



# Village of Kewaskum

## Statement from the Village Board Regarding Forthcoming Disciplinary Charges

The Village Board of Kewaskum is committed to maintaining the trust and confidence of the community we serve. This includes communicating as transparently as possible about matters that affect the Village. In keeping with that commitment, the Board is providing this update regarding an ongoing matter involving the Kewaskum Police Department.

### **Filing of Charges with the Police and Fire Commission**

Following the conclusion of an independent investigation conducted under the guidance of the Village's labor and employment counsel, the Village Board has filed formal charges with the Kewaskum Police and Fire Commission (PFC), the legal mechanism for pursuing disciplinary action in law enforcement. Charges have been filed against Police Chief Thomas Bishop and Lieutenant Bryan Frank.

The charges outline failures by Chief Bishop and Lt. Frank to follow established procedures and hiring protocols related to the employment of Officer Jeremy Haske. The investigation found conduct that the Board believes reflects a level of negligence inconsistent with departmental policies and the professional standards expected of leadership.

### **Background**

Earlier this year, the Village Board was informed of allegations from the early 2000s involving Officer Haske during his employment with a prior law enforcement agency in Juneau County. That matter resulted in disciplinary findings that were upheld on appeal in Juneau County Circuit Court and ultimately, his termination from the Juneau County law enforcement agency. Officer Haske's application to the Kewaskum Police Department did not disclose the reason for the conclusion of his prior employment.

The independent investigation examined whether appropriate due diligence was conducted prior to Officer Haske's hire and whether department leadership fulfilled its responsibilities under established hiring and vetting procedures. The findings support the Board's determination that the hiring process did not meet the standards expected and was not in the best interest of the department or the community.



Officer Haske remains on paid administrative leave while next steps in the process are determined.

### **Why the Board Is Taking This Step**

The Village Board has a responsibility to ensure that the residents of Kewaskum are served by a police department that operates with professionalism, accountability, and integrity at every level, including in how it vets, evaluates and selects the officers entrusted with public safety.

Filing charges with the Police and Fire Commission is the appropriate legal mechanism under Wisconsin law to ensure that these matters are reviewed thoroughly, fairly and transparently. This process is fair to all parties, providing both Chief Bishop and Lt. Frank with the opportunity to justify the process and their actions.

### **What Happens Next**

Because the Village Board is not directly responsible for hiring, reviewing or discipline within the Police Department, this charging process is required to request a review by its governing body, the Police and Fire Commission (PFC). The PFC is an independent citizen body responsible for overseeing the hiring, promotion, and discipline of police personnel. The Commission will now conduct its own proceedings in accordance with Wisconsin law. The Village Board will respect that process and will continue to share information with the community as it is appropriate.

### **Continued Public Safety**

The Village wants to assure residents that public safety services remain fully operational. The Kewaskum Police Department continues to serve the community, and residents should continue to call 911 or the non-emergency number as needed.

### **A Commitment to This Community**

The Village of Kewaskum holds its employees — and its leaders — to high professional and ethical standards. The decision to file these charges was not made lightly. It reflects the Board's belief that accountability and transparency are essential to maintaining the public trust that our community deserves.

We appreciate the patience and support of our residents as this process moves forward. We are committed to keeping the community informed and to ensuring that Kewaskum continues to be a place where residents have full confidence in their local government and police department.