



City of West Allis

Meeting Minutes

Police and Fire Commission

Thursday, August 21, 2025

6:00 PM

West Allis Fire Department
7332 W. National Ave.

REGULAR MEETING

A. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Cosby called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Kimberly Cosby, Michelle Sutinen, Amy Heron and Sagar Tolani

Excused: Commissioner Mark Manthei

Also present: Police Chief Pat Mitchell, Deputy Chief Chris Marks - Police Department; Interim Fire Chief Jason Schaak, Interim Assistant Chief Joe Breznik - Fire Department; City Administrator Erin Hirn - City of West Allis; Bridget Morawetz, Recording Secretary

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the July 17, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Sutinen and seconded by Commissioner Heron to approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following votes:

Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani

Nay: 0

D. POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. Request for approval: Initiation of a Captain's promotional process

A motion was made by Commissioner Tolani and seconded by Commissioner Heron to approve this request as presented.

The motion carried by the following votes:

Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani
Nay: 0

2. Request for approval: Police Department 2026 budget requests

Chief Mitchell discussed his 2026 budget requests with the Commissioners. He noted that he is seeking two increases for the 2026 budget year: 1) a \$45,240 increase for maintenance contracts and software and 2) a \$20,040 increase for education and training. Chief Mitchell stated that the increase will be reimbursed at \$320 per certified officer via the Wisconsin Act 227 and will not be paid for by the West Allis taxpayers.

Chief Mitchell then stated that he presented two items at the 2026 Capital Budget meeting for consideration and approval: 1) \$815,036 for the upgrade/replacement of the dispatch center radio system and console stations. He stated that components on both are over 13 years old and have reached end of life usage; 2) request of \$138,000 to replace two (2) parking control vehicles.

Additional discussion ensued between the Commissioners and Chief Mitchell regarding the requests and clarification and explanations were provided accordingly.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tolani and seconded by Commissioner Sutinen to approve the suggested 2026 budget requests as presented by Chief Mitchell.

The motion carried by the following votes:

Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani
Nay: 0

3. Police Department Financial Report

Chief Mitchell did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

4. Monthly Performance Report

Chief Mitchell stated that the 2025 West Allis Night Out was well attended by residents and the next day, Community Services members attended a number of neighborhood block parties to engage further with West Allis residents.

Chief Mitchell reviewed a significant incident that occurred on July 19th. He noted the stop sticks deployed and additional assistance of a squad push bar aided in bringing a vehicle to a stop after the driver took off during an attempted traffic stop.

Chief Mitchell stated that a search of the car resulted in recovery of a rifle and cocaine. Additionally, the driver was found to be a convicted felon. Chief Mitchell stated that both the driver and passenger were arrested and charged accordingly.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

5. Training Bureau Report

Chief Mitchell stated that Community Services Officer (CSO) staffing is currently at seven, just one person short of the department's allotted eight positions. He stated that all seven are performing well in their CSO roles and the department will continue to assist with developing their skills as potential recruitment candidates in the future.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

6. Patrol Bureau Report

Chief Mitchell did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

7. Criminal Investigations Bureau Report

Chief Mitchell discussed with the Commissioners the cities sex offender ordinance and specifically the decision regarding the 950-foot radius requirement from schools, parks and day cares for such individuals. He noted that two individuals have requested to move to West Allis and their requests are currently under review.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

8. Community Services Bureau Report

Chief Mitchell did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

9. Communications Bureau Report

Chief Mitchell did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

10. Tavern Violation Report

Chief Mitchell did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

E. FIRE DEPARTMENT

11. Request for approval: Fire Department 2026 budget requests

Interim Fire Chief Schaak presented a number of items to the Commissioners relating to his 2026 operations budget and capital budget requests to include:

Operations:

- \$68,000 increase in the overtime budget to offset a 10.75% negotiated union wage increase and a potential change in 24-hour non-represented discretionary leave benefits

Capital:

- \$130,000 for replacement of in-vehicle dispatch computers as the current operating systems is failing and IT identified replacements as a priority;
- \$200,000 for PPE gear replacement;
- \$25,000 to retro fit an existing pickup truck with toolboxes and a lift gate to assist with apparatus repairs

A motion was made by Commissioner Heron and seconded by Commissioner Tolani to approve all the suggested budget requests as presented by I/FC Schaak.

The motion was approved by the following votes:

Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani

Nay: 0

12. Communication: Flood response and EOC update

I/FC Schaak presented to the Commissioners an overview of the actions taken by both departments and DPW in response to the severe flooding event on August 9, 2025. He stated that over 150 calls for assistance came through the dispatch center during the heaviest timeframe of the rainfall.

I/FC noted that FEMA involvement and other financial support for residents is a priority as well as debris cleanup and health protection of residents. Lastly, he noted that a more inclusive and informative report of this event will be presented before the end of the year to the Commissioners.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

13. Fire and Rescue Report

I/FC Schaak stated that fire prevention efforts for July were focused on State Fair vendors and the bureau worked to complete over 629 inspections prior to the start of the fair.

I/FC also reviewed some of the benchmarks contained in this report.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

14. Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) and EMS Report

I/FC Schaak stated that the current MIH contract with the VA has expired as of August 10th and the VA has suspended MIH visit referrals until a new contract has been established and approved.

I/FC Schaak then reviewed the highlighted EMS calls contained in this report.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

15. Administration and Communications Report

I/FC Schaak stated that he recently attended and completed the first course in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer program. He noted that the program is held in Emmitsburg, Maryland at the National Fire Academy and is recognized as a premier leadership development program.

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

16. Fire Department Financial Report

I/FC Schaak did not speak to anything contained in this report and the Commissioners had no additional questions or comments.

The report was placed on file.

17. Communication: Resignation of Firefighter Justin McMenamain

I/FC Schaak stated that FF McMenamain resigned from the department after accepting a position with the Milwaukee Fire Department.

18. Communication: Retirement of Firefighter Scott Portz

I/FC Schaak stated that FF Scott Portz will retire from the department on August 20th after a 27-year career with WAFD. He noted that FF Portz was dedicated to his job and his good-natured personality would be missed.

19. Communication: Retirement of Battalion Chief Guy Paider

I/FC Schaak stated that BC Guy Paider retired from the department on August 16th after a 29-year career with WAFD. He stated that BC Paider held many roles within the department and presented a calm, clear and professional presence during his tenure.

F. POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

20. PFC Financial Report

The Commissioners had no additional questions or comments and the report was placed on file.

21. Discussion: Opening and maintaining lines of communication options with administrative and non-administrative members of the fire and police departments

Commissioner Heron stated that she met with City Attorney Decker and Commissioner Manthei to discuss communication between the department administration staff, union members and the PFC. She stated that the process of bringing department issues in front of the Commission does not seem to be working effectively and would like to work on a solution to open the lines of communication between all parties.

Both Chiefs stated that they meet regularly with their respective Union Board Presidents as well as Commissioner Manthei to discuss issues (policy or personnel) as well as a general overview of current department goings on. Chief Mitchell indicated that in terms of disciplinary or compliant sharing, the departments can keep the Commission President in loop only, but the information cannot be shared with all as the need to remain impartial is necessary should an appeal on a disciplinary or complaint needs to be presented to the full Commission.

Commissioner Tolani stated that as Commissioner Manthei is the President of the Board, his input and direction will be needed to have a complete discussion and made a motion to table until the September meeting.

The motion was approved by the following votes:
Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani
Nay: 0

22. Discussion and possible action regarding the fire department's current interim appointments

Commissioner Tolani stated that over the past months with the appointment of the interim positions, he has seen lots of positive changes and movement with the department. He stated that as an interim position; while having the authority to make important decisions, it does not have the full impact of having the Fire Chief status recognition. Additionally, Commissioner Tolani noted that if the merger is approved to move forward, it will take anywhere from 2-3 years to complete and an interim status was not designed to be held that long. Commissioner Tolani stated he is in favor of approving the move from Interim status for full status of all three individuals.

Commissioner Heron disagreed and stated that she asked City Attorney Decker what the difference was between Interim and Full status and it was indicated that the difference was, an Interim was easier to get rid of than an actual Fire Chief. Further she indicated that if the merger occurred, a Fire Chief recruitment process would take place and all would need to reapply for the positions regardless.

Commissioner Sutinen agrees with Commissioner Heron and asked City Administrator Hirn her perspective on this issue.

CA Hirn responded that as stated, if the merger is approved, then yes, at some point a recruitment process will happen for a Fire Chief for the combined department. However, as also stated, that will not happen much before 2027 and who would really apply for a Fire Chief position between now and then, knowing that within a year or so, they would have to reapply for the combined department Chief position.

Commissioner Cosby continued to be in favor of moving forward with the appointment to full status of all three individuals. She stated that given the absence of Commissioner Manthei, she proposed that this agenda be tabled again until the September meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tolani and seconded by Commissioner Heron to table this discussion as requested by Commissioner Cosby.

The motion was approved by the following votes:
Aye: 4, Commissioners Cosby, Sutinen, Heron and Tolani
Nay: 0

G. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on a motion made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm



All meetings of the Police and Fire Commission are public meetings. In order for the general public to make comments at the committee meetings, the individual(s) must be scheduled (as an appearance) with the chair of the committee or the appropriate staff contact; otherwise, the meeting of the committee is a working session for the committee itself, and discussion by those in attendance is limited to committee members, the mayor, other alderpersons, staff and others that may be a party to the matter being discussed.

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The City of West Allis does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, age, marital or veterans' status, sex, national origin, disability or any other legally protected status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs or activities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT NOTICE

Upon reasonable notice the City will furnish appropriate auxiliary aids and services when necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and to enjoy the benefits of a service, program or activity provided by the City.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of West Allis to provide language access services to populations of persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) who are eligible to be served or likely to be directly affected by our programs. Such services will be focused on providing meaningful access to our programs, services and/or benefits.