MEETING MINUTES

Village of Palmyra
Budget Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2026
100 W Traft Street
Village Hall Meeting Room
5:30 p.m.

Call to Order

Chair Stephanie Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present:

- Stephanie Wallace, Chair
- Jeff Pfahler
- Tom Ball

Staff Present:

- Public Safety Director/Police Chief Blount
- Fire/EMS Chief Gartzke
- Sgt. LePak

Business

1. Discussion/possible action on 2027 budget request for Village Departments.

Review of Proposed Budget (Version 2)

Payroll Calculation Review

Police Department

The Committee reviewed personnel expenditures and agreed to remove the proposed part-time police officer position from the budget. Members acknowledged future staffing needs but determined current financial conditions require a conservative approach. Future contract negotiations and operational adjustments may provide opportunities for cost savings and staffing flexibility.

Fire/EMS Department

The Committee reviewed staffing proposals and the following cost-saving measures:

- Removal of the proposed seventh full-time firefighter position.
- Elimination of the proposed 24-hour third-person EMS coverage model.
- Retention of the current 12-hour EMS coverage model.

Committee Action: The Committee approved the above-noted changes.

Fire/EMS Chief Employment Contract

The Committee discussed the upcoming renewal of Fire/EMS Chief Gartzke's employment contract and reviewed the budgetary impacts of both renewing and not renewing the position. Members discussed potential cost savings associated with a non-renewal scenario and the possibility of applying those savings toward the current Fire/EMS deficit.

Directive to Staff: Chair Wallace asked staff to prepare two budget scenarios for Village Board consideration: one reflecting renewal of the Fire/EMS Chief position and one reflecting non-renewal.

Limited-Term Employment (LTE) Discussion

The Committee discussed the potential use of Limited-Term Employment (LTE) positions to address temporary staffing shortages resulting from medical leave, parental leave, administrative leave, or extended vacancies.

Potential benefits included reduced benefit costs, increased staffing flexibility, and improved coverage during workforce disruptions. Concerns discussed included equitable assignment opportunities, impacts on current part-time employees, administrative oversight requirements, and budget implications.

Directive to Staff: The Public Safety Director will continue researching LTE programs and evaluating their operational and financial impacts.

Fire/EMS Financial Review

Fire/EMS Deficit

The Committee reviewed the Fire/EMS deficit, currently estimated at approximately $602,000. Discussion included:

- Historical causes of the deficit.
- Responsibility for repayment.
- Long-term budget implications.
- Effects on borrowing and credit capacity.
- Future capital needs.

Chair Wallace emphasized that clearly defining deficit repayment obligations is critical to the Village's long-term financial planning and future budget decisions.

Future Capital Needs

The Committee discussed anticipated capital expenditures, including:

- Fire apparatus replacement.
- Facility maintenance and upgrades.
- Equipment replacement.
- Long-term infrastructure investments.

Town Contract Concerns

The Committee reviewed projections indicating future Fire/EMS revenues may exceed annual operating expenditures and discussed:

- Potential requests from participating towns to reduce contributions.
- Allocation and use of future surpluses.
- Existing contractual obligations related to deficit repayment.

Directive for Committee Chair and Village President: Chair Wallace will work with the Village President to review contract language and obtain legal clarification regarding deficit repayment obligations, surplus allocation, and funding responsibilities.

Long-Term Strategic Planning

The Committee, Public Safety Director Blount, and Fire/EMS Chief Gartzke discussed:

- Regional Fire/EMS consolidation opportunities.
- Shared service agreements.
- Police service partnerships.
- Long-term financial sustainability.

All in agreement and understanding of the importance of proactive planning for future staffing needs, capital replacement schedules, revenue limitations, and rising operating costs.

Consensus: Continue exploring regional collaboration opportunities.

Paramedic Service Evaluation

The Committee discussed the feasibility of adding paramedic-level services.

Potential benefits discussed included enhanced emergency medical capabilities, improved patient care, additional intercept-service revenue, and expanded regional service offerings.

Challenges discussed included:

- Licensing and regulatory requirements.
- Additional staffing costs.
- Equipment acquisition costs.
- Medication and supply expenses.
- Startup costs.

Action: Discussion only. No formal action was taken.

Capital Projects and Facilities

Fire Station Improvements

Staff provided updates on ongoing and planned station improvement projects, including:

- Exterior painting.
- Building sealing improvements.
- Ventilation upgrades.

Staff advised the Committee that contractor availability for the exterior painting project, along with weather conditions, may delay completion of some improvements until spring. If projects are not completed by year-end, budgeted funds may need to be carried forward into the next fiscal year.

Grants and Revenue Opportunities

Grant Funding

Fire/EMS Chief Gartzke reported that a recent DNR grant application was denied. Additional grant opportunities remain under review.

Chair Wallace emphasized the importance of pursuing grant opportunities to reduce reliance on local tax revenue.

Staff were encouraged to investigate:

- Focus on Energy programs.
- State funding opportunities.
- Federal funding opportunities.

Directive to Staff: Chair Wallace asked staff to look into Focus on Energy programs specifically for the HVAC upgrades.

Fire Inspection Program

The Committee discussed the potential implementation of a commercial fire inspection fee program.

Discussion included potential fee structures, including square-footage-based fees, tiered classifications, and cost-recovery models. Additional discussion addressed staffing requirements, certification needs, scheduling procedures, and administrative costs.

Direction to Staff:

1. Research fee schedules used by comparable municipalities.

2. Identify personnel to obtain fire inspection certifications.
3. Develop recommendations for future Committee review.

Police Department Budget Review

Vehicle Replacement

The Committee reviewed the planned sale of an existing squad vehicle and the purchase of a replacement vehicle.

Direction to Staff: Include the estimated vehicle sale proceeds and replacement vehicle costs in the next budget draft.

Citation Revenue

The Committee reviewed current and historical citation revenue trends and discussed the potential need to update ordinance forfeiture schedules to better reflect current enforcement objectives.

Drug Task Force Membership

The Committee reviewed prior participation in the county drug task force.

Staff reported concerns regarding:

- Limited assistance with local investigations.
- Inadequate communication.
- Poor return on investment.

Consensus: Membership in the county drug task force will not be pursued at this time.

Legal Expenses

The Committee reviewed anticipated legal expenses associated with:

- Fire union contract negotiations.
- Police union contract negotiations.
- Town Fire/EMS contract negotiations.
- Development-related legal matters.
- Personnel issues.

Consensus: Staff and Village Board members should complete as much preliminary work as possible before engaging legal counsel in order to minimize legal expenses.

Additional Discussion

Additional topics discussed included:

- E-bike registration requirements.
- Potential ordinance revisions.
- Court revenue trends.
- Fire inspection staffing needs.
- Equipment replacement planning.
- Additional non-tax revenue opportunities.

The Committee emphasized the importance of identifying sustainable revenue sources to offset rising operational costs while minimizing impacts on taxpayers.

Adjournment

Tom Ball moved to adjourn the meeting. Chair Stephanie Wallace seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trustee Stephanie Wallace

Minutes approved without corrections Nov. 5, 2026