

GRIFFITH SAFETY BOARD

November 14, 2013

The Griffith Safety Board was called to order by Chairman Marker at 7:00 p.m.

Those in Attendance

Jim Marker	Griffith Safety Board Chairman
Gary Sutton	Griffith Safety Board Vice-Chairman
Liz Goral	Griffith Safety Board Secretary
RoAnn Purgert	Griffith Safety Board Member
John Volkmann	Griffith Safety Board Member
Glen Gaby	Town Council Liaison
Greg Mance	Police Chief
Roy Schoon	Fire Department

The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance. The following items were discussed:

Approval of October 10, 2013 minutes: Motion by Safety Board member Sutton
2nd by Safety Board member Volkmann
Motion carried 5-0.

Reports: Griffith Police Department

Chief Mance read the monthly report for October.

Over the past 3 years the crime for October is up 5% but over the last 6 months overall total crime is down 24%.

Griffith Fire Department

Chief Schoon read the October monthly report.

Chief Schoon reported that training is about 60 or 70% complete.

Captain Tim Tinsley was presented his fire helmet upon retiring after 18 years of service to the Griffith Fire Department.

VEST

Lt. Gang reported that changes are being finalized but had nothing additional to report at this time.

FOP Post 161

FOP President Tharp had nothing new to report.

New Business

Awards/Recognitions

Award to citizens were as follows:

Jeffrey Dildine – In August of 2013, several locations within the Town of Griffith experienced the theft or attempted theft of air conditioner condenser units. Information was that suspects attempted such a theft at the First United Methodist Church and it was likely suspects would return to complete their criminal act. Understanding police were unable to post an officer the entire night, Jeffrey Dildine, in communication with police, conducted his own surveillance on the night of August 29th. As fate would have it, the suspects returned. Mr. Dildine quickly began taking photographs and immediately alerted officers. It was only through the dedication and vigilance of Mr. Dildine that officers were able to apprehend the suspects who were implicated in numerous thefts of similar nature. Mr. Dildine is commended for his diligence in fighting criminal activity within our community. We are proud to have his invaluable assistance which is so greatly appreciated.

Robert Bubala – In recognition of your selfless contributions to the Griffith Community through the volunteer management of the town's website. It is only through you, your efforts and effective communication with so many entities that the citizens of Griffith remain so well informed about events and occurrences within the town. The service you provide is invaluable and makes such a significant difference in the lives of so many and the operations of the town. Please accept this token of appreciation on behalf of a grateful community that is truly appreciative of your efforts.

Kylee Chenault - On July 19th, 2013, first responders were summoned to 247 N. Cline Ave. after a vehicle lost control and collided with a residence. Multiple emergency units were on scene with serious damage and injuries observed. Over an extended period of time as emergency crews managed the scene, 12 year old Kylee Chenault appeared in support of the crews with water and soft drinks. Her act of kindness and support and willingness to step forward and help in whatever fashion she could, is a testament to her giving nature and willingness to contribute. On behalf of a grateful community, we commend you for your efforts and acts of kindness. It is the simplest of gestures that carry the most meaning.

Keenan Asche – On August 30th, 2013, Keenan Asche observed a suspect causing significant criminal damage to a foreclosed residence and proceed to unlawfully enter the residence. With an active interest in the peace and safety of his neighborhood and community, Mr. Asche exercised quick and forward thinking by taking photographs of the suspect and his activities. Through Mr. Asche's actions, police were able to effectively prosecute the suspect with significant and concrete evidence. Mr. Asche is commended for his actions and willingness to get involved. Mr. Asche is an example of an outstanding citizen and it is only with the assistance of Mr. Asche and those like him that we can continue to fight back against crime and preserve the peace of our community.

Richard Olszewski – On August 12th, 2013, a patron of 7-11 reported losing their wallet. Richard Olszewski is owner of the business and upon being notified of the unfortunate event of one of his customers; he immediately reviewed the surveillance footage for the business. In doing so, Mr. Olszewski determined the patron had dropped the wallet inside the business. He then observed another subject pick up and retain the wallet with an obvious lack of integrity. Mr. Olszewski contacted police with this information which resulted in theft charges being filed against the suspect. This is not the first time Mr. Olszewski has displayed such concern and care for his patrons. Over the past many years, Mr. Olszewski has gone above and beyond to assist police in investigations and other matters. On behalf of a grateful community, we commend Mr. Olszewski for his continued involvement and are proud to have such a business owner as a member of our community.

Jeffery Messinio - On August 30th, 2013, a suspect was observed causing significant criminal damage to a foreclosed residence and proceed to unlawfully enter the residence. Jeffery Messinio was on duty with the Griffith Public Works and overheard the radio transmissions. Mr. Messinio then observed the suspect fleeing down the alley in a vehicle. With an active interest in the peace and safety of the community he serves, he quickly placed his vehicle in such a position as to stall the suspect from his attempt to flee and notified responding officers. It was through Mr. Messinio's actions and willingness to get involved, that allowed police to apprehend and prosecute the suspect. Mr. Messinio is commended for his actions on behalf of a grateful community that is proud to have his service as an employee of the town. He is truly an example for others to follow.

Pedro Jaramillo – was not in attendance.

Promotions of Police Officers

Detective Schoon, an eight year veteran, and Officer Gauler, a 13 year veteran, were both promoted to Corporal.

Awards of Griffith Police Department personnel were as follows:

Ryan Bottiger – On September 15th, officers responded to a report of an armed male standing in an apartment building parking lot who was threatening to commit suicide. The male was armed with a loaded handgun and continuously held it to his own head. The man disregarded any directions given by officers and persisted in his threat to take his own life. Corporal Bottiger continued to obtain a closer position to the man, placing himself in harm's way as he effectively initiated a dialogue with the distraught male. Through patience, compassion and professionalism, Corporal Bottiger was able to calm the man and eventually convince him to place the handgun down and abort his intent to take his life. Corporal Bottiger risked his own life in order to help a fellow human being feeling the pressures of life. Corporal Bottiger is commended for his exemplary actions which no doubt prevented tragedy. We are proud to have such an officer.

Cory McCarter & Albert Tharp – On July 31st, 2013 Patrolman Tharp observed four subjects who appeared underage and intoxicated. Making contact and investigating further, he determined the subjects were indeed impaired, but not as a result of alcohol leading him to believe that dangerous narcotics were involved. Patrolman McCarter responded as well and together, officers discovered and confirmed the presence of various pills in addition to a fifth subject who was located unconscious inside a tent. All five subjects were transported to the hospital and treated, thus preventing an imminent and potentially fatal drug overdose. Patrolman McCarter and Patrolman Tharp are commended for his diligence and dedication to duty in service of our community that likely resulted in the preservation of lives.

Mark Gerdzos – On April 27th, 2013, Indiana State Police contacted a male for whom an ambulance was being requested. Prompt Ambulance and Griffith Police responded in support. As medics attempted to place the male on the gurney, he became very argumentative, agitated and combative, causing Prompt Medics to secure the patient to the gurney for everyone's safety. While officers assisted Prompt with loading the gurney in the back of the ambulance, the male attempted to reach into a fanny pack affixed to his belt. Officer Gerdzos quickly and intuitively intercepted the patient's advancement and immediately conducted a search of the fanny pack in light of the furtive gestures observed. The search yielding a loaded revolver style handgun. The revolver was immediately secured. All involved had little doubt the patient's intentions were none other than to obtain his firearm and cause harm. Officer Gerdzos' quick reaction and intuition likely prevented a lethal and tragic incident from taking place. Officer Gerdzos is commended for his actions and we are proud to stand beside him in service of our community.

Swearing in

David Alan Borgetti #69 was sworn in by Secretary Liz Goral as a Probationary Officer for the Griffith Police Department.

Alternate 911 proposal

Steve Kil, St. John Town Manager, Mike Forbes, St. John Town Council, Cliff Wroe, St. John Dispatcher and Jerry Tippy, Schererville Town Council were in attendance and presented an alternate 911 proposal. They were available after this meeting to answer questions.

Fire Department candidates

A motion by Vice-Chairman Sutton, seconded by Safety Board member Purgert, to accept Fire Department candidates Beau Leimbach, Derrick Hussie, William Werner, Craig Presco, Frank Alvarez, and William VanSlyke. Motion carried 5-0.

Griffith Police Probationary Officer

A motion by Vice Chairman Sutton, seconded by Safety Board member Volkmann, to offer a conditional offer of employment for officer #71. Motion carried 5-0.

Questions/comments from the floor.

Mr. Rich Otto of 149 N Elmer expressed his ongoing concern with vehicles in his neighborhood parking across sidewalks and his belief that the Griffith Police Department were not taking action in this matter even though he had called in complaints and spoken to the Chief of Police over the past five years about this issue. Mr. Otto did not wish to speak to Chief Mance about his concerns as he believed nothing would be done. Chairman Marker informed Mr. Otto that he would call him in reference to his complaint.

Town Councilwomen Schaadt wanted to express her thanks to the Safety Board, Police and Fire Departments for their recognition of outstanding citizens and employees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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