

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **SEPTEMBER 21, 2021**

The Safety Committee meeting was held on September 21, 2021, at North Royalton City Hall, 14600 State Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m.

**PRESENT: Committee Members:** Chair Mike Vos, Vice Chair Jeremy Dietrich, Joanne Krejci; **Council:** Paul Marnecheck, Linda Barath; **Administration:** Mayor Larry Antoskiewicz, Fire Chief Robert Chegan, Police Chief Keith Tarase, Finance Director Eric Dean, City Planner Kyle Reisz; Economic Development Director Tom Jordan Law Director Thomas Kelly; **Other:** Matthew Stuczynski, Marty Toukonen.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of July 20, 2021 Safety Committee minutes. Moved by Mr. Vos, seconded by Ms. Krejci. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0 **Motion carried.**

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **1. COVID-19 Local Response**

Chief Chegan sent everyone the dash boards from the Department of Health. There have been many more cases seen since July; an increase in numbers. The procedures in the Fire Department and the City still remain the same. CDC guidelines are still being followed, as well as the Cuyahoga County Board of Health guidelines. In speaking with our medical director, they are seeing a lot of younger patients. Most patients have not been vaccinated. The problem we are seeing in the hospitals is the staffing in every aspect. There are not enough employees. As far as we have seen in the hospitals, there are beds available. Staffing issues are a big concern and playing a big role in care. We see a lot of people in a very competitive work force. There has been some break through with those that are vaccinated. As far as vaccination rates, the state's level is roughly 49%, and Cuyahoga County is at 55%. As far as operations, we still have a good PPE supply (Personal Protective Equipment). Department Head meetings are still being held weekly. Chief Chegan felt that the departments have been handled very well.

Mayor Antoskiewicz indicated that University Hospitals had a Mayor's meeting last week, where they talked about this time frame verses when things first started. In general, they are having more cases now. People are going to be seen more often at the ERs, whereas they were more afraid before and some stayed home. People are starting to have surgeries, and procedures, and starting to hurt the work force that they have. This time around, people have gotten a lot nastier in sickness and you may be waiting in the E.R; people are getting upset. He went on to say that every nurse has a lot of patients. Chief Chegan commented that people are waiting in the E.R. and they are busy. Yesterday there were over 130 patients just in the E.R. It is overwhelming to manage the number of patients with staff shortages. At times his team is waiting for an E.R. bed to open up. They are doing their best to maintain, however, hospitals are struggling.

Question was raised about young people and higher numbers. Chief Chegan commented that we still do not know a lot. Everyone is getting out more and there were events over the summer. Winter is coming and people will tend to stay in. There are a lot of unknowns, even with the boosters, etc. With that lack of information, he felt that they have done a good job doing what they need to, in order to protect the staff and community. It has been a good working relationship with everyone. They have put their best practices together for our residents and our employees; with PPE and training. He is seeing other things as well, besides covid, such as pediatric upper respiratory illnesses. He noted that we are coming into the flu season. There is continual training and being ahead of the curve has been the goal. Chief Chegan still has meetings every week just on this topic.

#### **2. Police & Safety Report**

Chief Tarase went over the August stats which included the following: 0 fatal accidents, 4 deer accidents, 2 hit skips, 1 injury accident, 23 non-injury accidents, 7 prior property accidents, 63 physical arrests, and 89

speeding tickets. Officers have been busy handling requests from Council as far as traffic violations. They have been moving speed signs around the City constantly following requests. He had a list and would get to those as soon as they can. In lieu of having speed signs out, they had officers sit in some of those areas and deal with the violations.

Chief Tarase discussed recent new hires, in which four were within their field training; one should be within 2 weeks, the other within three weeks. The third one will finish training and be on their own in November; the fourth one in December. Currently, they are accepting lateral transfer applications through the end of October. There have been three applications with two interviews set up for next week.

Mr. Marnecheck asked for further details about the lateral transfer process pertaining to position, and Chief Tarase concurred that it was for entry level only. Those who apply must have been employed full time within the past year and off of their probation from the agency that they were on. He went on to say that they submit their application and do not have to do the Civil Service test. Everything else still applies. When they submit their application, they must have a physical agility test from Tri-C Community College. Tri-C conducts their testing once per month, in which there was one this past Sunday; next one being in October. For the laterals, they were given three opportunities to take the agility tests. Currently, two applicants are from Cleveland Police Department, and one is from Metro Hospital. Along with that, he had exhausted the civil service list that was put out. He started taking applications for the new civil service exam, which will be November 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Marnecheck asked if this was why the deadline to apply was October. Chief Tarase indicated that the laterals have until October 29<sup>th</sup> to apply, and the civil service applications end October 22<sup>nd</sup>; to his recollection.

Mr. Marnecheck asked about the process pertaining to seniority. Chief Tarase explained that they do not bring any seniority with them when they are hired; they are put at the bottom of the seniority list. Depending on their experience, they may have an increased starting rate of pay, but their seniority stays at the bottom. Mr. Dietrich pointed out that there is an age restriction on lateral transfers. Chief Tarase concurred; the age is 35, which is the same with a new applicant. That is set by the State of Ohio. Mr. Marnecheck asked if this could be for people that may have hoped to work in North Royalton, but when they came out of Civil Service, there may not have had been a position available; this could allow them to work here. Chief Tarase commented that what you typically see, is some people have an attachment to the City in some way whether they grew up here, or have relatives here, or perhaps had better pay or benefits than the City they are working in. He finds that is usually what attracts specific lateral applicants.

Ms. Krejci inquired about the current number of open positions for officers. Chief Tarase indicated that out of 32 patrolmen, they were down by roughly 5 total. It has been a while since they have been at this peak. As fast as he has been hiring, there are those that have been leaving; mostly to retire. Another officer will retire in November. They also have a promotion to Lieutenant that would take place this week, and they are finishing up on the promotional process to Sergeant. Mayor Antoskiewicz commented that to get to where we were when we started the whole process, we need about two more at this time to get to that number; with all of the retirements. There were a few retirements a few years back that were not replaced.

### **3. Traffic Lights Discussion**

Mr. Wos pointed out the particular intersection of Akins Road and Ridge Road not having a light. To his knowledge, two residents had hit someone or had been hit, which prompted this discussion. He thought that ODOT (Ohio Department of Transportation) governs the closeness of traffic lights. Discussion ensued about locations of certain traffic lights. Mayor Antoskiewicz asked if we were going to have an officer there. Chief Tarase is working on getting another motorcycle policeman, because right now with the road closings and accidents, officer Kimmel has a lot going on. He indicated that there have not been any other accidents at the intersection. If you are looking at a light in that area, the next step would be getting a traffic survey done for the intersection at Akins and Ridge. Visibility issues were discussed pertaining to that area. Mr. Wos felt that it warranted a study, and the next steps to do so; when there is time.

### **LEAVE ON AGENDA**

## NEW BUSINESS

### **1. Deer Regulations**

Mr. Dietrich is involved with the program, in which two officers are responsible for going out and checking deer stands. He pointed out that Officer McDonald is an avid hunter, and has four different properties that he hunts on in North Royalton. He had approached Mr. Dietrich about this. Agreeing to speak on Officer McDonald's behalf, Mr. Dietrich indicated that out of the four different properties in which he hunts, he had camera trails on all of them. Officer McDonald has not seen one doe. The current rule with this program is in order to hunt a buck, you must acquire two does first. The reason was so that hunters would not just get their trophy buck and then quit; and still have the many doe here as a result. Mr. Dietrich feels that we have taken out so many doe that we only have a lot of bucks left. What is being asked is that we eliminate or compromise the rule. Instead of getting two doe prior to a buck, it was suggested that we eliminate this now and hunt as normal. It is being asked that we take away that rule or compromise that rule. For example, changing it to the number of one doe, rather than two doe; prior to a buck. It has been suggested by Officer McDonald that it should be as it is any place else.

Ms. Krejci asked about other municipalities. Mr. Dietrich was uncertain. He explained that the Division of Wild Life does not have the rule, nor the State; this is a North Royalton rule. Mayor Antoskiewicz indicated that when there were six cities, they all had these rules in place around the same time, and people voted around the same time; cities passed them. He was not sure if the rules were all the same for our surrounding neighbors. He commented that Ms. Schroeder could research and find out more. Mr. Dietrich stated that we had six deer accidents reported; that number has gone up. He commented that bucks are more aggressive and that season is coming. You typically do not see bucks, however, during the season you should see them. He reiterated that Officer McDonald is only seeing bucks at this time. Mr. Dietrich has seen quite a few. He stated perhaps we can think about changing the rule; doing a compromise.

Mr. Kelly was involved in some of the creation of that legislation and the working group of the multiple municipalities that came together. His recollection was that the initial effort was designed to reduce the reproductivity level because we were so overrun by deer. It may be that it is having the affect that it was designed for. Taking out the reproductive females has diminished the number of herds. However, he would recommend if we are going in that direction, that we communicate that to the other municipalities; because there was an understanding that we were in this together. The only differences in the legislation from the other cities was as to the price, that he is aware of. Mr. Dietrich stated that we have adjusted it; the cost is \$75. Mayor Antoskiewicz mentioned some have changed their acreage. Mr. Kelly indicated they had; their size of perimeters.

Mr. Dietrich was open to a compromise. He felt that it had to be done the way that it has been. He conveyed that there are not that many doe at all. Perhaps we could allow one doe before a buck; rather than two. That is what he originally thought we could change. He suggested that we change it to one doe rather than two. Mr. Marnecheck wanted to clarify that currently, we have to take two doe before a buck. Mr. Dietrich concurred. Mr. Marnecheck asked for clarification as to the sequence following the buck. Mr. Dietrich explained that you can only have one buck; meaning you must start over again with two doe. Mr. Marnecheck pointed out that all we would be changing is, one doe before a buck; rather than two. Mr. Dietrich concurred.

Mr. Marnecheck asked about the application timeline, with hunting starting this weekend; whether one can apply late. Mr. Dietrich indicated that you cannot. Mayor Antoskiewicz agreed. You have to have been applied already. Mr. Dietrich commented that we can follow up with people that have already applied and get word to them; those already hunting. The program seemed to have worked the way it is suppose to. He recommended having the compromise. Mr. Marnecheck agreed and suggested that we could revisit in a year and adjust, depending on doe numbers. Mr. Dietrich concurred.

Ms. Barath inquired about the numbers of hunters this year. Chief Tarase indicated roughly 90 hunters, which was the same as last year. Mr. Dietrich concurred; it is exactly last years' number. Mr. Marnecheck wanted to clarify if everyone felt comfortable with the legislation being drawn up. Mr. Wos agreed. Mr. Dietrich and Mr. Marnecheck agreed on the choice of a compromise. Discussion ensued about the next step. Mayor Antoskiewicz was comfortable with either one. Mr. Marnecheck pointed out, this way you are still getting a buck; with the change. Mr. Kelly suggested asking Ms. Schroeder to amend the legislation from two doe to one.

## **2. Hydrant Maintenance/Painting update**

Chief Chegan discussed there are two programs which are yearly maintenance, and then the painting project, which started earlier this year. Starting with annual maintenance, they just finished up a week ago for maintenance for fire hydrants; which was the longest it has ever taken us. That was directly related to the run volume, whereas it used to take three weeks. They began in April; it is taking this long to get it done. The repair list gets turned into Cleveland Water; any hydrants that need attention will get fixed. That is out of their control as far as the timing. Typically, if you see them get fixed, it will take 30-90 days for the landscaping company to come back and do the landscaping afterwards. Residents have complained that the landscaping was not done right when the hydrant was, which is a reason they contract all of that out. That will not happen until the next season when we start to do the maintenance. The reason for the maintenance is to make sure the sediment is out of the lines, and the hydrants are in working order; in case of an emergency. They start the fall maintenance program, which is any of the barrels that may not drain, while checking the hydrants; to go around for any of the defects. If it does not drain, they take the water out to make sure it does not freeze over. They would start that at the end of October.

The painting project was a success. They have done it since 2014. Presented to Council and three options to the Mayor, they picked to have two kids come out with tools and brutally attack the hydrants, and Chief Chegan indicated that did not work well. His opinion was that they have come out great. These were brought down to bear metal and he projects that these will last a long time. Their roads this year included State Road, Royalton Road, and West 130<sup>th</sup>. They were able to get to Wallings Road, which was not on the original plan; but in the same budget. He deemed that as a success and talked about the quality of work. In speaking to Strongsville, they were very happy having used the same company. He felt it looked very good and was a better process. Mr. Dietrich was really pleased with the color. Mr. Marnecheck asked how many hydrants was put in for Cleveland Water to replace. Chief Chegan indicated that out of 2400, typically was usually around 30. Less than 10 are out of service, either they broke the stem or it was old. Less than 10 would be completely out of service that they would definitely get to; others were small replacement parts. They will do the whole hydrant; his guess would be 20 or less. Discussion concluded about the process and what had needed replaced on hydrants.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Mr. Wos seconded by Mr. Dietrich **to adjourn the September 21, 2021 meeting.** Yeas: 3 Nays: 0.  
**Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.**

09-09-2021

August Stats

ACCIDENTS:

FATAL	0
DEER	4
HIT SKIP	2
INJURY	1
NON INJURY	23
PRIVATE PROPERTY	7
PHYSICAL ARRESTS:	63
SPEEDING TICKETS:	89
THEFT COMPLAINTS:	3
(includes attempts)	