

## January 2026 Village President Update

As 2026 begins, I wanted to look back at some key events from 2025 involving our village. The most important development was the decision by the board to contract law enforcement services with the Outagamie Sheriff Department. Before I took office, the village board had already started discussions about the future of our police department. Police Chief Lowell James had announced his retirement for April 11, 2025, just days before my term began on April 15.

Prior to my start date, the board interviewed two candidates for the police chief position but did not fill the role. At the April 14 meeting, the board considered contracting the Outagamie Sheriff Department, but the motion did not pass. The day after I was sworn in, I reached out to Outagamie Sheriff Department to discuss contracting for their services. After careful consideration, I decided to recommend to the board that we move forward with this partnership.

Meanwhile, I spoke with Rick Olig about becoming Interim Police Chief so our department could keep operating. The board approved Rick's appointment on April 23, and he did an excellent job maintaining our services while decisions were being made about the future.

On May 19, the finance committee met to compare costs between our police department and Outagamie Sheriff Department. Public input was had during this discussion. Then, on May 22, the Courts and Public Safety Committee met with Outagamie Sheriff Department to further discuss the agreement, ultimately recommending a contract for one full-time deputy. The village board approved this recommendation on June 3, set to take effect after August 1.

I've shared these details to document how the decision was reached and because I believe partnering with the Outagamie Sheriff Department serves Black Creek's best interests. One major advantage is the training our assigned deputy receives, supported by Outagamie's resources and services. Since the transition, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and I appreciate their professionalism throughout. As of January 12, 2026, Deputy Bigalke will be our new assigned deputy—please join me in welcoming him and thanking Deputy Hewitt for his five months of service.

Black Creek isn't alone in this trend; Combined Locks and, more recently, Kimberly have also contracted with Outagamie County Sheriff Department.

While some of these villages are larger than ours, Black Creek shares similar motivations for choosing this path. I hope this overview helps residents understand broader changes in municipal law enforcement.

Looking ahead, we're working on a new contract with Black Creek Rescue Service, aiming for a resolution by March 2026. We're also discussing upgrades to our Wastewater Treatment Plant with MSA (our contracted engineer) and Saputo, which is an urgent matter.

Please sign up for electronic notifications on our website to stay informed about meetings and notices. The clerk's office distributes newsletters with useful updates, and starting in 2026, water and sewer bills will be sent quarterly. We have important decisions coming up that will impact Black Creek's future, so I encourage everyone to attend village board meetings or check the "departments" tab on the home page for Village President updates.

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Andy Gleason