

**SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023**

The Safety Committee meeting was held on September 19, 2023 at North Royalton City Hall, 14600 State Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

PRESENT: Committee Members: Chair Mike Wos, Vice Chair Jeremy Dietrich, Heidi Webber; **Council:** Paul Marnecheck, Joanne Krejci, John Nickell; **Administration:** Mayor Larry Antoskiewicz, Fire Chief Robert Chegan, Police Chief Keith Tarase, Finance Director Jenny Esarey, Law Director Tom Kelly; **Other:** Joel Spatz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of July 18, 2023 Safety Committee minutes. Moved by Mr. Wos, seconded by Ms. Webber. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

Mr. Wos moved to add a fifth item to tonight's Safety Committee Agenda, Gas and Oil Wells, seconded by Mr. Dietrich. Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Police & Safety Report

See report.

Ms. Krejci brought up the Flock camera search numbers in the statistics report. She wanted to clarify what those numbers represent. Chief Tarase clarified that July's number 529, and August's number 544, stand for searches in the system by officers; they do not represent numbers of stops.

Chief Tarase advised that we are currently down by one full-time officer. Recently, we did online testing through the National Testing Network, which yielded 17 candidates who passed the test; Civil Service. Among those, two were immediately removed because they were past the required age limit of 35. Two others were removed from the list per their request, because they found employment elsewhere. Mr. Marnecheck inquired about the possibility of applying for any waiver for the age limit. Chief Tarase explained that the state has the age limit set at 35, which is what we follow. He noted that Council could change that by way of ordinance, however the age is 35 years maximum. Out of the remaining candidates that were interviewed, we are down to roughly 6 candidates. Civil Service meets tomorrow to approve the Chief's list, then the process will begin for hiring one individual.

Pertaining to police vehicles that were ordered this year, Chief Tarase was notified a month ago by the dealer that Ford had cancelled our order. He contacted our vehicle outfitter to let them know. They responded by stating it was an error message that Ford sent out, and they sent him communication from Ford that it was an error. The Chief tried to verify this with the dealership, in which they are having a hard time getting in touch with Ford. He is uncertain whether they are going to build their vehicles this year or not, especially because of the strike. The purchase orders are still open; he is waiting to hear. Three vehicles were ordered this year.

Chief Tarase reported that we continue to rotate the speed signs throughout the City. They are typically out for a week before we change batteries and move them elsewhere. He brought up the recent press release regarding the Post Office, whereas 7 arrests were made involving the thefts of mail and fraudulent checks. Chief Tarase stated that they would not have gotten arrests without the detective from North Royalton providing all of the information. The investigation is still continuing. Mr. Nickell asked if all of the arrests were out of that P.O. Chief Tarase indicated that they were not. Mr. Wos noted there was one employee involved in the past. The Chief agreed, adding that she is actually in court tomorrow. Mr. Wos inquired about the Federal Court, whether they deferred it down to Common Pleas; which he disagreed with. Chief Tarase concurred. Ms. Krejci commented that one would get in more trouble stealing from someone in the City, than if someone steals from a Post Office; which she felt was ridiculous. Mayor Antoskiewicz agreed.

Regarding deer hunting, Chief Tarase advised that he signed 100 permits, which is likely all there would be for the year. Mr. Wos brought up the Flock cameras. He wanted to know if we have had any significant crimes solved recently. Chief Tarase commented that the Flock cameras are always helping, however, there was really not a news worthy story to share. He continued that even if it may not seem so, a lot is being ruled out by the searches as well. Some missing juveniles have been located also. There have been I.D.'s from pursuits, from the bank; the cameras have been very helpful.

2. Safety Town

Chief Chegan reported that he met with Mike Laub from the schools a couple weeks ago. In the past week, he received the proposal from our architect who would be designing this project and doing the site layout, as well as detailing. That cost is going to come back at approximately \$3,600. We began a fund, which Ms. Esarey explained is a line item; our donations that we have collected so far. The Chief believed we were up to \$14,000 on that line item.

Currently, we have another fundraising activity going on. Chief Chegan would be meeting with Mr. Laub, along with the Early Elementary School PTA. If we need to do any building detailing, the Career Center has been able to help us with this. We have that available when we do get the volunteers to help build them; we will have the plans already to scale. That is what we will be working on the next couple weeks. Pertaining to the detailing, the exact measurements is going to be 75 x 75 at the exact location. We are speaking about Royal View Elementary School, to the west of it, whereas there is a part of the property between some trees; they will make certain that it will fit there. Otherwise, we would have to move it a bit more south. It will also include the lane striping, which they will let us know exactly where we are going to do that. The lane striping will be done by the schools. Mr. Laub stated that his people will do that part. The Chief initially thought the cost would be six figures. He was confident that we would be able to scale this down as we moved forward. We will be utilizing their paint and their man power. There is also going to be a parameter chain link fence and gate, and a light pole will be provided for security. The traffic signal will be LED and all of the signage will hopefully be donated as well. Chief Chegan also had a discussion with the Lion's Club, in which there will be more discussion in January. They have already provided the Chief with a figure, which we are hoping to make that somewhat larger for next year also. We have been working some on this and hopefully we will keep moving forward.

Mrs. Webber inquired about the total estimated cost. Chief Chegan indicated that early on when he presented this, it was just under six figures. He could not really give an exact estimate, however he felt it can be cut significantly; perhaps 40 percent. He has spoken with the Mayor about those we would be approaching with much of the work.

3. Fire Report

Chief Chegan advised that our run volume has been up by 10% for the last sixty days; most have been EMS related. We have been very busy. We have not had significant calls. We had one major hazmat incident, which Route 82 had to be closed last month. He explained that a 1000-gallon propane tank had leaked. We did call the Southwest Emergency Hazmat Team and they helped us to alleviate that incident; the road was closed for 2-3 hours during the day. We evacuated the area and tried to open it as quickly as possible. He mentioned the storm damage that came through since our last meeting. We had some damage in the northeast section, which started on Oakridge Drive, where we had our first call of the 20-minute incident. It came in as a structure fire, however it was an explosion with much flame; behind Bunker Road and Oakridge Drive. It was confirmed that it was a microburst that came down and wiped out all of those trees, which involved debris removal. The Chief wanted to recognize the Service Department; there were a lot in that area. We received roughly twelve calls about that incident.

Chief Chegan shared that we swore in our last member July 7th, in which he was on day shift for five weeks. Normally, it is an eight-week probationary training period, however he was a lateral transfer. We make certain

that we give them all the tools they need. All of our shifts are up to the levels that are prescribed. He did not foresee any hiring in the next year or any promotions in the next couple of years. He noted that we had a lot of people leave.

Police and Fire will be working on the new CAD system, which will be a lot of work for the officers and we will be doing the same. The county is still working on the new 911 system. We will be out again near wards doing more hydrant work, and this time entails pumping of them. In the spring and summer, when we do the initial inspection, any hydrant that we see that does not drain immediately, we will put that on the list. In the fall, around November, we go out and pump that barrel out to prevent freezing. Or if we see there is an issue with a leak at the seat for example, then we turn those back in to Cleveland Water for repair. Not only do we inspect them in the spring to make sure they are functioning, we also go back if there are any problems with any of those issues. We want to do as much as we can to prevent freezing.

4. K9 Support Dog

Chief Tarase advised things are going well and we have gotten great feedback. The officer is currently continuing her training with the dog. She has completed six weeks so far, out of roughly eighteen weeks; there will be a two-week break. It will be a little bit longer before the dog is completely certified. Once done with the training, the officer and the dog will have to test for the certification.

Chief Tarase mentioned that the K9 vehicle was converted over to the officer's vehicle, which there had been question about at the last meeting. Mr. Nickell asked about the number of times the officer had calls or requests for the dog. Chief Tarase clarified there were three separate incidents where they needed to help calm someone down, whereas they used the dog for that purpose. The dog is constantly with her.

Mr. Wos moved to remove K9 Support Dog from the Safety Committee Agenda, seconded by Mr. Dietrich. Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

REMOVE FROM AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

1. Gas and Oil Wells

Chief Chegan stated that throughout the years there have been many issues that we have had to deal with. We have not had many in the last eight years. Most of the time these oil wells are safe and do not pose any hazards. However, we did have a couple of issues this year, which we were discussing previously. He met with ODNR (Ohio Department of Natural Resources) roughly two weeks ago, and he has their inspection sheets. We did discuss those that have issues. Two were in Ward 2, in which one was remedied and the other one is still awaiting parts to finish repairs. We try and keep a great relationship with the oil well companies. If he is in need of repairs, the Chief has a lot of their personal numbers to contact them.

Chief Chegan explained that we have 33 active wells in North Royalton. We have many wells that are inactive and a lot that have been plugged, and also those that have been abandoned. We have taken care of a few of the abandoned wells over the years in working with ODNR and their inspectors. He would like to go with them and begin working on these wells that are not producing. By law, there are certain time frames and production that these wells have to do and they cannot sit abandoned. This could cause issues down the road. We will be working with them and they are going to provide the production reports. He went on to say that 16 of the 33 active wells are in northeast North Royalton; that is basically Ward 2, and some in Ward 4. There are 11 in Ward 6 and there are two in the northeast Ward 1. We have an oil well and gas well map, in which everything is labeled on the fencing. We have all of their emergency contacts in our CAD system, so that when we have a problem, we can address them immediately.

Pertaining to the inspections, the inspector has been doing this for almost forty years; he was supposed to have retired. The reason he is still on the job is because he cannot get anyone to fill his position; similar to those that cannot find diesel mechanics. They have inspected seven wells in our area, in which two of them residents had issues with and we had concerns about. They are aware of this issue, because we have communicated that with them and they are making sure to follow up. All the others were in compliance. The last time they were able to inspect all of the wells, was some time pre-Covid. We want to make sure we follow up with them and we will stay on top of that. The Chief wishes to point out to them, when inspections are planned in 2024, landscaping issues need to be addressed to the gas oil and well companies. When they are initially put in, they usually have some nice trees put around them; at times they do not last. Also, the fencing tends to get old. We are hoping to meet with them and have them put in some effort. He stated that we are not the jurisdiction having authority over the oil and gas wells, however we have taken a stance to help our residents and have them make the calls. The Chief noted we are not going to take the complaint for them however if it persists, then we will get involved and help them. We have been successful mitigating the problems that we have had.

Ms. Krejci asked for more clarification as to the locations of the 16 wells. Chief Chegan brought up Wallings Road, however he would get her a list and bring in the map. He shared that you can go on the ODNR website and search 'well locator', you can find them that way with more information; the wells will be shown as green dots. Chief Chegan noted that we probably could have had 10 to 12 more. He recapped 14 years ago, whereas Cutter Oil Company wanted to procure city land to drill more, and we fought that and ended up with no more than what we have currently. In talking to ODNR, there is nothing on the table at this time in North Royalton for any drilling. Ms. Krejci felt it was hard to imagine 16 being in Ward 6, especially with the population. As discussion ensued, Chief Chegan indicated we do not foresee any new drilling at all; there is a lot of drilling elsewhere that is prioritized right now.

Ms. Webber asked about the number of companies, in which Chief Chegan explained he had roughly six different companies out of those 33 wells; one of them were bought. We are supposed to receive their mailings every year to indicate yes or no, as to whether wells are still active; however, ODNR usually receives those. If they are a well reputable company, they will copy us on the information. We are pretty up to date on our wells, because we have had issues in the past and we want to make sure we are on top of any potential issues quickly.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Wos, seconded by Ms. Webber **to adjourn the September 19, 2023 Safety Committee meeting.** Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

North Royalton Police Department

Incident	# of for July and August 2023
MVA NON INJURY	30 27
MVA DEER	3 4
ASSAULTS	3 8
ATV/DIRT BIKES	3 10
NOISE DISTURBANCES	28 22
FRAUD/IDENTITY THEFT	19 26
PHYSICAL ARRESTS	4 2
SPEEDING CITATIONS	45 21
THEFTS (Includes Attempts)	25 23
SUNDAY NOISE COMPLAINTS (Mower/Leaf Blower)	0 0
School bus violations	0 0
Therapy dog deployments	0 3
Total Flock Plate Reads	1,830,753 (As of 9-18-2023)
Flock Searches	529 444