

# **Police & Fire Commission (PFC) Charter 2026**

## **Purpose of Commission:**

The Police & Fire Commission is authorized and mandated under State Statute 62.13 for the purpose of providing uniform regulations of police, fire and emergency medical services. Further, in 1945 the citizens of Port Washington, by referendum, authorized Optional Powers for the PFC as outlines under State Statute 62.13 (6).

Police and Fire Commissions are intended to keep politics out of personnel decisions; ensure that hiring is done on merit; ensure any discipline is conducted fairly by an impartial citizen board; and hear and review citizen concerns.

## **Mission Statement:**

The Police & Fire Commission (PFC) exists for the benefit of all our citizens, who expect and deserve a high level of public safety. We oversee the Police Department, Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in a fiscally responsible manner. Our mission is to hire and retain the most qualified personnel and advocate for the best training, equipment and facilities to allow them to carry out their tasks. The safety of our residents and protection of life and property is our goal.

## **Meeting Date and Time:**

The Police & Fire Commission meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6 PM at City Hall.

## **Membership and Terms:**

Police & Fire Commissioners are appointed by the mayor and approval by the Council to a 5-year term. Appointments are confirmed at the Council's May meeting.

Jim Biever (Chairman)	Term expires 5/1/2030
Sarah Burdette (Vice Chair)	Term expires 5/1/2026
Joe Dean	Term expires 5/1/2027
Jill Eernisse	Term expires 5/1/2028
Ed Johnson (Secretary)	Term expires 5/1/2029

## **2026 Strategic Goals for Police & Fire Commission:**

- 2026 will see the opening of our new Public Safety Building. This building was designed to meet the needs of our police and fire departments for 50 years into the future.
- The mental health and well-being of our police and fire personnel will again be a priority.
- The PFC will continue to take an active role in the budget process to advocate for our departments and identify efficiency and cost saving opportunities in the yearly budget.
- Work continues to review and approve an updated PFC Rules and Procedures Manual.
- The PFC will encourage continuing education and training for all personnel.
- We will continue to review department Capital Items requests.
- We will work with both Chiefs and key personnel to explore and encourage new thinking and procedures. Identifying cost savings measures should also be encouraged in all departments while identifying grant and other funding opportunities.

## **Obstacles, Risks and Countermeasures:**

- Retaining qualified personnel and full staffing for all departments is required to achieve our goals. This past year we had very few responses to our efforts to fill an open officer position in the Police Department. Likewise in the Fire Department, the demand for full-time firefighter/paramedics in this county far outpaces qualified candidates.
- Retaining full-time firefighter/paramedics will become challenging this year as our pay scale begins to fall behind that of other area departments.
- Inflation continues to take its toll on budgets. Realistic budgets going forward should be considered.

## **Measuring our Success:**

- The Fire Department has been able to maintain adequate paid-on call and paid-on-premises staffing. As noted, full-time staffing will be a challenge going forward.
- All Police Officer positions are currently filled.

- In 2024 we told the citizens of Port Washington that if they approve our Fire Department full-time staffing referendum, we'll assure them prompt responses in their time of need. We made good on that promise - EMS response times have consistently averaged about six minutes from time of page to on-scene for most of 2025 within the city. Fire response time has also been greatly reduced. The reliance on neighboring departments to answer our calls has virtually been eliminated.
- Port Washington consistently ranks as one of the safest cities in Wisconsin if not the entire nation. Something we should be proud of and celebrate.

### **Reporting and Accountability:**

- Having the PFC meetings televised on the city's YouTube channel allows our elected officials and citizens to monitor the activities of our departments and the Police & Fire Commission.
- Open communication with our citizens, the City Administrator and other key personnel is crucial and should be encouraged.