

## **BLOOMINGTON BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

The Bloomington Board of Public Safety held a Regular Session on **Tuesday, October 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.**, in the McCloskey Room, Room 135, City of Bloomington located at 401 N. Morton Street, Bloomington, Indiana.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Board Member Jon Barada called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. Board Members Tim Brinson and Philip Amerson were present in person. Board President Barbara McKinney was not present.

Also in attendance were Fire Chief Roger Kerr, Police Captain Ryan Pedigo, Police Captain Myrick Williams, Assistant City Attorney Christopher Wheeler, and Legal Administrative Assistant Ashley Sparks.

### **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Board Member Tim Brinson made a motion to appoint Board Member Jon Barada as Vice Chair. Board Member Phil Amerson seconded the motion. Board Member Jon Barada expressed an uneasiness in accepting this position. After some discussion, the official vote was passed with a vote of 2-1.

### **CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada certified the executive session held earlier that evening.

### **DECLARATION/REVIEW OF BOARD MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada read the conflict of interest disclosure statement. No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Board Member Phil Amerson made a motion to approve the presented consent agenda, which included payroll and claims from September and October, as well as minutes from the September meeting. Board Member Tim Brinson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

### **CERTIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada certified the executive session held earlier in the afternoon.

### **POLICE DEPARTMENT BUSINESS**

#### **Report on Monthly Statistics, Training and Incident Reports:**

Police Captain Myrick Williams presented the monthly statistics and training. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo interjected to make small clarifications in the community engagement events discussion.

#### **Letters of Appreciation/Commendation:**

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There were no letters of appreciation or commendation to be presented.

General Business:

Police Captain Myrick Williams reported no general business of substance to share.

Purchases: Expenditures/Procurements:

Police Captain Myrick Williams reported that the Department is updating radios and camera systems.

Personnel:

Police Captain Ryan Pedigo spoke on staffing numbers, including 1 resignation effective October 27. A new hiring process has been decidedly postponed until after the salary ordinance has been solidified, which has an anticipated result of an increase in applications due to salary bumps.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked what manner of advertisement results in job applications for the Department. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo indicated that the main and primary source of applications is word of mouth.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked if applicants are from other agencies within Monroe County. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo indicated that these are most likely from adjacent counties.

Board Member Phil Amerson asked how many officers are currently commuting to other counties for employment. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo and Police Captain Myrick Williams indicated an unsure number, but likely not many.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked if we are losing more officers to retirement than we are bringing into the profession. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo and Police Captain Myrick Williams indicated that there is not necessarily a large bump in retirements, but there is a large number of officers leaving the profession, leaving departments racing to build competitive benefits packages.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked if Police Captain Ryan Pedigo is generally the person responsible for receiving hires and offers of employment. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo responded affirmatively and further explained the steps of the hiring process, including that any personnel offers are first approved by Police Chief Mike Diekhoff.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked how much time is spent with applicants prior to a job offer. Police Captain Ryan Pedigo indicated that the background investigators get to know the applicant and their contacts and the psychologist contracted with the Department works with several agencies to get second opinions, conduct extensive research, and provides the Department with heavily detailed reports.

Police Captain Ryan Pedigo indicated one promotion and two conditional offers of employment to be voted on as discussed during the executive session earlier in the evening.

Board Member Tim Brinson made a motion to promote Gerrit Heitink to the rank of Senior Police Officer, effective October 14, 2024. Board Member Phil Amerson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

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Board Member Phil Amerson made a motion to extend a conditional offer of employment to Faheem Bade. Board Member Tim Brinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

Board Member Tim Brinson made a motion to extend a conditional offer of employment to Ethan Eickholtz. Board Member Phil Amerson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 3-0.

### **CIRT/ARV REPORT**

Police Captain Myrick Williams indicated no deployments of the CIRT vehicle.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT BUSINESS**

#### **Report on Monthly Statistics and Training:**

Fire Chief Roger Kerr presented the monthly statistics.

#### **General Business:**

Fire Chief Roger Kerr announced the October 24 hose uncoupling/ribbon cutting ceremony for the new station, followed by an open house on October 26.

Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated a due date for remodel bids of Friday, October 18, 2024.

Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated that the MIH team has already moved into their offices in Showers West.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked how ready Monroe County First Responders would be should a natural disaster attack on the same level as the hurricane damage currently being seen in Florida. Fire Chief Roger Kerr responded that he has no reason to believe that we can't handle it, overwhelming as it may be, and have handled a similar issue in the last few years when Bloomington flooded and several people were rescued.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked what the Fire Department would want, could they have anything. Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated that, along with the increase in pay that is coming, the Department is also fulfilling the second most important wish of employees and is reinstating a rescue company when they get moved into their new facility.

#### **Personnel Issues:**

Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated 2 employees are currently on sick leave and recovering from surgery and 3 employees are on light duty and ready to come back.

#### **Letters of Appreciation and Commendation:**

Fire Chief Roger Kerr presented one letter of appreciation.

#### **Purchases: Expenditures/Procurements:**

Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated a few large expenses due to the design work on the new logistics building and Station 3.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

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There was no old business presented.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Assistant City Attorney Christopher Wheeler spoke on the City of Bloomington Merit System and Board of Public Safety statutory authority, indicating that there has recently been legislation passed which mandates personnel matters of public safety entities be handled through a merit system versus a board unless the entity actively rejects the merit system prior to December 31, 2024. He explained that Police has indicated a desire to reject the merit system, while Fire wishes to keep things with the Board.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked for an explanation of the merit system. Assistant City Attorney Christopher Wheeler explained the purpose of the merit system, stating that it handles all discipline, hiring, promotions, and firing. He further explained that the Board of Public Safety will still exist to oversee purchases and statistics.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked what the tradeoffs are for the merit system versus staying with the Board of Public Safety for all matters. Fire Chief Roger Kerr indicated that the Firefighter's Union likes the merit system because they are able to appoint 2 people to the board and give the Department a voice. Police Captain Myrick Williams indicated that the Police feel that the Board of Public Safety has been effective for their needs and there is no reason to fix something that is not broken.

Board Member Tim Brinson commended the Police Department on their use of the flock cameras. Police Captain indicated that he is very impressed with the information gathered with these cameras and the place they hold in investigatory matters.

Board Member Tim Brinson asked if the City pays for the flock cameras. Police Captain Myrick Williams responded affirmatively, clarifying that it is a lease rather than an ownership.

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada asked if flock cameras impinge on the privacy of citizens. Assistant City Attorney Christopher Wheeler indicated that these cameras are in plain view. Police Captain Myrick Williams clarified that the cameras only record the vehicle type and license plate, making it no different than a radio announcement to be on the lookout for a specific vehicle. Board Vice Chair Jon Barada commented that drones have been useful in other places. Police Captain Myrick Williams pointed out that we are bound by regulations indicating that the cameras must be seen, must be in a public right of way, and be compliant with the Plain View Doctrine.

Board Member Phil Amerson discussed his conversations with the general public, which has acknowledged an underappreciation for the Police and Fire Departments.

Board Member Phil Amerson asked if agencies that are working to deal with the homeless problems place a burden on the Departments by working with the citizens' names rather than assigning them a case number. Police Captain Myrick Williams indicated that the Social Services division and OARS groups are doing a lot of the outreach. Fire Captain Roger Kerr indicated that the MIH program is built upon helping the unhoused and those on the fringe of becoming unhoused if circumstances do not improve. Board Member Phil Amerson commented that California has been having social workers ride with patrol officers, particularly when working with veterans, which has made a great impact. He expressed a desire to help the community without placing excess stress on the Police and Fire Departments.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Board Vice Chair Jon Barada adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Sparks, Recording Secretary  
Board of Public Safety

**The minutes of the September 15, 2024 Board of Public Safety Meeting were approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2024.**

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*Jon Barada*  
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*Tim Brinson*  
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*Philip Amerson*  
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*Barbara McKinney*  
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