

Village of Peoria Heights  
Board of Trustees  
August 18, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sherryl Carter, Diane Mariscal, Beth Khazzam, Jeff Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees Meeting held on July 21, 2020 and the motion was seconded by Trustee Wisenburg. The Board approved the minutes 6-0.

Mayor Phelan reminded residents the Village is currently working on a comprehensive plan and encouraged participation.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment.

Ms. Jeannette Hillyer, 800 E Marietta, stepped forward to speak about the Peoria Heights Fire Department. She noted that she is related to Fire Chief Greg Walters and thanked the Board of Trustees for discussing the issue. She stated as the Village grows the PHFD must grow as well. She urged the trustees to listen to the Fire Chief Walters for guidance and thanked the PHFD volunteers for their time.

Mr. Mark Bean, former president of the Lions Club, came forward to ask for permission to install the Lions Club collection box in the parking lot. He also said October 15, 2020 was White Cane Safety Day and asked permission to use the park on that date for an event.

Mr. Scott Corsaut, leader of the American Legion Post #1111, came forward to announce that the Armed Services Day event will be soon and will benefit Freedom Service Paws. Mr. Corsaut continued on to state he, and other members of the American Legion Post, were present to thank the Peoria Heights Police Department for protecting the community. He noted the department's hard work to make sure events and residents are safe. He presented Chief Sutton with a certificate of recognition from the American Legion Post #1111. Mayor Phelan asked everyone present to join in recognizing the PHPD. Chief Sutton thanked everyone for their appreciation and kind words stating the department appreciated the support.

Hearing no additional public comment, Mayor Phelan closed public comments. Mayor Phelan moved on to the trustees' reports.

Trustee Carter praised the landscaping staff for their hard work keeping the public grounds looking nice. Mr. Michael Casey, Superintendent of Streets, announced that sealcoating had been completed on Columbus, Constantine, Miller, and other streets. Chief Sutton asked Mr. Casey to update the Board on Lions Park. Mr. Casey explained Public Works had reviewed playground equipment for structural integrity and dismantled some equipment which wasn't safe. Mayor Phelan asked Mr. Casey and Attorney Walton to provide an update on the continuing construction work just outside the Village on

Lake Avenue. Attorney Walton stated that Village had communicated directly with Illinois American Water about the incomplete construction which had been ongoing for months. Attorney Walton expressed the Village's dismay and discontent that traffic had been diverted into residential neighborhoods during this time. Mr. Casey stated shortly after the call Illinois American Water had begun work. The underground work had been completed, and the road should be reopened tomorrow.

Trustee Mariscal had nothing to report for building maintenance.

Trustee Khazzam stated she and Mayor Phelan had been approached by a resident, Ms. Tanisha Cayson, about organizing a voter drive on September 5, 2020. She encouraged everyone to sign up to vote. She reminded residents that it is a census year and also encouraged residents to complete their census questionnaire. She noted billions in funding is allocated based off of census data. Trustee Khazzam announced that the next meeting for the Village comprehensive plan will be on September 10, 2020 at 6:00 pm. The meeting will discuss parks and environmental features. Trustee Khazzam finished her report by stating she had attended meetings with Illinois Municipal League and Peoria Park District to try to secure funds for a trailhead in Peoria Heights.

Trustee Goett had nothing to report for Administration. Chief Sutton announced he'd be sending out a copy of the police union contract. He also stated he'd sent out an update on the first quarter financials.

Trustee Wisenburg had nothing to report for the Fire Department. Fire Chief Walters came forward to announce, with sadness, Mr. Don Faulkner had passed away. Fire Chief Walters noted that Mr. Faulkner was a large part of the PHFD, having been involved for many years, and he would be greatly missed.

Trustee DeVore stated the Village had been receiving increased reports of burglaries of unlocked cars. She encouraged residents to secure their cars or at least remove possessions from them. Chief Sutton stated the police had recently made an arrest connected to the issue, but it's an ongoing issue.

Mayor Phelan asked for old business. Hearing none, he moved on to new business.

Trustee Carter made a motion to approve the purchase of software for the fuel system in the amount of \$3,100, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. Trustee Carter stated the fuel system was more than 15 years old, and it needed upgrades. Mr. Casey clarified the system would allow Bookkeeping to more accurately track fuel use. Trustee Carter asked how the expense would be allocated, and Clerk Turner stated it would primarily be paid out of the street budget. The motion to purchase the software passed 6-0.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the voluntary collection agreement for the Village of Peoria Heights, Illinois, Hotel or Motel Occupancy Tax. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. Attorney Walton explained that it was a voluntary agreement because AirBnB, which did not owe the tax or own the rentals, will collect the tax on behalf of the owner and the Village. Attorney Walton noted the agreement was beneficial for both parties. Trustee DeVore asked if a similar agreement was necessary for other similar companies. Attorney Walton stated it should be, and the Village should speak to Azavar. He stressed again that the companies themselves aren't liable for the taxes, but they typically comply with collection agreements to avoid liability. Trustee Wisenburg asked if there was a fee charged to collect the tax. Attorney Walton stated there was not. The agreement was approved 6-0.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve a donation to the Lions Club in the amount of \$500, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. Trustee Goett stated the donation was to help purchase playground equipment. Chief Sutton explained the Lions Club had approached the Village requesting funds for seed

money to seek grants to purchase new playground equipment. Trustee Wisenburg asked if Lions Park was Village property, and Chief Sutton stated it was. The donation of \$500 to the Lions Club was approved 6-0.

Mayor Phelan announced the appointment of Bart Cumming as Village Treasurer for the Board's consideration. Mayor Phelan noted Mr. Cumming had previously served as a trustee for the Village and stated Mr. Cumming's background as CPA made him ideal. Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the appointment, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. Mr. Cumming's appointment was approved 6-0.

Trustee Wisenburg began the discussion of the Peoria Heights Fire Department by thanking Fire Chief Walters and Chief Sutton for their work gathering information for the Board of Trustees. Trustee Wisenburg stated he'd like to see the Board of Trustees come to a census on how to move forward. He stated supporting hiring a fire chief noting he'd like to see the Board focus on the Village's immediate needs. Trustee Mariscal said the Village had received a reduced contract rate from the City of Peoria for \$153,000 a year. Trustee Mariscal asked how long the contract would be, and Chief Sutton stated it would be a long term contract though the length hadn't been negotiated. Chief Sutton explained the proposal was for response to all fire calls, accidents, and cardiac arrests. Trustee Mariscal asked if Trustee Wisenburg was recommending a full-time or part-time fire chief. Trustee Wisenburg stated the Board had discussed both and noted the cost difference between the two options. Trustee Wisenburg didn't make a recommendation. Trustee Mariscal asked if there was someone to cover day time hours if the Village hired a part-time fire chief, and Trustee Wisenburg stated there wasn't. Trustee Mariscal asked Fire Chief Walters if he was responding to fire calls in the evening as well as day time hours. Fire Chief Walters stated he did but noted he isn't paid. He stated he had great flexibility to respond to calls as a retiree. Trustee Mariscal asked if a full-time chief would be responding to calls outside of business hours. Mayor Phelan noted that it would depend on the contract and job requirements. Fire Chief Walters explained if the fire chief was salaried then responses could be required. Trustee Mariscal asked Fire Chief Walters who covered him in his absence. Fire Chief Walters noted there were multiple individuals who provided backup. Trustee Mariscal asked Fire Chief Walters about the number of volunteers in the PHFD. Fire Chief Walters stated he would like more, but there were enough to respond to calls. Trustee Mariscal noted the cost of a full-time fire chief would be on top of the fire department's current budget and would increase their budget to approximately \$365,000. Trustee Mariscal noted the PHFD is very beloved and expressed concerns if the Village could afford the increased costs. Trustee Wisenburg acknowledged the financial concerns due to the pandemic and stated the Board had recently received a report stating the finances were in line with the previous fiscal year. Clerk Turner clarified that revenues were down substantially from the previous year and the only reason the Village had a surplus year-to-date was due to decreased spending. She continued noting that sales tax revenues were below normal and would remain so but were being offset by delayed and cancelled projects. Trustee DeVore asked for more specifics, and Clerk Turner explained most budget items were below normal as only necessities are being purchased. Trustee Khazzam asked if the fire chief position was created if it would need to be advertised and was told yes. She asked if the Fire Chief would have additional requirements for recruiting and training. Fire Chief Walters stated there was no need for increased training. Trustee Khazzam asked if fundraising would be a requirement, and Fire Chief Walters stated he had submitted a list of requirements for consideration. Trustee Khazzam noted that Fire Chief Walters was an educator, and the Village might incur additional training costs in order to maintain the same level of training. Fire Chief Walters stated the Village could retain an individual with similar qualifications as him. Trustee Khazzam asked if the budget could be reviewed to help fund the costs. Mayor Phelan noted that all budgeting expenses are subject to Board approval. Trustee Carter stated she supported hiring a full-time fire chief though she had concerns about the salary under discussion. Fire Chief Walters cautioned Trustee Carter that the proposed salary was fair. Trustee Carter expressed concern with contracting services to the City of Peoria. Trustee Goett expressed agreement with Trustee Carter. He expressed optimism that the Village would continue to grow, and the Village would need additional fire services to help support the growth. Trustee Goett acknowledged he didn't know where the funding would come from, but he believed it was important to plan for the future.

Chief Sutton stated he had gathered information on in house service and contracted service at the request of the Board. He stated he would like to see an in house service but hiring a fire chief could lead to the necessity of hiring a duty crew. It necessitates conversations about funding sources including the option for a public safety tax. Chief Sutton stated the proposed numbers supported contracting, but he understood that contracting would lose some heart and local service and the Board would need to make a decision. He urged the Board to consider funding sources when considering their decisions as the Village had only recently turned its financial status around. Trustee Carter asked for salary comparables. Mayor Phelan asked for additional comments from the audience. Ms. Mary Bair, 5016 Claredon Place, asked to speak. Ms. Bair stated that safety needed to be the first concern. She said the City of Peoria could make a lot of promises, but she was concerned if they would be kept. She asked what would happen if both of the nearby stations were unable to respond. She noted that selling equipment would be a one-time boon to the Village. She finished by saying the City Council would also need to approve the contract under discussion. Trustee Mariscal asked Chief Sutton if that was correct, and Chief Sutton stated it was. Mayor Phelan noted that the topic was a moving target, and the proposed numbers were a quote. He stated Administration needed direction in order to pursue that option more thoroughly. Trustee Wisenburg noted there was a deadline of November. Trustee Goett expressed he'd like to try to keep the PHFD. Trustee DeVore asked how much the comprehensive plan had cost and was told approximately \$98,000. She asked if it was being paid with grant funds, and Clerk Turner said it wasn't though the costs were partially funded by specialized funds.

Mayor Phelan asked the trustees if there was any miscellaneous business to discuss. Trustee Wisenburg read a letter by Ms. Lockheart asking the Board of Trustees to speak to the City of Peoria about traffic from construction on Lake. Trustee Wisenburg asked if there was a process or request for approval when traffic detours impact the Village. Mayor Phelan noted there was a professional courtesy, but there was no process for approving detours from outside the Village. Attorney Walton emphasized there was no legality or requirement other than courtesy. Trustee DeVore stated that it was a continuing issue and cited a similar issue at Prospect Road and Forest Park Drive. Attorney Walton stated the situation was frustrating, but there were no legal requirements. Chief Sutton shared he had a productive dialogue on the issue, and he believed the Village has the correct contacts now to correct the issue in the future. Superintendent of Water, Mr. David Marfell, noted that part of the issue was work was being done by Illinois American Water, and their employees don't know where the boundaries are.

Clerk Turner read the Treasurer's Report. As of the end of July, there was \$3,129,713.49 in the Village controlled accounts and \$1,251,890.32 in the Water controlled accounts. Trustee DeVore made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, and Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The Board voted 6-0 to accept the report.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded. The Board voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm.

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Michael Phelan, Mayor

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Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk