

Village of Peoria Heights
Special Board Meeting
January 23, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Beth Khazzam, Jeff Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Trustees Sherryl Carter and Diane Mariscal were absent. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment. Hearing no public comment, he closed the meeting to public comment and moved on to new business.

Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to enter executive session under 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3) to discuss personnel and the selection of a person to fill public office. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The Board voted 4-0 to enter executive session at 11:02 am.

The Board of Trustee returned to open session at 11:40 am. Mayor Phelan asked if there was any additional business. Trustee Wisenburg noted he wanted to have a policy discussion regarding the Peoria Heights Fire Department. Trustee Wisenburg first wanted to determine a timeline for the PHFD to recruit members. Chief Sutton noted that he had had some conversations, but nothing was determined. He suggested 3 months to determine if the recruitment program could work and mentioned that was based on information provided by Fire Chief Walters previously. Trustee DeVore noted the conversations regarding recruitment had been ongoing for approximately 2 years. Chief Sutton stated he would provide administrative reports on the PHFD, but the Board must make decisions regarding appropriate timelines and what constituted a success. Chief Sutton noted he had recommended contracting services with the City of Peoria, but that he thinks the proposed hybrid model of paid and volunteer firefighters could provide a win-win that would allow the Board to move forward and evaluate the situation. Trustee DeVore noted the PHFD and the Peoria Heights Fire Association were separate entities. She asked Fire Chief Walters if they had separate funds. Fire Chief Walters stated that they did. Trustee DeVore asked if there was a significant amount available to the Peoria Heights Fire Association, and Fire Chief Walters stated there wasn't. Trustee DeVore asked if the PHFA would be willing to help fund salary costs. Trustee DeVore noted she might agree with a hybrid model if there was a plan for a nonbinding referendum question to be placed on the ballot. She stated she wants to ask the citizens if they're willing to pay taxes to fund a fire department. She expressed that the PHFD needs to attend Board meetings and become more involved in the community. She recommended creating a series of goals for the PHFD. Attorney Walton noted that a public survey might be more useful to the Board of Trustees since the local election had no contested races and would likely have a low voter turnout. Trustee Wisenburg asked if the salary for a full-time Fire Chief would be included in the next budget. Chief Sutton noted budget decisions were up to the Board of Trustees. Trustee DeVore stated if the Board could agree to the hybrid firefighter model it would allow the Village to move forward and start planning in order to determine funding options. Trustee Wisenburg asked Attorney Walton to look into the process of placing a referendum question on the ballot.

Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to reenter executive session under 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(3) to discuss personnel and the selection of a person to fill public office. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. The Board voted to enter executive session 4-0. The Board went into closed session at 12:10 pm.

The Board reconvened in regular session at 12:19 pm.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. The Board voted 4-0 to adjourn at 12:20 pm.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk