

**APPROVED**  
**Minutes of the Public Safety Committee Meeting**  
**Village of Northbrook**  
**Cook County, Illinois**  
**January 10, 2023**

Trustee Pepoon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. On roll call, present were Trustees Pepoon, Collision and Ebhomielen. A quorum was present. Also attending were President Ciesla and Trustees Israel, Ross and Hebl.

**Call to Order**

**Hear From the Audience**

None.

**Presentation and Review of Fire Department Organizational Assessment**

Fire Chief Carlson gave an overview. He stated the Village Trustee's recommended that the Fire Department go through an assessment process. A third party assessor was hired and the following is the report in response. He will have each consultant introduce themselves and then will go through the report.

**Introduction of Consultants:**

Jim Dominik, Polaris Public Safety Solutions, noted he was a prior resident of Northbrook and provided a brief introduction of himself, his accomplishments and he introduced the company.

John McNicholas introduced himself. He stated the Chicago Fire Department previously employed him. He gave a brief overview of his background.

Michael Mealer, introduced himself stating he was previously was employed by the Chicago Police Department up until 2015. He gave a brief overview of his background, noting he is an attorney.

Steve Rivero introduced himself, noting he specialized in data analytics.

Mr. Dominik began by stating the Northbrook Fire Department is exceptional. The Village Board has a lot to be proud of, however as like any study sometimes departments could do things differently. He then stated he would review the benchmarks, highlight both the positive and the negative and ultimately review the results of the station location analysis. Mr. Dominik provided a quick overview and explained what they focused on during the assessment.

**Assessment Overview:**

- Administration & Support Services
- Fire prevention bureau

- Emergency Management
- Community Risk Reduction

#### Benchmarks and standards:

- State Agencies
- National Associations
- National Organizations
- Insurance Services Office (ISO)
- National Institute of Standards and Technology

#### Findings and recommendations

- Strengths
- Strategic planning
- Fire prevention
- External partners
- Public engagement
- Dept Personnel

Mr. Dominik discussed the Department's practice of dispatching an ALS fire company with the ambulance and his recommendation that it continue. He discussed the number of vehicles/personnel at each call and how this is the same as a few named surrounding communities.

Trustee Hebl, noted the criticism the Village/Board receives for having a fire truck and ambulance at each call.

Jim McNicholas explained the challenge of trying to interpret exactly what is at a scene with the 911 call – all the information is not always given. Getting the address correct is sometimes a challenge. The situation at the call is not always a clear. A correct picture is not always provided. In his opinion, it is best to send more and send back what is not needed. He felt it was important for all to understand.

Chief Andrew Carlson explained that the responders have a lot to do in a short period of time and extra people can accomplish tasks simultaneously. The paramedics all have a job to do and the fire truck brings a supervisor with it. Our real cost is personnel and salaries so we should utilize them to provide service and help each other.

Trustee Pepoon questioned the cost benefit of downsizing the equipment or the number of personnel on a call. Chief Carlson explained that since our most significant cost is personnel, a smaller vehicle doesn't save much cost and the personnel on the fire truck are ready and available for the next call. Mr. Dominik noted challenges with a smaller vehicle. If you were to add a smaller vehicle, they need to take people from other places. Smaller vehicles still need the personnel to go with them. That is the

challenge. He discussed a study and noted it is important for communities to equip and staff their department to address their everyday needs.

Mr. Dominik addressed the company unit hour utilization levels. He explained they looked at the utilization of all the Fire vehicles and personnel. What they found is neither is over utilized.

President Ciesla brought up an analogy of the water pressure on the west side of Northbrook. How it was considered good enough, but they still felt it was important to make it better. For Northbrook just because it is good enough does not mean it is good enough for Northbrook.

In response, Mr. Dominik commented the purpose of the analysis is to identify the needs of the department. He discussed the importance for Northbrook of the location of their Fire Stations. The locations can impact the ideal response times. Ideal response times indicate some could be relocated. He explained that half of the analysis work focused on this. They took into consideration the effect traffic flow, population, buildings, etc.

Mr. Dominik then addressed internal training and education programs. He stated it is great. He noted the use of the 7g agreement helps to keep fire inspections in the Village on an 18-month cycle. Overall, Northbrook's apparatus preventative maintenance and replacement plans are good. He noted one item needed is to update the department's strategic plan. As the Board, you want a plan to budget in order to achieve this. Trustee Ebhomielen asked how old the present strategic plan is. In response, Chief Carlson noted it has been a while since the strategic plan was updated. Mr. McNicholas explained the communities that have a strategic plan are ahead of the curve.

Mr. Dominik then reviewed some of the recommendations in the assessment report including developing a comprehensive emergency management program, a risk reduction plan, conducting a cost/benefit analysis of a mobile healthcare program, updating Fire Prevention Bureau ordinances, and establishing a self-re-inspection program for minor violations.

Mr. Dominik then reviewed other items. He stated the department should establish a program to allow basic storefronts to certify an inspection checklist every X number of years in lieu of a full inspection. Look at additional time metrics. Establish universal guidelines to classify calls by type and priority level. Collaborate with RED Center a way to standardize data metrics. Assess opportunities to improve call transfer times between the primary and secondary PSAPs. Increase public education programs focused on people over 65 and high-risk target hazards. Publish an annual report of the department's accomplishment and activities. Review and evaluate whether the CERT Program should be retained or restructured.

President Ciesla noted she believed Highland Park had a CERT Program. Mr. Dominik noted the challenges related to CERT programs, e.g. the CERT volunteer training can be a challenge to the department.

Mr. Dominik then discussed cascading dispatch and response time events and primary and secondary PSAP center findings and recommendations. He noted the NFPA 1221 performance standards for primary PSAP centers, and noted they tend to be the minimum standards. Mr. Dominik stated in 2021, RED Center processed 90% of all calls within 80 seconds, which is good.

Steve Rivero noted President Ciesla's comment "good enough" and "good enough plus" as he discussed the four-minute travel time catchments as they relate to the present locations of the three fire stations.

Steve reviewed each of the fire station locations, the catchment area, response times and optimal locations for three stations by moving stations around to cover the area. President Ciesla questioned if the number of homes impacted when moving a station is proposed was calculated.

Mr. Dominik explained their study did not look at that data. It was based on where the calls were, travel, and how long to get there.

Trustee Ebhomielen questioned how they determined where the ideal location and Steve explained the process they used. Trustee Ebhomielen then asked how new developments are considered. What percentage would be considered substantial growth?

Mr. Dominik explained the importance of knowing where the demand for service is.

Trustee Hebl left the meeting at 6:59.

Steve stated this is a predictive model. He then explained the three levels they look at.

Mr. Dominik discussed a development located in Colorado. He explained substantial growth depends on the use of the property and it is not definitive until the development completed. He then stated with four fire stations Northbrook is ideally divided. Manager Pavlicek noted this include areas outside of the corporate limits of Northbrook which is served by the Fire Department via an Agreement with the Fire Protection District.

Manager Pavlicek informed the Board that all known proposed developments in the Village have been considered with the assessment.

Mr. Dominik explained the assessment provides ideal locations based on information we have today. We can predict changes based on proposed changes.

Trustee Ross questioned if Polaris collaborated with any of the neighboring communities, Glencoe for example. In response, Mr. Dominik stated they do. In addition, they look at mutual aid. The challenge becomes how much to rely on mutual aid. You do not have control of other communities/organizations assets. If there is a big snow event, they will put their needs first. You will take a back seat. Their goal is to come up with a model that works. Works for everyone.

Mr. Dominik provided a summary. He stated planning is the key. An example is the present challenge of just obtaining the equipment. Presently, it can take up to two years to take possession of some vehicles.

Trustee Israel stated this is a great long-term discussion, but he would like to know what changes or what could be accomplished short term. In response, Mr. Dominik discussed strategic planning.

Chief Carlson pointed out the fire department already does some of the recommendations and they will continue. He explained the department already started working on some of the emergency management training. It requires staff and staff time. One option is to share an emergency management program with surrounding communities. Another big area is the Fire Prevention Bureau. This too will require additional staff. Several recommendations included data and reporting. This is something we want to do anyway. In the past, we gathered the recommended data. In 2016, we stopped, but I do not know the reasons. The new Deputy Chief and the management analyst can now assist.

President Ciesla questioned what the Board could expect to see in the upcoming budget. Manager Pavlicek stated the Board would receive a budget update in March. President Ciesla stated in her opinion community outreach is a priority and she would like to see more public education. Trustee Ebhomlielen stated she would like to see more programing, for example for seniors.

Mr. Dominik stated there are National Standards out there for review.

President Ciesla questioned if there is a model community they could look at. Mr. Dominik explained everyone does something good, and everyone needs a little help. Northbrook does a good job. He recommended focus on station locations because as a community grows, obtaining property to make changes gets harder.

Trustee Israel stated the stations are critical, but they also need to look at opportunities that arise. Northbrook is a "Class A" community and we are still doing well. The whole conversation should not take away from us being at the top of the heap.

Chief Carlson noted he is an advocate for a forth station because Northbrook is too spread out for three stations to meet travel time standards. This is the only way to reduce travel times.

Trustee Israel stated he agreed. He then questioned using Northbrook Court as a site. Chief Carlson questioned the proposed location for Station 11 in the report, noting it takes them further away from the Eden's Expressway, Skokie Boulevard and Sunset Ridge Road.

Trustee Pepoon questioned the strategic plan and who would address it. In response, Chief Carlson stated they would.

Trustee Hebl returned at 7:25.

Trustee Ebhomielen restated the short term plans need to be addressed such as resident programs. In her opinion, they will have a bigger immediate impact.

### **Adjourn**

Trustee Collison moved, seconded by Trustee Ebhomielen to adjourn the Public Safety Committee Meeting at 7:26pm. On voice vote, all were in favor.