

**Village of Waterman
Public Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
Waterman Village Hall
215 W. Adams St.
Waterman, IL 60556
Friday, June 30, 2023 at 4:00pm**

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 4:00PM

Roll Call: Trustee Radtke, Trustee Johanningsmeier, Trustee Sedlacek, Special Guests Village Manager Nykaza, Village Clerk Pool, Police Chief Swanson

New Business:

Trustee Radtke explained, as a point of order, the Board of Trustees is responsible for municipal governance and constituency concerns matter to them. She explained the Board of Trustees is not in the business of policing, but will intervene when the police are negatively impacting the village as a whole, which is why we are here tonight. The committee members have heard enough and seen enough to have concern and called the meeting to hear directly from community members. She further explained the Public Safety Committee is a subcommittee of the Village Board of Trustees, and will not make any decisions tonight. The Committee will make recommendations to the Village Board. The next meeting of the Village Board of Trustees is Tuesday, July 11, 6:30PM. The committee is also required to discuss all personnel matters in closed session.

Discussed police coverage. Discussed Chief Swanson picking up extra shifts. Does not return coverage back to fulltime, but has improved at key times throughout the week.

Discussed public perception of Waterman Police Department (WPD). Trustee Radtke explained concerns are being raised by community members over the WPD issuing lots of citations. Committee members have approached several trustees with concerns, and negative comments and concerns were observed on social media. The concern is about the overall perception of the WPD being too aggressive, heading in the wrong direction, and it having a negative impact on the reputation of the Village overall. The sentiment is that people now won't come to Waterman to visit or spend money due to the reputation of the police. Will welcome public comment on this matter.

Discussed search for part time officers. Chief explained how the Board raised the hourly rate and posted the part time position. Only had one viable candidate apply and there were some concerns about not completing training. Chief suggested we bring on a promising auxiliary officer and train to become a part time officer. Trustee Radtke expressed the need to build a deeper bench in this area. The WPD needs to have options when providing coverage and should not rely solely on one part time officer. Trustee Sedlacek asked a follow-up question regarding the specifics of the pay increases already approved by the board.

Public Comment:

First community member discussed golf cart permitting process. Citizen would like to see the process for renewing a golf cart permit be simplified. Should not require an inspection for a permit renewal. Would like to see the process streamlined. Committee will review and discuss at the next meeting.

Second community member recommended increasing the pay for officers to attract more viable candidates.

Third community member explained the tickets people are receiving are over “stupid stuff,” like tinted windows and not stopping at a stop sign for long enough. Also suggested the Village needs to issue the tickets directly and receive all the money, instead of giving the money to the county. Chief said he is already working on that.

Fourth community member explained her experience in having to go to court, which was rescheduled, and then the officer was sitting one house down from hers. Made her feel uncomfortable. She has been pulled over once and her mom has been pulled over twice. Thinks the officer’s behavior is excessive. Sees the comments on Facebook and thinks it’s just too much.

Fifth community member addressed the concerns on Duffy Road. Lots of individuals are getting speeding tickets from one officer where speed is reduced from 55MPH to 25 MPH. Says there is a lot of gray area in enforcement. People are getting out of those tickets. This community member is also the road commissioner for the township and took the liberty of putting up a speed reduction sign. Still thinks it is a gray area that the village needs to address. Was motivated to do something when his granddaughter got a ticket. As a lifelong resident of the Village, is disappointed to see the riff within the village. Expressed concern over how much is happening in this world, this type of behavior doesn’t need to be in our small town. Also asked for follow up on road and bridge spending. Village will be sure to follow up with township commission regarding the road and bridge fund.

Sixth community member explained how his mother-in-law has been pulled over for tinted windows and her license plate cover. Explained how she bought the car exactly in this condition from a dealer in the State of Illinois. Doesn’t understand how it is illegal. Believes there is a negative public perception of the WPD right now because of this behavior.

Seventh community member explained an experience with a part time officer late one evening that he felt was very unprofessional and disruptive to his family. Explained this officer has a lot of negative energy and should not be working in our community. Stated his neighbors feels the same way, but didn’t tell their stories.

Sixth community member asked about the number of officers and why we want to hire when it seems the village is over-policed. Trustee Radtke explained why we need to deepen the bench, to give the WPD alternatives in coverage. Right now we rely on one part time officer almost exclusively.

Eighth community member said previously the WPD tried to address the speed sign issue on Duffy Rd but the Village board wouldn’t financially support the changes. Also explained the WPD has had issues with officers in the past. He asked the committee to give the Chief time to address these issues.

Trustee Radtke thanked everyone for their time. Acknowledged it takes courage to come and speak up. The committee appreciates their time and feedback. One community member thanked the committee for seeing and hearing their concerns and calling the meeting.

Closed Session – Personnel Matters:

Entered into executive sessions under subsection numbers 11 of section 2 (c) of the open meetings act to discuss discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1). Moved by Trustee Johanningsmeier and second by Trustee Sedlacek. Pass 3-0. Trustee Johanningsmeier moved to exit executive session. Trustee Sedlacek second. Pass 3-0.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 5:22PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Radtke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Submitted by:
Dr. Sarah Radtke, Village Trustee