

TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

BOARD OF SAFETY MEETING

January 9, 2025

The Board of Safety Meeting was called to order by Chairman Eric Graf at 5:30 p.m., in the Schererville Town Hall Meeting Room, 10 E. Joliet Street, Schererville, IN.

Attendance was taken with the following Board Members present: Eric Graf, George Kouros, David Eenigenburg, and David Jaroszewski. Staff members present: Chief of Police Peter Sormaz, Deputy Chief of Police Steven McNamara, Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Deputy Fire Chief David Meyer, and Recording Secretary Stephanie Bottiger. Also present: Attorney Christian Bartholomew in lieu of Attorney Alfredo Estrada, Town Manager James Gorman, Director of Operations Andrew Hansen, and Town Council liaison Tom Schmitt. Absent: Robert Volkmann.

THEREUPON, Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Jaroszewski made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2024, regular Public Meeting, seconded by Mr. Eenigenburg. Motion carries (4 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence

ITEM A. FD – Thank-you letter from Lake Hills Fire Department

Chief Patterson notified the Board in November, 2024, the Lake Hills Fire Department lost Firefighter Ron Vale Sr., a member of the Lake Hills Fire Department for forty-six years. They sent a thank-you card to the Schererville Fire Department for assistance with the wake and funeral of Mr. Vale.

ITEM B. PD – NONE

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. PD – New Hire Process & Emergency Hire Process

Chief Sormaz updated the Board that the Emergency Hire Process had been extended as of December 20, 2024, in an attempt to seek additional applicants. While the Emergency Hire Process has been extended, the Department has also posted the Traditional Hire Process in the hope of obtaining applicants for the academy. The process for the Traditional Hire is open for sixty days. Once the sixty days are up, the physical agility and written portions will take place working up to the establishment of a certified list.

ITEM B. FD – NONE

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. BOARD - Election of Officers

Motion made by Mr. Eenigenburg to nominate the following members as Officers for the 2025 Board of Safety: Mr. Graf as Chairman, Mr. Kouros as Vice Chairman, and Mr. Jaroszewski as Secretary. Mr. Graf inquired if there were any other nominations for those positions to which there were none. Motion seconded by Mr. Jaroszewski. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM B. FD – Swearing in of New Officers

Chief Patterson requested Clerk-Treasurer Mike Troxell come to the front of the room for the swearing in of the following officers to their new positions:

- Battalion Chief Jon Gettemens to Assistant Chief
- Captain Joe Konicek to Battalion Chief
- Firefighter / Paramedic Ryan Abens to Lieutenant

After the Officers were sworn in to their new positions, Father Mick Kopal came to the front and offered a prayer for the Firefighters in their newly sworn positions.

ITEM C. FD – Approval of Lieutenant Promotional Register for two years

Chief Patterson requested approval of the Board to maintain the Lieutenant Promotional Register for two years, until December 18, 2026. There are five candidates on the list. Motion made by Mr. Eenigenburg, seconded by Mr. Jaroszewski. Motion passes (4 – 0).

ITEM D. PD – Removal of Life Saving Award

Chief Sormaz requested the Life Saving Award be tabled until the March, 2025, meeting, when the Police Department Annual Awards will take place. Motion made by Mr. Jaroszewski, seconded by Mr. Eenigenburg. Motion carries (4 – 0).

ITEM E. PD – Policy Update – Police Reserve Program #22.01

Chief Sormaz recommended the Board approve the policy update to the Police Reserve Program #22.01. He went on to add there were two areas of the policy that were updated. The first was the Reserve Officer must be proficient in the tasks and skillsets before they are promoted to solo patrol. The second is in regards to the number of hours the Reserve Officer must complete before being promoted to solo patrol. Chief Sormaz also advised the Board the policy was reviewed by the Board Attorney who recommended the Department move forward with having the policy approved by the Board. Motion made by Mr. Jaroszewski, seconded by Mr. Kouros. Motion carries (4 – 0).

THEREUPON, Reports

ITEM A. Police Chief

Chief Sormaz notified the Board of the retirement of K9 Juno on December 23, 2024. K9 Juno was with the Department approximately ten years and will also be recognized at the March, 2025, meeting along with his handler, Anthony Buonadonna who has been a handler with the Department for eighteen years.

Chief Sormaz welcomed new Board Member Robert Volkmann. He advised the Board the remaining reports were in the packet.

For the month of December, 2024, the Patrol Division reports were unavailable.

For the month of December, 2024, the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) reports were unavailable.

For the month of December, 2024, Schererville Police Officers attended 137 hours of training.

For the month of December, 2024, the Animal Control Division had 21 calls for service, 0 bite reports and took in 2 animals.

ITEM B. Fire Chief

Chief Patterson advised the Board, that in addition to the reports in the packet, due to the promotions that have taken place, there will be a hiring process that will take place between January 2, and February 7, 2025.

For the month of December, 2024, the Schererville Fire Department performed 10 inspections, responded to 400 incidents of which 335 were EMS related, 31 were Fire related, 31 were Alarms/Investigations, and 3 were Fire Prevention, Inspection and/or training. They also attended 370.75 hours of training.

ITEM C.

Attorney

Attorney Bartholomew reminded the Board that with the passing of the Police and Fire Merit Systems law by the State of Indiana, each Department had the option to opt out of having a Merit Board System. He went on to add that votes were taken on December 20, 2024, by both the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Department opted out of having the Merit Board System, while the Fire Department chose to opt in to the Merit Board System. They will proceed with constituting a Merit Board System for the Fire Department which will consist of five individuals with various requirements as set specified in the statute, which must be put into place by March 1, 2025. Once the members of the Merit Board will then proceed with the process of coming up with a system they want to use to make determinations on hiring, firing, disciplinary actions, et cetera. Attorney Bartholomew went on to add that this is a fairly new process which will involve quite a bit of leg work. He further stated that he and Attorney Alfredo Estrada would be working with Attorney Austgen to get everything in place by the appropriate time frame. Attorney Bartholomew stated he was looking forward to these events coming together successfully.

THEREUPON, Board Members

Mr. Jaroszewski advised Chairman Graf that today was National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day and he thanked the men and women of the Police Department for their service.

Mr. Kouros congratulated and thanked all those that were promoted today. He encouraged them to continue with the great work they were doing.

THEREUPON, Business from the Floor

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Jaroszewski made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Eenigenburg. Motion carries (4 – 0). The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

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SCHERERVILLE  
SAFETY  
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BOARD OF  
CHAIRMAN

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GEORGE KOUROS  
SCHERERVILLE BOARD OF  
SAFETY VICE CHAIRMAN  
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