



TOWN OF GRIFFITH PUBLIC SAFETY BOARD

111 N. Broad Street, Griffith, IN 46319

**Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2024**

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

Those in Attendance

George Jerome	Griffith Safety Board Chairman – Absent
Phil Vechey	Griffith Safety Board Vice Chairman
RoAnn Purgert	Griffith Safety Board Secretary
Liz Goral	Griffith Safety Board Member
Sue Katona	Griffith Safety Board Member
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 – Absent
Mike Andree	Assistant Chief, Griffith Fire Department
Christian Bartholomew	Legal Counsel, Burke Costanza & Carberry

The following items were discussed:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of February 1, 2024 Meeting Minutes

PSB Member Goral made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2024 Public Safety Board Meeting as presented.

PSB Member Katona seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Announcements made at tonight's meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS

1. **Griffith Police Department**
Chief Mance read the monthly report for January 2024.

2. **Griffith Fire Department**

Assistant Fire Chief Andree read the monthly report for January 2024.

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 February 2024. Corporal Ghrist advised the top Volunteer VEST member for the month of February was Tom Gindl with 253.5 hours. He was followed closely by Mike Andree (251.5 hours). Honorable Mentions were for Fermin Lopez (123 hours), Ruth Gindl (83.25 hours) and Robert Bubala (64.25 hours). The total number of hours for 2024 put in by VEST members is 1,653.25. Currently, there are 14 active VEST members.

Corporal Ghrist then introduced VEST Member Robert Bubala, who was celebrating 10 years with Griffith VEST. Corporal Ghrist stated VEST Member Bubala always assists with town events and can be seen frequently out at Central Market. VEST Member Bubala also gives weather preparedness presentations and anti-scam presentations for the elderly. VEST Member Bubala stated he joined VEST because he wanted to be a firefighter, and he wanted to get involved with the Town. He stated it has been a joy to serve this Town.

Civil Service Members from Porter County were also present tonight to honor VEST Member Bubala. PSB Member Goral thanked Mr. Bubala for his service and mentioned that he does a lot for the Animal Shelter as well.

5. **Town Council Liaison**

Councilman Ryfa advised there was nothing to report tonight.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no matters of "Old Business."

NEW BUSINESS

1. 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)

Corporal Ghrist introduced both Ella Maciszak and Claire Petersen, whom he nominated for recognition. Corporal Ghrist advised both girls are 6th Grade Griffith Middle School students who started off selling bracelets to raise money for the local animal shelters. They now have expanded their business to not only bracelets, but to include crocheted items and painted ornaments. They even came up with a business name, "Pawsome Crafts" and logo.

At a recent craft fair, they raised \$411. The girls each picked a pet angel from the tree at the Griffith Police Station. When they dropped off their donations a few days before Christmas, most of the tree was still full. They took the rest of the angels and fulfilled all the items on all the wish lists. They then shopped for all the animals and delivered the items on January 2, 2024. Both students are extremely respectful, always willing to help, and are role models for the other kids.

Ella Maciszak and Claire Petersen each were presented with a plaque recognizing their accomplishments. The girls received a standing ovation from all those in attendance at tonight's meeting.

2. Administration of Oath of Office for Police Chaplains; namely, Pastor Bill Jones and Father. Gregory Bim-Merle

Chief Mance advised he was excited to announce the revamping of the Chaplaincy Program, aimed at enhancing the ability to provide spiritual and emotional support to our officers and the community they serve during challenging and stressful situations. Their responsibilities include offering guidance, counseling, and assistance to individuals affected by crime or traumatic events, as well as participating in departmental events, meetings, and training sessions. As part of this initiative, we will be conducting the Oath of Office for two (2) esteemed individuals tonight; namely, Pastor Bill Jones and Father Gregory Bim-Merle. Both individuals bring a wealth of experience and unwavering dedication to their respective ministries, and we are honored to have them as our newest police chaplains. The Department's previous chaplain, Father Mens, has retired. Retired Police Sergeant Marlene Starceovich will be assisting with bringing back the Chaplaincy Program.

Pastor Bill Jones – First United Methodist Church

Chief Mance stated dedication, service, and a profound commitment to faith are the hallmarks of Pastor Bill Jones, a steadfast Methodist minister whose journey in ministry spans over a decade. Rooting in the Methodist tradition since his baptism and confirmation at the age of 16, Pastor Bill's devotion to his community and congregation has been unwavering.

Having served as the Youth Director at FUMC Griffith for five (5) years, Pastor Bill's transformative experiences there solidified his calling to ministry. Now, as the Senior Pastor at First United Methodist Church of Griffith going on five (5) years, he continues to exemplify his deep-rooted faith and passion for service, guiding his congregation with compassion and dedication. Pastor Bill's enduring commitment to ministry and community service is a testament to his profound belief in the power of faith and the transformative impact it can have on individuals and communities alike. We are proud and blessed to have Pastor Bill Jones as part of our chaplains.

The Oath of Office was administered to Pastor Jones by PSB Member Katona. Pastor Jones' wife and daughter were present.

Father Gregory Bim-Merle – St. James the Less Parish

Chief Mance advised Father Gregory Bim-Merle is a Roman Catholic priest of the Diocese of Gary. Father Bim-Merle was ordained in 2017 and presently serves as the parochial administrator at St. James the Less Parish in Highland, Indiana

In addition to his parish duties, Father Bim-Merle serves the Indiana Knights of Columbus as the Associate State Chaplain, demonstrating his commitment to Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Father Bim-Merle is a board member of Diocese of Gary Catholic Charities, which provides community service, assistance, and charity in our local area. Father Bim-Merle is also a musician and plays the organ at Holy Angels Cathedral for Diocesan liturgies, as well as performing and singing in a few local bands. His dedication to serving others and fostering a sense of belonging within his community makes him a highly valued member of the clergy at St. James the Less, and a great addition to the Griffith Police Department's chaplaincy.

The Oath of Office was administered to Father Bim-Merle by PSB Member Katona. Father Bim-Merle's parents were present.

3. Sale of Excess Property to the Crown Point Police Department; namely one (1) 910 Precision G8 Rifle w/Scope, valued at \$2,600.00

PSB Member Purgert made a motion to approve the sale of excess property to the Crown Point Police Department; namely, one (1) 910 Precision G8 Rifle w/Scope, valued at \$2,600.00.

PSB Member Katona seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

4. Auction of Excess Property; specifically,
 - a. Two (2) 2013 Dodge Chargers (Fleet #9132 and #9133),
 - b. Three (3) 2016 Dodge Chargers (Fleet #9157, #9158, and #9162),
 - c. One (1) 2016 Ford Interceptor (Fleet #9161), and
 - d. One (1) 2013 Ford Interceptor (Fleet #9142).

PSB Member Goral made a motion to approve the auction of excess property; specifically,

- e. Two (2) 2013 Dodge Chargers (Fleet #9132 and #9133),
- f. Three (3) 2016 Dodge Chargers (Fleet #9157, #9158, and #9162),
- g. One (1) 2016 Ford Interceptor (Fleet #9161), and
- h. One (1) 2013 Ford Interceptor (Fleet #9142).

PSB Member Purgert seconded the motion.
Motion carried 4 – 0.

5. Approval and Adoption of Griffith Police Department's:
 - a. Policy 303 Handcuffing and Restraints
 - b. Policy 304 Control Devices
 - c. Policy 305 Conducted Energy Device
 - d. Policy 802 Evidence Room Manager

PSB Member Katona made a motion to approve and adopt Griffith Police Department's Policy 303, 304, 305 and 802 as presented.

PSB Member Goral seconded the motion.
Motion carried 4 – 0.

6. Griffith Police Department seeks approval to initiate hiring process for Patrol Officer

Vice Chairman Vechev made a motion to approve Griffith Police Department initiating a hiring process for Patrol Officer.

PSB Member Katona seconded the motion.
Motion carried 4 – 0.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

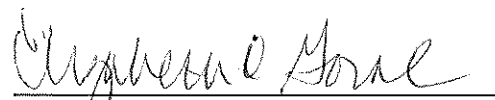
ADJOURNMENT

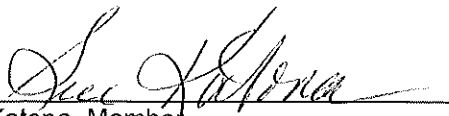
Meeting adjourned at 6:53 P.M.


George Jerome, Chairman


Phil Vechev, Vice Chairman


RoAnn Purgert, Secretary


Liz Goral, Member


Sue Katona, Member

Minutes Prepared By:


Joan Kolodziej, Recording Secretary