



Palmyra Public Safety Department
Police/Fire/Rescue
126 N. First Street
Palmyra, WI 53156

May 13, 2026

Village Board Members:

Today, the Palmyra Public Safety Department demonstrated exactly why rapid response, teamwork, and the Public Safety Officer model are so important to our community. Due to the immediate actions, professionalism, and courage of our personnel, one of Palmyra's most iconic and historic buildings — the American Legion — was saved from what could have become a devastating total loss.

At approximately 12:00 p.m. today, contractors working on the American Legion building were utilizing an open flame when building materials ignited, resulting in a structure fire. A 911 call was immediately placed and Palmyra Public Safety was dispatched.

At the time of dispatch, however, a crew of four Firefighter/EMTs from our department was already assisting in the Kettle Moraine district at a fatal motor vehicle crash and vehicle fire. They had been requested through the mutual aid system, as Kettle Moraine already had both an ambulance and an engine on scene and required additional assistance. As always, we assist our neighboring communities just as they assist us.

As a result, Public Safety Officer Katie Daniels, Sergeant Lepak, and a paid-on-call firefighter who happened to be driving through the village became the initial responding crew, along with Fire Chief Gartzke. Public Safety Officer Daniels immediately deployed a hose line while firefighters established a water supply and charged the line. Officer Daniels then made entry into the building and placed water directly on the fire, achieving what is referred to in the fire service as an "immediate knockdown," stopping the fire before it could rapidly extend throughout the structure.

The crew assisting in Kettle Moraine immediately cleared that scene as safely and quickly as possible and responded back to the Village, with an estimated response time of approximately 10 minutes. Due to the effectiveness of the Public Safety Officer model, an iconic and historic Palmyra building was saved during those



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critical first moments. As we often say in emergency services, fire doubles in size every minute. Without personnel already in town and immediately available to act, the outcome could have been drastically different.

While the American Legion sustained significant damage, particularly from smoke and water, the structure itself was saved. The fire was contained primarily to the front portion of the building and did not spread throughout the structure. The kitchen and large portions of the facility remain intact, and it is believed the building can be repaired.

I would also like to recognize the effectiveness of the MABAS mutual aid system, which brought approximately 10 assisting departments to the scene. Although the fire was quickly knocked down, extensive overhaul operations were required to ensure there was no hidden fire extension within the walls or roofing materials.

Thank you to our Public Safety Officers, firefighters, EMTs, mutual aid partners, and Village leadership for your continued support of innovative public safety solutions and for believing in the Public Safety Officer model. Today's response demonstrated exactly why rapid staffing, cross-trained personnel, teamwork, and regional cooperation matter.

Respectfully,

Paul Blount
Director of Public Safety / Interim Police Chief