

**APSOA**

# **ASHWAUBENON PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER'S ASSOCIATION**

2155 Holmgren Way - Ashwaubenon - WI - 54304

**EMBARGO UNTIL PRESS RELEASE AT 11:00 AM CST**

**PRESS RELEASE AND PUBLIC STATEMENT WILL BE LOCATED AT 780 Armed Forces Drive  
D2's Stadium District at 11:00 am CST on Feb 06, 2020. Contact Eric Paulowski with  
Questions.**

## **Ashwaubenon Public Safety Officers Association Expresses Support of Incoming Police Chief And "No Confidence" in Village Manager**

Ashwaubenon Public Safety Officers stand firmly behind incoming Public Safety Director Brian Uhl, but have significant concerns over the Public Safety Department's relationship with Village of Ashwaubenon management, according to Eric Paulowski, President of the Ashwaubenon Public Safety Officers Association (ASPOA).

Uhl, formerly Chief of Police for the Village of Oregon, will become head of Ashwaubenon's Public Safety Department on Feb. 17.

Paulowski said numerous Public Safety Officers have had disappointing or unsatisfactory experiences with Village Manager Allison Swanson. They include issues related to open records requests, the handling of various department incidents, unilateral changes to pay practices, wrongful denials of grievances, and possible disregard of Village policy and procedures. Several grievances and lawsuits are pending against the Village by former and current officers.

"It is unclear," said Paulowski, "how much support the Public Safety Department has from the Village Board of Trustees, which has oversight authority over the Village Manager. The APSOA



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hopes the Village Board takes seriously the disappointing and unsatisfactory experiences the officers have had with the Village Manager.”

The APSOA has declared a statement of “No Confidence” in Ms. Swanson with a vote that occurred on Wednesday evening. The APSOA hopes this action will cause the Village Board to give careful attention to the facts that led to this “No Confidence” vote and result in a more cooperative and collaborative relationship between APSOA and the Village Board, said Paulowski.

“To be honest, this is significantly overdue,” said Paulowski. “The Association did not want to go public with this,” he continued. “But given the Village Board’s failure to acknowledge the countless complaints that the Association and many citizens have brought forth, we simply had no choice. It is important to recognize this vote is unanimous, and not a single member feels differently. Our hope in this action is that it will bring forth a shift that results in a more cooperative and collaborative relationship between the Association, the Village Board and Public Safety Department employees and leadership.”

The APSOA has included along with this release, a list of factual evidence, including documents, reflecting of Village Manager Swanson’s behavior and asks constituents to form their own opinion based upon those facts. It also asks the residents to reach out to their Village Board members and demand action based upon the evidence before them.

For more information, contact APSOA President Officer Eric Paulowski at 920-540-6550 or APSOA Secretary Officer Melanie Lovato at 920-562-0079.

The following is a partial list of just some of the egregious behaviors the Association has witnessed:



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- Ms. Swanson terminated a Lieutenant and demoted two additional supervisors (Captain and Lieutenant by stripping them of their seniority) without Police and Fire Commissions approval or involvement. **Multiple Lawsuits pending.**
- Ms. Swanson continues to violate Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and applicable wage and hour laws even after being notified from the EEOC office that her actions are improper. **Multiple Lawsuits Pending**
- Ms. Swanson personally disregarded criminal charges recommended by an Internal Affairs investigation related to a Village Board member's conduct in September of 2019. Battery & Disorderly Conduct charges were recommended and Ms. Swanson stated in an email to the Head of Internal Affairs that she was "comfortable with no action being taken," despite the fact that her position has no law enforcement or prosecutorial component.
- Ms. Swanson requested an Ashwaubenon Public Safety Officer void multiple citations as a favor to an officer from an outside police department.
- Ms. Swanson recommended a change to the Village's anti-nepotism clause as she was involved in a personal relationship that violated the then existing anti-nepotism policy. Historically, other highly qualified candidates have not been hired or even considered due to this policy.
- Conservative estimates reflect a Village investment of over 13 million dollars in Capital Park, yet this measure never went to the Finance Committee or referendum. The approximate payback on this stadium is 2% annually, not counting the approximately \$50,000 the Village must contribute to an escrow account for maintenance annually. Minimum payback on this investment is 50-70 years yet Big Top Baseball only has a contract for 20 years. It is unclear what happens in year twenty one.
- Swanson has approved significant expenditures in the purchase and subsequent clean-up of Schneider lot on S. Broadway without involvement from Finance Committee. The only involvement from the Finance Committee was to approve the final budget. Capital Park and Schneider purchases were never brought as a line item to the Finance Committee; At least one member of the Finance Committee feels that it would have been normal practice to involve the committee in these types of expenditures.
- An outside investigation looking into the off-duty life of Officer Jamie Zynda was ordered by Ms. Swanson and cost taxpayers approximately \$13,000. The investigation found no violations, yet Ms. Swanson nonetheless insisted that a disciplinary letter be placed in his file. When APSOA contested this decision in Arbitration, Officer Zynda was told he would have to use personal vacation time if he was needed to testify. **Arbitration decision pending.**
- Swanson requested an outside law firm conduct an investigation into a K9 fundraiser event during which officers were given no information about what they might have done wrong, yet no violations were found, and the Village refused to release relevant documents for months. **Prohibited Practice filed.**



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- FMLA leave denied for birth of an Officer's child. State of Wisconsin contacted, reversed the decision with FMLA granted.
- Officer's retirement pay out structure changed without negotiations or advance notice to the Association to do so. Ms. Swanson simply changed the retirement payout amount to retiring Officers costing the average officer \$15,000-\$50,000 each upon retirement. **Grievance plus additional Lawsuits pending.**
- **Grievances pending** for officers not be disciplined equally or given Instructor positions per contract.
- Ms. Swanson suddenly removed a long serving member from the Police and Fire Commission (PFC) when the member did not agree with Ms. Swanson on a particular topic. Swanson did this in the context of changing the residency requirement for PFC members. Swanson was then able to fill the open seat with her own appointment.
- Officer was a victim of sexual assault from Supervisor while off duty. Officer was told by Ms. Swanson that, "This was attention you were asking for".
- Village scammed out of \$293,310.45. Employees were not disciplined equally. In fact, one employee received a \$10,000 raise approximately 18 months after the incident. Village was found to not have fraud insurance protecting the Village.
- Ms. Swanson arbitrarily changed the pay of officers in violation of the collective bargaining agreement in 2016-2017. The Association filed a grievance in 2017 for contract violations. Ms. Swanson settled with the Union just prior to the arbitration hearing, acknowledging the contract and pay scales. Officers were not paid back fully for previous lost wages. The Association agreed to settle with all members losing hundreds to thousands of dollars each and had significant legal defense fees despite a very clear contract violation.
- Ms. Swanson changed the procedure so all information regarding the Ashwaubenon Public Safety Department must go through her prior to being released to the public. This has not been the practice of our Public Information Officers in the past.
- Chief Rolling announced early retirement from Public Safety due in part to repeated unethical decisions made by Ms. Swanson. Chief Dunning and Lieutenant Crocker also made a decision to leave earlier than projected. Other Department heads have also resigned their employment due to strained relationships with Ms. Swanson.
- Street Department & Public Works employees lost up to 5 vacation days. ACT 10 voided their union contracts so Ms. Swanson removed the sick time bonus from these employees as they had no means to contest it.
- An officer signed up for vision insurance by error in November of 2015. Ms. Swanson refused to cancel coverage. The insurance company acknowledged the insurance could be cancelled. After significant requests, Ms. Swanson eventually cancelled the coverage.



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- Ms. Swanson yelled out of a truck window as she drove by at an officer on an active traffic stop calling him a nickname which was unwelcomed. This was completely unprofessional conduct and a formal complaint was filed.
- \$89,000 was spent on a Public Safety Department study, which recommended staffing ambulances with only two officers. APSOA feels strongly this would greatly reduce EMS care, efficiency and patient outcomes. Ms. Swanson alleges this study was performed by a committee. This committee was involved in the selection process for the contractor of the study but then excluded them from many aspects of the study. Ms. Swanson met personally behind closed doors with the contractor multiple times, allowing her the opportunity to influence the contractor and its reports. No other committee members were granted this opportunity.



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