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 July 23, 2026

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

Roll Call: Roll call was taken with all Trustees in attendance except Trustee Butler and Trustee Stewart. Also in attendance were President Richard Samples, Police Chief Eric Hansell, Code Enforcement Officer Cindy Beddingfield, and Treasurer and Deputy Village Clerk Mindy Olson. Those not in attendance were Fire Chief Rich Evans 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 Retzer, seconded by Trustee Jordan. Roll call was taken approving the agenda as presented unanimously.

Comments from the Floor: None

Discussion Items

1. *Tourism Grant – Rotary Club Oktoberfest:* President Samples presented the tourism grant request from the Rotary Club Oktoberfest in the amount of $7,500. Treasurer Olson advised the Board that the group did request a higher amount this year. President Samples said we will vote on this at the August meeting.

2. *Park Design:* President Samples advised the Board that he and Treasurer Olson have talked with a representative from Kiwanis. They are going to attend a Kiwanis meeting and present the Coronado Park design and hopefully get a donation from the group towards the park. Treasurer Olson said the total for the park is just under $140,000. President Samples said that no one responding to the color choices that was sent out the to Trustees. He said the patriotic color scheme is the best choice. Treasurer Olson and the Trustees in attendance agreed.

3. *Budget:* Treasurer Olson presented the final draft of the proposed budget and appropriations ordinance the Board for discussion. She advised that the budget is balanced and ready to go. The plan is to have a public hearing before the next meeting, and the Board will need to approve the ordinance and budget at that meeting. The only thing she wanted to point out is that Chief Evans sent an email requesting that line item for the turnout gear be increased to $17,500 to purchase 3 sets of gear for the year. Treasurer Olson said she has budgeted for 2 sets of gear. If the Board chooses to override her and include another set this year she will adjust the budget accordingly. She also included in the packet a preliminary year to date versus budget for fiscal year 2026. She will finalize the figures after the audit is complete.

   President Samples handed out a memo to the Trustee regarding the Volunteer Fire Department and shared his thoughts. He can back up everything in the letter. He is not really happy with the Fire Department coming in, wanting more money all the time. He said they have money available to them in their other fund. Treasurer Olson said she is not sure what they will spend the money on as she does not have access to that account. Attached to the letter is a breakdown of the payments to the Fire Fighters over the last 4 years.

   Trustee Retzer asked why the Fire Department has something like this, but the other departments do not. Treasurer Olson asked if he was asking about the pay or the other bank account they have. He is asking about the other account. President Samples said that was something that was set up a long time ago. When the Fire Department does the fundraisers, those funds go into the separate account. Several years ago, there was some questions relating to misappropriating the funds, so the Village took over managing the account. The auditors subsequently said the funds were not the Village's, so the control was given back to the Fire Department. President Samples said he has a problem with them having so much money in an account for no other reason than to just have the money. They do not want to spend "their" money. Treasurer Olson said part of the issue that surrounds this is the definition of the Fire Department. They are considered a Fire Department under the Village of South Jacksonville. The question is whether the Volunteer Fire Department under the Village of South Jacksonville a standalone entity or is it our actual people. We do not pay them like employees, but we pay workman's compensation insurance for them. It is a difficult question that no one can seem to give her a straight answer.

President Samples said he is truly in favor of them having their own Fire Protection District where they have their own money, employees and equipment. Trustee Retzer said it just seems like a cluster. Treasurer Olson said her issue is that Chief Evans asked for an extra set of turnout gear and even though the Village purchased the fire truck this year he is not offering to purchase the extra set out of their funds. The Village has no idea what those funds are used for. Trustee Retzer said if they want an extra set they can buy it. Trustee Retzer asked who their governing board is. President Samples said they do not have one. Treasurer Olson said they have the Chief and Captains, but no one from the outside. Trustee Retzer said he does not like the sound of it at all.

Old Business

1. *Axon Contracts:* Chief Hansell presented the Board with a contract consolidation proposal from Axon. Over the last few years, the department has added additional cameras which have created multiple contracts with Axon. To help with this he contacted Axon to consolidate all of these contracts into one. With the consolidated contract proposal, the Village will also get all of the department tasers upgraded to Taser 10, all new body cameras, new squad car cameras, access to Fusus and 3 solar powered outpost cameras. The idea would be to put one of the outpost cameras around the school as a permanent location and move the other 2 around the Village as needed. The new contract is for a 5-year period. If we renewed each contract individually, the total increase would be $103,366. With the new contract and all the free equipment and programs our new yearly payment will be about $77,237. Treasurer Olson said she did budget this in the figures for this year.

   President Samples reminded the Board that we are mandated to have the body cameras. Chief Hansell said we own all of our existing equipment and could sell it to recoup some of the funds. He has reached out to the Morgan County Sheriff's Office, and they are interested in purchasing some of the equipment. Trustee Retzer asked if Axon is a company and what their reputation is. Chief Hansell said they are the industry standard and are top of the line.

New Business

1. *PD Exercise Room:* Chief Hansell told the Board that the officers would like to set up an exercise room in the department. They are planning to solicit donations of old equipment. Treasurer Olson said she will check for any available grants that may be available for something like this.
2. *Police Sergeant: Chief* Hansell said he wants to promote a sergeant to help with some of the duties of the department. The sergeant will assist with supervision of the patrol

staff, calls for service and paperwork. He would like to do a trial process. He will be very selective and also be hard on them.

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

(SEAL) VILLAGE OF SOUTH JACKSONVILLE CORPORATE 1911 SEAL ILLINOIS