

A Special Village Board meeting was held at the Marshall Buehler Center and also set up as a Zoom meeting and a conference call meeting according to Wisconsin Attorney General Release Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Open Meetings. The number to call in: 715-423-6698; 5-digit conference ID: 02067.

The agenda for this Special Board meeting was posted on the Municipal Building door, the entrance of the Police Department/Marshall Buehler Center, and at Nekoosa Port Edwards State Bank in Port Edwards, as well as on the Village website.

The Special Board meeting was called to order by President Zurfluh at 7:05 p.m.

Present: President Zurfluh, Trustees Bingham, Duncan, Grunden, Mancl (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Mitchell & Saylor

Absent: None

Also Present: S. Drew, R. Bossert & D. Tremmel

Citizens: Pat Tyler, Leo Thomasgard, Scott Stewart & Gary Blum

Public Comment: Pat Tyler stated she was not impressed with the consideration of whether the Police and Fire Commission is needed. This is a new Commission that follows the State guidelines. She feels it is important to do this separately and that the Village Administrator should not have control of everyone hired or fired.

Leo Thomasgard stated that he has been the secretary of the Commission since its inception, and the greatest reason for having a Police and Fire Commission in a smaller community is the fact that we are talking about it. The purpose is to remove the politics. The current staff and Board may be able to handle the duties but there will be turnover of the Board members and staff. The money the Village spends on the Commission is very minimal. He stated that he does not believe the function of the Police and Fire Commission is understood.

Scott Stewart stated that the purpose of the Police and Fire Commission is to hire, fire, promote and discipline. The members are non-political, and most of the members are subject matter experts. When the Commission was created, the Village had a police department in crisis. The Commission addressed rules and procedures. There is no state mandate requiring the Village to have a Police and Fire Commission. If the Village votes to dissolve, he thinks the community will want to know why. He also pointed out that the Commission is very minimal expense to the Village.

Gary Blum stated that the Police and Fire Commission is important to him because in 1991 he worked with legislators to allow small communities to have Police and Fire Commissions. In 1993 legislature was passed to allow Class 4 municipalities to form a Police and Fire Commission. He also stated that it keeps politics out of it.

President's Report: None

Motion (Duncan/Bingham) to move Agenda Item 6(a) to beginning. Motion carried. All ayes.

Motion (Zurfluh/Mitchell) to approve a Temporary Class "B" License for the Port Edwards Firefighters Athletic Association for one day only, July 27, 2021 (Rain date – July 28, 2021). Motion carried. All ayes.

Discussion/Action on relevancy and need for the Village Police and Fire Commission. Trustee Bingham explained why he requested the discussion on relevancy and need for the Village Police and Fire Commission. It is nothing personal against the members; he is just looking to eliminate a level of government. He feels the Administrator is an effective leader who can hire and oversee the fire and police departments.

There was discussion amongst the Board members stating advantages and disadvantages of the Village having a Police and Fire Commission.

Motion (Zurfluh/Saylor) to disband the Police and Fire Commission effective April 10, 2022. Motion failed (2-4). Roll call vote: Bingham – aye; Duncan – no; Grunden – no; Mancl – no; Mitchell – no; Saylor – aye; Zurfluh (abstain).

Discussion/Action on Village 2022 Budget and Trustee Guidance. President Zurfluh stated that this is on the agenda to offer the trustees an opportunity to express their feelings about the budget and how they see it going. Administrator Bossert presented a calendar of committee meetings and dates at which the budget will be discussed and processed. The question came up that if a trustee attended a committee meeting of which they were not a member, would they be able to speak at that meeting regarding the budget. It was determined that it would be the decision of the Committee Chair.

Discussion/Action update on the Volunteer Fire Chief Hiring Process. Since the Board voted to keep the Police and Fire Commission, Administrator Bossert presented the process for hiring the Volunteer Fire Chief with the Police and Fire Commission intact. The Fire Department will present to Administrator Bossert packets for the two candidates. The Administrator will conduct interviews and present the Police and Fire Commission with the packets, along with his recommendation as well as the recommendation of the Fire Chief. The Police and Fire Commission will review the information, conduct interviews and make an appointment. The Village Board will be informed of the appointment made by the Police and Fire Commission.

President Zurfluh stated that the next regular Board meeting has been moved to Tuesday, August 17, 2021 because a quorum was in doubt and Administrator Bossert would not have been able to attend on August 10th.

Meeting adjourned at **6:12** p.m.

Diane M. Tremmel, Village Clerk-Treasurer