

Flossmoor PD training helps keep staff emergency-ready

BY BILL JONES
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In the wake of the mass shooting that claimed the lives of 19 children and two adults in late May at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, the Flossmoor Village Board took some time during its Monday, June 6, meeting to discuss the measures its police department has taken over more than two decades to prepare to respond to active shooter situations.

"Chief [Tod] Kamleiter and staff had an opportunity to reflect on our police department's readiness and training in the area of active shooter response," Deputy Chief Clint Wagner said.

Those efforts started roughly 23 years ago, following the Columbine High School massacre. Kamleiter and Sgt. Brian Tencza became the first certified trainers in active shooter response, Wagner said.

"This training has evolved in many ways over the years, in response to similar acts of violence in our nation's schools, and development of new tactics and training," Wagner said.

The police department's leadership has continued to train officers since 1999, rotating annual training between each school in the community. Staff has also trained officers in neighboring jurisdictions who may respond to emergencies in Flossmoor's schools, Wagner said.

The Flossmoor Police Department has also provided the village's schools with facility security assessments and assistance with their staff response plans for active shooter situations. Kamleiter and Cmdr. Keith Taylor did a security assessment for Flossmoor Community Church in April, Wagner added.

Each public school is required to do a drill annually, with law enforcement and students in attendance. Those drills last took place in October 2021 for Flossmoor School District 161 schools, February

2022 for Infant Jesus of Prague School and in March 2022 for Homewood-Flossmoor High School.

On the annual training side for officers, Flossmoor held its training at H-F High School in 2019, Parker Junior High School in 2020 and FCC in 2021. So, training will likely take place at one of the Flossmoor elementary schools this year, Wagner said. A review of H-F's crisis plan also is expected soon, he added. Wagner said that cooperation with schools has been "second to none," with school staffs always responsive to feedback.

Wagner also noted that at the end of May, a Flossmoor officer graduated SWAT training. That will make the police department's staff 100% SWAT trained, Wagner said.

"This level of department-wide tactical training is unheard of, especially in the Chicagoland area," he said.

Kamleiter and Flossmoor Fire Chief Robert Kopec are meeting to develop rescue task force training. The idea for dual department training is to integrate both police and fire responses to enable trauma care to be administered quickly, Wagner said.

Wagner added that Flossmoor officers have bulletproof vests, as well as special rapid response vests they can wear over those to protect them from rifle fire. They also have shields, and carry rifles as well as helmets. The bottom line?

"Flossmoor's staff is trained and ready to respond," Wagner said. "The village has equipped us with every piece of equipment we could possibly have. ... We want to assure everyone in our town that we are prepared, should something unfortunate happen. We have been training on this for years."

"I'm impressed just how proactive you guys always are," Trustee Brian Driscoll said. "Best to be prepared, and hopefully you'll never have to use it."

Scholarships awarded to 8

By Chronicle Staff

The Homewood-Flossmoor Education Organization awarded eight \$500 scholarships to members of the Class of 2022.

The Future Teacher Award was presented to students who plan to pursue a career in education. The honorees are Madelyn Zirbel and Erik Dedo who will be attending Illinois State University.

Outstanding Service Awards recognize students for their participation

and involvement in service at H-F and in the community. Awardees are Elizabeth Wojcikowski who will attend the University of Iowa; Nataleigh Russell who will attend St. Louis University; Charlotte Sampson who will attend the University of Illinois; and Jacobi Buntton, North Carolina A&T.

Outstanding Senior Awards were presented to William Brooks who will go into the trades, and Oscar de la Torre, University of Georgia. They were selected from teacher nominations.



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