Village of South Jacksonville

Mayor Richard Samples *Trustee* *Trustee Paula Belobrajdic-Stewart*

Deputy Village Clerk Mindy Olson *Trustee Christina Butler* *Trustee Tom Jordan*

Attorney Roland Cross *Trustee Michael Preston* *Trustee Steve Retzer*

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday May 21, 2026

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Samples.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance led by Cindy Beddingfield and recited by all in attendance.

Roll Call: Roll call was taken with all Trustees in attendance. Also in attendance were President Richard Samples, Police Chief Eric Hansell, Fire Chief Rich Evans, Code Enforcement Officer Cindy Beddingfield, and Treasurer and Deputy Village Clerk Mindy Olson. Those not in attendance were Attorney Rob Cross and Public Works Superintendent Brian English,

Approval of Agenda: President Samples asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion to approve was made by Trustee Stewart, seconded by Trustee Jordan. Roll call was taken approving the agenda as presented unanimously.

Comments from the Floor: None

Discussion Items

1. *Rural Fire Fees:* President Samples said we received an email from Attorney Cross explaining what he meant by public comment at the last meeting. He suggested that we have a thoughtful, itemized and specific explanation for the increase in the fees. There needs to be a real discussion of the thought process behind the increase. Chief Evans said

he has sent some literature to Attorney Cross as to why he is requesting the fee increase. Attorney Cross requested more information from Chief Evans, and he has not provided that yet. Chief Evans said we have been receiving calls about the rural fire fees notices. He had Amy send out the letters with the current rates on them for this year. He said we will have more time to work on the details.

2. *Salary Increases:* Treasurer Olson presented the proposed salary increases for all non-union employees of the Village. It is 3.5% with the exception of the union contracts. Trustee Stewart asked what Cost of Living is. It is 3.5%. Trustee Retzer asked what the additional pay for Detective Wilson is. Chief Hansell said it is the sergeant and detective pay. He also asked what the license was listed under the Public Works guys. That is for their CDL licenses which are per contract language. Trustee Stewart asked if we have job descriptions for Jackie and Amy and is there a salary range. Treasurer Olson said yes there are job descriptions and the large discrepancy in pay is due to the prior large salary increase given by Tyson Manker. Are there any certifications for their jobs? Treasurer Olson said no they are basically secretary positions. Trustee Stewart said those are big salaries for no degrees. Trustee Jordan said you need to pay to keep good help. Chief Hansell said we need to look at Sheryl since she graduates from the academy soon and will have some added duties.

   Trustee Butler asked if Jackie or Amy had any degrees. Treasurer Olson said yes, they both have degrees. Amy has a 4-year degree, and she is not sure about Jackie but believes it is a 4-year degree as well. Trustee Butler asked if Trustee Stewart feels this is adequate for their roles. Trustee Stewart said she seems it is more than adequate but not necessarily for Jackie. But again, there were issues in the past that led to discrepancy. Trustee Butler asked if Jackie could do grant writing. President Samples said he does not believe so. Trustee Butler asked how we will vote on these. President Samples said it will be presented just as they see it. Treasurer Olson said they are not technically voting on the union employees she just includes those for the Board's information. Trustee Butler said she is ok with all except Jackie. She feels she is good and may need more. She would also like to see the full salary and benefits package. Treasurer Olson said she will send that to all the Trustees for review.

3. *Parks:* President Samples advised the Board that we have set a meeting with the company that we are working with on the parks. He invited anyone that would like to attend they are welcome to sit in at the meeting. President Samples said he included drawings from the company for all 3 parks. Treasurer Olson said one of the things that stuck out to her and Mr. English is there seems to be a lot of open space at Godfrey Park that we do not. One thought is to flip flop Godfrey Park and the unnamed park and see what that would look like. Also, the price of the turf may be less because we could purchase the turf locally. President Samples said one option may be to take some of the equipment from Godfrey Park and put it in the unnamed park. He said there is still a lot of discussion that needs to be done about the parks.

Trustee Preston pointed out that according to the diagrams, Dewey Park also appears to have a lot of empty space. Treasurer Olson said we want to revisit the type of equipment at Dewey Park because a lot of the kids that will be using the park are the school kids. We need to decide what type of toys we want to put there and what type of liability the Village wants to assume for the school kids to use the park. Trustee Stewart agrees that we should consult the school as well when the time comes. She is pleased to see the parks are getting started. Trustee Retzer asked what the order of the parks would be. It should be Godfrey Park, Dewey Park and the unnamed park. But it may change as we go forward. Trustee Butler asked if there was a timeline for these. Currently no because it all depends on grants and funding.

4. *Fire Truck:* Chief Evans said he has put together some comparisons of available fire trucks. The most comparable one is listed at a cost of $299,000. The new Jacksonville Fire Truck should be in sometime in the middle of June. Chief Evans said he and his assistant chiefs have researched these and have been online looking and they feel the JFD truck is the best one. They discussed this at the fire department meeting and the members voted to put $30,000 down toward the first payment on the JFD fire truck. These funds would come out of their fundraiser account.

   President Samples asked if the agreement is a 3-year lease or 3-year purchase option. What happens if the engine were to blow up in year 2. Chief Evans said he thinks it is a purchase option. Truste Butler asked what everyone's thoughts are. Trustee Stewart asked where the money would come from. Treasurer Olson is looking into grants and possibly some of the money could come from TIF or Tourism. Trustee Butler asked if we offer $225,000 over 3 years. Trustee Retzer said Chief Evans is telling us we need to do something. President Samples would like to see the Board get more involved. Trustee Retzer said he looked through the information from the last meeting, and he thinks there are better deals out there. However, he does not know all the specific details on the trucks. Chief Evans said that is why they went through the trucks.

   Trustee Butler asked when the Village's ladder truck was last inspected. Chief Evans said he believes it is March of every year. President Samples asked if the truck can be fixed. Chief Evans said it cannot. Pierce will not fix it. But if you put a new ladder on it with the same chassis it would cost about the same amount of money. Chief Evans said it is on a website for sale but has not had any hits yet. Trustee Butler asked what the cost will be to rebrand the truck. Chief Evans said the pickup truck cost about $600. He does not think it will be much because it is virtually the same design. Trustee Butler asked if we can get warranties on the trucks and what is tested on the trucks. Chief Evans said no, not generally on a used truck. Once a year the ground ladders and pump are tested. Centre State also does annual maintenance on the engine. She would like to get documentation of the testing that has been done on the JFD fire truck.

Trustee Butler said she would like to move forward and how long before something can be done. Trustee Retzer agreed. Treasurer Olson said as soon as someone makes a decision and has a price. Trustee Stewart would prefer us to use TIF because of the parks we have to maintain out of the Tourism Fund. Trustee Butler wonders if it is better to offer $225,000 paid over 3 years or pay all of it at one time.

President Samples said he does not think the JFD truck is worth the money. He will go back through it but thinks Chief Evans just picked out what he wanted the Board to see. Chief Evans said they picked out Pierce trucks because that is what they are accustomed to. He is the fire chief and he hopes the Board would trust his recommendation. It will take a lot less time to train on it as well. President Samples said he thinks this truck can be bought for cheaper. Trustee Butler said she likes the idea of offering $200,000 and paying it all at once. Chief Evans said he is sure JFD would like to have the money all at once, but he knows Chief Summers and Mayor Ezard are trying to help the Village out.

President Samples said if they would come down to $200,000 outright it would be better for everyone. Trustee Butler asked if he is ok with the offer. He does not vote, but he thinks there are better options available. Trustee Preston said the Board needs to do something now. President Samples said there is a need but if there is a fire due to mutual aid, the JFD would assist. Chief Evans said there is a chance the ladder truck would not be available to respond though.

Trustee Retzer would like to draft a motion for the next meeting to offer $200,000 one-time payment to JFD to purchase the ladder truck. That would put the onus back on JFD. Trustee Stewart said before she could vote on it, she wants to know where the money is coming from. Treasurer Olson said with a definite price she will be able to determine the funding. Trustee Butler clarified that if JFD accepts $200,000 then the Village would only be paying $170,000. The fire department would be contributing $30,000 out of their fundraising account. Chief Evans asked if the Board has directions he can take to start a conversation with Chief Summers now before the next board meeting. President Samples said we need to know first if the Village has the funds first. Trustee Stewart said she doesn't think it would hurt to start a conversation now just in case. Chief Evans said he could start the conversation at $200,000 but would like the Board's confidence to go up to $225,000 if necessary. Trustee Retzer would like to hear from other board members. Trustee Preston said he feels this is the way to go. Trustee Stewart said she agrees. Trustee Jordan also likes this plan.

5. *FOIA/Social Media:* Treasurer Olson said she included in the board packets a fact sheet that she received from Civic Plus. She also sent those same questions to SMARSH. The Board will be able to compare the two companies better regarding the social media archiving. She also indicated that Civic Plus resubmitted their quote to reflect only the FOIA system. Treasurer Olson said John from Civic Plus is very pushy for his product. We have received 3 different quotes from him. The 2nd was a quote giving a discount on the social media archiving. She asked for a quote from him for just the FOIA system because the Village does not have a high social media presence. The Village only has 3 Facebook accounts and 1 YouTube channel. The need for social media archiving is not that big to justify $5,000 for an archiving program.

   Chief Hansell said he would suggest we get rid of Code Red and go with Civic Plus. The Village will get more out of Civic Plus than Code Red. Trustee Butler said the Code Red link is not operational. Chief Hansell said it all has to be redone because Code Red got hacked. Trustee Butler asked if we can get compensated for the program being down. Treasurer Olson said she did not know anything about it being down and she will pull the contract and check on it. Chief Hansell said the system is back up and running he just has not had the time to go in and set everything up. Trustee Butler asked how soon we can cancel the contract with Code Red. Treasurer Olson said she knew nothing about it but again would check into it. Trustee Butler suggests we get rid of Code Red and use more social media.

   Chief Hansell said he does not care which system we use for social media archiving as long as it does YouTube. Trustee Butler asked if Civic Plus does social media archiving. Treasurer Olson said they do for a cost of between $4,000 and $5,000 and SMARSH is around $1,100. Trustee Butler asked if the Civic Plus system will do the videos. Chief Hansell said the videos still have to be run through Axon. Treasurer Olson said she agrees with Chief Hansell that we should go with Civic Plus for the FOIA system, but she cannot justify spending that much for the social media archiving. She said that SMARSH focuses more on social media archiving which is a plus. The social media archiving platform is not a major component because you would still need to send whatever information to the FOIA system, so the two systems do not have to be from the same company. Trustee Butler asked if the Board needs to approve this. Treasurer Olson said not necessarily. Chief Hansell said as a department head he just wants to bring it to the Board for informational purposes.

   Trustee Stewart feels like this conversation is leading us to needing a social media policy. She would like to know who is in charge of each Facebook account and who is authorized to make posts. Chief Hansell has an internal department policy and controls what Sheryl posts. Chief Evans is in charge of the Fire Department Facebook page. Trustee Stewart asked if the Board needs to vote on the Civic Plus FOIA system. President Samples

would like to review this with Attorney Cross to be certain how the Board needs to proceed.

6. *Budget:* Treasurer Olson presented the Board with updated budget figures. She advised the Board that the TIF budget was updated to reflect what is paid out to the County and the Codes budget remained unchanged. She is waiting to speak with the engineers to verify there is no planned out of pocket money planned for MFT. The Tourism budget has not been updated because the parks discussion needs to be finalized. Treasurer Olson said she knows the Board would like the budget to be completed by a certain date but until there are finalized plans and figures the budget cannot be completed. If the budget and appropriations are completed and the actual appropriations exceed the approved amounts, the Board would need to approve an amended appropriations budget. It is better to wait for more solid figures.

President Samples gave the Board a note and quote that Superintendent English received for repairs that are needed at the South Main lift station. Treasurer Olson said she did include these in the Sewer budget. Treasurer Olson is working with Benton & Associates on verifying some funds relating to the lead lines and water tower work. The wells at the water plant also need to be cleaned. Trustee Butler asked if the state will be fixing South Main. There is nothing planned. President Samples said we would like to know so the Village can do some main work prior to the road work.

Treasurer Olson cannot finish the budget for the Fire Department until a decision is made on the fire truck purchase. The Police Department budget is still preliminary until she has a chance to review that with Chief Hansell. The tornado sirens still need to be included on the budget. Trustee Butler said she thought we were borrowing money to pay for the tornado sirens. Treasurer Olson said we will be using funds from different funds to pay for the tornado sirens, but the actual expense still needs to be on the budget.

Treasurer Olson has not included in the packets the General Fund budget. One item that needs to be discussed that she feels strongly about is a panic button at Village Hall. There are days when only one person is in the office alone. Trustee Butler said that it should be an administrative decision, and we should get it done. Treasurer Olson agrees but at the same time those funds have to come from somewhere. She has also talked about remodeling the offices, especially the carpet. There are a lot of big-ticket items on the budget this year so some items may need to be put aside for future years.

Old Business

1. *Tornado Sirens:* Chief Hansell advised the Board that the tornado sirens are up and running. Both sites have been nonsound tested and work. The old poles are on the ground. Chief Hansell said they are trying to work a deal with GTSI to rehab one of the old ones and donate it to the Village of Woodson to be put out by the new school. President Samples said his only requirement would be that GTSI donate it to the Village of Woodson and not make money on it. Chief Hansell said there has not been a conversation with them yet, just with GTSI.

New Business

1. *2025 Morgan County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan:* President Samples presented the Board with a draft of the 2025 Morgan County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Board to review. He attended several meetings and reviewed lots of documents. This plan is under FEMA and allows the Village to apply for items under FEMA such as generators, etc. We cannot participate without approving the resolution.

2. *New Fire Fighter:* Chief Evans would like to add another new guy to the department. There is a gentleman that lives on Vandalia that is currently an EMT with Lifestar and he is getting ready to start paramedic classes. That would bring the number up to 26. President Samples asked if any were talking about moving to a new department. He does not think so.

3. *Trustee Terms: Trustee* Retzer asked if they could get a list of the Trustee's current terms. Ms. Olson said she started working on that and it got quite messy with all the resignations and appointments. She will continue to work on it and get a list to the Board.

Executive Session: There is no need for an executive session.

Adjournment: President Samples asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Retzer, second by Trustee Preston. All in favor of adjourning the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Richard Samples, Village President

Attest:

Mindy Olson, Deputy Village Clerk

Ayes: 4
Nays: 0
Absent: 0

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SEAL CORPORATE 1911 SEAL