

# **Girdwood Public Safety Advisory Committee Regular Meeting**

## **April 15, 2025**

### **Minutes Final**

This meeting will be held via Teams with in-person attendance at the Girdwood Community Room, 250 Egloff Dr.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings.

The Girdwood Public Safety Advisory Committee operates under the Girdwood Public Meetings Standards of Conduct.

7PM Call to order, Luke Niedringhaus, Co-chair

Roll call: Mike Opalka, Debra Croghan, Tim Astle and Luke Niedringhaus attending

Quorum confirmed (3 required)

GBOS Member Kellie Okonek, Police, Roads and Utilities Chair also attending, not needed for quorum

Agenda approval for Apr 15 2024 meeting

LN/TA

Assent

Minutes approval from Nov 19 2024 meeting

No action

No quorum of members currently on PSAC attended that meeting. Minutes will remain in draft form

**Announcements/Introductions/Presentation:** None

#### **Business:**

- 1) Welcome new members, introductions and discuss PSAC structure  
Members introduce themselves.  
PSAC structure requires 3 to create quorum. If needed, GBOS member can vote.  
Operating rules are in the packet for all to review. No formal change yet to quarterly meetings.

As Chief Achee is attending Whittier council meeting tonight as well, at this point he provides his report, which is noted in the minutes under Public Safety Reports.

- 2) Public Safety Contract with Whittier  
Copy of the 2022 contract is in the meeting packet. This contract is 3 year – ending at midnight Dec 31 2025. Renewal option clarifies the amount for police services, however the additional cost of dispatch at the amount \$tbd will be added to that set amount. Renewal will be for 2 years.  
Staff recommends renewal of the contract for the extension period.

GVSA will need to determine what to do for policing after the renewal term (ending Dec 31 2027).  
This discussion should begin in 2026.

Summary of review of policing is presented and added to final meeting packet.

Options would require various steps to become viable:

Girdwood create own police department – specific requirements tbd, vote of Girdwood and costs associated with purchase/maintenance/staffing.

Girdwood join Anchorage Police Department – requires positive vote of Anchorage and Girdwood

Girdwood/Whittier engage in new contract – requires negotiation of contract specifics and mutual agreement

Girdwood has contracted with Whittier for police services for 9 years, under 3 different contracts. Service remains mutually beneficial. Girdwood receives community policing and response times that are better than those available elsewhere at a cost that is less than what other communities pay for policing. Whittier is able to maintain staff throughout the year as Girdwood and Whittier have somewhat opposite “busy” policing seasons.

- 3) Discuss any new and ongoing Girdwood public safety concerns (see meeting packet)  
Status of PSAC recommended GBOS resolution from Nov 2024: GBOS wrote a resolution requesting speed study of Alyeska Highway. DOT has acknowledged the request and it will likely take place during summer months.

Girdwood Public Safety Advisory Committee is a sub-committee to the Girdwood Board of Supervisors

Resolution also addressed traffic calming on Alyeska Highway – Staff is working on Transfer of Responsibility Agreement (TORA) with State DOT to allow work on the sweeps. Flashing speed limit signs and re-painting of the stencils on the pedestrian pathway along Alyeska Highway are also included in this discussion with DOT and TORA.

Group also discusses speed limits on neighborhood roads, which are mainly MOA. 20MPH is about the lowest speed limit within the MOA, lower is difficult to enforce. Speed limits for both state and municipal roads are managed by their respective Traffic Departments. Staff can provide information from recent speed studies. Notable in the studies is the volume of traffic on Timberline.

- 4) Review upcoming community events (see meeting packet)  
Spring Carnival and Forest Fair are main events.
- 5) Other Community relations opportunities:  
The list below are items that PSAC members have engaged in the past. Staff will support these and other efforts by PSAC members:  
PSAC member ride along with WPD (not discussed)  
Outreach via community resources: Newspaper; Newsletters; Clinic; Other (Not discussed)  
Attendance at Whittier town council: Upon advice/coordination by Chief Achee, PSAC members may go to Whittier closer to contract signing.  
Future Coffee with Cops/Cones and Cops: Debra Croghan will engage with owners of coffee shops/Ice Cream shop and offer dates to Chief Achee to see about proactively scheduling for fall. Staff will assist with publicizing events.
- 6) Update on status of Areawide alcohol tax  
GBOS wrote a letter requesting funding for projects as determined by Police and Fire Chief in Feb 2025. Determination of what may be approved is pending.
- 7) Roundtable comments from the PSAC board  
Concern about low snow year and increased wildfire hazards in Girdwood. Proactive steps to protect the community possible at this time? Fire Chief is aware and monitoring/advising. Forest Fair has moved food vendors to be out from the trees for exactly this reason. Weather will be a large factor, there are a number of things GVSA can do and has done in the past if there is a burn ban in effect:  
portable signs and general publicity to advise public of hazard  
enforce no campfires at the campground  
GFR respond to fires on other private/public property during burn ban
- 8) Next meeting date May 13, 2025 at 7PM

#### **Public Safety Reports:**

WPD Update (WPD Chief Andre Achee) – review most recent stats

New dispatch service coming on line. Contract has been awarded to Valdez, transfer of services is underway with May 1 full transition expected. Prior to this, dispatch was provided from Sitka. Lately this has been difficult with fiberoptic cable failures. Cost of dispatch is higher than that from Sitka. Distribution of that cost between Whittier and Girdwood is still being calculated.

PSAC requests that Valdez dispatch staff complete a site tour of Girdwood so that they are more familiar with the layout of the town.

PSAC member requests that Whittier Police focus on enforcement of speeding in the 45MPH zone of Alyeska Highway.

GFR Update (Chief Michelle Weston) – request written report: No report

GBOS Public Safety Supervisor report (Kellie Okonek): No report

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjourn** 8:10PM