

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE  
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
JULY 6, 2021 AT 3:30 P.M.  
VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairperson Tom Narduzzi (arrived at 3:47 p.m.)  
Councilperson Kathleen Kapusta  
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz

Others Present: Vice Mayor Dave Grendel  
Councilperson Kenn Synek  
Councilperson Dale Veverka  
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz  
Finance Director Vern Blaze  
Police Chief Michael Kilbane  
Fire Chief Steve Rega  
Building Official Michael Gero

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz called the meeting to order at 3:42 p.m. as Chairman Narduzzi was having difficulties accessing Zoom.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz said we will jump right into the first item on the agenda, it's Ordinance 2021-35. It's the ordinance amending Chapter 351, the Parking Generally, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence to prohibit parking on public streets during winter months and to prohibit parking on one-way streets entirely.

I have not seen many examples of ideas of certain changes. I know Jim was working on a lot of it, and I haven't heard from him or talked to him recently. Right now I am not sure where we sit on any of the changes that Council wanted improved on it.

Councilperson Kapusta asked well then should we hold it until maybe our meeting if we are going to vote on it at our meeting, we could still talk about it.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz said Councilperson Trakas was running with it, and he's not on today. I say we just hold off and talk about it next Tuesday. If we are still not satisfied, then we can proceed from there.

Councilperson Kapusta said I agree.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz said so then we will move on to Item 2, our Police Department personnel status.

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Chief Kilbane said currently within the past few weeks actually we had numerous retirements from the Police Department. Lieutenant Kroeger and Detective Paine, Patrolman Kingzett and part-time Patrolman Luciano all retired during the month of June; and I will be joining them a month from now. We did hire three new entry level candidates off the entry level list. They are currently in the field training program. All three of them had their Peace Officers' certificates when they were hired so they didn't have to go through the academy, they went immediately into the FTO program. So far, they are all exceeding expectations; so we anticipate that they will finish the FTO sooner rather than later. Just Friday we finished interviewing the candidates off a recent lateral hiring list. We are going to present that list with recommendations to the Mayor tomorrow, and hopefully it looks like there are some very promising candidates on a lateral hire; so it will help our personnel efforts and being able to get our numbers where they need to be.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz asked Chief how many more candidates are we looking at to hire?

Police Chief Kilbane said I am still in discussions with that with the Mayor. We are trying to figure out the best planning to go forward. I am meeting with the Mayor weekly as a matter of fact to make sure we are getting everything we need to. So, I will bring him the candidates, give our recommendations and then I will meet with them again sometime this week; and we will come up with the best, we want to make sure we are absolutely hiring the best candidates for our Police Department. That's the paramount concern. It's not just the numbers. I would rather forego the numbers and make sure we have quality candidates.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz asked do you have a number in mind Mayor on how many Patrolmen you would like or Policemen you would like?

Mayor Kurtz said we will send out the chain of command the way it is today, and then we will send you our recommendation.

Councilperson Kapusta asked my question is do we Mayor and Chief, do we have a plan in place for replacing our Chief which is not possible to do, but for finding someone to take his place?

Police Chief Kilbane said I'm working closely with the Mayor on that to make sure we have a smooth transition, and even with that being said, after I leave, I will be available to the Mayor to assist with any transition after I retire, any assistance that he needs, albeit it will be on a long distance basis; but I would be more than willing to provide whatever help I can to make sure the transition goes smoothly.

Councilperson Kapusta said thank you.

Mayor Kurtz said and to further amplify that, when I hired Chief Kilbane I went through a lengthy interview process and short listed. I am considering a similar process. We are pulling up the old process, but we may form a committee of experienced veterans that could filter out and ask the questions germane to law enforcement, personality, leadership all the different elements that we need to have a good Chief. So, we are going to go through that process, and I

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just had a meeting with an outside individual today that's going to help out. So, I am excited about the opportunity. It's bittersweet because Mike is so well respected in the law enforcement field in terms of his capacity to teach, to learn and to articulate concerns and issues; but I am confident that there are candidates that internally, and I want to make sure we vet fully internally as well as look and see what's available overall for them. So, that's where we are at.

There are two segments of our Police Department. We have an older group that's believe it or not they are retiring; I hired a lot of them and they are retiring. You know what that tells you. So, we have an older segment of our Police population, and then we have a lot of younger, real fine young entry level individuals. It's an exciting opportunity, but it also presents challenges.

Like the Chief said, we are meeting weekly, going through different scenarios; and I am confident because of his willingness to be available, we are going to be okay and going to go through a vetting process that's going to be a little more structured than in the past, but I am confident that we are going to continue to do some great things for that department.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Mayor is it possible that Council could receive maybe a roster of the Police and Fire Departments because there are so many new faces there and various years of experience. I think a few years back when Anthony was Mayor, there was a picture of both the Police Department and the Fire Department, all the members and everything. I would like to have that updated with their years of experience just to give us an idea of the makeup of both of our safety forces. Sometimes you could put a face with a name, and if we could have that.

Mayor Kurtz said both Chiefs can you put that together for me, and then we will put it in the packet. Our goal would be to put it in the packets this Friday. Is that okay Vice Mayor?

Vice Mayor Grendel said that would be great Mayor, thank you. I just want to know our staffs well and their years of experience.

Mayor Kurtz said so when you get stopped at least you know their name.

Councilperson Kapusta said speak for yourself.

Chairman Tom Narduzzi joined the meeting.

Acting Chairman Walchanowicz said Tom we are on Number 3 on the agenda if you wanted to resume.

Chairman Narduzzi said I guess we hit the Police Department personnel status with the Chief already.

Several people replied yes.

Chairman Narduzzi said by the way Chief, you look 10 years younger, I don't know why, a little bit of stress is leaving you, right?

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So, Chief Rega you are up next.

Fire Chief Rega said well we just recently had 3 retirees move on so we worked diligently to replace those 3. Just to recap our staffing, we have 21 full-time firefighters, 4 Lieutenants, 3 of which are on shift 24 hours on and 48 hours off shift. We have one 40 hour Fire Prevention Lieutenant; and then we have the Assistant Chief and the Chief. Added to that there are 3 part-time firefighters; part-time has been pretty challenging to keep people. It's kind of revolving door, and there are not a lot of folks out there right now part-time, and then we also have a part-time emergency vehicle technician. He's a mechanic and comes in once a week and on an emergency basis to work on our emergency response equipment.

Just to give you some demographics here, we currently have 16 firefighters that are under 10 years of experience; and of those 16, 12 of them are under 5 years of experience. So, we have a real young department here. Our command staff is in the 22 year plus range; so we are going to be working diligently with our succession planning to get people up to speed to take over when the command staff changes over which is going to be roughly in another 5 years.

Chairman Narduzzi asked Chief have we looked at, I know Mayor Kurtz had mentioned this in his campaigning, about hiring Police/Paramedics down the road to put us a step ahead of everybody else, since the Police are the first ones to respond. I just wanted to know if we looked down that avenue yet or not.

Mayor Kurtz said only because it may not be a Paramedic, maybe an EMT initially as a first. We just had a situation that the Chief can talk about.

Fire Chief Rega said we really haven't had any formal discussions on it, but there is an option there. I think the Mayor is correct in that the EMT takes 2 or 3 months to get through a program. They have accelerated programs, but a Paramedic would be a good 12 month period to train those folks. There's a lot more training involved with them, continued training. It is a possibility, but I don't know if that will be the answer here, possibly just EMTA's or advanced folks who could arrive on scene. We still on at least the Fire side, we have fire calls and things like that, and the Police always pitch in and help out a little bit here and there on scene. When we have emergency medical calls they are there quickly. A few of them have AED's that they bring with them and other skillsets that we have trained with them on. One of the things that we cross-trained on is bleeding control, which is a common thing now. They are pushing for everybody to have training on bleeding control in the public just because of what we are experiencing with active shooters and things like that across the country. So, we have done some cross-training with that. We have done CPR and training with the Police; but an actual formal public safety officer when they are both Paramedics and Police trained, we haven't really discussed that yet, but anything is possible.

Chairman Narduzzi asked does anybody have anything else to offer?

Vice Mayor Grendel said I was just going to ask Chief Rega if the Fire Department, are they experiencing the same difficult that the Police are as far as new applicants for the positions? I

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know all over the country we know what's happening in the Police. I was just wondering if the same thing is happening to Fire to that extent or maybe to a lesser extent.

Fire Chief Rega said yes it is. We are seeing the same low numbers on entry level exams. The Police, it's more accepted, and they are making use of lateral transfers. It's not quite as prevalent on the Fire side, although there are a few cities looking at it and doing it. The candidate pool is definitely dropping. People are not wanting to do Police and Fire.

The other thing we are noticing is people used to have a full-time job and then maybe a part-time job somewhere else; and that's kind of dropping off. They are just having that one career; so those are the kind of challenges that we are coming across on the part-time side as well as the full-time.

Vice Mayor Grendel said thank you Chief.

Chairman Narduzzi said so if we want to move on to Number 4, the Police Department capital budget.

Police Chief Kilbane said the capital budget, the major purchase obviously is every year the Police vehicles. There has been a delay this year with delivery from Ford. The interceptors are built, they are ready to go, they just don't have computer chips. Like many other cars across the country, they are sitting on the lot waiting for the delivery and installation of computer chips. Dennis is on top of that. He is checking with the dealership pretty much weekly to see when the status is going to change. All the equipment is in for them, all the video systems are in. All we need are the cars to install it in. Our contractor for the installation, Hall Public Safety, is ready to go. Once we give them the go-ahead usually it's just a couple of week process to have our cars changed over.

That's the only major capital expenditure for 2021. The only additional expenditure in 2022 projected is replacing the Glock handguns. Glock's new generation of weapons is supposed to be introduced late summer or early fall. I talked to their manufacturing representative for our region a couple of weeks ago, and as soon as they do introduce them, he's going to get us prototypes for our range officers to evaluate and test fire; and then we will make recommendations for a purchase once we complete that process.

Chairman Narduzzi said so in the Five-Year Capital Plan that I have in front of me Chief there is Ordinance 2021-15, and it's Police equipment for \$141,929.80, what is that?

Police Chief Kilbane said I believe that was the video systems. We ordered extra video systems so our entire fleet will be equipped with dash cams.

Chairman Narduzzi said okay. Anybody have anything else?

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Finance Director Blaze said just a clarification, I believe that's actually Ordinance 2021-51 instead of 15; but the dollar amount is correct. That was adopted by Council 7-0 on April 13<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Chairman Narduzzi said I just had it on my sheet Vern, and it was highlighted, so they had 15 instead of 51.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it might be a while for those chips, I know all the car dealerships are running out of cars to sell as far as that goes because of the chips. I believe they make them mostly what in Taiwan, those chips?

Police Chief Kilbane said I know they come from Asia, and unfortunately once the economy relies on a sole supplier for one piece, it can cripple an entire assembly line for one small piece.

Mayor Kurtz said Ford has 15,000 F150's sitting on the lot in Kentucky waiting for chips.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I think all the makes are suffering like that.

Chairman Narduzzi said it's funny to drive by these lots, there are no cars on them. You drive past Lorain, and there's no cars on the lots. It's crazy.

Vice Mayor Grendel said there's going to be a lot of unemployed salesmen.

Chairman Narduzzi said so we will move on to Chief Rega for the Five-Year Capital Plan.

Fire Chief Rega said we currently in the Five-Year Capital Plan, we have a new ambulance on order. We ordered that in March, much like Chief Kilbane, there were some delays on that with the chip for the computer on the loader. We are being told, it was supposed to come in sometime in January of next year, and it's looking more like the projections are late summer. Hopefully, if they find a new source that would change, but that's kind of what they are telling us tentatively right now.

As far as the rest of the capital, I try to march out the purchasing plan for each item that we have. The Fire Department has a lot of expensive items in the way of medical equipment and vehicles. Our squads are on about a 3 year replacement, and we have 3 squads, so by the time you replace that squad, you are looking at about 9 years of service on that piece of equipment. Our engines as far as our Fire trucks go, are about a 10 year replacement plan, what we are trying to do moving forward. Our heart monitors are going to be due up in another couple of years for replacement. Right now our ladder truck is going to be 20 years old next year. I was looking at, much like what we just did with our current backup engine, we refurbished that and put it up as front line. I am looking at a process for that. With the ladder I did get a quote back on that; we are still kind of analyzing it; but the initial quote for a refurbishment is \$491,000. It also has about \$175,000 in options as far as refreshing the generator on the truck, the transmission, painting the truck and so forth, different items that are options. So, we will have to take a close look at that and see which way the City wants to go in terms of replacement of that truck down

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the road. We are not really due for a replacement of a ladder truck until 2026, but current pricing on a similar truck right now today is about \$1,400,000. If we were to design it a little bit differently, we could probably get down to \$1,300,000. If we change how we want to operate totally, and we could go with a different vehicle, that would be about \$1,000,000. So, if you project that ahead to 2026, you can see how we are going to be dealing with a big purchase if we go the new route. If we do the refurbishment route, I think we can get out another 16 years or more on this vehicle that we have right now. Again, technology is changing, so I just talked to the salesperson today, and it's quite possible 10 years from now we might be looking at all electric vehicles. They are demoing some right now in the form of a Fire truck; so it's possible the ladders could be different as well. So, we are going to take a close look at this proposal and see how it fits into what we want to do moving forward because if you factor in a contingency plan on this refurbishment, you are looking at a project of about \$732,000. Currently, as it sits today, we have encumbrances of future purchase of a ladder truck at \$365,000. By the time if we go this route and we decide refurbishment, we will have another encumbrance this year and next year; so we will get up to about \$615,000. So, we will still fall short of that amount of money to do that project.

Again, it's something that we are looking at. We are not starting out with no funds at all, we do have funds. We are trying to fund that new project, but you can see how if we have to get to \$1,800,000 in 2026 to buy a new truck; we are still going to fall short there as well unless we change our savings strategy.

Chairman Narduzzi asked and if you were going to do the refurbishing, when would that occur?

Fire Chief Rega said well there's currently a little bit of a wait to get into that rotation, probably a 6 to 8 month wait. Once they have it, it will probably be another 6 months or so on the refurbishment process; so that's why I am kind of looking at these other funds that we will encumber in that timeframe. So, it would still be a bit of a project. Are there any other questions on that?

Chairman Narduzzi said I would say just by dollars and cents that refurbish would be the way to go; and then if things do change within 10 years and we go to electric, we are saving a ton of money, and we are still projected out that it's going to be okay for 16 years you are saying.

Fire Chief Rega said well that's what we have to really take a close look at that because like we did with the other truck, you are still using the old motor which has less emissions on it. There are less headaches as far as repair and maintenance for that particular vehicle when you don't have all those other sensors and things on it. So, there are some advantages to it definitely.

As far as other projects we are looking at, we have our ongoing replacement of our Fire gear much like the Police have body armor, we are on a 5 year rotation on that. Firemen typically have a primary set and a backup; so if they go on a fire and the gear gets dirty, it has to be cleaned and then they have a backup set. Basically, we rotate the fire gear out, after 10 years it's replaced. It should be replaced at that point, and that's how that rotation goes with the fire gear.

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We also added in radio equipment. Radio equipment has gotten very expensive, so we are starting to plan for that. It doesn't start until 2022, it's in that 5 year window.

SCBA replacement, again some of these items, specifically the SCBA, we can try to write grants for them when the time comes. Currently, we are okay, but we want to start saving in case we have to purchase those items since it's probably a good \$250,000 purchase when we are replacing those items.

Then we also have some response vehicles, our Chiefs' cars; by the time we replace those, they will probably be around 10 years old, so that's why you are seeing those popping up on the schedule there. Actually, I have heard recently about electric vehicles being utilized, and when you think about it, the way the Fire Department operates, some of those chase vehicles might possibly be electric vehicles in the future.

Outside of that, something that's not on the Five-Year is our CPR devices, they have a Lucas Three out now. It's pretty similar to the ones we have that are for CPR. We put it on the patient, and actually mechanically provides CPR. They are very effective, ours are coming up on 10 years old. We do maintain those with a service contract with a manufacturer; but it is something that we need to look at possibly getting on this Five-Year Plan for replacement in the next 2 to 3 years. They do run about \$16,000 apiece, sometimes we can get those a little bit cheaper if we buy all 3 at the same time; but it's still a sizable purchase.

Chairman Narduzzi asked so Vern can you add that to the Five-Year Capital Plan for next year so we don't forget right away?

Finance Director Blaze said we already talked at the recent staff meeting and letting Directors know that probably in August we will be roughing in some 2026 column numbers as 2021's will be not quite at an end, but we have to add the fifth year so that we hope to be before Council this fall with the Finance Committee to talk about the 2022-2026 Five-Year Capital Plan. I am sure the Chief will be on that too to add those.

Chairman Narduzzi said thanks Vern. Anything else Chief?

Fire Chief Rega said I think that's it.

Chairman Narduzzi asked does anybody else have any comments for the Chief?

Several people said no.

Chairman Narduzzi said alright we will move on back to the Police Chief about the Police camera update.

Police Chief Kilbane said thank you Chairman. Yes, all 31 cameras are operational at this time. A big part of that goes out to Dave Snyderburn and his crew at Tech Service, they really pulled out all the stops working hand-in-hand with Flock Public Safety to get the system up and

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running. We constantly make adjustments to the system as we see little tweaks to be made here and there, but the general theory was to create a network of these cameras circling the City so if somebody wants to come in here and commit a crime, they are going to have to pass through at least one of those cameras coming and going to and from the City. We have had tremendous success, we have already recovered, originally a half a dozen; but I think we are up over 10 recovered stolen vehicles from camera alerts. We have one that Officer Waidley got a camera alert. He located the stolen vehicle, stopped it. There were 2 occupants, both of them were wanted felons that had active warrants. They had a trafficking amount of methamphetamine and a loaded gun in the car with them. So, he was able to interdict them before they could conduct any business in our City which is how the system is supposed to work.

Just last night, Andrew March got an alert on one of the cameras. He located the stolen vehicle, stopped it. The driver was in possession of a stolen vehicle. He had 8 grams of heroin on him, and he also had a warrant for an aggravated burglary committed last week. So, again, that's another bad guy we got off the street before he could commit a crime.

We also had a motorcycle that one of our officers attempted to stop. The motorcycle took off. Rather than engage in a highly dangerous pursuit, we used the camera to identify the owner of the vehicle and track the whereabouts of the motorcycle and avoided a potentially hazardous life-threatening pursuit through the City. The officers are engaging with them. There is nothing but positive feedback. They are really getting a lot of good arrests and recovering stolen autos, doing all the things that the camera system is intended to do for us.

Councilperson Kapusta said I hope that word gets out in the community Chief. I think it could be one of our best deterrents; so that's great.

Chairman Narduzzi said I think that's great news Chief, and that was money well spent. I am glad all of Council supported that because I think it's going to pay dividends down the road at some point.

Police Chief Kilbane said yes, it's definitely a force multiplier, and I appreciate Mayor and the Council supporting that proposal when it came forward. I think we are really going to see more dividends from that moving forward.

Vice Mayor Grendel said hopefully we can keep these criminals behind bars pending their trial, not release them, arrest them and release them right away; and they are back on the streets like in quite a few communities. I don't know about Ohio Chief, but I know some of the other, you hear of a number of arrests and then there's no bail for them; and they are out on the streets committing other crimes or that. So, I hope that's not the case here in Ohio.

Police Chief Kilbane said unfortunately Cuyahoga County is very much engaged in the catch and release manner, releasing a lot of felons that would previously stay behind bars on a personal bond and court date. They are out there, and with juvenile offenders it's even worse. The juvenile detention center won't hold them unless they commit an extremely violent crime, so we are arresting these juvenile offenders that are out on release for their prior carjacking. They are

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committing offenses here. So, unfortunately it keeps law enforcement busier than they need to be.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it's frustrating. You have to explain it to families that are victimized by these released criminals, and there is no explanation for it. It is a sad commentary, but you are seeing it more and more all the time.

Chairman Narduzzi said it's the same kids that keep coming back to town because they get their hands slapped, and it's a fun little game for them for the weekend.

Police Chief Kilbane said it's not fun if it's your car that gets stolen.

Chairman Narduzzi said I know, it's terrible for recipient because they go through a lot of crap. Chief, thanks for the update.

Back to Chief again with the update on the Police training.

Police Chief Kilbane said absolutely. Last year we took it on the chin with training because Covid pretty much shut down training. We did some in-house, but now that things are loosening up, we have been able to cycle our officers through some specialized training as it becomes available. So far, we have gotten officers to Advance Police bike school, street interdiction tactics which is extremely useful with the issues we have been having with the drugs and the guns. That's training that teaches officers how to identify potential suspects on a traffic stop that may be carrying guns or drugs and helps them with the interview and interrogation process and how to ask the questions.

We have also had officers go through interview and interrogation skills. We sent 3 more officers through instructional skills and firearms instructor training, so we do all of firearms instruction and certification in-house. I think it's very important to be able to do as much of the training, especially training in our own department as we can; so I am a very big proponent of train the trainer, sending one of our officers to get certified as a trainer, having him or her come back and train the rest of the department.

We also sent more officers to field training officers school in anticipation of bringing on new officers; so we have a wider selection of officers to share their skills and experience with our newly hired officers.

We conducted in-house department wide training just recently in the past couple of months in close quarters combat and weapon retention using our own SWAT officers as the instructors; and as Chief Rega said, the Fire Department provided instructions to all of our officers in bleeding control and combat tourniquet use.

The other big thing with training was, and it also sort of goes over to the equipment. We purchased 2 new pepper ball launching systems to be used as a less lethal and/or crowd control option. Pepper ball, if you don't know, it's like a paintball gun that shoots little plastic balls full

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of powdered pepper spray. It's the same thing as the pepper spray we carry on our belts. We can just use it from a much farther distance. We sent 3 officers to the instructors' school. As a matter of fact, as we speak right now today, they are conducting the first of our training classes for our whole patrol division making all the officers certified in using this.

Sergeant Buehner, one of our instructors in pepper ball, I had him create a demonstration video. It's a real short video, just a couple of minutes, that explains how it works and shows how the system works and what it's capabilities are.

The video was then shared by Police Chief Kilbane.

Chairman Narduzzi asked so is that our gun range Chief?

Police Chief Kilbane said yes it is.

Chairman Narduzzi asked what are all the bullet holes on the sides? These guys need more practice.

Police Chief Kilbane said no, that's actually part of the training we do. We train the way it's going to happen out on the street. Anybody can stand still and shoot a stationary target straight ahead. What we train our officers to do is to do cover, to use movement, to move laterally, to shoot targets at angles; so you are not seeing officers who are missing, but they may be using cover off to the side behind one of those barrels and shooting at a target that's off on an angle after they trigger the rounds, it's going to hit the wall.

Chairman Narduzzi said I was nervous there for a minute.

Police Chief Kilbane so those are very much intentional.

Chairman Narduzzi asked so have we purchased these guns that we just watched the video on?

Police Chief Kilbane said yes, we have 2 complete systems; and it's compressed air. The Fire Department has a compressor so they refill the tanks for us so there's no cost for us there. The only cost is for the actual ammunition and the practice ammunition to train the officers on.

Chairman Narduzzi asked and what would we use those for crowd control?

Police Chief Kilbane said 2 things. We have 2 of them right now, they are always going to be issued to officers who are on the road. So, they are always going to be available. It can be used for area crowd control like Mark showed that second video where you can disperse powder over a large area; or if you have an individual that either wants to fight or has a knife, instead of having to get up and go hands-on and risk injury, he can be up to 60 feet away and say hey drop the knife or no I'm not going to fight you and deploy the pepper ball at him to incapacitate him as opposed to having to actually put hands on him and risk injury to the suspect or the officer.

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Chairman Narduzzi said very good. With the new Government involved and all this putting money into Police training and stuff, are there any kind of grants out there that we would get some kind of break or free money to send our officers for training?

Police Chief Kilbane said actually the intent of the Government is to do it the other way around. They are going to require certain training, they haven't said what yet, but I am pretty sure it's going to involve use of force; and it's going to, if you don't put your officers through their training that they mandate, you are not going to be eligible to get grants for your department. So, they seem to be taking that approach rather than the way we are going to provide this.

The good news about that is a lot of the training that they are proposing like constitutional use of force and implicit bias and de-escalation; we have already put our officers through it. Our officers had de-escalation training 4 years ago. We started it before de-escalation really became a big thing. So, we are ahead of the curve with a lot of the mandated training.

Chairman Narduzzi said well I can almost guarantee you that our Council, I hope our Council would never go to this Police defunding method; but I would hope that the Police Department and the Fire Department would get as much support as they could ever need. I know you will be exiting, but I am sure that the new Chief will understand that we are behind you guys 1,000%.

Police Chief Kilbane said and I am thankful for that every day. I can't tell you how important that is as a Police Chief to know that we have a Mayor and a Council and a City Administration that backs us 100%. I know some of my peers aren't as lucky as I am to be in that position.

Chairman Narduzzi said I understand, and that's a terrible situation to be in if you are a Police Chief. I don't know how some of these guys do it.

We will move on, does anybody have anything else on the guns?

We will move on to the Fire Department training.

Fire Chief Rega said in terms of hours of training, we have actually did okay last year. Just to give you some ideas in 2018 we were at 4,200 hours of training; and this is all man hours of training. In 2019 we were at 4,860. In 2020 we were at 4,930, and this year, year to date, we are at 2,308; so we have a combination of being able to do online training with sources such as Lexipol and Fire Rescue Academy as an online system that we can utilize assignments for each individual to take on their own. That's usually roped in with other policies and procedures that we are working on that month with EMS and both Fire. So, ours is kind of a pre-assigned, and we work 6 months to a year out on setting things up. Covid did keep us from doing a lot of in-person stuff, but we switched to a Zoom medium so that allowed us to still continue on with our training, linking up with the doctors, the coordinators to get that training.

As far as the types of training, we did the Stop the Bleed last January; and again, we had it for all of our officers as well. That is also something that we go over, we do a complete CPR class. We cover AED's and then we will mention the bleeding control as well because the push now is to

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have that across the country and every person should know how to do that, what that training needs to be and the items that need to be involved with it.

In February of last year we did radio training, and an interesting point is we required everybody to go and spend a little time at our Chagrin Valley Dispatch Center down in Brecksville so they can see what's happening on the other end of that phone when they take a call and see how it's processed through the dispatch center. A thought would be to have, if Council would like to go there for an hour or two and sit at dispatch, I am sure we can let you do that. It is a totally different world than what it used to be, and what they do there is fantastic, how they follow the calls through and handle anything small to very serious calls.

We did elevator rescue last year. It's something that we do every so many years. It's been a little while, and we have a lot of new guys on so we did elevator rescue training down on Rockside Road looking at several different hotels. We actually got in the elevators, learned how to ride the elevators down, how to access them, both hydraulic and cable elevators.

On top of that we do a lot of hands on power tool training with the different devices we have on the trucks, and that's ongoing every month. We did some ropes and (inaudible) skills. We worked on RTF skills. We did training with each shift just trying to refresh ourselves. It has been some years since the big push in 2016 when the RNC, we did a lot of work with our Police officers. We still try to stay fresh with that; so we kind of reviewed it with our personnel this past year.

We also deal with the mass casualty side of it. We learned how to function in a mass casualty, how to handle that, who you call, how to get the resources here; so we review that all the time.

Other items we deal with is mayday drills, pediatric and geriatric EMS stuff, driver simulator. That was something that we did this year, and early in the year we got the State simulator here. It's a large semi. I am sure some of you saw it out by our station. It actually had 2 simulators in it where you can sit in a chair. It's almost like a giant video game, but it's a little bit more than that. They put you through different scenarios as you are driving.

The other thing we do with drivers' training, we will pair up with the Valley View Fire Department. We will go down to Cinemark, and we run guys through a scenario there where they have to drive either an engine or squad; and they run through different obstacles in their path, and they have to do that without knocking cones down.

The other thing we did last year is we trained all our officers how to drive an ambulance because we really didn't know where we were going with the pandemic; and if we were to lose a sufficient number of Paramedics, we would need drivers. So, we paired up with the Police and did that. I think that was in March. We had them out back doing a little obstacle course on how to handle the larger ambulance like that.

So, we stayed pretty busy throughout. We do SCBA drills as well. We often get into the Rec Department, we play SCBA basketball. It's kind of an air consumption drill; so we will train on

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that, make sure guys know how to use that SCBA really well and their limits when they are doing it under an exercise if you will.

So, we did stay busy throughout last year trying to find ways to get those training hours in and stayed busy.

Chairman Narduzzi said it's amazing Chief that you do all this training, and the average person has no idea. I am involved, and I have no idea that all this stuff goes on behind our backs. So, congrats to you.

Fire Chief Rega said we can try to get your Assistant Chief Wheeler's schedule and maybe see if you can stop in and see some of the interesting stuff. We just got done training with our new extrication tools which are all cordless now. They are all battery operated. They are still hydraulic, but we did training up at the Service garage. We cut up about 6 or 8 cars. That was pretty interesting as well.

Chairman Narduzzi asked Dale do you have a question?

Councilperson Veverka said I do. A couple of weeks ago I saw the water rescue trailer headed north on Brecksville Road. Were you doing water rescue training then? It seemed like it was running hot.

Fire Chief Rega said well no, we actually had several rescues recently down on the river. These are down behind Strong Style and Kurtz Brothers down there at the bend of the river. As you know, we are getting more popular, the river is getting more popular as a kayaking destination. So, there was what we identified as some hazards in the water there, some trees that got snagged up; and what was happening, it was funneling these kayakers into one section where they couldn't get out and flip over and get stuck on a log over there. The first one, the kayaker was able to get themselves out onto the log and out of the water, they just couldn't self-rescue. With our water rescue team through CERT, they were able to go out and get the person.

The second one which was only less than week later, that person was stuck up to his chest in the water up against the log. We were able to get down to secure him, and then again the water team went out and picked him out. Having identified that, I contacted the resources of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to see if we could get better access to that location, and they were willing to help out. Then our National Park actually had a team of people that went out and cut up some of those hazards on the river, and hopefully made it a better situation. They also put signage up to prevent that.

So, you are seeing with the growth of that activity on the river, with Haydite starting to fill in and become more of a hazard, you are seeing our needs change a little bit. We were always aware of water rescue, and obviously we need to up our skill levels on that. We do rely upon the CERT team for the advanced skills, but again we have a lot of new faces in our department and we need to double back around and look at some of those new skillsets that we might have to master. That's why you probably saw that vehicle.

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Now we were actually down at Haydite last Tuesday. We brought the rescue team down there to scope things out a little bit. Unfortunately, they did have a big rescue the night before in Berea, so we weren't able to do all the things that we really wanted to do; but we did go down there and try to see what we could do to create a better situation in the future.

Councilperson Veverka asked are additional departments involved in that program, or is that specifically with us?

Fire Chief Rega said well, we are always wanting to share our training. As we develop that, it would be productive to reach out to our partners in Valley View, Brooklyn Heights and those cities around us to see who wants to participate. A lot of those resources that come to us aren't from those communities that are part of the CERT team; so we are just going to see what we need to do as a host in incidents like that to up our game on that. We are always inviting other people to our trainings and making sure that we aren't the only ones with (inaudible).

Councilperson Veverka said right, and the fact that we share the river with Valley View, with Cuyahoga Heights, with Brooklyn Heights, I am pleased to hear that we are working together on those programs.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked Chief how deep is that water down at the Haydite?

Fire Chief Rega said well we weren't able to determine that the other day when we were there, but just looking at aerial, I was able to put together a series of pictures that show when it was dry and as it was filling up. It's got to be at least 40 to 50 feet deep at a minimum. I think where the person went down, it was probably well over 25 feet. So, it is deeper than your average pond or body of water.

Chairman Narduzzi said so on a safety level, just talking about the river and the canal and even Hemlock there's a couple of bodies of water down there, and I know the kids, I know my son was scolded a couple of weeks back. He and his buddies go down there, and they go down in that running water; and I was fortunate to have a patrolman come and tell me that he saw my son down there. Is there something that we can put in the paper to tell the parents to try to limit their kids' activities down there to stay on the towpath and don't go exploring down by the water and rocks. It's a scary situation, and I lived through a couple of deaths down there in my lifetime, and I really don't want to see another one. So, anything we can do from the safety point of it Chief to put something in the monthly paper just to get out to the parents, don't let your kids go down there, and don't go down there alone and please stay away from the water down there.

Fire Chief Rega said I know the Mayor mentioned in his weekly update a couple of weeks ago, and we can definitely get that message out there; but you have to realize too that there are kids coming from out of town and maybe quite far because they hear about this, so they might not get that message. I think the importance of learning how to swim is very important, and then the dangers of fast moving water because it can change rapidly with the rain, just a few feet of water can really knock you over. You don't realize that, and it can be very challenging in the swift waters of the river at times.

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Councilperson Kapusta said I understand what you are saying Chief, but I would second what Chairman Narduzzi is saying; I think that if we can at least start with our own kids and then sometimes our own kids bring in other kids too, so the message can get to some others. I really would support that.

Councilperson Veverka said and the other piece that goes along with that puzzle, are the drainage pipes. I know that in Aurora when I worked there, we lost one of our students who ended up getting dragged into a drainage pipe. So, we do have a number of entries into drainage pipes throughout the town; and you don't think, you don't really think of the force of that water pulling you into a pipe.

Fire Chief Rega said we can definitely work on getting that message out.

Councilperson Veverka said thank you Chief.

Chairman Narduzzi asked anybody have anything else for Chief Rega?

Okay Mike, we are going to move on to the big one of the evening. So, I don't know who was on Council a couple of years back; so we came up with a chicken ordinance that really never went anywhere. The problem hasn't gone away, and with the pandemic going on and people doing more home gardening. This chicken thing is starting to get out of hand, and we didn't take it by the arm last time and kind of put a stop to it. Now here we are. I don't want to enforce anything that you know is going to be crazy, but we have to have some type of limitations on these chickens. I don't know how to say it nicely, but they are loud, they stink, they bring in other rodents who eat their food; and if you live on a half acre lot and have 30 chickens in your backyard, there's an issue there. I hope no one goes against me on this, but that's an issue; and you wouldn't want a chicken coop 5 feet away from your bedroom window, and you are smelling that stuff all night, and you are listening to all the chatter they make in the morning when somebody is feeding them or an animal comes into the yard. I don't want to be telling somebody what they can and what they cannot do, but we have to have some type of control over this; and it doesn't affect a lot of people in this town but it does affect a few. If it affects one, that's too many.

So, it's up to us, we are the lawmakers, to get something on the books to give Mike and the safety department some type of leverage so that they can control this because if we don't, it's just going to get out of hand in some situations. So, I think everybody on the committee had a list of that ordinance that Mike had kind of drawn up a couple of years back.

I guess I just want to open it up to see what others are thinking. If it's the number of chickens, the coop thing; I think Mike just kind of took bits and pieces from other cities and threw it together.

Building Official Gero said I took information from other cities that already had ordinances in place as far as what some of those best practices were. I just want to say that I appreciate the Safety Committee recognizing the Building Department as the third safety service of the City. If

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there's trouble they call the Police Department. If there is a fire or medical emergency, they call the Fire Department; but if nothing happens, that means the Building Department is doing their job.

Councilperson Kapusta said I would like to respond a little bit to what you asked Chairman Narduzzi. I was on Council and introduced that ordinance with you the last time, and I remember the family that had come to us to talk about this that initiated the discussion; and they gave the scenario of exactly what you were saying. They have not even what I would call an average size lot in town, they have a very small lot that happened to be on Daisy; so one of the smaller ones. That's exactly what they said, they will sit at their kitchen table, and they look out and see the chickens there and can't get away from it.

We also had the opportunity I think at that time to have a few citizens come to some of our meetings and talk about kind of what they see as the way to handle the situation and the amount of space you have to have and so forth. I guess my question is, having said that, since we have this ordinance, is this not enforceable by you Mike? Is there an issue? Have you not gotten questions about the chickens? Why are we talking about it now?

Chairman Narduzzi said we never voted the ordinance in.

Councilperson Kapusta said I understand that. I am talking about the content of it. Is that like a workable thing for him? We did put a lot of work into it as I said back a few years ago; and that's why I was questioning. Do you think this is a good place to start? Do we need to modify things here?

Building Official Gero said I think the memo that I sent over to Councilperson Narduzzi, I don't know if everyone has that or that was included in the packet; but that is the memo that I put together, basically presented to Council as the ordinance. There was some discussion, there was some question as far as bringing some experts in or something like that to review it. It kind of never went anywhere if I remember correctly.

So, the items that I had listed on there were items that I did not feel were outlandish or unenforceable. It's fairly specific as far as the number of chickens allowed, that they shall be kept in a coop or a fenced area, the location of the coop so that it would be a minimum distance from the property lines. This is something that we would be able to enforce. It would like an accessory structure type of thing if someone was putting up a coop.

Chairman Narduzzi said so Mike, I'm just going to read a couple of these that are on here so that everybody is on the same page. I don't know who got this memo, and who didn't; but a maximum of 6 chickens allowed on a lot of 20,000 sq. ft. in area. Roosters are not permitted. Chickens shall be kept in a coop or fenced area. The placement of coop is a minimum of 15 feet from the side yard lot line on a 100 foot wide lot or greater, 10 foot minimum on a lot smaller than 100 feet wide. Minimum of 15 feet from the rear lot, minimum of 20 feet of an adjoining structure; so that to me, I would put at least, I would rather give them the backyard and not give them from the dwelling by somebody's bedroom window, even 20 feet from a bedroom window

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you are going to smell that coop. So, that one we might have to talk about. The chicken coop and run must be designed to ensure the health and well-being of the chickens and not endangered by the manner of keeping for confinement. All animals shall be covered in a predator proof coop, cage or other structure.

So, I think Mike is getting the best of both worlds here. He is trying to control the situation, but he's also trying to protect the animals too. A lot of these people that have chickens, they don't even have a coop. They have these open baskets in their backyard that the chickens come and lay eggs in; and that's the only time the chicken ever lays down is when it's laying its eggs. They roost in the backyard or in the neighbor's backyard; and there is no control over these things whatsoever.

For most people who have these chickens, probably 90% of them, they take care of their chickens. They have a coop for their chickens. The chickens do roam their backyard, but they come back at night to the coop. There are some out there that are really, they must be in it for the eggs because they don't care about the chickens; and they definitely don't care about the neighbors. So, I think that it's been long enough. I don't know how long it's been since Councilperson Kapusta started this.

Councilperson Kapusta said 2016 Tom.

Chairman Narduzzi said it's been a while, and I know Councilperson Trakas, but we were moving along on this; and then Councilperson Trakas wanted to bring in Ohio State, somebody to talk about chickens to us and we kind of dropped the ball. Basically, I am blaming myself in some aspects too, but I think it's back on the table now. I am going to put it for legislation for next month and see where we stand. We talked about it a number of times, and I think it's not over the top. I think it's a very minimum, and all we can do is put into law and see what happens. We can always adjust it if people come and they complain about one thing or another or they don't feel that it's a strong enough piece of legislation; but I think we just need to start somewhere and get something on the books to give Mike a little help when people call. There's nothing worse for Mike than when a neighbor calls, and he's irate. Mike says yeah I am sorry we don't have anything on the books about that. It makes the Building Department look stupid, and it makes Council even look worse because we are not doing anything about it.

I am asking everybody for their support, and if you have an issue with it, we can discuss it now because we still have some time; but it is going to be on next month for legislation.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked are you talking about August?

Chairman Narduzzi said for August. I would support it, I would even go as far as also being a co-introducer with you and Kathleen on this.

Councilperson Kapusta said I will too Tom. I was just trying to think, I think it was the Ohio Extension Service or something that Councilperson Trakas wanted to bring in; but I also don't know that we really had opposition to it the last time, but we didn't have support either. I think

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that's why it just sat there; so I think it would be a good idea, and like you say, if it needs to be modified, we will do it down the line.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I remember being at some presentations at the Council meeting on this, the family that lives on Brookside.

Chairman Narduzzi said the Holdash family.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I remember he came with his daughter.

Councilperson Kapusta said and another gentleman yes, they were here.

Chairman Narduzzi said like I said before, I'm not doing this to hurt anybody. There are some people out there that you know how they are, they just don't use common sense I guess. They are not being very neighborly; so I think we just need to have something on the books to kind of keep control of it, that's all.

Councilperson Synek said I would like to make a few comments. So, my concerns with this, I certainly don't deny that chickens in a suburban neighborhood are a nuisance; but I have to weigh that nuisance against an individual property owner's private property rights. To me, I struggle in particular with the limitation of a number of chickens. If a Government can limit the number of chickens that a citizen can own, then what's to stop a Government from limiting the number of cars that a citizen can own, or the number of children a citizen can have. To me, it's an invasion of a person's civil liberties, constitutional rights of private property. Certainly 6 chickens per 20,000 square feet; I have a client down in Medina. There's a commercial chicken raising operation, and they are raising way more than 6 chickens in a much smaller space than 20,000 square feet. I am no agriculture expert, but there's no reasonable relationship between 20000 square feet and only 6 chickens. I would like to hear the experts what is a reasonable number of chickens for 20,000 square feet. I have to believe it's a much higher number than 6.

Again, I don't deny that it's a nuisance, but private property owners have rights to do what they want to do with their property within certain limits. Certainly it's very reasonable to have limitations where the coop can be, the size of it, the position of it; but to deny a citizen a right to acquire property, I have a hard time with that.

Building Official Gero said I would just like to add a comment that I think we already have an ordinance on the books that limits the number of dogs you are able to have in a neighborhood so that it doesn't create a nuisance for your neighbors, and the 20,000 square foot is the average size city lot; and that's where our minimum lot size, and that is where that came into play.

I am sure that many chicken farmers that are in a rural area have more than 6 chickens on a 20,000 square foot area. I don't doubt that at all.

Chairman Narduzzi said but then again, it is a commercial area that they have them. If you look at a 20,000 square foot lot, and 10,000 is the front yard, another 2,000 or 3,000 is the house, it

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doesn't leave much to have 6 chickens in the backyard. The space is just a starting point. If you have a coop next to your bedroom window Councilperson Synek, I think you would change your mind on that, if it was 1 chicken or 20 chickens, the stench is unbelievable. So, I don't know if you ever had a chance to smell it, but it's not very pleasant. If you are downwind from the chicken coop, it's not a good place to be, especially on a day like today.

Councilperson Kapusta said and I respect what you said Councilperson Synek about where does our authority end, and people's rights begin. I think it's always a tenuous situation. It's a question, and I think that's what legislators have to do. We look at a situation, we try to assess the pros and cons; and I don't think any one of us sitting here makes a decision like we can take away their rights, we can limit this; that's not it, but somebody needs to speak for the unspoken too. So, I think our responsibility is to take a situation, assess it from all angles and then put it to a vote. If the majority of the 7 of us still does not want it, that's the way it should go then. It should go the way of the majority, but I think never to entertain these kinds of topics because we are worried about taking people's rights, I don't think that's the good thing either because how about the rights of the other people who don't want the noise, who don't want like Chairman Narduzzi is saying, the smell, all of those things. We have to take a stance, and then it should be the rule of the majority on it. That's my opinion.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said if I could say something. I received several complaints about the chickens. It's not the 90% that are doing what they are supposed to do, it's the 10% that are ruining it for everybody else. I grew up with them, I know what it's like. I know what the smell is all about, it's not pleasant. So, I would support the legislation for that.

Chairman Narduzzi asked anybody else?

Councilperson Veverka said I think it's especially important the distance from your neighbor's house. I see that as being critical. On a related topic, when you are talking about the smell, I have gotten a few calls over the past month related to dog waste that people aren't picking up and attending to that are in proximity of their neighbor's property and make it kind of nasty too. Do we have any kind of control of that? Is that a health issue? How is that dealt with?

Building Official Gero said I would think that possibly that could be, you are referring to someone not cleaning their yard right?

Councilperson Veverka said yes, especially not cleaning their yard adjacent to somebody's living area. That's the place that they send their dog to, and it's left laying around.

Building Official Gero said I don't know if the Animal Control Officer has dealt with that issue before or not. That could very well be a health hazard and a nuisance issue that would have to be addressed. The Building Department could address that.

Councilperson Veverka said okay.

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Chairman Narduzzi said so as far as this chicken ordinance goes, Debi if you could get everybody a copy of the original 2016 one.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I think we received it. We received it in Friday's packet.

Chairman Narduzzi said if anybody wants to make adjustments or comments about it within the next couple of weeks get back to me, and if not, we will put it on as agreed.

Councilperson Synek said could I suggest, would it perhaps be wise to have a grandfather clause in this that kind of exempts residents.

Chairman Narduzzi said no, I do not want to go to a grandfather clause. That doesn't help us in the situation we are in right now.

Councilperson Synek asked what will happen to those residents that do have more than 6 chickens and perhaps have a rooster, what are they supposed to do?

Chairman Narduzzi said hey we made people get rid of pigs before.

Vice Mayor Grendel said therapy pigs too at that.

Chairman Narduzzi said it is what it is. If the legislation passes, I think we are going to have to deal with that.

Building Official Gero said so if I could add, where this section of code, this chapter, this ordinance would go, a public hearing would be required. So, that would be one way for the residents to voice their opinions on it.

The other thing, this being in that Chapter 11, they always have the right to appeal anything to the Board of Zoning Appeals if this is enacted, and they don't want to get rid of their rooster, they can make an appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Councilperson Synek said Mike could you perhaps speak to what enforcement and penalty provisions for violating this ordinance would be.

Building Official Gero said I do not have that. I do not know what the Law Department would assign that as far as penalties.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I'm sure we could probably get that before Council right.

Building Official Gero said from Greg O'Brien, sure.

Vice Mayor Grendel said there's nothing in the old ordinance that was proposed.

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Councilperson Veverka said Mike, can you give us some idea, do we have a dozen folks that have chickens, do we have a couple of dozen families that have chickens?

Building Official Gero said here's the interesting fact in all this. I don't know how many houses we have that have chickens, but I know that we have like a half of dozen chicken properties. So, that much I know.

Councilperson Veverka asked is a lot of that chicken problem related to numbers or location of the coop or that they are running at large?

Building Official Gero said yes to all 3 of those.

Councilperson Veverka said thanks.

Building Official Gero said some are running at large, some of them are the location, the proximity of the coops, and then the other one is the number of chickens.

Councilperson Veverka said okay. Well I piggyback on an earlier comment related to what are the specific consequences related to violations. I know I had someone talking to me about violations related to motor homes, and I am not sure how those violations, if we have specific things spelled out or not. So, this question may piggyback on the chicken question in that when we pass an ordinance then, what are the levels of teeth we put into the ordinance? If it only causes somebody to clean up the situation for a week, and then the situation reappears, then we haven't done our job.

Building Official Gero said we always have the option of citing that person and taking them through the Court system.

Councilperson Veverka said okay.

Chairman Narduzzi said I will reach out to Greg O'Brien and see if he could put some type of penalty if you want to call it that; but I am really not looking to penalize anybody. I am looking to clean up an unhealthy, unwanted situation. That's what I'm after. I'm not looking to slap somebody on the wrist and give them a fine. That doesn't solve the problem. There is an issue out there that we are trying to fix, and we have to start somewhere to fix it. So, I am not looking to fine anybody because they have 7 chickens and only allowed to have 6; I am just trying to keep some kind of control and be realistic about a movement that we have to try to control. I am not looking to hurt anybody or take anybody to Court. Without something on paper to give Mike a substance to say you know what, that's not allowed, people do what they want to do. Unless you come up with boundaries for these people there's nothing for Mike to follow. It's just a positive movement forward for us to do something.

Building Official Gero said I would just like to add that the Building Department is looking for compliance. We are not looking to fine anybody. To take somebody to Court, that creates a whole added workload for the Building Department. So, if people just comply, that's why some

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of these people, we will work with them; we will give them a notice. We try to get it to get it right, not to say okay you are bad, you have to pay \$1,000 fine because that doesn't solve the problem.

Chairman Narduzzi said I would hope to think that 98% of the people will comply with whatever we have on paper. Right now, they don't know what they are allowed to do, and what they aren't allowed to do; and some of them just don't use common sense when it comes to being neighborly. That's all I am trying to enforce.

Mayor Kurtz said well consistent with that Mr. Chairman, we have been working for the past year and a half to bring some of these nuisance properties into compliance, and it's a long, laborious process. We make some headway, but it doesn't change the dynamic of the individual who is a hoarder, who has personal issues, who has mental or emotional issues. We work really hard between the Building Department and enforcement to try to move the ball. So, we make some progress. I think there's going to be legislation next week on the Grunt house, and we are making progress on the house at the corner of Kingscote and the house next to Selig. It's such a challenging situation to get people to comply, let alone these nuisance issues.

I get calls about fireworks because of the impact it has on families. I am not sure to what extent we can monitor from a safety standpoint, they keep changing the law in Columbus; so now who knows what our enforcement capacity for just fireworks and the impact it has on dogs and animals, let alone humans.

So, we have a full spectrum of enforcement mechanisms, challenges on a daily basis. All weekend we got calls about a motor home that a guy brought in. You can have a motor home for 10 days I believe. It's amazing how people create dynamics with all these different scenarios. There's never a dull moment for sure.

Chairman Narduzzi said but like you said Mayor with the homes that we are trying to clean up. It's progress. At least we didn't turn our backs to it and ignore the situation. We are trying to do something about it, and to me that's progress. If you succeed or not, that's another story, but if you don't try to help the situation, we are not doing our job; so I commend you for doing what you are doing with the cleanup of the houses, it's years overdue.

Mayor Kurtz said well there's going to be more. There's people running a business, a construction business out of their house on Oakwood. We are going to deal with that. We are dealing with some of the hoarding issues. It's sad by the way. This isn't about somebody trying to skirt the law, some people just have personal challenges; and they don't know how to manage their properties anymore. It sounds like we are over-enforcing, but actually we have been very delicate in terms of trying to mediate some of these things; and we have face-to-face contact. It never ends. It is a never-ending issue.

Chairman Narduzzi said so before we conclude, I know I missed Number 1, the parking ordinance. If anybody could fill me in on what we discussed.

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Mayor Kurtz said we have decided you are not allowed to park anything in the City at all. Since you weren't here to run this meeting, Chris said he's going to ban parking altogether. I am just joking.

Councilperson Kapusta said and call it the Narduzzi amendment Tom.

Several people began speaking at once.

Building Official Gero asked can I just add one comment before adjournment? I just hope Council realizes that when something is brought before Council, it is the last resort. We have exhausted all of our methods and all of our ability of persuasion and resources to where we have to come up and have these properties condemned or citing somebody for Court or assessing somebody, whatever it might be. It's not as if we just say hey your up, your turn, you are going before Council or we are taking you to Court today. I just hope Council realizes that.

Councilperson Kapusta said Tom in answer to your question, the Acting Chairperson in his wisdom decided appropriately that since Councilperson Trakas was not here, we were probably best to wait until he was here because some of us had given him feedback on that.

Chairman Narduzzi said okay, thank you for the update.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said I have one other, it didn't make the agenda; but I wanted to make mention to everybody. This is for Chief Kilbane. I have talked with several of our officers, and a lot of them are highly interested in body cameras. Councilperson Trakas and I found a few grants that would provide our City with body cameras for them, and they had mentioned not only for traffic stops or issues on Rockside, but just for protection when they have to go in one home for a well check or something. I just wanted your feedback with body cameras for our officers.

Police Chief Kilbane said body cameras in theory are a fantastic idea. In practice there are 2 main drawbacks with them. Number 1 is the public records law. All that footage from the body cameras is public records; however, we have to redact it. So, if someone comes in and requests 8 hours of body camera footage, we have to sit an officer at a monitor for 8 hours to go through and redact all of that.

The second stumbling block is, while the cameras themselves are fairly inexpensive, storage and public records law dictates how long we have to maintain these records for; storage can be prohibitively expensive. (Inaudible) is the biggest body camera supplier around, and their cloud storage system; they will pretty much give you the camera, but you have to subscribe to their software support and cloud storage. It runs around \$3,500 to \$4,000 per year, per camera. If you multiply that by over 20 patrol officers, and that's a pretty hefty price tag; and that's not even getting the logistics of having someone responsible for editing and redacting. I think once those issues are addressed legislatively by the State of Ohio, it will be a little bit easier for smaller jurisdictions like Independence to swallow; but definitely it would be something we should keep on the radar and assess, but make sure we are assessing all the potential costs and benefits.

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Councilperson Walchanowicz said thanks for the information, I appreciate it.

Police Chief Kilbane said one other thing I do want to bring up. I know we were looking at the activity. I was letting you know specifically with that nuisance ordinance being extended to commercial properties. Just since the beginning of the year, I looked at serious criminal complaints throughout the City, over 75% of them occurred in the Rockside Road corridor. That's the majority of the bad things that happen are happening along that Rockside corridor. I think it's something moving forward, and I am a big proponent putting our safety resources where they are needed. We already have altered our patrol and have some direct patrols in that area, but going forward that's something we need to keep in mind and consider that the majority of our Police resources are being focused on that Rockside corridor. So, any of our decisions should definitely have that as a consideration going ahead.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said it sounds like we need a department on Rockside Road, right Mayor.

Mayor Kurtz said we have a department, just where the most effective flotation is the question.

Vice Mayor Grendel said and speaking of that hotel on Rockside, is that empty now as far as anybody staying there? They were supposed to be gone at the end of June or that.

Mayor Kurtz said no, there is still activity in the area.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I know there was some altercation up at Romito's involving some of the occupants from there.

Mayor Kurtz said there's still activity Vice Mayor. We are still getting conflicting information, nothing I am comfortable sharing because it's not accurate enough to be able to say publicly. When we have accurate information, absolutely we will share that and make sure we get it out there; but right now the Chief can share with you that we are still having activity, and we are also monitoring just to make sure that we maintain some type of safe environment.

Vice Mayor Grendel said thank you Mayor, and Chief do we store our dash cam video then?

Police Chief Kilbane said yes we do, but it's a much smaller quantity because the dash cam is only activated during that call. Body cameras, like the IACP's model policy for the body camera is almost always on. There are very few exceptions where the officer can switch it off. If it's a Fourth Amendment violation, somebody has reasonable expectation privacy, or if the officer is on down time or on a personal phone call; but other than that, on a 12 hour shift they may well have that camera on for 10 hours; whereas the dash cam during a 12 hour shift, they may only have an hour of footage.

Vice Mayor Grendel said I see, thank you.

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Chairman Narduzzi asked so does anybody have anything else that relates to the Safety agenda?

Fire Chief Rega said our EMS billing company, the contract we have with them is coming due. I was asked to go out and get a few other quotes from other companies as well. I put that together. I should have it available, I don't think I will get it for this Council meeting, but the next one. The vendor that we currently have in mind, but there are some things Council will have to consider. They increased their fee from 7% to 7.25% which isn't a lot. They do offer quite a bit, other options that other collection companies don't have. So, I will try to go over all of that. I just wanted to give you a heads up that it's in the works right now for the next Council meeting.

Councilperson Kapusta asked Chief how long have we been with them?

Fire Chief Rega said we have been with them since, I don't have it in front of me, but since 2013, I think we started getting involved with them late 2012 and then 2013. I would like to put together something that shows a graph of what we have collected, but unfortunately, our run volume has changed since 2013, almost every year it increases; and we aren't dealing with a set number. You are dealing with changes in Medicare and Medicaid and how insurance has evolved in the last 7 or 8 years and what they cover and what they don't cover. Our billing amounts have changed; so it's really hard to create a graph that looks consistent because of all these different variables. It's hard to tell whether some other company would have done better for us. I know we definitely did much better from the previous company we were at. So, this is kind of an exercise to see if they are consistent with the other companies, and if they are accurate on the amount of fees that they charge. So that was an exercise they wanted me to do. I got that together, so hopefully we will have it, maybe not for next week, but the next Council meeting.

Councilperson Synek said now that Governor DeWine has lifted the state of emergency, and the CDC has greatly relaxed the pandemic lockdown orders, have we reached a point in time where we can take down the social distancing signs that are all around the park and on Hemlock Trail? Is it time for those to go by the wayside?

Mayor Kurtz said if there's no objection, then we will start taking them down.

Councilperson Kapusta said I think it's a good idea, I agree.

Several other people said I agree.

Mayor Kurtz said we will start taking them down, thank you.

Councilperson Synek said thank you.

Chairman Narduzzi asked anything else for anybody? I know the Mayor is dying to get into his next meeting.

Mayor Kurtz said I have 5 or 10 minutes. We can talk safety all day if you like.

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Seriously though, there are a lot of things going on, and the Chiefs outlined. We are very fortunate to have some very good personnel. We are in a sad state right now with Officer Vitron's young son Ben passing. So, these periodic punches in the gut to the Independence employee family, it's tough. It's tough to keep your upper lip and keep a smile on your face when you know you are dealing with a life changing event. Keep the Vitron family, by the way, keep everybody in your prayers because there's not a day goes by that I have to deal with some personal situation or tragedy that never hits the papers. You never see it in the light of day, but I will say it again, people are under a lot of stress. There's a lot of stress out there. I am so thankful, we should be so thankful that we have employees that work so hard and are so dedicated to plow through with some of these challenges.

We will just keep going. We have a lot of exciting opportunities, and at the same time, we have to keep looking over our shoulder at some of the challenges. So, I will keep you up to speed from a safety standpoint. We are making progress. Like the Chief articulated, and I think both Chiefs, we are not going to hire just bodies. We are going to hire professionals or young people that can be trained to be professionals and go with the steady hand of those that have some experience in both Police and Fire and quite frankly in Building because Mike appropriately stated, that's an enforcement mechanism, an enforcement arm for the City. That one is not easy, but I can tell you that since Jim Riley has been on board, we have adopted a policy of communicating face to face. We have made great strides, and we are learning a lot. We are learning about some of the challenges people have. So, we are very fortunate to have people on board that, and you are very, Council is very fair and generous to give us the finance for some of the things that we do to support some of the programs that support people.

Again, I think it's a great team effort, and I appreciate the thoroughness of these committee meetings and the support we get out of legislation and how we present to Council. So, thank you very much.

Chairman Narduzzi said just to mention the Jim Riley situation again. You know that's not a very pleasant job for Jim to do at all, and I am pretty close with Jim, and I hear some stories; but at the end of the day, it's a great move and it helps Mike out a lot. I don't know if Mike realizes it, but he diffuses a lot of problems and solves a lot of problems before they get to be a bigger problem. For a city our size, that's awesome. I think the more you can handle face to face before it builds up into a bigger situation is the way that you should do business; and Mayor I congratulate you on making that move. I know you talked about it for a long time about having a person like that. Good old Jimmy, he fits the mold perfectly because he has the ability to diffuse where other people probably couldn't do it.

Mayor Kurtz said it's been very effective so far, and I think his experience on Council gives him insight as to what they expect, what Council expects because we all work for the people that we are trying to enforce the situations with. So, we try to find that appropriate balance, but you are right, he has been a great addition to our business and engineering group enforcing some of these challenges and also mediating. We are blessed.

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Councilperson Walchanowicz said I don't know if everyone knows, we should keep our prayers for the Onders family. Mr. Onders passed apparently last night.

Mayor Kurtz said Lou passed away, and he was a great Finance Director, short term; but he was like Vern, you could talk to him. He was a legacy. He was a great guy.

Councilperson Walchanowicz said sure was.

Chairman Narduzzi said alright guys, I will make a motion for adjournment.

**Moved by Narduzzi, seconded by Walchanowicz, to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting of July 6, 2021. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.**

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

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Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council  
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 07/07/21

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