

IOWA POLICE JOURNAL

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE IOWA STATE POLICE ASSOCIATION



BOARD SPOTLIGHT

By Zach Lewis, ISPA President



Thank you. Two little words that often escape the vocabulary of those we deal with on a daily basis. For all of you who are reading this, I want to tell you a heart-felt thank you. Thank you for putting on that vest, badge and gun every day and serving with bravery, honor and professionalism (even when you would rather tell that person what you really think). Thank you retirees for your service, the groundwork laid and the lessons learned. And thank you to the wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, mothers, fathers, children, loved ones and friends for supporting us through it all, because without you, there would be no reason to take that oath.

As I enter my seventh year on the board, I am amazed at how time has raced by. When I became junior director in October 2009, in Davenport, the stock market had already crashed and was on the rise, but the damage was done. The cities' contribution rates were already set at the floor of 17 percent from July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010. That changed July 1, 2010, when the rate went to 19.90 percent and eventually topped out at 30.41 percent on July 1, 2014.

The first five years on the board were spent "weathering the storm" of falling revenues, shrinking city budgets and rising contribution rates, or in the words of the great Past President Ryan "Cap'n" Goecke, "keeping this ship *on* the rocks." With the combination of the markets rebounding and the sound investment strategy of team at the Municipal Fire and Police Retirement System of Iowa (MFPRSI), the system recouped all of the losses and the cities' contribution rates dropped on July 1, 2015, by over 3.5 percent.

In the past year, the national spotlight (rightfully so) has been on ambush assassinations of police officers in New York, Texas and Louisiana, amongst others, in the wake of anti-police rhetoric. Here in Iowa, two of the members we lost in the past year were not from assailant attacks, but they were no less devastating. On April 17, 2015, Sgt. Jason "Jay" Fleckenstein with the Sioux City Police Department died of natural causes at the age of 39. On July 4, 2015, Iowa State Police Association (ISPA) Third Vice President Robert "What about Bob" Flannery died after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Both of our brothers were taken before their time. Jay was in the prime of his career, always striving to make himself and everyone around him better. Bob was in the prime of his retirement, if you can call it a retirement. When he should have been hitting the links and working on Linda's honey-do list, he jumped with both feet (and that famous Bob smile) into the crazy world

of the ISPA Board. Bob was not willing to sit on the bench and wait to be called in. Like during his almost 40 years with the Dubuque Police Department, he was “jumping calls” until the end. I have shed more tears in the last year than in the previous 20 (shocking, being a Bears fan), but these two men left this world better than they found it.

With the passing of Bob, the ISPA Board of Directors and the ISPA Past Presidents had a unique situation to address: how to fill the third vice president position smoothly while having Dubuque host in 2018. After much discussion, Past President Tim Pillack was nominated and voted in by the delegates of the 2015 ISPA Conference as Third Vice President of the ISPA. The Board was then advanced, and Josh Bell with Local 5 Cedar Rapids joined the Board as junior director.

I hope I have not depressed you so much that you have quit reading. My reasoning for writing this is that I believe that in order to know where you are going, you have to know where you have been. It is due to the strength and experience of the individual members on the ISPA Board when I was elected in 2009, and those elected after, that ISPA was able to work with our lobbyists, Mike and Paula, Rabiner Treatment Center (RTC) CEO Brad Klug and all of our members, to “weather the storm” both with ISPA and RTC issues.

It is a great honor that I take over as ISPA President. Over the next year, the focus of the ISPA Board is going to be very similar to the last couple years. We are going to work with legislatures and our lobbyists on bills that affect our members. Again this year, we are going to work on increasing our membership along with finding fundraising opportunities. I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that the coming year will bring and hope to see everyone in Sioux City for the 84th Annual ISPA Conference in October, 2016. Stay safe.