



TOWN OF GRIFFITH PUBLIC SAFETY BOARD

111 N. Broad Street, Griffith, IN 46319

Meeting Minutes April 3, 2025

The Griffith Safety Board was called to order by Chairman Jerome at 6:29 P.M. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Those in Attendance

George Jerome
Elizabeth Goral
RoAnn Purgert
Phil Vechey
Sue Katona

Griffith Safety Board Chairman
Griffith Safety Board Vice Chairman
Griffith Safety Board Secretary
Griffith Safety Board Member
Griffith Safety Board Member

Rick Ryfa
Melissa Robbins
Albert Tharp
James Sibley
Curt Burrow
Paul Sines
Roy Schoon
Michael Andree, Jr.
Brian Bott

Town Council Police Department Liaison
Town Council Fire Department Liaison – Absent
Chief, Griffith Police Department
Commander, Griffith Police Department
Commander, Griffith Police Department
Lieutenant, Griffith Police Department
Chief, Griffith Fire Department
Deputy Chief, Griffith Fire Department
Legal Counsel, Burke Costanza & Carberry

The following items were discussed:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of March 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes

PSB Member Goral made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2025 Public Safety Board Regular Meeting as presented.
PSB Member Katona seconded the motion.
Motion carried 5 – 0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Announcements made at tonight's meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS / REPORTS

1. **Griffith Police Department**

Chief Tharp read the monthly report for February 2025.

2. **Griffith Fire Department**

Fire Chief Schoon read the monthly report for February 2025. Chief Schoon advised the members of the Griffith Fire Department participated in a Dodge Ball Event wearing full gear. He stated Firefighter Breanna Carter had the longest time. In response to PSB Member Purgert's question, Chief Schoon the gear they wear weighs approximately 60-70 pounds. In response to PSB Member Vechey's query, Chief Schoon explained "Ice Training" is where firefighters are taught how to get someone out of a body of water should they fall through the ice.

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 March 2025. Total number of hours volunteered for March 2025 is 873.5 hours. Total number of hours volunteered for Year 2025 is 2,436.5 hours. Top Volunteer for March 2025 was Member Mike Andree, Sr. with 297 hours, followed by Tom Gindl (296.5 hours), Ruth Gindl (117.5 hours), Fermin Lopez (71 hours), and Robert Bubala (48.75 hours).

5. **Town Council Liaison**

Town Council Liaison Ryfa advised there was nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There were no matters of "Old Business."

NEW BUSINESS

1. Griffith Police Department seeks approval to make a conditional offer of employment to Emmanuel Figueroa

PSB Member Goral made a motion to grant approval to the Griffith Police Department to make a conditional offer of employment to Emmanuel Figueroa.

PSB Member Vechey seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5 – 0.

2. Griffith Police Department presents Certificates of Commendation to:

a. Corporal Jason Jaques and Officer Taylor Watkins

Lt. Paul Sines advised: On February 10, 2025, at approximately 10:37 p.m., officers received a call from a complainant reporting that a 19-year-old classmate was live-streaming on Instagram and threatening to kill herself. The complainant also informed officers that the suicidal individual lived near train tracks and was waiting for an approaching train. A physical description of the 19-year-old was provided.

Officers quickly responded to the train tracks on Glen Park Avenue, where the 19-year-old resided in the 1100 block of N. Elmer Street. When they arrived, a train was just beginning to cross the Glen Park Avenue tracks, but the 19-year-old was not visible.

Corporal Jaques then responded to the train tracks on 40th Place. As he turned onto 40th Place, he saw the railroad gates begin to lower for an approaching train. He also spotted a female matching the 19-year-old's description on the other side of the tracks. The 19-year-

old was heading toward the crossing, despite the gates starting to come down. Cpl. Jaques managed to cross the tracks just before the gates lowered and quickly exited his vehicle to stop the 19-year-old from moving further toward the oncoming train.

The 19-year-old told Cpl. Jaques that she had been planning to jump in front of the train, expressing feelings of having nothing to live for and being alone. She was distraught and crying uncontrollably. Officer Watkins, who was also on the scene, treated the 19-year-old with great empathy and compassion. Thanks to Officer Watkins's calming presence, the 19-year-old was able to have a conversation with officers and agree to seek the help she needed.

Cpl. Jaques' quick thinking and decisive actions, combined with Officer Watkins's compassionate support, played a crucial role in preventing a potential tragedy. Both Cpl. Jaques and Officer Watkins should be commended for their heroic efforts and for providing the necessary support to begin the 19-year-old's road to recovery.

Corporal Jaques and Officer Watkins were presented with Certificates of Commendation.

b. VEST Member Michael Andree, Sr.

Corporal Peter Ghrist advised: On February 28, 2025, Michael Andree, a member of Griffith V.E.S.T., was on volunteer patrol in the 200 block of S. Broad Street when he became stopped in traffic, waiting for a moving train to clear. While waiting, Mr. Andree saw a red pickup truck drive around the lowered gates and collide with the moving train.

Mr. Andree immediately radioed in the incident and rushed to the scene. The truck was just a few feet from the moving train, and the driver, an elderly man, was attempting to exit the damaged vehicle while the train was still in motion.

Concerned the driver might fall into the path of the train, Mr. Andree went between the truck and the train to assist the driver away from the danger. He then placed the driver into his patrol vehicle to keep him safe while waiting for additional first responders.

At the time, Mr. Andree was unaware of an earlier police call regarding a suicidal individual in a red truck. The driver of the truck involved in the accident was the same person in that call. The driver's attempt to harm himself by crashing into the train was unsuccessful, and Mr. Andree's quick actions may have prevented another attempt on his life, considering the perilous situation.

VEST Member Michael Andree, Sr., was presented with a Certificate of Commendation. Chief Tharp stated Vest Member Andree Sr.'s actions went above and beyond all expectations of a volunteer VEST Member.

3. Griffith Fire Department requests permission to hire the following candidates:

- a. Daimoni Singletary- Station 33
- b. Ruben Espinosa – Station 33
- c. Jeremy Johnson – Station 33
- d. Ryan Rose – Station 31

PSB Member Purgert made a motion to grant permission to the Griffith Fire Department to hire the following candidates:

- a. Daimoni Singletary- Station 33
- b. Ruben Espinosa – Station 33
- c. Jeremy Johnson – Station 33
- d. Ryan Rose – Station 31

PSB Member Vechey seconded the motion.

Motion carried 5 – 0.

4. Griffith Fire Department swearing in of Probationary Firefighter to full status; namely:

a. Noah Angel – Station 31

Deputy Chief Andree, Jr., advised: Tonight, the Griffith Fire Department proudly welcomes Probationary Firefighter Noah Angel as he is officially sworn in during the Safety Board meeting. A lifelong Griffith resident, Noah graduated from Griffith High School before pursuing his passion for firefighting.

Demonstrating commitment to service, Noah successfully completed the District 1 Fire Academy in December 2024, equipping himself with the skills necessary to serve and protect his community. He is currently enrolled in an EMT course to further expand his lifesaving capabilities.

Since joining the department, Noah has been stationed at Central Fire Station, where he has consistently displayed dedication, hard work, and a strong willingness to learn. His efforts have not gone unnoticed, and the department is excited to see his continued growth.

The Griffith Fire Department congratulates Firefighter Noah Angel on this important milestone and looks forward to his future contributions to the team and the community.

PSB Member Katona swore in Firefighter Noah Angel, Station 31, to full status. Chief Schoon presented Fire Firefighter Angel with a Certificate of Promotion and badge.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no questions or comments received from the floor.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.



George Jerome, Chairman



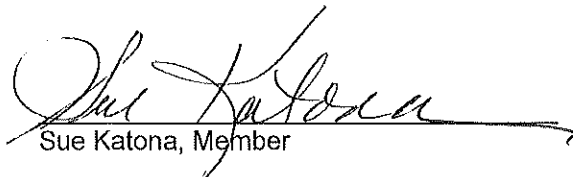
Elizabeth Goral, Vice Chairman



RoAnn Purgert, Secretary



Philip Vechey, Member



Sue Katona, Member

Minutes Prepared By:



Joan Kolodziej, Recording Secretary