

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Village of Palmyra**  
**SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD MEETING**  
**Wednesday March 12, 2025**  
**Palmyra Eagle High School Community Center**  
**123 Burr Oak St.**  
**6:30 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order by President Weiss at 6:30 pm. Roll call: Ball, Gorsegner, Kinjerski, Petruska, Smith, Tucker, Weiss-present. Tucker-excused. Smith-absent. Also present Casey Griffiths from Ehlers, Pavlock, LePak, Gartzke.

**New Business**

1. Discussion/presentation on the Referendum for the Public Safety Dept. that will be on the April 1, 2025 Ballot.

Kathy Weiss presents her powerpoint and hits on problems both state and county wide. Everyone is having the same issues with funding. Large and small communities. Our geographic location is also an issue as we are so far from everyone that might want to join with us. Cost of readiness is what is expensive. We have to be ready at all times 24hrs a day, 365 days. Mutual aid is reciprocal. We have to offer mutual aid in order to get mutual aid. ISO ratings, the lower our rating the lower homeowner's insurance is. Our rates for having a Fire Dept went from a 5 to a 4. Lower the number the better. There are also state mandates for training and updated equipment. They dictate the hours of initial training and ongoing training. Also mandates on the equipments performance. There is a small pool of qualified employees to pick from we are not getting any applicants. We have to have competitive wages to keep employees. This amount is NOT an "ongoing amount". The \$350,000 will be worked into the base levy and that remains in the "base" amount.

Casey Griffiths from Ehlers presented. The Village had meetings in Dec. and Jan when all of this started. He is talking about the financial part of this and how the Village got here. He went over the levy limit worksheet and law and the revenue options of removing the hydrant rental, and recycling off of the tax levy and placing these items on water bills and tax bills. Showed a chart of net new construction vs. inflation. Inflation is 2.57% and the village's net new construction was only 0.87%.

Residents asked questions: How is this \$350,000 going to be spent? Chief Pavlock said for personnel mainly. Pavlock went on to explain there are only 2 Polic Officers now from 7 am – 5 pm. There will be a part-time officer coming back to full time so this will help and he will have 3 part time officers. Currently the full time Fire/EMS employees are getting \$17.50/hr. way under paid compared to other departments, Pavlock is proposing raises in 2026 to \$20/hr. The days of true volunteers are over. The training to be a firefighter/EMT is super extensive. He also can't get Police Officers to apply. First of all, no one wants to be a cop anymore, not as popular as it used to be and the Village's pay is very low. Pavlock took no wage increase for 2024 or 2025. But he is averaging 120 hours in 2 weeks.

Fire Chief Mike Gartzke explains how the fire side works. We need 2 people to go in a structure fire and 2 people to stay out. The number of employees we have currently gets us out the door but not safely. We want to add 2 people to get to the 4 people on duty. We are averaging less than 6 minutes to get an ambulance to your house. Then they go to the hospital,

which takes approx. an hour. This is an hour that the ambulance is out of service for another call. We have had an average of 350 calls a year and we do rely on mutual aid.

Pavlock said that this community needs to decide how much police coverage they want. Does Palmyra need police? Officer LePak was at our HS all day today. Jefferson County Sheriff Dept is also short-staffed, they come when we call them, and they have been helping to cover shifts when we have no one but that is hard for them to do also. Pavlock said he has an open-door policy and welcomes residents to come in or call him.

Frank Sauter, Town of Palmyra resident and Town Board Chairman spoke in support of the referendum. The Town contracts with the Village's fire/EMS dept for coverage and he feels they are doing a great job. He says the wages are very very low. Sauter also spoke about how important it is to have the Police Dept.

Resident's comments were that they felt the letters that were mailed out about tonight's meeting should have been sent out months ago. The board tried to explain that back in Jan they were still trying to decide how much of a referendum to ask for and meetings had to happen also to approve a resolution. The Board didn't have enough information back in Jan. to send out letters, but Trustee Petruska said that she did agree the letters should have gone out sooner than they did. Residents asked why they don't know about these meetings and also how they find out when the meetings are. The Village Clerk explained that she posts them to the Village's website, they can sign up to get email or text notifications about meetings, she posts the agendas around the Village. She also said that the board meetings have always been the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays of each month, so if residents can mark this on their calendars as a reminder. Some feel this still isn't enough. A resident asked how much the Town of Palmyra pays toward the fire/EMT dept. per the contract. The Clerk gave those numbers out. Trustee Gorsegner mentioned that the current contract with the Town ends this year, and we can't begin negotiations until we know if the referendum passes. Another resident asked why she never sees the Police out patrolling? She says the cars are racing through town because everyone knows the Police aren't out as much. She asks if this money will help get Officers out on the streets. Chief Pavlock said that is the plan. He also said that the "model" the Village thought they had for the last 5 yrs for police coverage was not a true picture. Another said they the Village just got re-assessed which caused a lot of resident's taxes go up, how are they going to afford another big jump? President Weiss and Trustee Gorsegner said they understand completely. Weiss said that the Village has prided itself in keeping Village taxes low but we just can't survive like that anymore. The cost of fuel and benefits continue to rise but the amount the State gives us for levy limits isn't covering things.

No further questions at this time. The next meeting will be Thursday March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm

Gorsegner/Ball motion to adjourn at 8:20 pm. All ayes-motion carried.

Laurie Mueller,  
Village Clerk/Treasurer

Minutes approved with corrections on March 17, 2025