TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

BOARD OF SAFETY MEETING April 7, 2022

The Board of Safety Meeting was called to order by Chairman Eric Graf at 6:50 p.m., in the Schererville Police Department Meeting and Training Facility, 25 E. Joliet Street, Schererville, IN.

Attendance was taken with the following Board Members present: Eric Graf, Michael O'Rourke, Richard Pietrzak, and George Kouros. Staff members present: Police Chief Pete Sormaz, Deputy Chief of Police Steven McNamara, Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Deputy Fire Chief David Meyer, and Recording Secretary Stephanie Bottiger. Also present: Attorney Alfredo Estrada and Schererville Town Council liaison Tom Schmitt. Absent: David Eenigenburg.

THEREUPON, Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Pietrazak made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2022 Public Meeting, seconded by Mr. O'Rourke. Motion carries (4-0).

THEREUPON, Amendment of the Agenda

Attorney Estrada reminded Chairman Graf of the recommendation made during the Study Session to amend the Agenda under New Business. Under New Business, letters A1 and A2, with A1 being the suspension of the current eligibility list and the creation of an Emergency Hire Process while A2 providing the Police Chief with the authority to begin an Emergency Hire Process and establish a list. Motion made by Mr. Graff, seconded by Mr. Pietrzak. Motion carries (4 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence

ITEM A. PD

Chief Sormaz advised the Board he received a letter of appreciation from Cedar Lake Police Chief William Fisher for their assistance with a missing child case in Cedar Lake on March 26.

ITEM B. PD

Chief Sormaz informed the Board he received a note from the family of Bryan Kersey for their assistance with his funeral escort. Lt. Kersey began his career with the Schererville Police Department before taking a position with the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

ITEM C FD

Chief Patterson notified the Board that Dick's Sporting Goods donated over $9,000.00 worth of new workout equipment that will be used in the new fire station.

ITEM D FD

Chief Patterson also made the Board aware that Pepsi arrived at their station with a donation of two pallets of bottled water worth approximately $720.00.

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. PD – NONE

ITEM B. FD – NONE

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. PD – Request by former Officer Iman White to purchase his duty weapon

Chief Sormaz disclosed to the Board that former Officer Iman White presented him with a letter requesting to purchase his duty weapon. Chief Sormaz requested the Board decline the request made by Mr. White. Motion made by Mr. O'Rourke seconded by Mr. Pietrzak. Discussion: Chairman Graf requested a reason from Chief Sormaz as to why the request should be denied to which he responded that the weapons were becoming more difficult to purchase and he would like to maintain the weapon in the departments reserve until they can acquire additional weapons. Chief Sormaz further advised the Board that the department was awaiting an ammunition supply to be delivered that was ordered in 2021. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM A – 1 PD – Suspend the current eligibility list and begin an emergency hire list

Discussion of the suspension of the current eligibility list and creating and Emergency Hire list took place in the study session. Motion made by Mr. Pietrzak to suspend the current eligibility list and begin the Emergency Hire process, seconded by Mr. Kouros. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM A – 2 PD – Allow the Chief to begin an emergency hire process and establish list

Discussion of allowing the Chief to begin an Emergency Hire process and establishing an Emergency Hire list took place in the study session. Motion made by Mr. Pietrzak to give the Chief authority to begin the Emergency Hire process and establish an Emergency Hire list, seconded by Mr. O'Rourke. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM B. FD – Promotion for Battalion Chief

Chief Patterson requested approval from the Board to promote Captain Steven Waterstraat to Battalion Chief due to the upcoming retirement of current Battalion Chief Bill Howe. Motion made by Mr. O'Rourke seconded by Mr. Pietrzak. Discussion: Chairman Graf stated Steven Waterstraat is an incredible firefighter. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM C. FD – Promotion for Lieutenant

Chief Patterson requested approval from the Board to promote Valentino Trevino from Firefighter/Paramedic to Lieutenant. Chief Patterson's request for Firefighter/Paramedic Trevino to hold the Lieutenant's position first is due to the fact Firefighter/Paramedic Trevino has not yet held an officer's position. Chief Patterson would like him to gain knowledge of the first position of promotion before being promoted to Captain. Motion made by Mr. Pietrzak, seconded by Mr. O'Rourke. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM D. FD – Job Status change for Ryan Abens

Chief Patterson requested approval from the Board for the time promotion of Ryan Abens from 3rd class Firefighter/Paramedic to 2nd class Firefighter/Paramedic. He further apprised the Board that Ryan Abens had completed his Paramedic Program and received both the Indiana and National Certifications. Motion made by Mr. Pietrzak, seconded by Mr. O'Rourke. Motion carries (4 – 0).

THEREUPON, Reports

ITEM A. Police Chief

Chief Sormaz notified the Board of the commendations received by Officer Josette Quiroga, Officer Riley Arvanitis, and Detective Daniel Drexler for an incident that occurred on March 30, 2022, where five doses of Narcan were administered to an arrestee who suffered from an overdose during transport to the Police Department. After the fifth dose of Narcan was administered in the Sally Port of the Police Department, the arrestee regained consciousness and was transported by the Fire Department for medical treatment where he made a full recovery. Chief Sormaz congratulated the officers on a superb job in responding and identifying the issue with the arrestee, whose life they saved. Discussion continued for several minutes as Chief Sormaz answered some questions a few Board members had.

Chief Sormaz notified the Board that the Police Memorial would take place on May 20, 2022 and would keep the Board updated as to the agenda for the Memorial.

Chief Sormaz disclosed to the Board that on today's date he received a resignation letter from Officer Christopher Lopez, a seventeen and a half year veteran of the force. His last day will be April 16, 2022.

For the month of March, 2022, the Patrol Division had 1,266 calls for service, 88 accidents, 200 Local Ordinance citations, 350 State Infraction citations, 145 total arrests, 212 total charges filed of which 89 were Class A Misdemeanors, 35 Class B Misdemeanors, 55 Class C Misdemeanors, and 33 Level 6 Felonies.

For the month of March, 2022, the Criminal Investigations Division filed 49 criminal charges, 12 thefts, 0 thefts from motor vehicles, and 2 burglaries.

For the month of March, 2022, Schererville Police Officers attended 163 hours of training.

For the month of March, 2022, the Animal Control Division had 26 calls for service and 1 bite reports. 5 new animals were taken in, 4 animals were adopted out, 1 animal was returned to owner/guardian and 0 animals were transported out. The Animal Control Division took in $3,778.00 in monetary donations and $0.0 in product donations for the month.

ITEM B. Fire Chief

Chief Patterson advised the reports were in the packet.

For the month of March, 2022, the Schererville Fire Department performed 42 inspections, responded to 307 incidents, and attended 1,037 hours of training.

ITEM C. Attorney NONE

THEREUPON, Board Members

Mr. Pietrzak reported that earlier in the month, he went on a ride-along with Cpl. Ryan Staley and stated it was an eye opening experience. He also advised that Vice-Chairman Eenigenburg rode with Officer Anthony Rubino and that he too was in awe. Mr. Pietrzak went on to explain that, for the four hours he rode with Cpl. Staley, it was intensely busy for the crew of seven. Mr. Pietrzak believes the officers do not receive enough credit for what they do on a daily basis. He further asserted that he was going to work with the Council to see what could be done in regards to hiring more officers for the department. He went on to express that he believes the Fire Department is in a similar situation, staffing wise, as the Police Department. He was grateful for the experience and hoped the other members would be able to set up their ride-along soon.

THEREUPON, Business from the Floor NONE

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Pietrzak made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Kouros. Motion carries (4-0). The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

ERIC GRAF
SCHERERVILLE BOARD OF SAFETY CHAIRMAN
A TRUE COPY

DAVID EENIGENBURG
SCHERERVILLE BOARD OF SAFETY VICE CHAIRMAN
A TRUE COPY