

**SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 21, 2023**

The Safety Committee meeting was held on November 21, 2023 at North Royalton City Hall, 14600 State Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m.

**PRESENT: Committee Members:** Chair Mike Wos, Vice Chair Jeremy Dietrich, Heidi Webber; **Council:** Paul Marnecheck, Joanne Krejci, Linda Barath, John Nickell; **Administration:** Mayor Larry Antoskiewicz, Fire Chief Robert Chegan, Police Chief Tarase Tarase, Wastewater Superintendent Mark Smith, Finance Director Jenny Esarey, Law Director Tom Kelly; **Other:** Mary Gorjanc.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of October 17, 2023 Safety Committee minutes. Moved by Mr. Wos, seconded by Mr. Dietrich. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. Police & Safety Report**

See report.

Chief Tarase wanted to address an issue that was brought before Council earlier this year with respect to Ordinance 23-02, which was an agreement between the City and Chagrin Valley Dispatch for Motorola CAD services. This transition from our current vendor to Motorola has been terrible for each of the departments within Southwest Dispatch going through this transition. This has been over a year in the making with delays. We were coming to a point in October where we were supposed to go live with the system, and we were able to get that deadline moved back to December. Chagrin Valley went live in October and we felt that they should go forward first; it was their project. They can work out any problems that were there prior to us coming on board. Within that month of time, there have been major issues with the system. Two of Chagrin Valley's large agencies have already dropped Motorola and are going back to their previous vendor. Chief Tarase was looking at currently staying with the vendor for our records management.

There are two different systems; a CAD system (Computer-Aided Dispatch), and RMS (Record Management System). Strongsville was the lead in wanting to change their dispatching system. According to our agreement with Southwest Dispatch, we have to follow them, as far as dispatching software; however, we do not have to follow the record management. We met with our current vendor last August and he had conveyed that he could bridge the two systems to work. Therefore, we would have no real change in our report writing system. At the time, we could not verify that he would be able to do that; Motorola had not given him access to the system. One would not be able to see it live to know it was actually working. Since October, he has worked with the system and has it working seamlessly at this time. There are cities within Chagrin Valley Dispatch, for example Bedford Police Department, that continue to use him and never changed to Motorola; they are not having any issues. If we can get out of our agreement with Chagrin Valley and keep our records management under our current vendor, it is questionable on the agreement as to what is being provided. It mentions the CAD system, which again, Strongsville desires to use it. Chief Tarase continued that we do not have a choice and would have to fund our portion of that. The record management is separate; it is not addressed in the agreement, except that it offered licensing to each of our computers. Not only are our mobile computers in the vehicles, also all of our desktops on station. That is where the bulk of our expense would come.

Mr. Kelly stated he has had discussions with the Chief, whereas he shared the difficulty and wanted to explore the possibility of severing pieces of the contract. Our Fire Department is satisfied with their end of the services. The other departments that Chief Tarase is referring to would be police departments; such as Brook Park, Berea, Olmstead Falls, and Olmstead Township. Essentially, five of the police departments in the Southwest Emergency Dispatch are very unhappy with the experience that is being proposed by Chagrin Valley and Motorola. Mr. Kelly went on to say it was the belief of Chief Tarase that they were likely

promised certain things, with regard to the services that would be available through this software system, which are not available. Mr. Kelly was asked to look into this, which the Mayor agreed. Mr. Kelly wanted to make everyone aware of it. He had encouraged the Chief to bring up this topic because the effort to go live is set for December 5<sup>th</sup>. It may come down to a decision to sever certain services under the agreement before they attempt to go live, in an effort to try to retain the arrangement in place with our current vendor, TAC. There is the possibility that we may be able to get out of this without too much difficulty, particularly if the other side is willing to recognize that they cannot provide the services promised. On the other hand, it may be that we will be at odds with them, which could result in some litigation. We will not know until we approach them with our proposal that we be allowed to sever those pieces of the agreement, which the Chief finds unsubstantial; without substance and not coordinating with the promises that were made.

Mr. Wos inquired about the agreement. If there are things not being done that were promised, he wanted to know if that also puts the entire agreement that we have into question. He did not understand why this is acceptable if that was the case. Mr. Kelly explained that we have basically, two large agreements. The large agreement is with Southwest Emergency Dispatch to handle and host all of the dispatch services. Secondly, the agreement that the Chief is referring to from January; that has pieces and parts to it. The two biggest pieces are with regard to CAD and record retention. The record retention piece does not affect the Fire Department; however, it does affect the Police Department. The CAD software currently proposed to be used still meets the needs and will be used by Strongsville in any event. Since we are subject to the master agreement with Strongsville, that is not changing. The only piece we are talking about is the piece for record retention by the Police Department. At this time, we wanted to make everyone aware of the issue. We will very likely be addressing it with Chagrin Valley in the near future.

Ms. Webber stated it is very important for the police to maintain their accurate records, because of public service; public requests. Chief Tarase stated that in talking with some of the agencies that were using it for the past month, we were informed that there were 190 reports behind; the system is not working properly. Mr. Wos questioned the process when they call dispatch. Chief Tarase clarified that the big problem is, Motorola has a dispatching CAD system and they just toss the records management on top of it. Therefore, Chagrin Valley and Southwest Dispatch only care about the CAD software. He continued that none of them are concerned with the records management side, because they do not have records to manage; other than the CAD. All of these other agencies are struggling to get the things that we were promised; the same functionality we have now in the new system. Motorola does not offer those things and they do not plan on offering those things. Therefore, it changes how we would have to do things. Chief Tarase shared that we feel this is not what we were sold and we should not have to move forward with them. As discussion ensued, Chief Tarase stated this would also create more work and confusion for the officers, because they did not provide a lot of training on the system. It is completely different than what is being used and the agencies that are using it now communicated that it is not working properly. It will slow everything down; our work. It will cause problems, such as if there are records requests. We do not have reports done because the system is not allowing us to complete them. Mayor Antoskiewicz commented that the system we presently have will be able to continue to handle the records. Chief Tarase agreed. We went out with the vendor, as well as some of the other police chiefs, in which he gave us a live demonstration of what Bedford PD was doing, because they have to use the Motorola CAD through Chagrin Valley; however, they are keeping their records management as current tech computers and it was working in live time.

Ms. Barath asked for a reminder of who made the original recommendation to switch. Chief Tarase indicated that Southwest informed us that they were changing to Motorola CAD. We had looked at keeping the two systems in the past, however we were not certain that they would work. All of the departments felt it may have been easier to deal with one vendor; Motorola at the time.

Mr. Nickell inquired about any non-compliance or non-performance clauses in the contract. He also wanted to know with regard to the software, whether it would be better 'not' to transfer and attempt to get it back. Chief Tarse agreed, stating that was the reason he is under a time constraint; not having to go back and forth, which officers would not be happy with. Currently, the Chief has until the end of the year under the current vendor, therefore, he can still operate until December 31<sup>st</sup> under the current agreement. Mr. Nickell complimented

their negotiating skills and also felt that it was not a decision to be taken lightly. Mr. Kelly advised that we would need to contact Chagrin Valley Dispatch and let them know of our intentions to sever that piece from the contract; then perceive what their reaction is.

## **2. Safety Town**

Chief Chegan distributed a sketch prepared by the architect. He explained that the architect met with the Mayor. This would be the location that we have been planning for some time, at Royalview Elementary School; which was just confirmed. Now we can better estimate our costs and what it is going to be. We would like to break ground in the early spring. Chief Chegan referred to the sketch. The building on the bottom would be able to display our sponsors. They will actually be composite material that will actually have the frontage of who may sponsor. There will be 14 sponsors, because there are four buildings with four sides. Two of the sponsors will be the frontage of the police station, and one will be the frontage of the fire station of our City. We already have that planned and we are working with the architects to finalize the building scope; we will hopefully have the cost for that soon.

Secondly, we are going to be doing a video presentation for the community. The buildings are actually going to have storage built into them. The Chief pointed out the signs that will actually be able to be stored inside the buildings and more secured. The traffic light will be LED. The only electrical that we may have to run is perhaps for security; he would have to talk to the schools about that. An idea would be some security cameras back there. Regarding the fundraiser, Nikos as well as the Browns Backers have helped a lot. The Browns Backers plan multiple fundraisers for us. He spoke of Nikos, whereas he would be able to get digital copies of what they are doing. We will be doing a video presentation and posting on all of our social media sites. The next step would be pursuing the sponsorships. He, along with the Mayor, will be working on some of the large sponsors with the site and some of the concrete work; the challenging part.

Mr. Nickell asked if we know the cost of the sponsorship yet. Chief Chegan indicated we do not. We are working through that right now to see where we could be. We do not want to overprice ourselves, however we do not want to underprice. We are aware that we need the funds. Mr. Nickell asked about duration, if we are going to sponsor it for one year or perhaps three years. Chief Chegan noted this is a permanent piece of that. We are going to take the cost into effect with that, because this is a one-time build. Depending on the composite material, it is not something you are going to have to go back and repair a lot. The Chief brought up the others in Independence and Strongsville, which are great facilities, which the roofs already need work, and occasionally the paint jobs. This again, was mirrored after Brecksville, which has a lot of composites; a very simple, however expensive format. He went on to say they have not touched it in the eight years that it is been up. Mayor Antoskiewicz noted that we are still working on price, etc.; we are anticipating to keep it.

## **3. Fire Report**

Chief Chegan stated that our run volume has stayed consistent to our last totals; we will be close to 4200 runs for the year. Unfortunately, we always have one of those large events that gives us about 40 runs in one day. Again, that will perhaps put us slightly above where we were last year. We are right on pace from the last 30 days comparable to last year, with the exception of having a fire in Ward 6 last week, which was a residential structure that caused significant damage; mutual aid was requested. Mr. Wos asked about the streets it was located on. Chief Chegan clarified it was Riverview. He spoke of the last storm that came into the northeast section of North Royalton, in which Chief Tarase's men were there, along with Chief Chegan's and Services. He believed we had 11 runs in 60 minutes in the instance. When you have that type of storm, we get overwhelmed, however we prioritize. Mr. Nickell inquired if there were car crashes involved. The Chief indicated they were all electrical fires; one caused smoke in the house. There were branches down everywhere during the last one.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Addition of Police Department Chaplains**

Chief Tarase advised that at the last Council meeting, Council approved the change in the ordinance that allows the Mayor to appoint chaplains. The Police Department had looked at getting chaplains for a while. Finally, we were able to get them because we want them to be able to assist the department, our officers and the community; they can do that in many different ways. They can assist the department by making notifications to families' members who have been injured or killed. They can also visit the sick or injured members, attend and participate when requested in funerals of active or retired members. Also, provide some counseling and support for the members and their families, and be alert to the needs of the officers and families. They can assist the department by responding to natural and accidental deaths, suicides, major disasters, assist during major demonstrations, attend academy graduation ceremonies and social events, as well as possibly offer invocations and benedictions as requested. They would help in assisting the community by fostering familiarity with the role of law enforcement in the community, provide an additional link between the community and other chaplains in the department, and provide a liaison with various civic business and religious organizations. Each of these chaplains come from a different denomination. They have all volunteered to assist us. They volunteer their time. They can ride with the officers and get to know them, and be there as an additional resource.

## **2. Proposed Legislation: Flock Safety Cameras – Extension of Lease**

Mr. Wos advised that we have a proposed legislation for extending the lease of the Flock Safety Cameras. Chief Tarase explained he was contacted by Flock Safety regarding this extension. We currently have a two-year lease agreement with Flock for our cameras. This extension would wipe out our second year, which we are coming into now, and also add five years to the contract. They would lock in our current rates for those five years. This is not an addition of any cameras. This is merely keeping the status quo as to what we have now, for an additional five years.

Ms. Barath raised question as to how the cameras are working out. Chief Tarase indicated there are some instances where we have a report of a theft. We have had reports of theft of trailers and landscaping trailers; the report comes in hours later. Therefore, we go back and we search the cameras for the time period that the theft was possible and we find suspect vehicles. We follow up on those vehicles, either eliminating them or finding that those parties were involved. We can also use those after determining a suspect vehicle and putting an alert on those vehicles. When it hits on any Flock camera, we can be notified or other agencies can be notified that we are looking for that vehicle as well. We use it daily and it has been very helpful.

Ms. Krejci wanted to know if we are considering expanding it. Chief Tarase stated he would like to expand it if he has room in his budget; probably gradually. We have noticed some other locations that cameras would be helpful. Mr. Nickell asked about his budget, whether it was set for the year. Mayor Antoskiewicz commented that we are going to be talking about the budget. Mr. Nickell asked if the Chief requested to have more cameras, in which he had not. However, he was trying to give more time to evaluate. As discussion ensued, Mr. Nickell stated it may not solve a crime beforehand, however perhaps we can get these criminals off the street; it is important to him. He pointed out there is a state grant for schools right now and they are actually asking schools to put one or two in their parking lot, which his school district is going to look into it. Chief Tarase noted we alerted the school of the grant; however, it is up to the school to apply. Mr. Nickell felt it was important enough that the Attorney General is putting out a grant for \$30,000 for each one school district.

Mr. Marnecheck asked if we sign the five-year agreement, whether that includes things such as, upgrades to the hardware and software as it becomes available. Chief Tarase noted the cameras are not owned by the City and are owned by Flock. Therefore, if they have to upgrade their cameras, they will do that on their own when they have issues. Mr. Marnecheck shared his concern that if we sign a five-year agreement, the possibility of losing that bargaining chip; for example, certain renewals, higher definition, etc. Chief Tarase clarified he would have to ask. Any upgrades that they would make, they make on their own. If they found that their cameras are not working or need upgraded, they would do that as part of the current agreement. The Chief reiterated that this is just an extension of the agreement.

Ms. Webber questioned the number of cameras we currently have. Chief Tarase indicated we have 10. Chief Tarase had originally asked for 15 cameras. According to Flock, they thought the optimal was 26. Basically, there are 26 entrances into the city. You do not want to just cover an ingress of the cities, you also want to spread them within the city; therefore, you could follow a route that the car would travel. The Chief continued that if it would hit on one camera and then hit on another camera, you have an idea of where the car was traveling. In short, with 10 cameras we tried to hit the best areas possible to get the most of past crime patterns and entrances into the city. All of them are from Royalton Road north; therefore, we do not have anything on the south end of town. We do not have a lot of criminals coming in from Hinkley or Brunswick; most of them would come in either on 82, or across Wallings Road from I-77. There are places on the south part of town that would be useful. There are other parts within the north side to enable following those vehicles and where they may go. He had looked at the Industrial Park where there were number of issues in the past with illegal dumping or theft.

Mr. Marnecheck inquired if the Chief was currently working with any of the surrounding communities that have it, to see where they are putting their new cameras; perhaps piggyback off of theirs from a coverage standpoint. Chief Tarase stated that Strongsville does not have them or plan to use them. We have somewhat coordinated with Broadview Heights. Each of us is an 'in and out' of Route 82; therefore, it works for both. Brunswick has them going into their town; we have used all of those. Brunswick has one at West 130<sup>th</sup> and Boston Road. We can use that for vehicles that would leave our City and go into Brunswick. As far as looking at those time frames with thefts, we could see that they did head south; it is one of the main ways into Brunswick. Mr. Marnecheck felt we are making a big commitment. He wanted to know if there was any way we could possibly partner with these other cities to split the cost if they want another one, etc.; split the cost. It would help both communities. Chief Tarase reiterated that we are not adding anything. Mr. Marnecheck mentioned that the Chief had wanted additional cameras. The Mayor stated however, right now we are not doing that; this is not even in the budget for this year. We are just locking the price for what we already have, that is all that we are doing. Ms. Barath felt that was a good idea. The Chief agreed.

Ms. Krejci inquired about the price once more, if it was \$25,000 per year. Chief Tarase agreed; for the 10 cameras. Ms. Krejci felt that was not a lot of money for the protection of the City. Also, it makes it easier to budget every year, because you know where your amount is going.

***Mr. Wos moved to recommend Ordinance 23-143 to Council for approval, seconded by Ms. Webber. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. Motion carried.***

### **3. Proposed Legislation: Marijuana opt out**

Mr. Kelly reported on the marijuana retail provisions that were incorporated into the code, which were adopted by the electorate at the recent general election, Issue 2. The terms of those statutes go into effect on December the 7<sup>th</sup>. All of this was written by people who are standing to make a great deal of money in the operation. They obviously wanted to be in business as soon as possible. The only stopgap measure was an opt-out provision for townships, villages, and municipal corporations. If you take the opt-out, you can repeal that experience and go back and open up your town to the retail sales of marijuana if that is what you choose. There has been discussion on the websites that the Law Directors all participate in, relative to using other methods; the big one is moratorium. The problem with the moratorium is you essentially, have conceded to the industry that your town is open for business. It is only a question of when and under what circumstances. His strong recommendation was not to go that way, however to in fact, ask to kindly opt out and pass the ordinance. It would give time to produce something in the way of regulatory framework that will meet our needs. The experience in other communities out of state has been somewhat negative. They have much money, they have therefore, many ready-at-hand lawyers to come in. We would be hard-pressed to defend that kind of an attack if we do not have the opt-out in place; if we do not have the prohibition in place. The prohibition does not stop you from studying it or from considering whether or not you want it. Mr. Kelly suggested that we need to pass that, and to at least allow for other communities to serve as the destination of choice for those interested in that product; until we get a handle on how this will go. This was his recommendation. Mr. Wos agreed, as did Mr. Marnecheck.

Mr. Marnecheck wanted to clarify, 52% percent of North Royalton did approve of Issue 2. He wanted to know if Mr. Kelly was implying that a moratorium would not be as effective as an opt out. Mr. Kelly stated that a moratorium would not be effective at all. It only delays the opportunity for the industry. In short, it is a concession. It conveys we are open for business; just not today. What that does is it puts us on a clock. We have six months, then to come back and provide the guidance that would otherwise be required in terms of zoning, location, and hours of operation etc. He felt that we should allow other communities to test the waters first and therefore, he strongly recommended that we just opt out for now; to wait and see how it plays out. He shared that opt out ordinances were being done by other communities. Ms. Webber mentioned that we should let our law enforcement records retention get up and running before going down that path, if we decided that we wanted to do that.

Ms. Krejci questioned if we do not do the opt-out and just do a moratorium for six months, whether we can then decide that we do not want him here at all; in six months. Mr. Kelly clarified no we cannot. He did not see that in the initiative. The initiative gives you days to opt out. He reiterated if you do not opt out in days, you are open for business. The industry then has the right to show up and ask Mr. Jordan's staff to issue them a certificate of occupancy for retail space.

Mayor Antoskiewicz recapped when we had someone here discussing repealing an ordinance. He brought up that she actually called him yesterday. The businesses are already out there and to his understanding as well, we get no tax dollars out of this. Mr. Kelly agreed; municipal corporations are prohibited from taxing it. As discussion ensued, Ms. Barath asked about the current stores that we already have in the area, as to the status if we put this opt-out in place. Mr. Kelly explained if we put a moratorium on and essentially open up the City for the nature of that business, they would all be subject to the moratorium. Presumably however, come the end of the moratorium period, if you do not have the right limitations in place, they will challenge you.

As discussion ensued, Mr. Kelly advised that we are prohibiting every piece and parcel of this experience. You cannot stop people from growing them in their own homes. However, relative to any commercial operation, they would all be prohibited based on our efforts. Mr. Wos commented that one of our agricultural properties could not just decide they are going to open up a cannabis farm. Mr. Kelly stated no, because that is a commercial enterprise and it is subject to the municipal guidelines and ordinances. Ms. Krejci assumes that marijuana use in a city is now legal and there is no way to opt out. If we opt out of the rest of this, she wanted to know if we are communicating that people cannot use it here. Mr. Kelly disagreed, stating that they can possess up to two ounces; he was uncertain as to which substance.

Mr. Nickell shared he was not necessarily against it. He knows of those who use it for pain and it works for them. He did not have a problem with having a dispensary in the City. He pointed out that 52% of his ward were in support. The Mayor stated the proposition we had, when the people came here, is they were going to be going into one of the strip malls. We are trying to communicate that we believe the moratorium puts you in a certain position. Regarding the opt-out, you can still eventually repeal the legislation if the majority wants. You can repeal the legislation and then you can have them. The Mayor stated we believe we are in a better position that way, than we are the other way.

Ms. Krejci pointed out that people in our City did vote for it. The Mayor added that we are only opting out to say we are not. We do not want a store here; they can still get it. We are not saying that people cannot use it, we are saying that you cannot buy it in a store in North Royalton. Mr. Dietrich agreed to opt out and allow our Law Department to put this together the way it needs to be. Give them time, he felt it was that simple. Mr. Marnecheck made mention that we do have another meeting, therefore, we do not have to decide at this moment. Mr. Kelly, agreed; the first meeting in December is the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Marnecheck inquired if there was a way we could put it on second reading; it seemed as though it would still meet the deadline. Mr. Wos stated that he would recommend it tonight.

***Mr. Wos moved to remove Ordinance 23-145 out of Safety Committee and recommend it to the Council floor, seconded by Mr. Dietrich. Vote: Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. Motion carried.***

Mr. Dietrich shared that this was his last Safety Committee meeting. He expressed his gratitude to both chiefs. He had requested both terms to be able to serve on the Safety Committee, in which Mr. Marnecheck granted both times. Mr. Dietrich stated it was his number one committee that he wanted to be on; having had family members in law enforcement and fire departments. He lets residents know often that our chiefs are amazing. He expressed his thankfulness for all of the ‘behind the scenes’ things, the additional things that they do; which has been eye-opening. He expressed his gratitude to everyone tonight.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Mr. Wos, seconded by Ms. Webber **to adjourn the November 21, 2023 Safety Committee meeting.** Yeas: 3 Nays: 0. **Motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.**