

Village of Peoria Heights
Board of Trustees
December 19, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 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, Elizabeth Khazzam, Jennifer Reichert, Matthew Wigginton, and Brandon Wisenburg. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, Fire Chief Dan Decker, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2023 meeting. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The minutes were approved 6-0.

Clerk Turner read correspondence from Illinois State Senator David Koehler notifying the Village it had been approved for \$50,000 in funding for infrastructure projects. He congratulated the Village and wished it the best of luck. Mayor Phelan thanked Senator Koehler for the funding.

Mayor Phelan presented Ms. Theresa McDade with a proclamation for all her hard work with the Chamber of Commerce and for the community upon her retirement from the Chamber. He spoke of her work coordinating events singling out her work on the recent anniversary celebration. Ms. McDade spoke about her history in the community and expressed her thanks.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment on agenda items. Hearing no public comment, the Board moved on to old business. Hearing old business, the Board moved on to new business.

Fire Chief Dan Decker began a presentation on the Peoria Heights Fire Department. Chief Decker noted all the trustees want what's best for the Village and great services require funding. He reviewed his first six weeks on the job. Chief Decker shared the current staffing structure speaking about the importance of volunteers and ways to increase numbers. Chief Decker covered the challenges facing the PHFD including declining membership and longevity as well as continuing education requirements. He noted a lot of communities are struggling, and there's no way to assure there's always someone available to respond to a call with a volunteer structure. Chief Decker noted he wanted to develop guaranteed, consistent responds with a lasting professional structure. He noted the Village would still need volunteers and how to cultivate a good atmosphere. Chief Decker stated his long term plan was that no fire engine would roll without at least two trained personnel with volunteers to staff the third and fourth seat of the engines. Trustee Wisenburg asked Chief Decker his proposal for staffing going forward. Chief Decker explained he'd like to meet the goal to have at least two fire fighters on each call. He noted he'd use whatever funds the Board allocated to first staff full-time positions then part-time positions. Trustee DeVore asked about the number of employees required to staff two employees all day and night. Chief Decker explained how hours are typically covered and three full-time employees would cover one seat. The other could be filled with a combination of part-time employees and volunteers. Trustee Wisenburg asked how many positions Chief Decker was proposing. Chief Decker noted it would take six full-time employees, but the exact make up would depend on funding. Trustee Wisenburg spoke about different staffing models of various municipalities to which Chief Decker replied by noting population density and the call volume's effect on staffing models. Trustee DeVore asked the

cost of six full-time employees. Chief Sutton noted it was between \$659,000-\$789,000. She noted she had additional questions which needed answers prior to approving the positions. Trustee Khazzam agreed. She thanked Chief Decker for his presentation but noted her expectations was for a recommendation of number of positions and costs. Chief Sutton spoke about the time line to hire additional employees. He stated the costs to hire three full-time employees with five part-time employees was \$454,316 with salaries and benefits. Chief Sutton stated the Village could afford that proposal. Trustee Wigginton noted OSHA requires two fire fighters in and two fire fighters out and asked where the funding would come from. Chief Sutton noted there was a surplus in the current year, but he couldn't speak to future budgets and that the Board may have to make difficult decisions in the coming budget cycle. Trustee Wisenburg asked if the figure included the current paid staff, and Chief Sutton stated it didn't. Trustee Khazzam noted there was an action item, and she didn't feel comfortable voting without documentation showing the breakdown of costs. She expressed awareness the Village is headed toward paid staff, but her belief it irresponsible to vote without having a chance to review it closely. Trustee DeVore noted she was unclear what the Board was voting on. She expressed concerns limiting Chief Decker by voting on specific positions as well as concerns relating to the amount. Trustee DeVore questioned retaining volunteers under the paid model. Chief Decker explained his history with volunteerism in the fire fighting community. Trustee Khazzam asked if Chief Decker had assessed equipment and infrastructure and if he could speak to the future costs in those areas. Chief Decker stated he was pleased with the condition of the equipment, but he has concerns with the age. Trustee Khazzam asked about facilities and if they need updates. Chief Decker stated he hasn't had time to review that. Trustee DeVore said the Board had been told in the past the building wasn't able to house paid staff. She asked Chief Decker's opinion. Chief Decker stated he hadn't seen any major concerns, but he hadn't reviewed it specifically. Trustee DeVore asked if the volunteers were supportive of a paid staff. Chief Decker stated he's spoken in generalities while emphasizing the need to keep the volunteer presence strong. He spoke about the importance of good leadership. Trustee Wigginton asked about long term costs and if they included additional personnel. Chief Decker spoke of the importance of retaining employees. Trustee DeVore asked the costs of educational benefits or increasing stipends for volunteers. Chief Decker noted he hadn't reviewed it, but there were proposed policies. Trustee DeVore spoke about the City's proposed cost, as opposed to the costs for personnel, and stated she believes the increased costs are worth it. Trustee Wisenburg agreed as did Trustee Goett. Trustee Khazzam noted her concern the costs was a launching pad to increased expenses which were unsustainable. The Board discussed deferring with Trustee Wigginton supporting Trustee Khazzam. Attorney Walton stated it would be an appropriate approach for the Village to return in two weeks with a budget amendment. Trustee DeVore questioned if the Board needed to vote on the item if it had minimal impact on the current budget. Mayor Phelan noted the vote was the Board committing to expenses. Trustee Goett made a motion to approve paid fire department positions. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion. Trustee DeVore made a motion to amend the motion to increase the Fire Department budget \$454,316 annualized. Trustee Goett seconded. That Board approved the amendment 6-0. Trustee Wigginton made a motion to defer the item to the next meeting. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The motion to defer failed by a vote of 2-4. Trustees DeVore, Goett, Reichert, and Wisenburg voted nay. Trustee Wigginton expressed voting have received cost estimates that day set a bad precedent. Chief Sutton apologized to Trustee Wigginton noting he had spoken to Trustee Wigginton regarding it. The motion to approve the paid fire department positions increasing the Fire Department budget \$454,316 annualized passed by a vote of 6-0.

Trustee Khazzam made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-1719; An Ordinance Authorizing the Lease of Property Located at 1201/1203 Kingman Avenue to KDB Group, LLC. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion. Attorney Walton explained the sublease as fallen through, and KDB Group was asking for a

deferral. He noted he believes KDB Group may be surrendering the property, and Trustee Khazzam agreed. Mayor Phelan questioned if the Village could still vote, and Attorney Walton agreed. Trustee Wisenburg stated he would like to vote. The Board voted 0-6 to approve the Ordinance 2023-1719. Trustees DeVore, Goett, Khazzam, Reichert, Wigginton, and Wisenburg voted nay. Mayor Phelan instructed Attorney Walton and Community Development Director Wayne Aldrich to move forward with an RFP for the building.

Trustee Reichert made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-1720; An Ordinance Amending Title 8, Chapter 2A of the Village Code of the Village of Peoria Heights, For the Purposes of Providing for Optional Paperless Billing and Amending Application and Testing Fees. Trustee Wigginton seconded the motion. Trustee Reichert explained the ordinance increases the Waterworks service deposit from \$35 to \$50. The other change regards the policy for testing water meters. It also adds language for residents to receive an e-billing instead of a paper copy. Clerk Turner explained staff's plan to introduce e-billing options. Trustee DeVore questioned the meter testing language, and Superintendent of Public Works, Mr. Chris Chandler, explained it would involve a third party testing the meter in case of a dispute. Chief Sutton noted the e-billing was in support of moving to billing more frequently. Ordinance 2023-1720 was approved 6-0.

Trustee Wigginton made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-1721; An Ordinance Amending Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 24 Of the Village Code of The Village of Peoria Heights Regarding Hearings Before the Liquor Commissioner & Directing the Establishment of a Policy for Alcohol Compliance Operations. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion. Trustee Wigginton stated the Village would have a policy of recording all liquor hearings, and the recording would be the legal record. Chief Sutton explained it was also in response to some changes with the state enforcement. Trustee Wigginton noted in his research he believed the ordinance would preserve the Village's legal interests. Attorney Walton agreed. The Board approved the ordinance 6-0.

Mayor Phelan asked for miscellaneous business.

Trustee DeVore shared that staff has gone through its first round of training on the notification system. She estimated it will be rolled out in the middle or end of January. She shared all notifications will be opt-in, and residents can choose what notifications they'd like to receive. Superintendent Chandler noted residents can receive emails or other forms of communication besides texts.

Superintendent Chandler reported the Village has sent out a letter to residents to make appointments to identify service line materials. Trustee Wisenburg asked about communications regarding the results with Superintendent Chandler explaining the process. Trustee Khazzam asked if there were any reports on the results of ice pigging. Superintendent Chandler stated nothing definite, but it seems call volume had gone down. Trustee Wigginton asked about consulting services with Woodard and Curran, and Director Aldrich noted he had received a proposal, but he asked for a revision. He explained potential formats for gathering information which included multiple phases. Trustee DeVore noted breaking the process into phases could result in savings if the Board chose not to continue the process.

Director Aldrich stated the HUD Healthy Home applications had closed last Friday. Trustee Khazzam asked how many had been received, and Director Aldrich stated there were forty. Director Aldrich stated staff will do an initial review with METEC doing further financial review. The RFQ for Prospect Road has been published, and Director Aldrich is working on an RFP for form based code revisions. Trustee Wigginton asked about the cost share for the Village. Director Aldrich replied it was \$500,000

for Prospect Road grant, and around \$3,000 for each house in the HUD Healthy Home grants. The Board discussed cost sharing regarding Galena Road as well as well as funding sources.

Mayor Phelan thanked Public Works for their hard work putting up holiday decorations in the Village.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment on general items.

Ms. Mary Bair, 5016 N Clarendon Pl, thanked Chief Sutton and Chief Decker for their hard work. She expressed sadness and disappointment not everyone was on board initially. She noted the importance of starting small and improving.

Ms. J Gruber, 3814 N Faber Ave, expressed concern that the information provided to the trustees wasn't complete enough. She noted the amount wasn't disclosed on the agenda and that concerns her because she wants the fire department to succeed. She expressed she was excited for the new tenure for Chief Decker. She expressed support for the PHFD while concern about the lack of details. Mayor Phelan noted more information will be disclosed in the future.

Trustee Khazzam made a motion to approve payment of the bills. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion. There were no questions on the bills. The Board voted 6-0 to approve payment of the bills.

Clerk Turner read the Treasurer's Report. In the Village controlled accounts, there was \$8,272,686.08 and in the Water controlled accounts there was \$2,189,616.73. Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The Board of Trustees voted 6-0 to adjourn at 7:50 pm.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk