

SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES
APRIL 19, 2022

The Safety Committee meeting was held on April 19, 2022 at North Royalton City Hall, 14600 State Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:22 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee Members: Chair Mike Vos, Vice Chair Jeremy Dietrich, Dawn Carbone-McDonald; **Council:** Paul Marnecheck, Joanne Krejci, John Nickell, Linda Barath; **Administration:** Mayor Larry Antoskiewicz, Fire Chief Robert Chegan, Police Chief Keith Tarase, Finance Director Jenny Esarey, Law Director Thomas Kelly; **Other:** Jessica Fenos, Marilyn Borzy, Paul Borzy, Ken Krejci, Thomas Kociuba, Barbara Porzio, Michael Piskura, Michael McDonald.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of March 15, 2022 Safety Committee minutes. Moved by Mr. Vos, seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald. Vote: Yeas: 2 Nays: 0 **Motion carried.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. COVID-19 Local Response

Chief Chegan noted there was a slight climb of the new variant, however there have not been hospitalizations or anything significant at this time.

2. Police & Safety Report

Chief Tarase reported on the March stats, which were as follows: 1 deer accident, 4 hit skips, 26 non injury/ 1 on private property, 50 physical arrests, 38 speeding tickets issued, 19 theft complaints handled, 55 alarms, 17 disabled vehicles, 40 disturbances, 14 fraud reports, 53 cases of suspicion, 647 traffic stops, 36 welfare checks, and 4 citations for school bus violations issued.

Chief Tarase indicated that we have finished up two weeks of interviews for new hires, whereas he recapped he is looking to hire 4-5 officers; none for traffic duties specifically. Due to the retirements, we need to build up the number of patrolmen as previously mentioned.

Mr. Nickell raised question as to the primary focus for an officer who may be assigned to traffic. Chief Tarase explained we currently have one certified officer to ride a motorcycle, and the other one will be later this year. Other than traffic enforcement, they investigate school bus violations, deal with traffic signals, and impounded vehicles. They are called out for the serious car accidents as well.

The Chief pointed out that one of the speed measurement signs was recently stolen on Washington Avenue; the number is down to two signs. The value of the signs is over \$3000 each. Mr. Vos questioned how they are secured. He brought up the idea of using a field camera similar to those used for deer; placing them somewhere out of site. Ms. Carbone-McDonald made mention of putting trackers on them. Chief Tarase commented that this particular sign was lower than normal, making it easier for someone to cut the straps.

3. Traffic Lights Discussion

- **Strongsville/North Royalton border – W. 130th Street**

REMOVE TO AGENDA

4. Hydrant Painting and Maintenance

Chief Chegan reported that maintenance started yesterday, in which they were rained out; messages were put out for the residents. They keep us updated daily of where we are going to be, as far as the daily hydrant flushes; we plan to start in Ward 1. Pertaining to time frame, last year this took until August. We put out the

Ready Notify, as well as on Facebook. Regarding hydrant painting, he had not heard back as far as the dates go, however summer schedules are still being coordinated. Mr. Vos asked about the approximate time frame. Chief Chegan stated that there are roughly 2400 hydrants. He mentioned 2 years; possibly 3.

Mr. Marnecheck asked about those on private property, and whether we inform the residents about the service. Chief Chegan indicated that we have had a couple of inquiries where they were looking at the type of paint. Some of the Home Owner's Associations have looked into it. He did have one that was looking at it for their development. Mr. Marnecheck asked if they must match the color. Chief Chegan clarified they do not necessarily have to match; we have always conveyed yellow. Any hydrant that goes in for any specification for any development is the City spec that we wrote. That is based on what Cleveland Water installs, and we have put the paint code in after.

5. Safety Town

Chief Chegan indicated that we have not had an opportunity to move forward yet. We have another fundraiser coming up; scheduled by the schools. We are trying to work more closely together. Once he has gotten word back from the schools, he will forward it to everyone.

Mr. Dietrich has had inquiries as well and asked if we are going to be posting this on the City's website once we receive the dates. Mayor Antoskiewicz agreed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Ordinance 22-55 (Flock Safety contract)

Residents came forward to speak about the Flock Safety cameras.

Thomas Kociuba, 7640 Hi View Drive, was not in support of the Flock Cameras. His main point was that introducing license plate cameras is against the freedoms and liberties this Country was founded on, and would be a mistake. He expressed that they are a gross violation to privacy and are an expense to tax payers, which mostly do not support it.

Michael Piskura, 7512 Wilton Lane, a retired Police Officer, was 100% in support of Flock Cameras. His main points were that several good arrests were made as a result of them in Cleveland. From his experience in University Circle, the cameras have been a great tool. He expressed they would be a big help in North Royalton.

Paul Borzy, 14812 Landslide Lane West, was in support of Flock Cameras. He highly encouraged to install the cameras. He made the point that if you have nothing to hide, why would you be opposed them. He expressed those similar cameras have been a big help during his career at the airport.

Marilyn Borzy, 14812 Landslide Lane West, was in support of Flock Cameras. She expressed that she has seen how much these have helped other cities and believed that it helps with safety.

Barbara Porzio, 6233 Bunker Road, a retired magistrate, was not in support of Flock Cameras. She was adamantly against them. Her main concern was that they are an invasion of privacy. Chief Tarase communicated that the only reason these would be installed is to help solve crime; and nothing more. Ms. Porzio wanted to know how the information is stored. Chief Tarase indicated that the vendor does not have access to our data, which is erased after 30 days. She volunteered her services if needed, to help with more research and additional information as to how much they are helping in other cities.

Mr. Kelly pointed out why he disagreed with Ms. Porzio. From his interpretation of the law, the Police have an obligation to have probable cause to make a stop. But the level of indicia of wrong doing is so terribly low, it does not bear discussion. He continued that whether he likes it or not, the traffic stops and DUI stops were

first being initiated in the 1980's, whereas a former Chief asked his opinion at the time. Mr. Kelly had thought it was a violation of our Bill of Rights, and he was very much opposed to it. Within eighteen months, the Supreme Court indicated that he was wrong. We, now regularly allow our police to stop people on the streets at DUI check points for no reason at all; no probable cause. He understood her point of view and respected it, however, as the Chief Prosecutor in this community, he expressed that this is a wonderful tool. His hope was that we are able to persuade Council to approve it. It will benefit and protect everybody and their families. He concluded that it does not invade privacy.

Mr. Dietrich felt that this issue was very important, in which he fully supports. It was his desire to leave this on the agenda to speak on it even further. He felt there is more information that has to get out there for the residents. He reiterated that he is 100% for this. He agreed with Mr. Kelly that it is a great tool. He always goes to the experts, speaking about the Chief and his wonderful points about this tool; what it would be used for and not used for. We have explained this is not like Big Brother and that is not what it would be used for. He brought up the scenario of an Amber Alert and how much it could help in these instances. He pointed out that Broadview Heights has these cameras, as well as other cities. He recapped that this would be half the cost of hiring another Police Officer; it allows to do more with less. It is not an actual invasion of privacy; it is a license plate reader. He felt it would keep the community safer. He recommended leaving it in this committee.

Ms. Krejci asked about the incident that happened in the City of Broadview Heights, whereas the cameras in Independence assisted with finding the killer. Chief Tarase agreed that it did help solve the case. Ms. Krejci pointed out that it has been proven in other cities to be of help with cases.

Ms. Carbone-McDonald recapped that she had conducted a survey, whereas she received over 323 responses; with 87.45% against the cameras. She brought up those residents were concerned about the money and wanted to know if Police Officers had all of the property that they need for the field, such as tasers. Making sure that they have all of the necessary tools was her primary concern.

Mr. Dietrich wanted to make sure that the information out there is in fact, the correct information. He mentioned that Chief Tarase has been an officer for 25 years and he felt that again, we need to go back to the experts. Ms. Carbone-McDonald indicated that she put out the information that she received from Chief Tarase. She commented that residents have inquired about tasers and dash cameras.

Ms. Krejci pointed out that when we talk about what the Police Department needs, Chief Tarase knows the amount of money that he receives in his department. Furthermore, you cannot keep coming back to Council asking for money for different things. She felt that he has made the decision, as the Chief of our Police Department, that this is something that would really help them to ensure the safety of the City.

Mr. Nickell commented that we take the advice of our directors. The Police have never come to us about taser guns. He pointed out that when it comes to voters, most majorities do not speak up. His contact information has been out there for 13 years, in which he has had less than 15 calls about this; some are worried about the privacy issues. He felt it was good to do surveys, however, we have 22,000 voters in North Royalton, in comparison to the 323 responses that Ms. Carbone-McDonald received; a very small majority. Most people against things are going to speak up. He spoke about the issue of privacy and how he disagrees. He pointed out that we all have a Google phone, which knows everywhere we have been. He spoke about the cameras in the school system, whereas no one is watching those; they are placed there for incidents that happen only. Mr. Nickell went on to say that if they had not had the available video in a theft incident at the school, they would not have seen who broke in. He wanted to note in the minutes that the one Lieutenant sent an e-mail to the committee. We have plenty of break-ins in the City, whereas this would be of help. Mr. Nickell was in full support of the cameras.

Michael McDonald, 14599 Bennett Road, favors the cameras to an extent. He felt that two to four cameras were a good way of starting out small, rather than getting a lot of cameras right away and making that initial commitment. Spending that much up front was not the right way to go in his opinion. He also felt that

officers need more equipment such as tasers or dashboard cameras. He did feel the cameras would be great for Amber Alerts. He suggested down sizing the number of cameras.

Thomas Maulorico, 10231 Foxwood Drive, also felt that we should start small in number and give it a trial run. Smaller steps in the beginning may be beneficial. He felt that they would work and was not against the cameras entirely. He too, did not think we should start out with a larger number of cameras.

Mr. Wos pointed out that we can cancel the cameras at any time and pay a fee to take the cameras down. Chief Tarase concurred, we would just be out the installation fees; \$250.00 per camera.

Ms. Carbone-McDonald asked what \$37,500 per year covers. Chief Tarase explained that for the second year, it covers the cost of the lease of the cameras and the service; it is a two-year contract at this time. He addressed the number of cameras, being 15, that he had requested for the City, which is 21.33 square miles. In comparison to other cities, Brecksville has 12 cameras and their size is 19.56 square miles; Broadview Heights has 9 cameras for 13.06 square miles; Independence with 31 cameras for 9.63 square miles; Parma Heights has 10 for 4.19 square miles; Brunswick has 10 for 13.02 square miles; North Ridgeville has 20 cameras for 23.44 square miles. He felt that 15 cameras were below what is optimal for the City. Initially, Chief Tarase was looking at 26 cameras and he reduced it to 15; which is the minimum that he feels would be effective.

Ms. Carbone-McDonald inquired if all surrounding cities have cameras, in which we could work with those cameras to help us with traveling vehicles. Chief Tarase indicated that the only way it is going to help us is if we have an idea what that vehicle is. The problem is, we have not had information on the vehicles to be able to solve these property crimes or crimes. Ms. Carbone-McDonald stated she does not have a problem with the cameras, but rather the number of them. As discussion ensued, she also suggested a smaller number of cameras.

Mr. Nickell asked about the Police budget per year; in the grand scheme of things, we are talking about \$47,000 dollars. He went over some other large expenses we have had in comparison. The budget is larger, and furthermore, the Chief has never come and asked for things that he does not think is needed. Ms. Carbone-McDonald, speaking from that of a law enforcement family, indicated she would want her brother protected on the ground, and have more equipment; rather than spending this amount of money. She felt that the residents are looking at the money aspect. Mr. Nickell pointed out that more Police is needed, similar to Mr. Dietrich's point raised about the cameras costing less than hiring another Police Officer.

Ms. Barath mentioned that she does not have a concern about privacy. She agreed that if you are not doing anything wrong, it should not be problem. Her concern was the funding; strapping the local government with a perpetual amount every year without showing how they would benefit. She concluded that the majority of her feedback indicated most do not feel positive about them.

Mr. Wos would say from his perspective, that most people he has spoken with in his Ward are not comfortable. He works in technology and mentioned that when they deploy software at his company, they do not do the whole thing at once. They tend to pile at things and try them out. Once you have more feedback, then you make a determination and go from there. He felt that we could take a look at it for maybe a year and come back to it. Based on the information that we receive and if they are working, then he would really support them. Regarding privacy concerns, he would suggest actually taking a look at drafting some type of terms of use, or what is deemed permissible for these; such as the type of investigations, hit and runs, etc., and codify what specifically we cannot do with them.

Mayor Antoskiewicz shared that this has been talked about for quite some time now. He was not sure what other information Council would need. He felt that a decision needed to be made at this time. This piece of legislation needs to come to a vote. He felt that Council needs to do something with it today.

Mr. Dietrich noted that if he voted on this today, he would vote yes. He did not see the harm in keeping it in committee once more, however he understood the Mayor's point. Mr. Wos felt that a decision should be made

as well and move on. Mr. Marnecheck pointed out that we may be evenly divided. He felt that there are metrics, besides just the square mileage to use when you look at municipalities. He questioned if there was any interest in looking at a possible pilot program while we work out implementation; having less cameras initially. Chief Tarase clarified that the number of cameras would be up to Council to determine, in which he would work with whatever is given. However, his recommendation was what would work best for the size of North Royalton, when it comes to the number of ways to get around in the City to work effectively. He reiterated that if he felt it should be less, he would have come in with less. Mr. Marnecheck found himself in agreement with Ms. Carbone-McDonald; it is a lot of money initially, therefore, he wanted to ask about a middle ground.

Mayor Antoskiewicz made mention that no one here has brought up a preferred number. However, when you talk about a pilot, he asked how effective can you really judge that pilot. For example, if you pick four or five cameras, how do you judge if that is being effective or not; because you may be missing so many things. Mr. Marnecheck stated that there may be a way to look at this in terms of how we are doing the jail. We started out with a temporary 3-month period for Berea and worked out a system. Mayor Antoskiewicz discouraged from comparing apples to oranges. He conveyed that this is not the same at all. Mr. Marnecheck reiterated that it was still a way where we started something, worked it out, and then increased the commitment. Mayor Antoskiewicz expressed that this is totally different. Ms. Barath suggested voting on it now.

Mr. Wos moved to remove Ordinance 22-55 from committee and recommend approval for Council. Seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald Vote: Yeas: 2 Nays: 0 **Motion carried**. Mr. Dietrich lost connection.

2. Ordinance 22-61 (HB 172)

Residents came forward to speak about this ordinance.

Cheryl Rucincki, 11620 Clubhouse Drive, spoke about the *negative* effects of fireworks. She lives in a condominium community, in which she had an incident of large fireworks being set off. The fireworks were close, all of the debris was on her side walk, patio, and on her roof. She wishes to have an ordinance that they should not be having them in tight communities and high populated areas. She pointed out that their driveways are close and she had called the police previously.

Ms. Krejci indicated this was her Ward, whereas she has had calls about it. There are a lot of condominiums. She felt it was also irresponsible to have fireworks with houses so close together. Also, HOA's do not stipulate anything for fireworks; it is beyond their responsibility.

Justin Jeric, Edgerton Road, who is passionate about fireworks, felt that they can be used in the right manner. He shoots them off safely; he has five children. He understood the point about being in close proximity. However, he believes that we have an opportunity after everything that has happened, to use it as a family thing; meeting in the middle with the community is a good thing. He felt that if we have set dates and set times, addressing that as time goes on would be a good choice, and see how it goes.

Ms. Barath expressed that she does not have a problem with fireworks, but with those that are inconsiderate. However, she also looks at North Royalton as a varied city with different sized areas. She wanted to consider looking at those with more property verses the developments and tighter areas. She wondered if we could limit the locations. Mr. Wos could agree about the properties and acreage pertaining to this. He was sympathetic for the residents in the condominium community. He felt that the law would still be broken no matter what; if stipulations are put on fireworks for land size etc. He believed that it is putting the Police in a tough spot. Ms. Carbone-McDonald asked about the deadline. Mr. Wos indicated it was July.

Mr. Marnecheck wanted to clarify if this legislation is passed, that we would keep our current system. Mr. Kelly concurred, essentially. Mr. Marnecheck wanted to know if the State Fire Marshal came back with information yet. Chief Chegan noted that the committee has been meeting, and they are in the process of sending those rules to the State Fire Marshal; which will then send it to the joint commission that Ohio uses for

their review. At this point, they can make changes as it goes and do not have to accept the committees' recommendations. Mr. Marnecheck pointed out if we keep our current rules, that perhaps later we could amend them to incorporate with what the State might allow. Mr. Kelly agreed. Mr. Marnecheck asked if we have any such thing where one could get a permit to have events with fireworks. Chief Chegan commented that fireworks are illegal; you cannot get a permit.

Mr. Wos brought up other cities that have banned them. Mr. Marnecheck agreed that the State came up with a solution to a problem that he did not know existed. Ms. Carbone-McDonald wanted to know if strictly enforced, would it take away from our Police Force and their ability to focus on more serious things on these special holidays. Chief Tarase concurred, especially July 4th. He went on to say it is call to call and very busy. Discussion ensued about restrictions verses not restrictions, along with mention of our noise ordinances.

Thomas Maloriko, 10231 Foxwood Drive, expressed that we all have freedoms and rights, however with those rights come responsibilities. He is all for fireworks if that is what is enjoyed. But late nights after the holidays are over etc., people can be irresponsible. He spoke on the importance of hours and having a time to end them. He was fine with fireworks, however, if it could be conveyed with time restrictions, that would be beneficial.

Michael McDonald, 14599 Bennett Road, had a question for Chief of Police. In his 25 years as an officer, Mr. McDonald wanted to know how many times he has heard about anyone receiving a citation on fireworks. Chief Tarase has personally issues dozens for fireworks discharge; he would recall over 100 for the discharge and possession of fireworks. He believed Council should be putting laws on the books that actually get enforced, and if they are not going to be enforced or if it attracts our Police force on those nights, you have to pick and choose your battles.

Mr. Wos moved to remove Ordinance 22-61 out of committee and returned to Council. Seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0 **Motion carried.**

3. Ordinance 22-62 (432.30 Stopping for School Bus; Actuating Visual Signals; Discharging Children)

Mr. Kelly advised that currently the offense that is described as failing to stop for the school bus, is a minor misdemeanor; which carries a potential penalty of \$1000 fine. He is asking, along with the Mayor sponsoring the ordinance, to make it a first-degree misdemeanor. Mr. Kelly indicated that we have had too many people violating this and we are experiencing a very serious increase in the number. He felt it has to do with distracted drivers. It is his hope, as well as the Mayor's, that Council raise the level of offense to an M1, and give the magistrate the authority to impose a jail term if he deems appropriate.

Mr. Wos was in favor of this. He brought up having had the fine raised; which seems to not have enough impact.

Mr. Wos moved to remove Ordinance 22-62 from committee and return to Council. Seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0 **Motion carried.**

4. Proposed Ordinance: Fire Department vehicle purchase

Chief Chegan reported that when we normally purchase a staff vehicle car, they are on state bid and are readily available. Some vehicles purchased have yet to come in. Currently, there is no state bid on any of the SUV's. He had gotten with the dealer that had the last state bid, and the pricing was very comparable to last year for the same vehicle. We are placing an order for the first week in May; the only time they are placing any orders for this vehicle. The orders for the Fords were only 2-3 days open; not all dealers are doing this. He was actually turned down by a dealer. With the pricing that we do have, which is very similar to last year's state bid pricing, we are looking at a single vendor.

Ms. Barath questioned which vehicle we are replacing. Chief Chegan specified it would be his vehicle, which is Car 1; it is a replacement. He noted the state bid that we had enjoyed previously, we are having problems with these vehicles. We purchased a pick-up truck last year on it and still have not received it; it was ordered last June. This is what we are expecting in the future and we need to be a little more proactive.

Mr. Wos moved to recommend the Fire Department vehicle purchase for approval. Seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0 **Motion carried.**

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Wos seconded by Ms. Carbone-McDonald **to adjourn the April 19, 2022 meeting.** Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

04-13-2022

March Stats

ACCIDENTS:

FATAL	0
DEER	1
HIT SKIP	4
INJURY	0
NON INJURY	26
PRIVATE PROPERTY	1
PHYSICAL ARRESTS:	50
SPEEDING TICKETS:	38
THEFT COMPLAINTS:	19
(includes attempts)	