

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Village of South Amherst

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

June 26, 2024

Call to order:

7:00 p.m. – The council meeting was called to order by President Pro Tempore Jeanne Maschari and opened with the Lord's Prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll was called:

Councilmember Michele Jeffers	P
Councilmember Robb Koscho	P
Councilmember Michael Sangiacomo	P
Councilmember Becky Siesky	P
Councilmember David Troike	P
President Pro Tempore Jeanne Maschari	P

Ex officio members:

Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke	P
Records Clerk Laurie Beran	P
Law Director Matthew Mishak	P

(EA – excused absences)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA June 26, 2024

Councilmember Jeffers moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Koscho seconded the motion.

Jeffers x Koscho x Maschari x Sangiacomo x Siesky x Troike x Motion carried.

VISITORS

Ron, Cheryl, Tanya Crawford 205 E Main St.

Brian Baker 49822 Greystone Place, Grace Folley 126 Maroy Dr., Mark Leshinski 592 S Lake St., Dave O'Brien reporter Chronicle Telegram, Tammy Stanley 101 Annis Rd.,

SAFD: James Becker, Jason Deptula, Blaze Olejko, Andrew Streator

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President Pro Tempore: We are meeting tonight to review the termination of Fire Chief John Crawford. Mayor Jones, please address the council as to the reason for the termination of Mr. Crawford.

Mayor:

Summary case against John Crawford. So we're going to be hitting on three different points for the reason of his dismissal. (Mr. Crawford was handed the packet of evidence.) So, we will be touching on three topics of discussion through the summary case against John Crawford. One being

Lack of Communication: See Exhibit 3,4,11 during this process.

Effective communication is essential in any successful organization, especially in critical fields like fire and emergency services. Chief Crawford demonstrated a significant lapse in communication by telling the council that Tanker 105 was operational when, in fact, records and communications showing he had previously informed the department that the tanker was out of commission. This misleading information presented to the council indicates that Chief Crawford was not transparent about the tanker's status, undermining trust and operational integrity. Again see Exhibits 3, 4, 11.

Disobedience:

Chief Crawford has shown a pattern of disobedience by refusing to follow lawful orders from superiors and the legislative authority. Despite being instructed during his review to provide the door code for the

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Assistant Chief, he has not complied, therefore affecting operational efficiency and security protocols. Furthermore, as the Chief, he is required to relinquish his role as treasurer in accordance with association bylaws, a directive that he has ignored, continuing a violation of these rules. See Exhibits 8, 10, 14. When I speak on that, as far as relinquishing the role of treasurer that is for the Association.

Poor Administrative Performance:

Is the last. Chief Crawford's administrative performance has been inadequate, as evidenced by multiple complaints from former employees regarding his poor leadership skills. Additionally, he failed to address incidents of sexual harassment by not reporting them to HR, showcasing a neglect of duty and responsibility towards creating a safe workplace. His oversight also led to the expiration of the FCC license, which poses a significant safety risk for the village of South Amherst. The application is now in dismissal status without prejudice under Section 1.934 of the Commission's Rules. This situation necessitates filing a new application with the necessary fees and documents, halting operations until compliance is achieved. The combination of these factors—lack of communication, disobedience, and poor administration performance have clearly outlined the case for John Crawford's dismissal. And the last poor administration performance please see 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13. If you need me to go over that again, I can. Any questions? That's all I have.

President Pro Tempore: Mr. Crawford do you have any witness that you would like us to share the supporting documentation with?

Mr. Crawford: I do not have any witness, but I do have a statement from Cleveland Communications:

President Pro Tempore: Mr. Crawford, do you have anything you want to share with the council before we go into Executive Session?

Mr. Crawford:

Yes, I was presented something totally different but from what the mayor read. So, I wasn't prepared for all of what he said. So, stating I sent a repeal to the fiscal officer that 105 was going to CPR to be repaired. The mayor has to sign a P.O. so he knew the truck was going out of service. Past practice we have never contacted council regarding the truck was back in service. Maybe we need to put council on the department I Am Responding so they can receive text messages from all 911 calls and through the department so you know exactly the status of the trucks.

I paged out on May 13th through I Am Responding to department personnel that 105 was going to be worked on. On May 23rd I paged out that 105 was back at the station. Then we discovered the drain valve we still not fixed. So, we disconnected the 2 ½" cross lay and capped the line. So, if we needed to use a 2 ½" cross lay we'd have to use a connection to another 2 ½" lay. I called CPR and they stated they would send someone out to look at it. In the meantime tanker 105 went out to 2 mutual aid calls, pumped over 8000 gallons at one of the calls. So, tanker 105 was still in service to supply water to house fires. On June 6, CPR was able to get parts, come out and fix the station, or fix the broken, I then placed the 2 ½" cross lay was reconnected.

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As far as disobedience and refusing to follow lawful orders, you asked for the garage to be cleaned out so you can store stuff over there and that was done. You asked me to recruit to try bring up my numbers. I posted on Facebook, sign outside fire station: Help wanted for EMT's and Fire Fighters. I even printed up 100 flyers and placed on tables at the steak fry as requested by council members. Since then I have two fire fighters already trained join the department. One was on the department before. Two going through background check, one is waiting for school to start in the fall. If the other two get the background checks completed and if this was done and they'll also attend school. I brought on personnel to help with computer needs. So far he has removed the computer, removed the computer connections, excuse me, rewired the computer connections the proper way to make them more secure and help with the connections to the computers, instead of having the wires on the floor for people to trip, tangling up in the wires. He is getting familiar with the report writing and the mutual responding system. He assisted the assistant chief to program a fit test, so we were able to use a new SCBA mask.

Since my employee performance evaluation you discussed not communicating with you. I reach out to you every week and sometimes twice a week. I responded to your text messages and calls while at my fulltime job. I was asked by the Safety Committee to check into trade the 2015 command vehicle and getting a 2024 vehicle with already lights and sirens. They were given a response back from me on what Statewide stated in three days.

As far as the complaint of sexual harassment, did either one of these former employees place in writing and take it through the proper chain of command as it states in the Village Handbook and the Fire Department SOP's? Time, place, date, where it happened and all witness. The sexual harassment clearly states in the Employee Handbook it will not be tolerated. So, since you have this in writing, it obviously did not go through the chain of command, instead it went to town hall. So, has anyone from council investigated this acquisition? Why has no one from administration approached me or any of the officers if they have any knowledge of sexual harassment. So, you're basing your charge on two former employees without investigating an accusation. Better yet, what is administration doing with the knowledge? Why is it being brought up in this hearing or did this statement appear just before this hearing?

As far as my leadership, about ninety percent of our calls are EMS calls. When _____ (*could not interrupt word*) seeing the squad, if the squad is not there, we get the patient information: vital signs, list of medication and place I know to if needed. We do not transport, we are only a first responder. We assist the medics on the scene: we help load patient on the cot, carry downstairs as needed and load in the squad. So how's we've been doing this for over 25 years. Since I took over as chief there has actually only been one house fire. The fire was contained to the bedroom. There has been no major accidents since I've been on, no hazardous spills, no water rescues, no confined space. There has been numerous mutual aide calls, but I am not in charge of scene. The chief of the department is in charge and I follow his command. And for these calls, how many calls did these two former employees actually make the truck to the scene. So, if they're going to judge me, my leadership performance on this.

As I stated to you the FCC license is filed every ten years. License is supposed to be changed over to Norband (sp?), for some reason it was not done in the previous administration back in 2024. I submitted application to FC license and it was kicked back to me. I contact the

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FCC help desk and they sent me information renewal, sent me information to renew. It was done and all the boxes were checked out and once again it was kicked back. I contacted the records clerk if she knew if we had two different call signs for the station. She made some phone calls and text messages and I was told that Officer Aaron Darnell of the police department would be taking care of it. He contacted me and said he was kicked out of the program for eight times. He finally got through to FCC filed out the permission and sent it. And it was kicked back to him. I forwarded, or it was kicked back to me and I forwarded it to him. This went on for several more times. As to my knowledge we have still not secured a license.

So, while it is going on Cleveland Communications has been coming out to the station to work on the radio system, programming the fire department radios are 7800 series. They got all the radios done except the tanker and three portables. At this time 105 was in the shop getting worked done on it along with two portables. The other was an officer radio that he didn't turn in yet. They told me to contact them when they were ready to comeback programming. I contacted Cleveland Communications, told them I had the truck and portables to get programmed. They setup a day and time to meet,. I met them at the station to program 105 radio and portables. Once they finished programming they put all the serial numbers on all the radio into the computer and sent the information to the radios. Once that was completed they went around and check all the radios and checked them out. Once they were finished I sent out a text message through I AM Responding stating 7800 has been programmed and you need to play with the radios because the first six channels have been changed. So, there was no forced programming of department radio over the weekend. This program 7800 series had not, nothing to do with the FCC license. The northeast fire department already done this. The northwest fire department consists of South Amherst, Sheffield Township, Elyria Township, Amherst and Florence Township be going through the same process if they already haven't done so. As soon as the power installed the southwest department will also be installing the 7800 series.

I see you put in there that which I never had knowledge of the evaluation sheets. So, when we had my Employee Performance Evaluation you said, the Fire Chief demonstrates commendable dedication by consistently making critical calls. You indicate that I make most or all the council meetings. The chief adheres to policy when it comes to certain aspects of the job. On the job the chief is dependable. Great work ethic. Seems to be fine with the status of the fire house. Chief knows the on site job. The on site job is good. So, basically what your saying, what I found out for, you don't like my performance as far as emailing you guys back on the proper time. I have emailed several times and it has taken four days for certain people on this council to get back to me and I get told, oh I'm sorry I missed your email or text or whatever it was. I've tried to get back to you as quickly as I can, I work a fulltime job like most of you do. This is a parttime position, I'm not over here 24/7 like the previous chief, where he worked eight hours over here and you could talk to him all day long. In getting back to you as quick I can, in responding to you with stuff that is, if this stuff is so important that I need to get back to you that instant, then why isn't a phone call made to say I have a critical situation. There was an email sent out by the previous mayor if I'm not mistaking, stated if something is in dire need to be looked at immediately that it needs to be addressed in the email or the text message and that has never been done. I've tried to get back to you as soon as I can and try to get the answers soon as possible. Like I've said this is a volunteer department, I'm not up here forty hours a week and we try to get everything done as we can, everyone has got fulltime jobs. I've tried to bring up our

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numbers but its like all the other departments, if you read Facebook , everybody out there is asking for people to join the departments, so it's not like I'm not trying. There's things that I do that nobody sees what I do. But they can criticize the things that you only want to see. Nobodies come over to or department, watched us practice. Excuse me, correct one time. Nobody comes over to our meetings except one time to see what were involved in, what we do. All I've heard is week, we'd like to be more involved, I told you we've got an open door policy but nobody just comes over, nobody _____ (*could not interrupt word*)come over. Just like over here, this is an open door policy, you got a meeting, the public is welcome. But as far as these changes there they're bogus. That's all I got.

Mr. Crawford presented a letter from Cleveland Communications stating why they were at the station.

Additional comments that were made by Mr. Crawford:

As far as the check book I'll turn it over. I've told Mr. Urig multiple times that we need to get together at the bank, I need to set up a date and time with him and it's never been done. I can't force him to go the bank, I can't hold a gun to him to go to the bank. If the man does not want to go to the bank with me to get this stuff out of my name and his name, what am I supposed to do? I mean he is a grown man, an adult and I've asked him numerous times every time we have a meeting to get this off the books and he has not got back with me.

As far as not giving Ron Zaleha the code to the door, Mr. Zaleha knows how to reprogram those doors. I've asked him numerous times to meet me at the station so we could go over and reprogram these doors so he could get in. To this day he has not come up there and say, "Hey let's go do this." So, what am I supposed to do with him. But once again, I cannot make him come up there and do it. I've told him we need to get it done, he's been at the station, he always gotta go, when it's time to go he doesn't wanna stick around. So, that's all I got.

President Pro Tempore: Are there any questions from council? Having nothing further on the agenda, I will entertain a motion for Mayor Jones to be excused from the Executive Session.

Councilmember Troike moved to excuse Mayor Jones from Executive Session. Councilmember Jeffers seconded the motion.

Jeffers x Koscho x Maschari x Sangiacomo x Siesky x Troike x Motion carried.

President Pro Tempore: I will entertain a motion to enter into executive session including Michelle Henke as our Human Resource person and Matthew Mishak as Law Director.

Councilmember Troike moved to enter executive session including Michelle Henke as our Human Resource Representative and Matthew Mishak, Law Director to discuss the termination of Mr. John Crawford at the time of 7:18 p.m. Councilmember Sangiacomo seconded the motion.

Jeffers x Koscho x Maschari x Sangiacomo x Siesky x Troike x Motion carried.

Return to the Special meeting at 7:54 p.m.

President Pro Tempore: I will now entertain a motion on Council's decision.

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Councilmember Troike moved to confirm the dismissal on the evidence provided of John Crawford as Fire Chief of the South Amherst Fire Department. Councilmember Siesky seconded the motion.

Jeffers x Koscho x Maschari x Sangiacomo x Siesky x Troike x Motion carried.

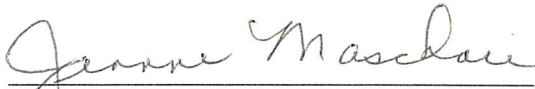
President Pro Tempore: The agenda has been completed, so we stand adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT Time 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Fiscal Officer Michelle Henke


President Pro Tempore Jeanne Maschari