

I. REGULAR MEETING

June 21, 2023

The Board of Public Safety met in the Regular Meeting at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, with Board President Daniel Jones, and Board Members Darryl Heller, Lee Ross (absent), Al Kirsits and Pamela Claeys present. Also present were Assistant Police Chief Dan Skibins, Assistant Fire Chief Todd Skwarcan, and Attorneys Danielle Campbell Weiss, Kylie Connell, Adam Taylor, and Board Clerk Theresa Heffner. The meeting was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Council Chambers Room, 227 W. Jefferson Blvd., South Bend, Indiana and virtually via Microsoft Teams at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/2023BPSHybrid>

Attorney Weiss asked that everyone mute their microphone when not speaking and reminded attendees that comments from the public should be saved for the Privilege of the Floor portion of the meeting. Attorney Weiss then read through the agenda to note any additions or corrections.

A. ROLL CALL OF MEMEBERS

Board President Dan Jones welcomed the public, called roll, and confirmed the presence of the Board Members.

B. APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Upon a motion by Darryl Heller, seconded by Pam Claeys, and carried by a roll call, the Board approved the Minutes of the May 17, 2023 regular meeting.

C. POLICE DEPARTMENT1. APPROVE HIRING OF PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICERS

Evan Eckelbarger

Kole Miller

Chief Ruszkowski submitted a Letter of Recommendation for the hiring of the Probationary Police Officers listed above, effective June 21, 2023. Assistant Police Chief Dan Skibins stated the following individuals have met the requirements of the application process of the South Bend Police Department.

Upon a motion by Al Kirsits, seconded by Darryl Heller, and followed by a roll call, the Board approved the hiring of the above Probationary Police Officers.

2. SWEARING IN OF PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICERS

Assistant Police Chief Dan Skibins gave a brief biography of the Officers highlighting their talents, achievements, education, and interests. City Clerk Dawn Jones administered the oath which was then followed by the badge pinning.

3. APPROVE PROMOTION TO SERGEANT IN SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT - BRANDON SCHMIDT

Chief Ruszkowski submitted a Letter of recommendation for Patrolman Brandon Schmidt to be promoted to Sergeant in Special Assignment, with a probationary period of one (1) year. Assistant Chief Skibins stated Officer Schmidt became a sworn member of the SBPD on December 6, 2013, and the promotion effective date of June 21, 2023. Chief Skibins stated Officer Schmidt will participate in the SBPD Supervisor Training and Orientation (STO) program, which is designed to develop leadership-starting within, as a critical first line supervisor.

Upon a motion by Al Kirsits, seconded by Darryl Heller, and followed by a roll call, the Board approved the promotion of Sergeant in Special Assignment.

4. APPROVE PROMOTIONS TO PATROLMAN 1<sup>ST</sup> CLASS

Shanna Gilmer

Andrew Witt

Kadeen Hughes

Chief Ruszkowski submitted Letters of recommendations for the above officers to be promoted to Patrolman 1<sup>st</sup> Class. Chief stated the above officers have successfully met the requirements outlined in the working agreement to become Patrolman 1<sup>st</sup> Class with the SBPD. Chief Skibins noted that Officer Gilmer's effective date was June 3, 2023, Officer Witt's effective date is June 27, 2023, and Officer Hughes's effective date is June 30, 2023.

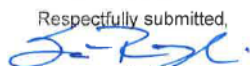
Upon a motion by Pam Claeys, seconded by Al Kirsits, and followed by a roll call, the Board approved the promotions to Patrolman 1<sup>st</sup> Class.

5. FILE MONTHLY STATISTICAL ANYALYSIS REPORT MAY 2023

Assistant Chief Dan Skibins submitted the monthly statistical analysis report for May 2023.

The MAY 2023 analysis is as follows:

<u>PART 1 OFFENSES</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>					
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
HOMICIDE	3	2	-1	9	10	1
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE*	1	0	-1	2	1	-1
RAPE	8	6	-2	31	29	-2
ROBBERY	18	20	2	96	114	18
AGGRAVATED ASSLT	118	102	-16	477	464	-13
BURGLARY RES	38	32	-6	171	180	9
BURGLARY NON RES	29	21	-8	97	79	-18
LARCENY	202	195	-7	869	943	74
MOTOR VEH THEFT	49	38	-11	179	207	28
ARSONS	2	1	-1	6	7	1
GRAND TOTAL	467	417	-50	1935	2033	98

Respectfully submitted,  
  
 Scott Ruskowski  
 Chief of Police

SR/jji

Month: **MAY 2023**

<u>PART 1 OFFENSES</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
HOMICIDE	9	10	11%
JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE*	2	1	-50%
RAPE	31	29	-6%
ROBBERY	96	114	19%
AGGRAVATED ASSLT	477	464	-3%
BURGLARY RES.	171	180	5%
BURGLARY NON RES.	97	79	-19%
LARCENY	869	943	9%
MOTOR VEH THEFT	179	207	16%
ARSONS	6	7	17%
GRAND TOTAL	1935	2033	5%

**5% CHANGE IN PART 1 CRIMES THROUGH MAY 2023** 

Assistant Chief Skibins noted that in 2023 through May there was a reduction of fifty (50) incidents in Part One Offenses compared to last year at the same time, however, we are slightly above year-to-date 2023 Part One Offenses compared to 2022 but that trend is going downward. Assistant Chief Skibins informed the Board that aggravated assaults are at minus three percent (-3%) and those consist of mostly gun-related crimes. He clarified that individuals criminally assaulted by shooting, shot at and not struck, houses struck, vehicles struck are all gun-related offenses that mostly fall into the aggravated assault category and when comparing 2022 and 2023, we have shown a reduction thus far. Assistant Chief Skibins explained that one of the spikes we are seeing is robberies to businesses, but that seems to be trending downward although we are up nineteen percent (19%).

Pam Claeys noticed an increase in vehicle thefts and asked if that was due to the rash of Kia thefts. Assistant Chief Skibins answered yes, and explained that it extended into 2023 from October of 2022, but it was identified over social media an easy way to boost those Kia model vehicles that continued into January and February and that’s why we have seen an increase this year compared to last year. Assistant Chief Skibins said they were hopefully getting that issue under control as well with the use of our flock cameras as well as our real-time crime center and then making a few arrests.

Assistant Chief Skibins added that he met with the Detective Bureau last month when they

have their weekly meetings on some of the spikes in crime and what we are doing to reduce them and there is no definitive reason why we saw a spike in robberies, notably commercial robberies in businesses.

Pam Claeys asked if these were smaller businesses or larger businesses that were affected. Assistant Chief Skibins answered they were small retail businesses like gas stations, convenience stores, and things of that nature.

#### D. FIRE DEPARTMENT

##### 1. APPROVE APPLICATION AND DECLARATION FOR RETIREMENT - DAVID SCOTT

Assistant Chief Todd Skwarcan submitted a Letter of Application and Declaration for Retirement for Firefighter David Scott, Badge No. 406. Chief stated Firefighter Scott was affectionately known as “Sunshine”, for his upbeat personality and having a sunny disposition, and that most of his years on the department was as a Lead Medic. Chief noted that Firefighter Scott received many accolades in his career, but one of his highlights was being the only SB Firefighter to have won the mayor’s prestigious employee recognition award. Assistant Chief Skwarcan stated Firefighter Scott was appointed to the SBFD on October 4, 1995 and his effective date of retirement was June 3, 2023. Assistant Chief Skwarcan asked the Board to join them in appreciation and gratitude for his commitment and distinguished service to the SBFD and the citizens of the City of South Bend and wished him many years of good health and happiness on his retirement.

Upon a motion by Darryl Heller, seconded by Pam Claeys, and followed by a roll call, the Application and Declaration for Retirement was approved.

##### 2. APPROVE LEXIPOL POLICIES

- 400 – Fire Inspections
- 401 – Fire Investigations
- 402 – Code Enforcement
- 403 – Community Fire Station Tour Programs
- 405 – Hazardous Materials Disclosures
- 406 – Maximum Occupancy – Overcrowding
- 407 – Youth Firesetter Referrals
- 408 – Fire Watch Services
- 409 – Quality Assurance for Enforcement and Inspection Program

Attorney Adam Taylor submitted the above Lexipol Polices for approval, and reminded the Board Members and the public that the above polices were submitted to the Board at the May 2023 Board of Public Safety Meeting. He noted that policy 404 was removed due to redundancy.

Pam Claeys asked how often Fire Watch Services are needed and if there is a certain scenario that triggers that need.

Assistant Chief Skwarcan responded that he would speak on that for Fire Marshall Ellis. He stated he did not know the statistics on how often it is implemented, but said it was infrequent. He explained there are instances where business owners are not as diligent in obtaining, updating, and maintaining their systems, and when the systems go offline, that is when we institute the Fire Watch policy. Assistant Chief Skwarcan further explained that inhabited structures that have a life safety risk, we will encourage them to do that. He noted our local ordinance and state code are weak on enforcement before Fire Watch is needed. He added that in a lot of these cases, the system might be down that is their fire suppression and monitoring system, and it is difficult to know that information before it happens, and it's difficult to encourage them to fix it. Lastly, he reiterated that it is infrequent that we institute Fire Watch, but we have to have a procedure to do it when we need it.

Pam Claeys asked about specially commissioned fire investigators and if they can exercise police powers.

Assistant Chief Skwarcan advised that they exercise investigatory powers and they are

firearm certified through a collaboration with the Police Department. They do not have arrest powers or other police powers. Oftentimes fire investigators are at the scene alone, although we go out of our way to ensure they are not, but they can be there alone or in very small groups. Sometimes these are suspected crime scenes depending on the investigation and nature of the fire, so for their protection, not in an offensive capacity but in a defensive capacity when they are on scenes.

Upon a motion by Pam Claeys, seconded by Al Kirsits, and followed by a roll call the proposed changes for the Lexipol Polices were approved.

3. RECEIVE LEXIPOL POLICIES

- 320 – Public Interference with Fire Dept. Activity
- 321 – Carbon Monoxide Responses
- 322 – Natural Gas Emergencies
- 500 – Electronic Health Care Record
- 501 – Patient Refusal of Pre-Hospital Care
- 502 – Advance Health Care Directives
- 503 – Latex Sensitivity
- 504 – Controlled Substance Accountability
- 505 – Non-Department Personnel on Emergency Vehicles

Pam Claeys asked about online medical control. Assistant Chief Skwrcan advised that the fire department medical personnel are also managed through the Saint Joe County area EMS Commission and the hospital. When ambulance crews are in route to the hospital, they are in communication with the hospital beforehand and there are certain skills and criteria that we need to ask permission to do before we do them. So, it is whatever physician is in the emergency department that we are transporting to at that time.

Assistant Chief Skwrcan also shared a story of how they have secured the pain medications on the ambulances and noted the checks and balances that have been put into place to ensure the pain medications are much more secure and accounted for by every EMS firefighter.

Attorney Adam Taylor submitted the above Lexipol Policies for review by the Board and to be considered for approval at the next Board Meeting. Attorney Taylor did a summary of each item above.

4. FILE MONTHLY STATISTICAL ANALYSIS REPORT FOR MAY 2023

Chief Carl Buchanon submitted the monthly statistical analysis report for May 2023.

MAY 2022	MAY 2023
STRUCTURE FIRES Property Damage--Buildings & Contents (Estimates)	
\$163,980	\$556,500
INSPECTION DIVISON	
278 Inspections 144 Re-Inspections	151 Inspections Re-Inspections
INVESTIGATION DIVISON	
5 Investigations	16 Investigations
1 Incendiary 2 Accidental 0 Natural 2 Undetermined	4 Incendiary 4 Accidental 0 Natural 8 Undetermined

Assistant Chief Skwrcan noted that it has been a busy fire season for the SBFD, so the report reflects an increase in investigations as fires have increased which has also led to an increase in property damage. Assistant Chief Skwrcan noted that it the final page of the packet we are wrapping up our Indiana River Rescue School. He explained that there were five (5)

classes this year and over 200 firefighters from all over the country have come through that program and this week they can be seen at the International Water Rescue Professionals Association conferences that are ongoing right now. The main reason the conference is held in South Bend is because of our access to the unique properties of the East Race and the river. There are other places in the county where you can get this training, but none of them can you walk out of your hotel and access class three (3) rapids. Chief Kirsits is one of the founding members and he could probably speak more authoritatively on this, but it has been a long running program and every rescue school has been a long running program in South Bend.

F. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Attorney Weiss reminded the public to use the hand-raising function of Microsoft Teams to indicate their desire to speak during Privilege of the Floor. She reminded attendees that they would be allotted three (3) minutes to speak.

**Marla Godette of 55705 Sichuan Drive, Osceola, IN 46561** asked to speak to thank the South Bend Police Department for their work in de-escalating active suicide standoffs. On June 19, 2023 she noted that she and her husband were in East Lansing, MI visiting family when her husband took a walk and encountered an active suicide standoff with Michigan Police. She added that she and her husband are both mental health professionals trained in QPR (question, persuade, refer), a suicide de-escalation modality. She explained that the officers on the scene were laughing and just being very unprofessional. They did a fine job over time, but it was the loose ends that they didn't tie up; that's the stuff that makes a difference when caring for someone in that situation. Lastly, Ms. Godette commented that having had the experience of doing a ride-along with SBPD and seeing something actually happen, she has seen things and knows the news says a lot, but she expressed her appreciation for the South Bend Police Department and noted she thanked Chief Ruskowski already.

**Board Member Al Kirsits** noted a mental health incident recently where the media was there filming. From what he heard on the news, it had a successful outcome. He then asked Assistant Chief Skibins to speak more about the incident. Assistant Chief Skibins explained that unfortunately last week there was a mental health crisis where an individual was suicidal and was live streaming the incident, so that added some elements that the Department had not dealt with much in the past. Training prevailed with the crisis negotiators as well as a mental health crisis response to that incident and obviously with help from the family. Chief Ruskowski was on scene and advised him later that we had done things that we had not done in the past, such as bringing forward individuals from the family to be a part of that negotiation. There are certain times when we can't bring family members in because the scene is not safe, but in this situation, it ended up being beneficial. He stated he did not know at this point what the follow-up has been explaining that the individual has had a mental health crisis in the past as well and so he had been seen by past doctors and he felt like they weren't taking him seriously. Lastly, Chief Skibins emphasized that he hoped that this time around the mental health follow up did take place but could not speak to it.

G. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion by Al Kirsits, seconded by Darryl Heller, and carried by roll call, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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Daniel Jones, President



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Darryl Heller, Member



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Al Kirsits, Member

*Pamela Ann Claeys*

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Pamela Claeys, Member

ATTEST:

*Theresa Heffner*

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Theresa Heffner, Clerk