

Starke County Sheriff's Office
Merit Board Meeting Minutes
1/31/2024

Opening:

Meeting was called to order at 5:20pm, held at the Starke County Justice Center conference room. The meeting was called to order by Brad Hazelton.

Present:

Merit Board Members: Brad Hazelton, Tom Belork, Denise Cultice, Phil Cherry, and Brett Hansen

Sheriff: Sheriff Jack Rosa, Chief Deputy Jack Hudgens, Deputy Chad McDonald, Deputy Daniel Byrd, and Matron April Wilhelm

New Business:

Brad Hazelton proposed the Sheriff's recommendation to extend the probation period from 12 to 18 months due to the academy wait list and FTO opportunity after the academy. Chief Deputy Hudgens reiterated that this would be for non-certified hires only, and the 12-month period would still apply to certified hires. Tom Belork made a motion to approve a change the probation period to: 18 months for all non-certified officers and 12 months for all certified, second by Denise Cultice, all approved.

Brad Hazelton advised that the Merit Board Rules and Regulations and SOP's were outdated and needed to be revised. Deputy McDonald suggested pulling two policies every six months or so and going over them. Hazelton revisited the vacation policy that was approved by the board in October 2023. Per this policy, all but one officer was grandfathered in for the old policy. Denise Cultice made a motion to approve, second by Brett Hansen, all approved.

Brad Hazelton addressed the off-duty vehicle policy. Sheriff Rosa wants to secure this stand-alone policy for our department in case of county policy changes. The current policy almost mirrors the county policy, but the suggested was made to adopt a line from the county that reads, "County-owned vehicles for personal use are only allowed to be used within Starke County and adjacent counties". A motion was made to approve this adoption by Denise Cultice, second by Phil Cherry, all approved.

Hazelton advised that he had recently contacted 1st Source Bank and that Tara told him that we are all caught up, "flush", with our retirement funds. McDonald suggested finding out if we could get deposits made into the retirement fund on a more frequent basis. Funds are deposited with the county monthly, so moving that money to our retirement funds more frequently could be beneficial. Hazelton suggested he could go with the Sheriff to see if we could get that approved.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Denise Cultice, seconded by Tom Belork, all approved. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: April Wilhelm