

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE  
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
MAY 3, 2022 AT 4:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CAUCUS ROOM & VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairperson Tom Narduzzi  
Vice Mayor Dave Grendel  
Councilperson Dale Veverka

Others Present: Councilperson John DiGeronimo  
Councilperson Anthony Togliatti  
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz  
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz  
Finance Director Vern Blaze  
Police Chief Robert Butler

Chairperson Tom Narduzzi called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

Chairperson Narduzzi said thanks for showing up everybody. Anthony, welcome. I know you are on Zoom.

The Police Chief called a couple of weeks ago and asked if we wanted to have another Safety Committee meeting, and I said absolutely. So, all this is going to be is a refresher for all of us to see what the Chief and his team's progress has been in the last six months. It has been six months since he has been hired on and then a look forward to the next six months. We will have meetings in between to see the progression, but it's not really about our accomplishments, it's about the team's accomplishments and things that we wanted the Chief to achieve. I think he has achieved both of them. Thank you Chief. So, he's just going to go through it real quick and show us what he has done, and then we will look at what is to come the next six months.

Police Chief Butler said I asked for this meeting. I know you guys hired me back in November. I wanted to make sure, I saw some of the accomplishments our team has done. It's very important to me that you see the gains that we have, and I am going to jump right into it.

So, the department breakdown, this is something that was the cornerstone of our very first Safety Committee meeting. Our current department total is at 35. The original request from last year, this was my first Safety Committee meeting is 37. So, we are doing really well. We are right on track of where we want to be. We are close. That 37 number is where we talked about having 7 per road shift, and 3 in the bureau. So, how do we get there? Well, we just had the written Sergeant exam that was completed. They take the oral assessment this weekend. When that list is done, it has to be certified by Civil Service. There are some other steps that have to be done. When I presented this, we stated that there was going to be an outlook that around July we would be able to promote the Sergeants. We are on track for that barring no other issues. That would

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allow us to have the two supervisors per shift on the road. If you remember why I stated that it was important is that we have patrolmen that are still managing the road.

The other day when we had the vandalism at Chase Bank, a patrolman was in charge of the scene. We want those that are trained. We want those that can control the scene to be contacted and share the vision that I have and that have more meetings with me directly. We want those trained personnel to lead the road. So, we are on pace.

Posted lateral entry tests in August, and that is again on par of what we were talking about, and the important note here is that we have two retirements slated for next year, one being a Sergeant. That is our SRO Sergeant. That is January or February of next year we are looking for that. So, potentially this Sergeants' list will have four promotions within a short period of time.

I also had mentioned in the past that we want to hire and train a person before the vacancy. If we are aware that somebody is going to retire, we want to give 45 to 60 days so that there is no decrease in service. If we wait until the day the person leaves in order to fill a position, we have to train that next person. We have to get to the start dates, and it delays our service to our community and to remain the optimal Police Department that we are, we want to continue that level of service. Department positions are being held up until the Sergeant position promotion is being made.

So, we have a part-time Deputy Marshal position that we are going to be posting. That has been one that we have left vacant until the Sergeants' test is done. We also have two SWAT team positions that are open. The important part about this and why that is important is that we want to continue to show there are possibilities within our department, and there are. We have a lot of avenues that people can go and still continue to strive and get to within this department. Once we have the Sergeants' list finalized, we can start looking at these other positions to find new ways to encourage our officers in training and other aspects for them to become specialists.

Our new jailer has been around for two to three months. It has been a rousing success. What has been happening is an officer arrests somebody, they pull up to the sallyport, they drop the person off. The jailer meets them. He takes over the booking-in process. This means there are more boots on the ground. We have the officer go right back to the road. We have the car right back in service. There is no delay. If we had to take this person to another jail, if we had to take them somewhere else, that means we are losing our officers from our own City. If there was a serious incident or something else of that nature, our officers are ready. They are in our City, they are here and ready to go.

The officer reception has been great. We are collecting more rewards. That is something that was not being done in the past because as I stated to you, is we had to pull manpower from the road, and if we only have three guys working, we just weren't able to do that. We are doing things we weren't able to do, and our jail population has increased significantly for those reasons. Last year around this time we had about 30 people in jail, this year we are over 80, and I believe the night jailer is a major part of that.

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This is just a visualization of the breakdown of where the shifts are at. As you can see on there, it's just that one position. I told you there are two open positions, so we have the one. There's that shift, we have six here, and you can see the open Sergeant's position. When we get those filled, that person will go up there. We just have to pretend the block is moving up to those positions. In which case we will have seven per shift with two supervisors per shift. That would be what the structure would look like.

The Special Operations Division that is where that other spot is missing, so that is the total of two that we are talking about, and you can see how we look across the way there. We have our two school resource officers, our two Task Force officers and our civilian jailers.

Councilperson Veverka asked how many people applied for the Sergeants?

Police Chief Butler said we had ten take the test. We had eight pass the test, and we have the oral assessment for those eight next week.

Councilperson Veverka asked and those are all from within the department.

Police Chief Butler said yes it is. They range in years of experience here. You have to have a certain amount of time within the department of Independence, not law enforcement in order to apply to be a Sergeant. I want to give a shout-out in front of all of you, everyone who took that test, I am very proud of them for stepping up. There are a lot of nerves, there is a lot of time spent studying, and we are blessed to have such a great department of intelligent people who put forth the effort to take that test.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Mayor how does it compare in the past when we have had those promotional tests? Is it more or about the same?

Mayor Kurtz said I would say the same. It's a different process we use today, but the fact is the Chief is correct. There is a lot of interesting in promoting. As he eluded to earlier, promotions are not a Patrolman to a Sergeant, a Lieutenant, etc. There are a lot of different opportunities within your current rank to train, whether they be a Federal liaison. They could be different Task Force, detectives. They could be Resource Officers, a variety of different growth opportunities in addition to just being a pure promotion.

Police Chief Butler said to hit on the Mayor's point as well which he brings up something good, the Detective Bureau thing, I want to remind everybody that we moved Mr. Andrew March to the Detective Bureau recently for succession planning. We wanted him to learn from others. We brought in Rich Paine as a part-time officer with 30 plus years within this department. We have Mr. Smagola, 30 plus years in this department. They are showing him the years of experience and knowledge that they have, and they are training the new generation, and that is what Andrew March is. To point it out, and I believe I have said this in the past, Andrew March was the Detective in charge of the Chase Bank robbery that occurred. He solved that crime for us for his first case, and he used the tutoring of those that have much more experience than him to help him to grow. That's what we are doing by having that. So, whoever we get in this next position after

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we hire up before the end of the year, that's going to be another person. So, as Greg Smagola retires next year, we want six months of just training. Give us that knowledge before you go. He will learn from the guys that have been here for 30 years. They need to learn, and then they can pave their own way with that knowledge.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Andrew is he 30 yet? He is young.

Councilperson Veverka said so when you say that we had 10 officers study for this Sergeants' exam, what specifically do you have them target in their studies?

Police Chief Butler said well we hire a company to get the test done, and what is on their test is our Policy and Procedure Manual for the Independence Police Department, the Employee Handbook is on there. The CBA contract is on there, and also there are three books that they have to read, and there are questions on those. You are going to ask me what those three books are, and off the top of my head, one of them is 99 Things Every Law Enforcement Officer Needs to Know. It's a book that details what law enforcement agencies need to know. It's kind of like a textbook. Start with Why, it's a book on leadership on how to ask questions on why something needs to be done and looking at the bigger scheme. It has to do a lot with Apple. There are a lot of things about Apple in that book, and I will eventually tell you what the other one is. Let's take a tour, they are all in my office. I read through them as well. So, they are great books. This company allows me as the Chief to find the books that I want our officers to read. They read these books, they are leadership books. They are books about Police. Also, of course, the Ohio Revised Code is on there as well.

Councilperson DiGeronimo asked can I ask a question? On the shift and personnel and resources, and I think it said likes seven is the number. Does it fluctuate? Do you overlap on hours of the day? Does it become five at this time up to ten based on time of the day or day of the week?

Police Chief Butler said they are on 12 hour shifts.

Councilperson DiGeronimo asked is it seven on and seven off?

Police Chief Butler said we do have an early car, but both shifts have that; so pretty much at all times, seven maybe eight depending on if we have an extra person come in a little bit early, but seven is what the number is.

Councilperson DiGeronimo asked does that work? We could add more to that? We are not limited.

Police Chief Butler said absolutely. We could, but there are a few things to consider. One is our City ordinance, and the City ordinance caps us at 41 total hires for the Police Department. Secondly, I have been here for six months, if there is anything in the future to look at those things, I think it needs to be a broad look at where we are at with crime, where are our statistics. A good conference with the Safety Director as well and where the direction of the department is.

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Right now so far things have been going very well. I think the only part that we really need to focus on is getting that extra leadership. When there is not a leader on the shift, some things just go by the wayside. You have somebody who has the collective vision, the Lieutenants that know what me and the Mayor are looking for, and you have those Sergeants that can help reinforce that. When a patrolman is taking over for shift, those kind of grander concepts are not coming into the picture when they meet with their staff at the beginning of the day. So, seven has been working. I think we need time to really let that work. That's the only thing I would state. I came here, and I requested that when I started in November at my first Safety Committee meeting. I am really fortunate that those who were on Council at the time supported that, the Mayor supported that. We got the hires. We hired Fuka and Mancino around that time as well as I came on, and I feel that the response has been overwhelming and positive. You are seeing the officers on the road. From my leadership I have stated to them that I expect less in the station. So, we put caps on how many officers can come into the station at one time. We all want this as a team. The Department wants us as a team, and it just needs to be verbalized. Now that it has been verbalized, we are seeing that seven is very effective.

Councilperson Veverka asked what's the effect of vacations with the seven? We are getting into the vacation season.

Police Chief Butler said the seven covers us for those vacation days. So, if we have six on the road, they can still work with six. There's a number that when we first had those meetings, three was the number where they started having issues, where they didn't have as much backup as they were wanting to have. So, the seven allows us to have vacations, time off and training and still have a good number out there. So, when I am saying seven, optimally we have seven, but obviously there are going to be a few days we have somebody off, six or something like that. This is not the only number of people on the road. I will also remind you that we have School Resource Officers. We have the Detective Bureau. I have used them during calls. So, for the bank robbery, the Detective Bureau and SRO's came out and they established the perimeter. When we had the light poles fall on Brecksville Road on the bridge, the jailers and the Detective Bureau came out in cruisers and helped block the road to make sure no pedestrians or anyone else got hurt. It's using what we have when it's available, and we are optimizing that as best that we can. So far it has been very effective, including when we have had people that have time off.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I know it's a small sample, if we could compare the figures for the first four months of this year compared to the first four months of last year. I know other things factor in this too. It would be crime figures as far as on Rockside and that. Have you noticed any difference with the more exposure?

Police Chief Butler said what I have seen is an increase in what we are getting. For example, the amount of guns that we have seized in the first four months of this year is over double than we did last year. I had the Detective Bureau pull those statistics. Why is this? The guns were there. We now have the personnel there looking out for those things. I feel everyone in this room that drives through the City is seeing that impact of that additional cruiser, of seeing those lights on the road. That is what we are seeing. The hard numbers can fluctuate, depending on weather, and it can fluctuate on anything like that. Overall, the numbers and impact are well exceeding the

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years in the past and are matching and increasing past pre-Covid numbers. So, last year is kind of weird to compare to. Last year was Covid, and in 2019 there was nothing. So, we try to compare ourselves to that, and we are making leaps and bounds above where we were.

Finance Director Blaze asked is the goal then, I tried to do the math, to have five Sergeants and five Lieutenants plus yourself?

Police Chief Butler said yes, that is where we are at, and that is what was requested. If you recall, the original meeting in November or December, I put off the Deputy Chief position in order to hold on to five Lieutenants. When we have a retirement that is coming in two years, I feel that is a position that we need to engage and look at again. So, we would go back to four Lieutenants, a Deputy Chief and five Sergeants. Five Sergeants is still what we have always had.

Finance Director Blaze said so it would be 10 plus yourself, 11. Is that a typical ratio in a Police Department where almost exactly like one-third of the Department is Sergeant or above.

Police Chief Butler said not only is it common, but I have been meeting with area Chiefs, and I can get you the spreadsheets. So, I asked them that very question, how many people do you have over the rank of Sergeant, what is your Department breakdown. Honestly, it's about 40%, and sometimes higher of the Departments. We are on the lower end of supervision for a Department. Bay Village for example has over 50% of their Department, it is supervision. What do you get with that? You get more trained personnel. You get more succession planning. If one person is sick, you have other people that can step into these positions. So, for us, yes this is what I feel works, and once we have the Sergeants, once we feel that we can re-engage in conversation on that. I made it a point that I want to go to every Department that I can, I sit down with those Chiefs for lunch, learn about their Departments, what training are they utilizing. What is the breakdown of their Departments and how do we look comparatively. I have been making a spreadsheet on that to continue to keep us ahead of the curve to make sure we are providing the best service that we can.

Finance Director Blaze said John it must be a lot different than the private sector. I can't imagine your family's business having between one-third and one-half of them in total employee base be management.

Councilperson Narduzzi said it's a 24 hour business, so you need direction.

Finance Director Blaze said I am just asking.

Police Chief Butler said the only thing I want to say to that as well is, and I don't know the private sector as well as somebody else who owns companies, but I will say you have to remember that Sergeant is a step. So, it's one step above. Lieutenant is another step above. So, you are talking about high management, mid management, lower management, if you are looking at a private sector, I am very sure they have step processes where somebody reports to one person, the larger company the more people they have to report to. You want those layers, not only of information so that you have a chain of command, but you also have a good free flow

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of communication. The Chief himself can't communicate with every single person all the time. A Lieutenant also has administrative duties. You are looking at Lieutenants basically at this point as almost a Deputy Chief in this position. The Sergeants are the day-to-day on the road supervisors. So, you need that breakdown, and the disparity between the responsibilities.

This is good, any conversations on this I am happy to engage in. It's important for us all to know it's an interesting setup.

I promised you guys when I started training would be a very important aspect for me. Training has definitely been so. We have completed three officers in the Crisis Intervention Team Training. We have one more going in June. The goal is the entire Department should go through this training within three years. So, that means I hope to have ten finished this year. That is the Crisis Intervention training. That is helping people that are going through a mental health crisis. If you check the news, check anything like that, you know that this is a hot topic issue for law enforcement agencies. There is liability there. There are things of that nature. I can share with you an email that I just got from one of my supervisors. Ms. Harvan, the person pictured next to dog in the Power Point, just completed her training. We had a resident with Downs Syndrome that was having an issue. They had an issue with communication. The other officer that had not yet received this training was running into some roadblocks with that. We called her over, she was able to establish the scene, establish a rapport with this individual and ultimately come to a very peaceful resolution to the situation. The Lieutenant thanked us for sending her to this training and saying that it already had an immediate impact on the road. This is what we are talking about. Most departments have one or two people trained in this. We are going to have an entire department full of this. Already we have four, and we are going to continue to push this. Sorry, we have three with one more coming. That is a letter that I really, really like. Ms. Harvan couldn't be here today to talk about that incident, but it's giving our community members the best. If you have an elderly person, if you have somebody who is going through a mental health crisis, and there is a communication difference, that's what these officers are being trained to do. It's very high level training, and it's something that I put a lot of stock into. I have the training myself. So, I wear the pin proudly.

Supervisor training, we are currently completing a Police Executive Leadership Training, PEALS, in the Civic Center currently. We are hosting it. Lieutenant Tinnirello and Lieutenant Martin are attending that. FBI, the Law Enforcement Executive Development Association, we have an officer attending that next week. That is one of our Lieutenants, Murphy, is going to that. We have two that just went through Simunition Instructor Training. Simunition is paintball rounds that go into an actual gun. They fire, they hit with paint. The officers learn tactics. They learn how to know, weapon fire and things like that. It's high level training, and we are going to be doing training internal in this department because we sent officers to this training.

We also hosted Foundation of Reasonable Force, and we hosted the Amber Alert Conference. I put this on Facebook, and I am going to reiterate it. I will host everything I can. I want to host. One, I am bringing training local to our backyard. Two, we get free seats in every training that I host. Next, I want our residents to see every single Police car from other areas, they are coming here. They see our impact on the law enforcement community.

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The Amber Alert Conference got so big that next year they are looking at other locations within the City. They are talking to the Holiday Inn to host it. It's gotten very large. That was something we had discussions with afterwards that possibly they need to shuttle, and we need to be respectful to our residents so they can access the Community Center.

More training to come, more crisis intervention training, more supervision. We are hosting the trilogy of FBI next year. We have a succession planning training, law enforcement succession planning training. We are hosting that this year. I want to say it's next month. Stuck in the Middle Training that's the name of the training. What that means is that in between Chief and in between Sergeant, it's more of a Lieutenant training. You are in there and how do you cope with what the needs are of the people below you with still balancing the needs of those above you.

Investigation training, I posted this on our Facebook page today. Lieutenant Martin is going to be one of the leaders of the Regional SWAT Team. We are sending him to instructor school. That is awesome that we have a representative, not only on the SWAT Team, but he is going to be one of the decision-makers. He will be on the Board of that team.

We are going to be sending officers to instructor classes, and this is Advanced Roadside Impaired Driver Education. The goal is to get the entire department through that as well. That is an advanced field sobriety class training. That is what is coming over in the next six months. So, training is not going to go away. We are going to continue to push training and find new avenues for the officers to find what they like. If you like something, you want to be a criminal investigator, you like investigation, there are classes we are going to send you to. You will be that investigator for us. Each shift can have those people that have specialty knowledge. Having resources that we don't have to go outside and hope that an area department has them.

Outreach, I think you can all tell our Police Department is taking outreach to another level. We hosted Down Syndrome Awareness Day. We have increased school interaction. In two weeks we have officers hosting the morning announcements every single day during Police week. This way students get to know our officers. They know their names. They ask interview questions. It brings them into our schools. This Friday I am participating in a video game tournament at the junior high. Whatever we can do to make those connections and break down barriers with our children to know that they can run to us, they don't have to run away from us, this is very valuable.

We are hosting a self defense workshop for the Girl Scout troop. Coming up this month, our business liaison has been a huge hit, and they have been going to area businesses updating contact information, finding out what the needs of the businesses are and opening up new lines of communication that we have not had in the past. This has been great. We are going to be adding another person to be kind of a part-time business liaison so that we are able to go to more businesses.

Fraud training, scam training for the elderly. We are hosting our training this week. I think it's Thursday. Officer Green is hosting that training.

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Finally, our Facebook page has over 1,000 followers. We just started that in November. It's taking off. We are getting good reception. We are getting good information out to our public, our residents. They know that we are working hard for them. So, these are some great pictures, our K9 units are making it around. They stop by recesses and anything else that we can do.

Councilperson Veverka said thank you for being at the Kiwanis meeting this past, our most recent meeting, and our question, are you going to have an officer at the middle school career week? They have a program that's going to go on in a couple of weeks.

Police Chief Butler said we have an officer that works in the middle school. I will follow up on that and get that information for you. I am sure we will.

General supplies and equipment, at the first Safety Committee meeting I talked about four things. I talked about radar units for our officers, the body armor, radios, and body cameras. Those were the needs of the department that the department was bringing to our attention. What has been completed? We have three new lasers that are in place on the road. They are lightweight, and if anybody wants to see them after, you will see a major difference. If you remember seeing them here before, picking them up, questioning how strong everybody was, this is going to shock you on how much better we have now.

All but ten vests are currently on the road. The supervisor vests we are waiting on a grant to see if we can start a yearly grant on vests to make sure that we keep up-to-date on these vests. The reviews have been phenomenal. They are lightweight. They fit. If there are every any issues, there is a storefront on Lorain Avenue. The officers can go there, and they will make immediate changes to their vests, so they get faster help on anything that they need. We have not had any issues with the vests, but there is an option if we ever do.

The radios were tuned. It was the first time we tuned our radios. It was not something we had done before. The sound is better, we are not getting as many clicks. If you got a click, that meant it wasn't reading the radio when you turned it on. We are not getting that as much anymore.

New dash cameras were ordered. This is something that I am going to talk about in a future slide here.

New window tint meters have been ordered. Window tint meters, we are seeing kind of an increase on Rockside Road especially, dangerous window tint. It is so dark. We have ordered brand new tint meters so that our officers, what that does is, it's a device about this size, they pull it over suspecting the window is tinted too much. They put it up, and it will tell them what the reading is. If it's at a certain reading, they will receive a citation. We want to keep everyone safe. You have to be able to look outside of your car. You have to see other cars. You have to see our children, see stuff like that. We cannot have crazy window tint just for the appearance. They feel it's a good appearance.

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Evidence processing room, I already mentioned this. We established a processing room. We took the evidence processing room out of where the officers ate, we made it a separate room so that they are now no longer processing evidence on the same table that they eat.

What is our goal? Our goal is to order more lasers for next year. We have six lasers. We will have enough that pretty much every day all of our officers will be able to carry a brand-new laser. I am not expecting Lieutenants to have to worry about that as much as I think they have a significant amount of administrative duties, but every officer will have a brand-new one that is working the road, and they could share them.

We are waiting on a grant for the vests. I will hit that on the grant slide.

Yearly tuning of radios, as I mentioned.

Our body camera grant will be mentioned in the grant slide.

We have money in a HIDTA account. It's a Federal fund, and we have an officer on that Task Force. We are waiting for some of the funds to be freed up. When those funds are freed up, we are looking to get a fingerprint scanner that is a \$17,000 item. What that is, you have somebody that needs to be scanned, a resident needs to come in and get their fingerprints scanned or checked, that is what we utilize. Currently, we are sending everybody to Newburgh Heights. Our fingerprint scanner broke down two years ago. So, it helps us if we have somebody out on the road that refuses to identify themselves, we go to a hotel, we can't find out who they are, this fingerprint scanner gets us instant information that we wouldn't have had before. It's not portable. We have to bring them back to the station. They used to have a program about eight or nine years ago that the State had where there was a portable version of this, and the State stopped it. I just was in a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor and the other Chiefs, and we talked about that device and how we all want it to come back. He listened to what we wanted, and he wrote it down. We will see where that goes.

Shield cameras, blue light and Flock cameras, those are the cameras we are talking about. Flock, the external cameras, we have a whole presentation for you on that because I know Councilperson Trakas asked many questions on that, and he asked Councilperson Walchanowicz to follow up with me. Luckily, we did come prepared today for that and for him.

First and foremost, I want to talk about the grants. We have a grant writer, Lieutenant Buehner has taken over. He writes our grants now. We are using that to try to get more equipment, try to get needs for the department. The law enforcement armor grant, we just submitted for that. If we get that, those ten vests which would cost \$12,000, the State would give us \$9,000 for that. So, from my original ask, we actually would be subtracted \$9,000. The City would only have to pay \$3,000 for those vests.

We have submitted to the Department of Public Safety for more visibility, for high visibility traffic grant. We would receive 700 hours of overtime for our officers to run traffic. That would be on the highways, on busy streets. It could be side streets, 700 hours to see extra officers

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running and making sure that the traffic laws were being followed. As I am sure you all know, the highways have gotten quite out of control since Covid. We do our best. Our officers are out there, and making many significant arrests that you will see in your weekly updates when I send them to you, but this extra money will definitely help us do even more.

The JAG grant. We are looking at axis cameras. These cameras, this is what they look like, are used in Lakewood, Cleveland Heights. I call them then blue light cameras. There is a blue light on top of the cameras. I really like this. Have you ever been to Lakewood, you will see that blue light at night. You will know that the Police are watching. You know that area is safe, that is the blue light. That's why we want that blue light. Cameras that record footage and allow live look which means if a crime happens, our officers can pull up live video footage on their cell phones and see where did the people go? What happened there? Anything of that nature. It's a live camera. It's not an LPR, Flock is LPR. That means if they see a stolen car, something else like that, we are immediately notified, and we can stop something from happening before it happens. Flock is very effective, it helped us solve the bank robbery, it's great. However, live look cameras can definitely help us out as well. There are different needs. If you are having an issue in a certain area, we can move these cameras around. There are mobile versions of this camera, and there is also other consideration, a brand-new City parking lot that we are building near Embassy Suites, CBIZ, Topgolf area. Having a camera there that can watch that parking lot at night, that is something that adds extra value. The camera itself, there's a 360 degree version of that camera. We can control that. There are two modes, one we can fixate it on a certain area where that the camera lens can pan around and just kind of do one of these motions and watch the area. Those cameras are about \$5,000. I am going to show you what they look like. I will also point out that it is a local distributor. The distributor of these cameras are in Brooklyn Heights.

This is what the cameras look like. This is the quality of video that they have over in Lakewood. You are able to zoom in and out of the cameras to see what is going on. I mean I can read that. That camera is across a large intersection across the street, and I can read into the building. I can see if there's a person in there shopping. I can see the UPS thing. The quality is great. Look how big this intersection is, and look how they can zoom all the way across the street to the CVS. This is the quality of the video. This is what is recording at all times. The video is held for 30 days. Then it is purged. It is held in the Cloud, and we don't have to worry about any of our systems being hacked. We don't have to worry about anything of that nature breaking down, losing videos. It is stored on the Cloud. Lakewood has these. Several departments do utilize these. The blue light is something that I find extremely valuable. It is just letting the people know we are watching them.

Councilperson Veverka asked so when they pan in, does that eliminate the big picture at the time?

Police Chief Butler said it looks like this. So, they zoom in on a specific point for whatever reason they are zooming in, or they can pan out. So, like here you can see this is more panned out, but if we want to get all the way into that Jeep, we can zoom all the way into that Jeep. We can control the cameras from our station. We can control it live. You can see how they are going

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in and out to show you that you have control over that. So, you would be able to control it from your phone. Certain people will be able to control it from their phone.

Councilperson Veverka asked so typically they would be doing the 360 unless there's something specific you wanted to zoom in on.

Police Chief Butler said we have that video. There's ways to edit that and still pull pieces from it. So, we can zoom in, get extra pictures from a wide look based on the technology that they have. So, the program that we have allows us to go in, grab images and pull them out.

Finance Director Blaze said last week I forwarded an article from the LA. Times to Council and the Mayor. The City of Beverly Hills has almost 2,000 of those cameras on top of Flock cameras, on top of drones, and their Council was considering legislation to acquire another 900 for a total of almost 3,000 of these cameras throughout the City.

Police Chief Butler said I'm looking for grants. I understand that we have budgets and things like that. I am not trying to go crazy on anything. A grant would be able to cover several cameras for us to be able to utilize for our agency. I have asked them to also give me a quote on a trailer. You will recognize the trailer, we borrowed them from the County. They are not ours. We can borrow them from time to time. If we have our own, we can use that, we can have it however we wish. We can set it up near the playground when we are not using it, and it can be recording. There's no reason not to have it out. A lot of these are solar powered, so that is a solar powered camera. If we need it, we pull the footage.

Councilperson Narduzzi said the Lowe's parking lot, I talk to the Manager all the time. He said that on a normal day they would have four to five thefts a day. They put that camera in there, and he said they might have two a week, and it's the blue light. It also has voice detection. When you pull in it says you are on surveillance camera. It's pretty crazy.

Clerk of Court Zidanic said the quality of that camera is exceptional. Does anybody ever use those indoors compared to the indoor security cameras?

Police Chief Butler said when they pitched me the device, they said a lot of schools use their product.

The next step in this process would be meeting with the Mayor, Safety Director, they would come and do more of a presentation on what the device is going to give. They will show you the materials. This way we have more knowledge on it. It's something that I want to see for the future. I know Councilperson Trakas had asked about more Flock cameras. We have a lot of Flock cameras. They are in really good strategic areas. We are getting a lot of value out of those cameras. I think we can have the best of both worlds. I think Vern's point is great, and we didn't coordinate this. We haven't talked about this, but he is mentioning how Beverly Hills has both. You don't want to put all of our eggs in one basket.

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Finance Director Blaze said Strongsville had hundreds of them years ago. I don't think we would need 3,000 of them like Beverly Hills, but I think this is a definite need.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I think five or six of those in the park would be fantastic.

Councilperson Veverka said well this all circles back to the comment that I made a while back, as soon as we start getting any cameras, was putting signage up so people coming in up Brecksville Road or in from Pleasant Valley, the main thoroughfares that they see a sign. They know that we have a lot of eyes in the sky.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I bet you companies would participate, like I am just thinking of the corner of Hillside and 21. You have the beverage store, you have the gas station, you have a development across the street. They have all been hit multiple times. For \$1,500 they can all go together and purchase a camera. It would cover all of them, and you would have access to it all.

Police Chief Butler said and the sign for these cameras, I mean absolutely it wouldn't be a problem. I think the thing that really sets it apart, and go back to the blue light. I don't need a sign to say there's a blue light. Bad guys know what the blue light means. They know what these things are. They know where a lot of these cameras are. I worked with these, a similar style when I worked in Cleveland Heights. There was less crime in the blue light area, that's why we put them there. You have a business area and stuff like that, there was less crime there. Put them in your schools, we want to make sure everyone is protected. The blue light cameras give us an advantage. If we had a serious incident, we could live look multiple cameras at the same time.

Finance Director Blaze said some of us older guys, we see the blue light, and we think we are at Kmart.

Police Chief Butler said the grant releases in two weeks for JAG, and we are going to put in for the JAG grant. We are going to put in for cameras.

Mayor Kurtz asked are there any limitations or parameters?

Police Chief Butler said there is not. I think it goes up to over \$200,000 that we can put in for. Are we going to get all of that? We are not going to, but you always want to aim high for a grant and hope to fall somewhere around that can be necessary to the department. So, Buehner has been contacting area departments, give me a copy of a grant that you had successfully gotten. So, we are trying to learn, and that's really very important to all of us in the Independence Police Department. I am sure it's important to all of you here. We are not an island. I want to learn if you have had success with this, let me learn. The department is reaching out to other departments learning about their structures, learning about their cameras. How did you get money? There are ways to do that, and we continue to explore those.

Councilperson Narduzzi said our citations are way up since the first of the year. We can take a portion of that citation money and just invest in cameras.

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Mayor Kurtz said we measure things in stops. The best tool is the stops.

Several people began speaking at once.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked the citation money, do we have a fund that it goes to?

Mayor Kurtz said Mayor's Court.

Police Chief Butler said when I started this, I stated that overall productivity is going back to pre-Covid type times. So, we are stepping it up. Our guys are working very hard. We do not measure based on our traffic citations, we don't measure on those things. We want our officers to know that we support them. We want them to work, and we have their backs. I believe that message is received well.

Councilperson DiGeronimo asked is there any other limiting factor besides dollars of adding more?

Police Chief Butler said each camera costs \$5,000. The only down side would be the Cloud storage. The cloud storage is less than \$50.00 per month per camera.

Councilperson DiGeronimo said to Tommy's point, if you have a restaurant or business in town, if you want something for your employees just for your parking lot, it's in your best interest to get the light. It has the Independence badge on there.

Police Chief Butler said this is where the liaison comes into play as well. If we start this, we can communicate with the businesses and say hey we have this. If it's an option that you are ever interested in, here's some information. We can coordinate with our Economic Director, Jess Hyser, and if she wants to help us coordinate these sort of things. If a new business comes into town, it's just an option to put on the table. Hey, this is here if you are ever interested, we are here for you. This is something we can watch and help in case there's ever an incident.

Mayor Kurtz asked who do you use to monitor these?

Police Chief Butler said if this goes into place, we would use our jailers to monitor this. Now that we have nighttime jailer, we have the daytime jailer, we are looking to, hopefully our 24/7 jail coverage, they are not just jailers. They are going to be information gatherers for us as well. They can watch these cameras. As you know, we do not have dispatch in our building. That is with Chagrin Valley Dispatch. These jailers have additional training. They can spot something that doesn't look well. They have a radio, they can radio to our officers. I see somebody suspicious pulling on door handles in this parking lot. Why did that guy just crawl underneath that car near the catalytic converter? Check that out. We are getting firsthand information, and we have somebody that would have the ability to watch something and identify something. You can put multiple cameras on one TV. So, a TV of this size would hold 30, obviously you don't want to crowd so you can't see the little people doing bad things, but you can put a significant amount of cameras up at the same time and have one person monitor what's going on, why is

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that happening. It works well in the dark. It works well in the light. I had a YouTube video that I also can show you guys later on that shows it even working at night. It's a good picture at night. It's a good picture in the day, as long as the road is lit, you get a good picture. Even not, you can still see kind of what is going on.

Councilperson Veverka asked does it have infrared capabilities?

Police Chief Butler said I would have to get back to you on that one. It has an LPR function, but our Flock is so good. I really think we need to concentrate on this for camera and live video. The Flock is getting us what we need with everything else, and it coordinates with the other cities. Almost every week I get an alert that another city is doing Flock, and when they do, we all talk.

This is something I have been looking into. I promised you I would. When you have suggestions or you have knowledge, I talk it over with the Safety Director, and I work on at least gathering information. So, please pass it along to Councilperson Trakas.

The next six months, I will thank you all for the approval of Lexipol. We have already started, and in five or six months we look to implement our new policy and procedure. It's a very long process. I have to go through every policy myself. I have to work with this company. That's just where I am at right now. I knew this coming in that when I delayed the Deputy Chief position, I knew that I was going to be taking on more responsibilities, and that's okay. We are going to get this done. This is going to be really good for our department.

A new Police station, I am going to talk about that on the next slide.

Training and equipment, we want to continue to be cutting edge. I told you we were going to buy more lasers. If there is equipment, if there are resources that our officers can use to keep themselves safe, keep our public safe and continue to provide quality service, I want to hear companies out. It never hurts to bring them in and listen and see what's out there. We will also continue to share.

So, we are part of the Regional SWAT Team. We are part of the Cuyahoga County Chiefs of Police Association. There are resources out there that we can share and make sure that our officers have the best and latest equipment.

Training, I already talked on that, and promotional and lateral lists, I spoke about that. It will be the focus of the next six months.

A new station, this has come up a few times. This building is over 40 years old. Our Police Department is a product of that as we are next door. I invite any of you that wishes to walk through the station, the Safety Director has given me permission to have you guys get tours through this. Also, we spoke today, the Mayor and I, are ride alongs. If there's something that you are interested in, I know Dale has, and with the permission of the Safety Director, he has granted that. If you want to do a ride-along, and you want to go out and see the department. You

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want to see the look from the road, we will get you out there. We will put you in a vest, and you can come out with our guys and see what it is like.

If you want to come over and see the station, it is dated. It is over 40 years old. We are at capacity. There is no room for growth. We do not have extra offices. We are here talking about new equipment, new ideas, that's great. We don't have really a lot of places to put these things. I have gone to other departments. I have gone to Rocky River. I have gone to Newburgh Heights, they both have new Police Departments that have been built within the last five years. I want to make connections and find out what is best for this department moving forward. There is nothing else we can do. Even if we blow out the walls and try to expand out, it's limited. You are putting a band aid on a gunshot wound. We need to look towards the future. The jail is old. We want to hopefully have some more cells. We only have seven or eight at this time. Most recently we have had five people in jail at the same time which was pretty much at capacity.

Councilperson Veverka said guess we can't use the ones in Historic Hall right.

Police Chief Butler said we cannot. It's really cool, and we are donating more items that we found in our attic to the Historical Society. We have a great relationship with them. We helped with that naming campaign as well. You see the mannequin has a name and everything. We are working hard with them.

Councilperson Veverka asked are you trying to get that in the C&B garage window?

Police Chief Butler said it's scary.

The look of the department needs to match the image of the department. I believe everyone in this room believes our department is the best department. It's extremely professional. All of us know how hard our Police Department works for this community. It is mirrored with other departments, other Chiefs, other agencies value Independence's Police Department. The building should match the image that people have in their mind. That is new, modern, forward-thinking, there's room for expansion and growth. Room for training, room for equipment.

Training space as I stated, we want to be able to train. If anybody wants to walk over there, I can show you what we have, and we need to keep up with area departments. When I started we talked about recruitment. We talked about being attractive to area candidates. Area departments are updated, Rocky River, Mayfield Village, Newburgh Heights, that's just to name a few. They are already there, and that is part of what they hand out in postcards. When they give their postcards to recruits, our new state-of-the-art facility. We have room for you. You have a kitchen to eat in. We do not have a kitchen to eat in. We want to just get up to where we are professionally with the building to match. So, that is something that will require further discussion, eventually asking for money to talk to an architect, talk to an engineer. Where could the next steps for us to finalize what that look would be like.

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I continue to have discussions with our Mayor about that. It's a big project. Even if we started tomorrow as we all know, we are years out. Every day that's another year that you add on to how old our Police Department is.

Mayor Kurtz said along those lines our conversations, we need to develop an investment strategy for our facilities, an overall strategy. We have done that in terms of accessing the current condition. I think it's important now that we take money and put it in an investment strategy to access our different options, whether they be new or renovate, the various locations, the various opportunities and how they overlap into each other in terms of service and serviceability. So, we will be coming to Council, possibly to the Public Buildings and Lands and/or Council as a whole workshop to discuss the opportunities of taking monies and putting them into investment strategies with respect to facilities so that we can say the Service Department is the highest priority. We can say the Police Department, and which other facilities need to be part of this overall strategy. So, stay tuned for that, but it's going to be something that is appropriate now. The Chief and I have had discussions, and I think with the input from Council and some professional assistance, we should be able to find an overall strategy. Once we invest in that strategy, define a strategy, and then we can look at implementing a strategy that will include funding, whether that is internal, external, borrowing remains to be seen. I think we have to coordinate an overall strategy first. So, that's really our goal for that.

Police Chief Butler said we can wrap up. I know it's taken a while, and I do apologize.

The Council agenda, these are the three things that I have upcoming on, and I just want to explain them. We are outfitting all of our cruisers. Remember we purchased our new cruisers. We are putting for vote the outfitting of those cruisers.

We are switching our dash cameras to GETAC. Twinsburg and Streetsboro uses them for their new dash cameras. Eventually when we go with body cameras, they would sync with these dash cameras. The current dash cameras that we have, they are not going to be able to sync with anything. They are old, they are outdated. They are not protected. There is a server in our basement. IT needs to manage that server. This is Cloud based. All of the videos go up on the Cloud. I took the input from IT. Jim Gibbs was there, Dawn and Matt, all of our IT professionals were there. We went with GETAC as an optimal provider for dash cameras. They will be there at the City Council meeting if anybody has questions on next Tuesday. One extra bit of fun you get with this is if, let us pretend and knock on wood, we have an incident at CVS, and they have internal video. We can upload their video to the Cloud of GETAC, and we can put a Police report completely on their Cloud and put it on one device. So, if we needed to send over a thumb drive, it's all on one. Everything will go there. We do not have that capability now.

Ordinance, this is changing the costs. Ordinance 101 currently has daily jail costs of \$100, that means if somebody brings a person from another city and wants to house them with us, we charge them \$100. This would raise it to \$150, which is a reasonable rate, and what is fair compared to what other jails charge. BAC costs and charging to use our range.

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Finally is the firearms purchase. We have over 60 guns in our evidence that have been seized by the court and the judge, and we will sell them to an authorized licensed gun dealer who we buy our guns from as a department. We did this a couple of years ago. Some Councilmen and some staff actually purchased guns from this company, and we look to get rid of this evidence we have collected. We have over 60 plus guns. When the company comes in, we will let you know when that is if anybody has some interest as long as this is voted up.

Does anybody have any questions or anything?

Councilperson DiGeronimo said I have a general question. Are we done? Unrelated to this, but something I will see, and maybe it's beyond our City are response times. Sometimes that is published somewhere, a City's response time to an incident. I don't know what the definition is of response time is. If you said here's our response time what does that mean?

Police Chief Butler said the response time is typically measured from the time an officer receives a call from dispatch to us arriving at the scene of the incident. It's not the time the dispatcher gets the call. It's the time the dispatcher tells our officer on the radio where to go and then them getting there. That's a response time.

Councilperson DiGeronimo said from a resident's point of view, that's their response time.

Police Chief Butler said a resident has to understand that when you call in to dispatch, dispatch has questions for you. They are going to ask you questions. Well I called at 2:00 p.m., why didn't somebody show up until 2:10 p.m. Well they talked to you for three to four minutes because they are gathering all the necessary information, and that sometimes is not taken into consideration. So, we want to make sure that we are focusing on the dispatcher has gathered what they need to keep everybody safe. They call the officer, and how fast did that officer arrive. Our response time here is pretty good. If we want to dive down, it would take some time to gather those statistics and talk to the Safety Director about it, but I am confident in saying that, especially how we are populating our officers on our roads out there, we have not received any complaints about it since I have been here.

Councilperson DiGeronimo said I don't have any issue, but yeah just when somebody says, what do you mean by that?

Mayor Kurtz said it would be EMS more than Police. You are disoriented in terms of time allocation. You call for a 911, and you think it takes forever, and it's a couple of minutes. It's really an abstract in terms of how people document that. It is something we should look at so that we have working knowledge of what our response time is so in terms of dispatching our officers, where they are concentrating, where they are working. We do that normally based on evidence or incidents, but having a more comprehensive approach to it never hurts.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I think the dispatch not being in Independence has caused some anguish amongst residents. I know one incident at the high school that the person called and said I have trouble at the high school, and they are like what high school would that be. They are not

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used to saying Independence. It has happened more than once. I have heard stories, but I think all in all we are working through that. It's the knowledge that the dispatcher should have.

Mayor Kurtz said maybe based on that, we should do an article in the newsletter periodically about how to orient yourself. When you call 911, deliver more information like I am in Independence, I am in the high school, or identify your location because the street could be the same. I am on Brecksville Road, like Brecksville in Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, Brecksville, so I think some of that could be accomplished by just articles in the newsletter periodically explaining to people the benefit and protocol in terms of what you should do to make your call effective.

Police Chief Butler said we will put it on Facebook first, and I will do it the next possible time I can. I sent in my June one, and we were talking about texting and driving, distracted driving because we have children out of school, and I want to make sure we keep all of our children safe. I think that's a good idea Mayor. I will make sure something goes out.

Mayor Kurtz said we don't identify the City we are calling from, and you have to spend more time trying to put that together. So, thank you.

Police Chief Butler said the Mayor had also mentioned concerns on the same topic that you mentioned about dispatch and what they would say on the phone. As a Police Department, I had their dispatchers come on ride-alongs. So, in January and February anybody who dispatched for us was put through ride-alongs to learn our City better, to learn our officers' names better. This is something that will go on continuously. We will continue to do ride-alongs with the dispatchers to make sure they know us.

Councilperson Veverka asked what's the dispatcher's first question when someone calls 911?

Police Chief Butler said what's your emergency.

Councilperson Veverka said that was my questions because that is what you hear on TV. With us being multiple communities, would the first question be where are you located? What town are you in?

Police Chief Butler said the first question they ask is do you need Police, Fire or EMS. Then they go from there.

I also have the ride-along options for you Councilperson Veverka so we can go over those.

Does anybody else have any questions?

Councilperson DiGeronimo said I think the outreach is so important. I think what you are doing is great. I think there are a lot more opportunities with things we can be doing with the residents and business community. If somebody is concerned about their business on Rockside Road, and I

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have employees, how to present yourself, how to know where there could be an issue. It's even something the department could offer a business.

Police Chief Butler said I will pass that along to the officer.

Councilperson Narduzzi said so another good meeting Chief. I promised Debi I would have everybody out of here by 5:15 p.m. because she has another meeting to go to, so we are right on schedule, but I appreciate the videos that you put together for us, and I look forward to the next six months to see what more we can accomplish.

Police Chief Butler said thank you for having me.

Mayor Kurtz said thank you Chairman, Members of Council for your attentiveness. We appreciate any support that you could provide us for the various pieces of legislation that you have on the agenda. If there are any uncertainty, feel free to reach out and let us know your concerns, and we will try to get those addressed before the meeting.

**Moved by Veverka seconded by Grendel to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting of May 3, 2022. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.**

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at 5:17 p.m.

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Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council  
**Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 05/04/22**

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