

Village of Peoria Heights  
Board of Trustees  
August 15, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sarah DeVore, Jeff Goett, Beth Khazzam, Matthew Wigginton, and Brandon Wisenburg. Trustee Mark Gauf was absent. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Clerk Turner read a letter from Diane Close expressing concern for future of the Peoria Heights Fire Department. Clerk Turner also read a resignation letter from Trustee Mark Gauf. Mayor Phelan wished Trustee Gauf best health in the future. Mayor Phelan announced he would be appointing Ms. Jen Reichert at the next meeting for the Board's consideration.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2023 meeting. Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 5-0.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Ray Lockhart came forward to express concern about the autonomy and independence of the Village of Peoria Heights. He stated he didn't have safety concerns.

Mr. Derek Schryer, legal counsel for KDB Group, came forward to explain the delinquent payment of property taxes was an oversight and had been rectified. He explained KDB Group had received a letter terminating the lease, and KDB Group was surprised by the letter. He noted KDB Group had a letter of intent from a tenant and respectfully requested the Board reconsider its position.

Ms. Stephanie Crawford, 905 E Division, came forward to express support for the PHFD and concern the Board listen to the residents' positions.

Mr. Pat Casey came forward to request information regarding the employment and hours of Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton. Mayor Phelan and Trustee DeVore briefly explained the contract terms of those positions. Trustee DeVore noted that she didn't believe either position was suffering by being held jointly by Chief Sutton. Mr. Casey expressed concern.

Ms. Mary Bair came forward to express her sadness over the resignation of Trustee Mark Gauf. She noted that he had a lot of knowledge and expressed her thanks for his service.

Mr. Mike Casey came forward to express support for the PHFD. Mr. Casey asked Mayor Phelan his position. Mayor Phelan noted the Village needed a fix and the majority of the calls had only a couple respondents. He detailed the history of the Board's efforts to support the PHFD with a paid fire chief as well as part-time day shift coverage. He stated he wanted constant coverage for safety.

Ms. Cindy Crawford, 626 E Marietta, asked if the Village offered EMT training and was told it was offered. She expressed support for additional training.

Mr. Dalton Carlson, 5133 N Montclair, wished Trustee Gauf the best. He noted that past fire chiefs had provided needs assessments and suggested hiring paid staff.

Ms. Heather McKeekan expressed concern about the past mayor and allegations against him. She expressed concerns about the positions of chief of police and village administrator being held by the same person. She expressed additional concerns about allegations against village staff. Mayor Phelan noted that the police officers wear body cameras.

Ms. Stephanie Reliford, 728 E Division, shared past interactions with the Peoria Heights Police Department. She expressed concern with the handling of her case as well as support for the PHFD.

A resident of 5020 N Ogden questioned the absence of Chief Sutton. Mayor Phelan shared Chief Sutton was seeking medical treatment. She shared her experiences with the PHPD.

Ms. Shirley Fowler, 1130 E Euclid, shared her positive experiences with the PHFD years ago when she first came to the Village. She shared that she had called emergency services many times and noted an increase in response time. She expressed support for the PHFD, the PHPW, and PHWW.

Ms. J. Gruber, 3814 N Monroe, expressed support for the PHFD requesting additional staff. She noted the Village had a qualified audit and expressed concern about internal controls. She offered compliments to the PHPW for their recent work near her business.

Mr. David Reel, 1116 E Euclid, expressed appreciation for Officer Daniel Boles patrolling the neighborhood. He expressed concern over the PHPD's previous handling of issues in his neighborhood. He also expressed support for the PHFD.

Hearing no additional public comment, Mayor Phelan closed the meeting to public comments and moved on to old business.

Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to approve the rescission of July 18, 2023 action on the fire department options. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. Attorney Walton explained the Open Meetings Act requires any action that is final action must be listed on the agenda. The agenda didn't have an action item listed on August 1, 2023 agenda so the item needed to be listed on the agenda and voted on again. Trustee Wisenburg noted he was responding to public concerns. Trustee Wigginton asked Attorney Walton asked if there was any legal or financial jeopardy from the action at the last meeting. Attorney Walton stated he didn't believe so, but he couldn't answer conclusively. He noted the action was void. Mayor Phelan took responsibility for the misunderstanding. Attorney Walton noted he didn't believe the action was an intentional violation. Trustee Wigginton asked for clarification of the motion that night. Clerk Turner read back the motion made on July 18, 2023: Trustee Wigginton clarified his motion was to preserve the Peoria Heights Volunteer Fire Department and explore contracting with the City of Peoria. Trustee Wigginton noted the option was to explore contracting with the City of Peoria. He expressed concern with removing an option and losing forward momentum. Trustee Wigginton noted the PHFD had never been better funded. Mayor Phelan gavelled as the audience became loud and called for order. Trustee Wigginton noted that auto mutual aid with the City of Peoria needed to be addressed immediately. Mayor Phelan gavelled again and requested civility from the audience. Assistant Fire Chief Matt Schadt came forward to speak about the use of mutual aid, and Trustee Wigginton asked additional questions regarding responses. Trustee Wisenburg asked about the

relevance of the discussion. Mayor Phelan noted a lot of people had expressed their opinions, and he would allow Trustee Wigginton to continue. Trustee Wigginton described a specific case and questioned the use of MABAS and mutual aid with Assistant Fire Chief Schadt providing answers. Trustee Goett expressed support for investing in the PHFD. Trustee Khazzam expressed her opinion that the Village wouldn't be able to accurately compare financials. Trustee DeVore noted she had been on record that she would look at all scenarios, and she would like to be able to review all facts. She noted she hesitated to vote in favor of exploring contracting with the City of Peoria because she didn't want to waste their time. She noted she had concerns with both of the plans that were presented in July. Trustee Wisenburg expressed the Village needed to provide funding for paid staff. Trustee Wigginton expressed concern closing one option without a plan. The Board voted 3-2 to rescind the July 18, 2023 action on fire department options. Trustees Khazzam and Wigginton voted nay.

Having concluded old business, the Board moved on to new business.

Mayor Phelan asked for a motion to accept the resignation of Trustee Mark Gauf. Trustee Goett made a motion to accept the resignation of Mark Gauf with regret. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion. The Board voted 4-1 to accept the resignation of Mark Gauf. Trustee Wigginton voted nay.

Trustee DeVore made a motion to approve a pedicab business license with Peoria Pedicab LLC. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. Trustee DeVore noted the business was seeking a license to have a pedicab in the downtown district. Trustee Khazzam noted the owner had met with Administration. The Board voted 5-0 to approve the license.

Trustee DeVore shared Discover Peoria was present to provide an update. Mr. JD Dalfonso came forward and introduced his colleagues Ms. Ashley Hildebrandt and Ms. Elle Benway. He shared the Village's quarterly report. Ms. Hildebrandt went over the detail of the report for the trustees. Ms. Benway explained the system for how events are displayed on the Village's landing page. She noted it was very recently updated, and staff was now able to adjust tags if appropriate so only Village events will show on its page. Ms. Hildebrandt spoke to how the data is collected assuring the Board the analytics are limited to Village events only. Mayor Phelan asked the team to speak about tourism, and Mr. Dalfonso talked about state and local efforts to promote tourism noting the importance of tourism to local communities by generating sales tax revenue.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the purchase of Public Works vehicle in the amount of \$47,797.26 to DeLong Ford Inc. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. Foreman of Public Works, Mr. Jim Bartley, explained the vehicle would be useful for plowing smaller spaces as well as providing diversity in the summer. The Board voted 5-0 to approve the purchase.

Trustee Wigginton opened the discussion of EMS equipment by explaining the PHFD had requested to purchase fire equipment. Assistant Fire Chief Carlson explained the PHFD wanted to purchase a Lifepak 15. It is used for shocking cardiac patients. The equipment would be part of a push to move up to EMT-B service. He stated there are 5 licensed EMT-Bs, but there are others who might be interested if the PHFD was certified. Assistant Fire Chief Carlson stated he had found a vendor that could supply the equipment for around \$22,000. Trustee DeVore questioned licensing and use of the equipment. Assistant Fire Chief Carlson provided an explanation as well as the process of training.

Trustee Wigginton asked Inspector Shane Murphy to provide an update on the code enforcement and landlord registration programs. He provided a detailed report of notices, citations, and legal action. He

noted he was seeing increased cooperation, and he expected a reduction in citations in the coming month. He also shared a detailed report of landlord registration.

Trustee Khazzam asked Trustee Wisenburg, as he had collected the signatures for the fire protection district, if the application had been submitted. Trustee Wisenburg stated he had collected signatures, but he wasn't at the liberty to discuss what had happened past that. Trustee Khazzam noted the Board needed to educate the public about what a fire protection district means.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve payment of the bills, and Trustee Wigginton seconded the motion. The Board voted 5-0 to approve payment of the bills.

Clerk Turner read the Treasurer's Report for the end of July. There was \$7,837,755.20 in the Village controlled accounts, and \$2,104,986.83 in the Water controlled accounts. Trustee Wigginton made a motion to approve, and Trustee Goett seconded the motion. The Board approved the report 5-0.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Wigginton seconded the motion. The Board of Trustees voted 5-0 to adjourn at 7:40 pm.

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Michael Phelan, Mayor

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Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk