



TOWN OF GRIFFITH PUBLIC SAFETY BOARD

111 N. Broad Street, Griffith, IN 46319

Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

The Griffith Safety Board was called to order by Chairman Jerome at 6:30 P.M. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those in Attendance

George Jerome	Griffith Safety Board Chairman
Sue Katona	Griffith Safety Board Vice Chairman
RoAnn Purgert	Griffith Safety Board Secretary
Liz Goral	Griffith Safety Board Member
Phil Vechey	Griffith Safety Board Member – Absent
Rick Ryfa	Town Council Police Department Liaison
Melissa Robbins	Town Council Fire Department Liaison – Absent
Greg Mance	Chief, Griffith Police Department
Roy Schoon	Chief, Griffith Fire Department
Christian Bartholomew	Legal Counsel, Burke Costanza & Carberry

The following items were discussed:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of January 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

PSB Member Katona made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2024 Public Safety Board Meeting as presented.

PSB Member Goral seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made at this point in tonight's meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS

1. **Griffith Police Department**

Chief Mance read the monthly report for December 2023, as well as the annual report for Year 2023. Chief Mance stated overall crime is going down. Year 2023 was a good year with good progress being made since the previous decade.

Chief Mance announced the Police Department will be hosting a Police Candidate Workshop on Sunday, February 25, 2024, which will be held at Griffith High School. This workshop is beneficial for

anyone interested in a career in Law Enforcement. The workshop will last between 5-6 hours, and some of the topics to be covered are: Physical Agility Testing, Written Tests, Mock Interviews, etc.

2. **Griffith Fire Department**

Fire Chief Schoon read the monthly report for December 2023. Chief Schoon advised that Year 2023 had the lowest call volume since 2016.

3. **Griffith F.O.P. Lodge #161**

There was no representative present tonight from Griffith F.O.P. Lodge #161.

4. **VEST**

Corporal P. Ghrist read the monthly VEST report for January 2024. Corporal Ghrist advised the VEST members put in 820.75 hours in the month of January. VEST Member Mike Andree, Sr. lead in hours worked with a total of 242 hours. He was followed closely by T. Gindl, and then by F. Lopez, R Bubala, and R. Gindl. There are currently 11 VEST members.

Corporal Ghrist advised in the month of December, VEST Members worked a weekend selling calendars as a fund raiser for Griffith Animal Control. During those two (2) days, they collected over \$2,500 in calendar sales/donations for Griffith Animal Control.

5. **Town Council Liaison**

Town Council Liaison R. Ryfa advised there was nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no matters of "Old Business."

NEW BUSINESS

1. Griffith Police Department seeks approval for the purchase of six (6) squad cars and outfitting for a total not to exceed \$325,000.00.

PSB Member Katona made a motion to approve the purchase of six (6) squad cars and outfitting for a total not to exceed \$325,000.00.

PSB Member Goral seconded the motion.

Discussion: PSB Member Purgert queried as to where the funds for this purchase would be coming from. Chief Mance explained the monies would be coming from the CAGIT Fund, which is funded by the County Income Tax that is given to municipalities. Chief Mance advised the supply of vehicles for purchase by law enforcement is low. Chevy dealers will not sell vehicles to a community who does not currently have Chevy vehicles in their fleet. The Ford Explorer was not available. The only option available was through Dodge. Chief Mance stated they were able to get new 2022 Dodge Chargers at a 20% discount, which allowed them to purchase one additional vehicle.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

2. Griffith Police Department recognizes the following officers for exemplary work in a Foot Chase & Apprehension of Burglar (23GR09378).
 - a. Cpl. J. Beck
 - b. Ofc. D. Arroyo (Note: Officer was not present due to being at SWAT Training)
 - c. Ofc. J. Corle
 - d. Ofc. N. Flahive

Commander C. Burrow advised of the following:

In the early morning hours of December 30th, Griffith Officers Jason Corle, Nick Flahive, Dan Arroyo and Corporal Jeff Beck responded to a burglar alarm at Calumet High School due to Lake County officers being tied up. Lake County Police had already responded to at least two (2) previous alarms at the school that morning and cleared the scene. A Calumet High School IT person remotely viewed cameras and thought he saw somebody enter but never leave.

Officer Corle discovered a door, out of the public eye, that was pried open with a backpack laying nearby. Griffith officers covered the exits as best they could, while Cpl. Beck and Officer Arroyo teamed up and made entry. Officers were about to ascend the northwest stairwell when a man started coming down the stairs carrying bags and wearing gloves. Officers identified themselves, but the man dropped the bags and fled in the opposite direction with officers giving chase. The man made it down the other stairwell and out the door, where he was greeted by Officer Flahive ordering him to stop. The suspect veered course and was advised he would be tased if he did not stop. The man disregarded the order, jumped a fence, and was tased by Officer Arroyo, still in close pursuit. The man fell and was taken into custody by officers and ultimately, he was turned over to the Lake County Sheriff's Department.

Corporal Jeff Beck, Officer Jason Corle and Officer Nick Flahive were presented with Certificates of Commendation.

3. Griffith Police Department recognizes the following officer for exemplary work in a Double Shooting (23GR08034):
 - a. Cpl. J. Gary

Lieutenant P. Sines advised of the following:

Officers were dispatched to a loud argument in a parking lot ending with shots being fired. Approximately nine (9) blocks away from the parking lot, Officer J. Merkel observed a vehicle with a bullet hole in the window glass, and the driver frantically waving at him. The driver pulled over and stated he was shot in the leg, and his girlfriend passenger was also shot. Three (3) small children in the backseat were unharmed. The driver identified the shooter as the father of two (2) of the children in the car.

Cpl. Gary proceeded to the area of the shooting and approached on foot to search for additional victims, evidence, and witnesses. Cpl. Gary was approached by the original caller and learned that two (2) men had been standing near a white van waiting for the victim car to pull up before shots were fired and the vehicle fled. The caller pointed out a spent shell casing and gave a description of the men. Cpl. Gary and Sgt. C. Herrmann strung crime scene tape and were attempting to secure the scene from numerous people walking through when a man walked under the tape and tossed a bag in the dumpster.

Cpl. Gary recognized the clothing description given and went after the man. The man attempted to continue walking away and claim he had no identification. Cpl. Gary's knowledge of the law allowed him to detain the subject for crossing the police line and failing to identify. A wallet was found on the man that identified him as the named shooter. The suspect was transported for questioning while Cpl. Gary remained on scene and continued to interview possible witnesses. Cpl. Gary's information was essential to quickly locating and detaining the second suspect.

Cpl. Gary's investigative skills and gut instincts were crucial to the arrests before the suspects had a chance to flee, destroy evidence, or intimidate witnesses.

Corporal Jason Gary was presented with a Certificate of Commendation.

4. Griffith Police Department recognizes the following two (2) school age girls for starting a business and raising monies for local animal shelters:
 - a. Ella Maciszak (11 Years Old)
 - b. Claire Petersen (12 Years Old)

This matter will be rescheduled as neither girl was able to attend tonight's meeting.

5. Swearing in of Station 31 Probationary Firefighter Brodie Claesgens to full status.

Assistant Fire Chief M. Andree, Jr. advised that Firefighter Brodie Claesgens was 1 of 17 firefighters hired last year. Firefighter Claesgens came from the Hebron Fire Department. Assistant Chief Andree stated Firefighter Claesgens has been assisting the Fire Department in many different ways, and they feel honored to have him. Fire Chief R. Schoon advised Firefighter Claesgens recently was able to get experience on the engine at a fire in Merrillville.

PSB Member Goral swore in Firefighter Brodie Claesgens to full status.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no questions or comments from the floor at tonight's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 P.M.

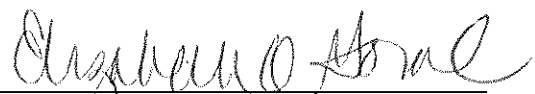
George Jerome, Chairman



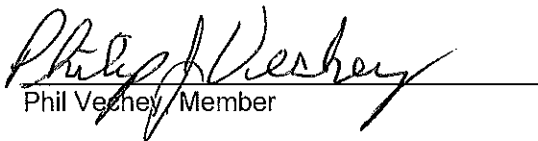
Sue Katona, Vice Chairman



RoAnn Purgert, Secretary



Liz Goral, Member



Phil Verhey, Member

Minutes Prepared By:



Joan Kolodziej, Recording Secretary