



# TOWN OF GRIFFITH PUBLIC SAFETY BOARD

111 N. Broad Street, Griffith, IN 46319

## Meeting Minutes August 1, 2024

The Griffith Safety Board was called to order by Vice Chairman Vechev at 6:33 P.M. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Those in Attendance

George Jerome	Griffith Safety Board Chairman – <b>Absent</b>
Philip Vechev	Griffith Safety Board Vice Chairman
RoAnn Purgert	Griffith Safety Board Secretary
Elizabeth Goral	Griffith Safety Board Member
Sue Katona	Griffith Safety Board Member
Rick Ryfa	Town Council Police Department Liaison
Melissa Robbins	Town Council Fire Department Liaison – <b>Absent</b>
Greg Mance	Chief, Griffith Police Department
Roy Schoon	Chief, Griffith Fire Department
Mike Andree	Deputy Chief, Griffith Fire Department
James Sibley	Commander, Griffith Police Department
Curt Burrow	Commander, Griffith Police Department
Christian Bartholomew	Legal Counsel, Burke Costanza & Carberry

The following items were discussed:

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. June 6, 2024 PSB Meeting Minutes
2. July 18, 2024 PSB Special Regular Meeting Minutes

PSB Member Katona made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2024 Regular Meeting and the July 18, 2024 Special Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Board Meeting as presented. PSB Member Purgert seconded the motion.  
Motion carried 4 – 0.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Announcements made at tonight's meeting.

### **COMMUNICATIONS/REPORTS**

1. **Griffith Police Department**

Chief Mance read the monthly report for June 2024.

2. **Griffith Fire Department**

Fire Chief Schoon read the monthly report for June 2024.

3. **Griffith F.O.P. Lodge #161**

There was no representative present tonight from Griffith F.O.P. Lodge #161.

4. **VEST**

Corporal P. Ghrist read the monthly VEST report for July, 2024. Total hours worked by VEST Members for July 2024 were 871.25. The top Volunteer for July is Tom Gindl with 283.5 hours. Honorable Mentions for hours worked are Mike Andree (265.5 hours), Ruth Gindl (78.5 hours), Robert Bubala (62.25 hours), and Fermin Lopez (61 hours). The total number of hours worked year-to-date by VEST members is 5,626 hours. VEST currently has 13 members, and there are 2 new applications. VEST members helped out at Central Market and the Independence Day Parade.

5. **Town Council Liaison**

Councilman Ryfa advised there was nothing to report tonight.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

There were no matters of "Old Business."

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Approval and Adoption of Griffith Police Department's:

- a. Policy 203 Training
- b. Policy 404 Northwest Regional SWAT
- c. Policy 1033 Wellness Program
- d. Policy 1027 Badges, Patches and Identification
- e. Policy 1011 Safety Belts
- f. Policy 705 Personal Protective Equipment
- g. Policy 703 Vehicle Use
- h. Policy 1012 Body Armor
- i. Policy 1015 Commendations and Awards
- j. Policy 1023 Personal Appearance Standards
- k. Policy 1024 Uniforms and Civilian Attire

PSB Vice Chairman Vechey made a motion to approve and adopt the Griffith Police Department's Policies a. through k. listed above (Policy Numbers 203, 404, 1033, 1027, 1011, 705, 703, 1012, 1015, 1023, and 1024) as presented.

PSB Member Katona seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

2. Griffith Police Department's Administration of the Oath of Office to Probationary Officer Raleigh D. Redinger PE #88

Chief Mance began with an introduction of Raleigh D. Redinger as follows:

"We gather here today to welcome and honor Raleigh Redinger as he takes his oath of office. Raleigh's journey to this moment is a testament to his dedication, service, and commitment to his community and our country.

Raleigh Redinger is a proud graduate of Kankakee Valley High School in Wheatfield. After completing his education, he answered the call to serve our nation by joining the United States Marine Corps. From 2019 to 2023, Raleigh served with distinction, earning the rank of Lance Corporal. As an infantry rifleman, his bravery and skill were evident in his service.

Raleigh's military career is marked by numerous accolades. He was awarded the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with one star, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and the Marksman Rifle Qualification Badge. His participation in Operation Inherent Resolve in 2021 stands as a further testament to his valor and dedication.

Following his honorable discharge, Raleigh continued his service to the community by working at the Lake County Emergency Dispatch Center. His commitment to public service remains unwavering, and it is with great pride that we welcome him to this new chapter.

Please join me in welcoming Raleigh Redinger as he takes his oath of office. We are grateful for his service and look forward to his continued contributions to our community. Congratulations, Raleigh!"

PSB Member Goral swore in Officer Redinger.

3. Griffith Police Department recognizes the following officers:

- a. Officer Keith Hojnicky
- b. Detective Robert Carney

Commander J. Sibley advised the following:

"Officer Hojnicky conducted a traffic stop for a minor infraction. During the stop, Officer Hojnicky identified a Source of Information (SOI) who provided valuable information regarding drug suppliers and sales in a neighboring community. The information corroborated using various law enforcement tools, and this information was passed on to the proper agency.

Additionally, a Cooperating Individual (CI) also provided crucial information about an individual involved in selling narcotics in another nearby community.

Det Carney contacted the perspective narcotic units, with whom he had previously worked on drug cases in Griffith and provided the necessary information to establish contact with the CI, as well as the target's information that Officer Hojnicky independently developed. This information resulted in charges against two subjects for dealing narcotics. One of them is a person of interest in at least one shooting incident in Illinois, which tragically resulted in the murder of an innocent bystander.

Officer Hojnicky's diligent work during and beyond the traffic stop exemplifies his commitment to public safety and contribution to the Griffith Police Department's efforts in combating drug-related crimes not only in Griffith but also in neighboring communities. This case highlights how even a minor traffic infraction can lead to the uncovering of significant criminal activities.

Det Carney's commitment to assisting fellow officers and his networking with neighboring police departments allowed in the passing of the information in a timely manner which ultimately led to dangerous individuals being criminally charged and keeping them from harming others.

Officer Hojnicky and Det Carney have used their collective experience, training and resources to the fullest extent to serve the community with professionalism and dedication.

Officer Hojnicky conducted a traffic stop which led to information about narcotic sales in the area. Officer Hojnicky recognized the importance of the information and passed it on for the furtherance of investigating which led to charges being filed on two subjects, one of which was implicated in a shooting where an innocent bystander was killed. Officer Hojnicky's dedication and professionalism is attributed to this outcome.

Detective Carney was given information regarding the sales of narcotics and was able to use his networking to get the information to the proper investigating agency. This led to charges being filed on two subjects, one of which was implicated in a shooting where an innocent bystander was killed. Detective Carney's dedication and professionalism is attributed to this outcome.

Commander Sibley presented Officer Keith Hojnicky with a Certificate of Commendation. Detective Carney was unable to attend tonight's presentation due to a prior commitment.

c. Officer Taylor Watkins

Commander C. Burrow advised the following:

"On June 29<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 9:30 p.m., officers responded to a disturbance in the 900 block of Arbogast. Sgt. K. Strbjak arrived and immediately learned it was a horrible firework accident. A large mortar had exploded sending chunks of concrete hurling hundreds of feet into a large crowd, several houses, and numerous vehicles. The scene was quickly recognized as a mass casualty situation having multiple injuries of differing magnitudes. He immediately called for back-up and several ambulances. Sgt. Strbjak's entire crew responded, in addition to Griffith Fire units, officers working Central Market, and officers from surrounding communities.

All first responders at the scene did an excellent job; however, after reviewing body-worn camera footage, it was evident that Officer Taylor Watkins should receive formal commendation. She utilized her prior EMT knowledge and immediately began triaging and providing first aid to five (5) different wounded patients and confidently directed other first responders and frantic party-goers. Officer Watkins located a child with a critical, open, chest wound. Her immediate assistance helped stop further bleeding and enabled arriving ambulance crews to quickly evaluate the patient and realize the child's dire medical status. Officer Watkins then drove the ambulance to allow both medics the ability to simultaneously tend to the child in the back of the rig. The juvenile was transported to Munter Community Hospital then airlifted to Comers Children's Hospital. The child sustained serious injuries but is recovering and doing well."

Commander Burrow presented Officer Taylor Watkins with a Certificate of Commendation.

4. Griffith Fire Department swearing-in of two (2) Probationary Firefighters to Full Time Status; namely:

a. Brianna Carter – Station 31

Deputy Chief Andree advised the following:

"Firefighter Brianna Carter has been serving our department since August of 2023. She recently graduated from the Fire Academy in June. During her time, she has shown great determination and dedication within the department. She has obtained her EMT and is currently enrolled in driver operator training. We are proud to have her as part of our team."

PSB Katona swore in Firefighter Brianna Carter. Chief Schoon presented Firefighter Carter with her Certificate of Promotion recognizing her as a full and active member of the Griffith Fire Department.

- b. Troy Matthis – Station 31  
Deputy Chief Andree advised the following:

"Troy has been serving our community since August 2023. He completed our department's second ERS course in the Fall and graduated from the Fire Academy in June. In his time, he's proven to be a hard worker and is always eager to improve his skills and better himself to help strengthen our department. He is also currently enrolled in Driver operator training."

PSB Katona swore in Firefighter Troy Matthis. Chief Schoon presented Firefighter Matthis with his Certificate of Promotion recognizing him as a full and active member of the Griffith Fire Department.

#### QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

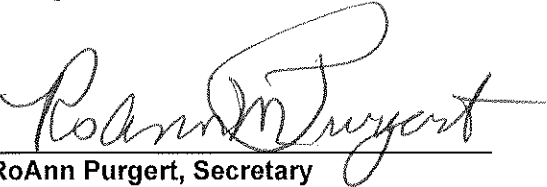
There were no questions or comments received from the floor.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

  
George Jerome, Chairman

Philip Vechey, Vice Chairman

  
RoAnn Purgert, Secretary

  
Elizabeth Goral, Member

  
Sue Katona, Member

Minutes Prepared By:

  
Joan Kolodziej, Recording Secretary