

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 16, 2021 AT 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CAUCUS ROOM & VIA ZOOM**

Present: Chairperson Tom Narduzzi
Councilperson Kathleen Kapusta
Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz

Others Present: Vice Mayor Dave Grendel
Councilperson Kenn Synek
Councilperson Dale Veverka
Councilperson Jim Trakas
Councilperson-Elect John DiGeronimo
Councilperson-Elect Anthony Togliatti
Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Finance Director Vern Blaze
Police Chief Robert Butler

Chairperson Tom Narduzzi called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Chairperson Narduzzi said welcome Chief, it's been a couple of weeks. I like what I see so far. I think it's going good. I see changes already throughout the City; so change is good sometimes, right? So, we are moving in the right direction.

I met with the Police Chief last Thursday just to kind of go over a basic agenda so he wasn't walking into something here, and he explained things to me very well. I think we are going to get the same explanation today on a couple of things. Without further ado, I am going to turn it over to Police Chief Butler.

Police Chief Butler said I am just going to have Debi bring the Power Point up so everybody can see it and hope everybody online is able to view this.

The first three weeks have been fantastic. Everybody has been super supportive, especially the Mayor, City Council. Everybody has been working with me on everything, and it's been great. Thanks again Chief Rega yesterday for our meeting and helping me with another Chief's perspective on things.

The reason why I am doing this is I want to take a look at the department as a whole, what we currently have, where we want to get to, what my vision is. This is not me coming from the outside and being a hotshot and trying to change the department, anything like that. It's not my goal. I have spoken with the department. The officers have been here a long time. Luckily today to speak on a few things too will be Sergeant Murphy who has been with the department for 15 plus years. He is a resident. Sergeant Martin as well who is possibly going to be taking

over command of our Regional SWAT Team; so these guys have been with the department for a long time. I have learned from those around me, learned from the City Council and my training and experience in other departments. I kind of just formulated an entire outlook that I feel that could lead us to some really good safety for the community as a whole and increase it even more. I know our guys do a great job, but how can we maximize that to the best level.

Alright, so first and foremost, I want to start with the current department structure. Currently we are looking at one Chief, no Deputy Chiefs, 2 Lieutenants, 5 Sergeants and 25 Patrol Officers. The ordinance which I gave you guys a copy of. I just made some extra copies for the people who are sitting here. Ordinance 2006-36 states what we are allowed as a department which is one Chief, 2 Deputy Chiefs, 4 Lieutenants, 5 Sergeants and 29 Patrol Officers which shows that we are pretty decently away from those ordinance allowed numbers. What I am looking for in 2022 to get us to a point that I am hoping to be at is one Chief, no Deputy Chief for right now, 5 Lieutenants, that's where the big change is, 5 Sergeants and 27 Patrol Officers. To get to that fifth Lieutenant, I would need City Council's support. I will explain why I need that, but I want to point out that I'm requesting still no Deputy Chief and just this increase in Lieutenant positions. So, this should not make a major difference when we are looking at our overall finances or anything else of that kind.

This is the current patrol shift structure. These are our officers, these are how the officers are broken down. This is where the totals are of how many officers work that shift if every single person is working. They are not on comp, they are not on sick, they are not on vacation. This is how many maximum people can work. We currently have 2 officers in FTO, and they do not count as in if they are out on the road they have to be with somebody else. They do not count as an actual person when they are responding to a call. The other 2 are in backgrounds. We haven't given them an offer. They have no start date, nothing of that nature. I just want to show you. So, overall right now, our total road patrol is at 21, including Mileti and Hakes the 2 new hires. The entire supervision, and this is the big button that I want to talk about today. The entire supervision for the road is 4. We have 4 Sergeants which means if one of them is on vacation or one of them is sick or whatever, a Patrolman is going to be in charge of the entire shift. If we have a pursuit, if we have a use of force, if we have a barricaded suspect. The Patrolman who has not gone through the supervision will be in complete control of the scene. They can try to make calls, they can try to get somebody else there, but they are going to be the immediate supervisor who is making that call to call off a pursuit or not call off a pursuit. So, that is what that looks like right now. The numbers next to their names is how many years of service they have. I will also point out that anything with a star is that they can retire within the next 3 to 5 years, which we are about 9 to 10 people total who can retire in the next 3 to 5 years which is over 25% of our department who can retire.

The current special operations structure is this. We have a Lieutenant, an Officer that's the whole Detective Bureau, our School Resource Officer Sergeant, one Officer. We have an Officer in the DEA, and we have an Officer in HIDTA. Those are task forces; so they go, they work at the DEA. They work cases, high level cases with the DEA contacts that they have. For that we have 4 Patrol Officers. For that, we have 4 Patrol Officers and 2 Supervisors for the entire thing.

So, this is a rank structure just to give you an idea. Since 2010 to 2022, and 2022 is where I kind of want to get to. I want to show you that we have had a general decrease in supervision from the Deputy Chief level. In 2010, 2011 we had 2 Deputy Chiefs for those positions. We went down to one, and currently we have been at zero since 2020 and half of this part. In 2020, 2021 and 2022 we are looking at this decrease. Lieutenants, you can see how this has been fluctuating. I am asking for one increase. Sergeants have remained the same for quite some time.

Patrol I am asking for a minor increase to what we have been patrolling for since 2010. You can look at the numbers. This is all the way through 2010 to 2022. I am looking to get to 27. This is a very small increase in our overall add to the entire agency.

This is just the same graph in a line graph to show you supervision, support staff and part-timers. Part-time and support staff has dropped significantly. This is the support staff. At one point we had additional workers, we had additional jailers, we had stuff like that. That has decreased considerably over time.

Department supervision, that's where we are at throughout the years. Again, it's a line graph similar to what you just saw before.

Why I am asking for this as well, the only time I have to add to this right now is to look at weapons calls, how many weapons calls we have had from 2019, 2020 and 2021. This number is going to be a little bit jarring, and the line graph kind of shows you how much we are increasing and how many guns we are recovering. This is people with concealed carry that we are getting out of cars that shouldn't have that. We have people carrying weapons under disability, drugs, alcohol and things like that; and any sort of illegal chargeable offense of weapons, this is where we have been at for the last 3 years. This is why that supervision, those additional officers, it's the safety perspective. This graph to me spoke a lot of volumes of where we are at and what we are looking at.

So, I will have Sergeant Murphy speak once I show you what I want 2022 to look like; but this is a side-by-side comparison. Currently, for 2021, we are at 21 Patrol Officers. The total Special Operations Officers, looking to go to 6. Total Officers are 25, 26; that's the officer rank, that's their pay scale. That is what I am looking to, that's an increase of one. Supervision is where I am trying to go higher, and I will explain why when I go to the next slide. Total road supervision as I said is 4, one sick, one down, you have a Patrolman as the supervisor of the road. Total Admin supervision, we have 4, I am looking to go to 3. This will again affect our finances and keep things relatively the same. Total supervision is 8, and I am looking to be at 11. Overall total is 33 for 2021, 35 if you count the 2 that we are about to hire, I am looking to be at 37. The ordinance allows 41, that is the paper that's in front of you that states that is allowed. This is the department structure I am looking to go to. Once I say it, I am going to let Sergeant Murphy speak on this a little bit and explain why, what the difference is between having what we currently have and what this would do. Again, Sergeant Murphy has been with the department for 15 years. He is a resident. He hears what the public has to say, and he lives this. He takes care of his shift and knows the day-to-day operations. So, it's very important.

What this shows is that there's a Lieutenant per shift, there is a Sergeant per shift, and there are 5 Patrolmen. I am going to work to try to get some part-timers. If I can get one per shift, they can fill gaps if somebody has a baby, somebody has an injury, something like that. We can have these part-timers be a stop gap to help us out so that we are not inflating our numbers too much. If we have a good guy or a good woman that works in this department, and they want to retire; and in a couple of months if they want to come back as part-time, you have them trained and ready to go, there's a chance that we can have these part-timers at our disposal and something I am going to look at.

So, Sergeant Murphy if you wouldn't mind speaking on it. If you need to go back to the previous slide, you can do that too.

Sergeant Murphy said the big question that we are always asked when we show up to a call or a big call or if something major happens is how many guys were working last night. We don't usually like to answer that question because last year we slipped to 3 people, and in my career we never did that before last year. We always had at least 4, 5, 6, 7 guys. When I started, we had 7 guys per shift, we mirrored the Chief's plan. That was like 2005, 2006 when I started, and we never had these issues. We had tons of cars on the road. We always had plenty of coverage for everybody. The problem with 3, as we worked with 3 last year; every call we go on that is something dangerous is a 2 person call. One is not enough, we just can't go that way; so anytime we go to the hotel, that's a minimum of 2 people. So, that leaves one guy on the road. So, now if there's another call, we are already calling for mutual aid. So, we were calling for mutual aid pretty much any time because just one guy can't do anything. Anything with any sort of danger is a 2 person call. So, working with 3 people, we were having issues because we were all down on Rockside on a hotel call, and that left the rest of the City empty, and I think everybody knows it. My neighbors and everybody was saying where is everybody at, well we were down there.

With this current structure, that shouldn't happen. There are plenty of guys, you could have 4 down on Rockside, and you still have 3 at the south end. You could have 5 down on Rockside, and you have 2 on the south end. You are never going to leave it empty. Even if guys are off, there are still going to be plenty because we can manage it this way. It was just unmanageable with 3 people. We just felt naked.

The other issue is with 3 basically we have a thing where we have to play defense. We can't go out and work. We can't go out and deter people because once again we have 3, you make an arrest and you are down to one. So, we need to get those numbers up so we can go back there and get that presence and get these 6 or 7 cars on the road. People will notice it. Again, we had a bump in manpower just recently, and you have noticed it. That makes people slow down. Rockside Road people are noticing it. There are people getting pulled over, and it's going to make an immediate impact.

The other thing that I don't know if the Chief mentioned or not, the dual supervision is important because if one supervisor is off, there is another one there, and with all this influence of young people, they need a supervisor there because there could be a shift where the top Patrolman

might only have 4 years, that is not enough to run the City and make those decisions. This way, there will always be a Sergeant, there will always be a Lieutenant who can kind of run that shift.

Police Chief Butler said that was an excellent point. I appreciate your bringing that up.

I also gave you guys a copy with your packets. This is called a Patrol Assignment Log. It's called a PAL. The Sergeants have to do at the end of their shifts to show. This is on November 4, 2021. We have 3 officers working. That was it for the City, 3. This is what they turn in at the end of the night. We had somebody on sick, we had somebody on training, only 3 were working. Remember the person on FTO doesn't count as a person. So, we had 3 for the entire road. I just wanted to show you that this is actually here, and this is actually happening. This is what is being turned into me.

Moving on, the future Special Operations Division, I am looking for a Sergeant; so this does not change. The Detective Bureau is not going to change. What you are going to see is a drop in supervision and special operations. I am going to have that extra Lieutenant position overseeing this division to begin. The Sergeant from the school when he retires in 12 months, we are going to kick over to the Bureau, and we are going to have officers in the school. We are paying the Sergeant rate, the premium rate, including overtime rates for a Sergeant to work the school. I can get the same product out of officers. Again, the reason why I am bringing this up is, they are doing a great job. Sergeant Borowy, Officer Repicky are doing fantastic in the schools and doing a great job and great work; but I am trying to say from a financial point of view, I can still get that same product, we can still develop the same programs without bloating what my current operational budget is. So, I kick that Sergeant over here, and we have one part-time officer named Rich. He retired a couple of years ago. I see him still, his picture on the 2018 composite that we have. He is now currently as a stop gap. He is helping with the paperwork in the Bureau. He is helping things go.

My dream is we get our Bureau operating a little bit more where they are doing some undercover work. They are following up on some of the crimes on Rockside Road. We get our undercover units out there and just not rely on our Task Forces, but we ourselves do that, and right now we are not because there is just not enough there. Having these 2 part-time officers pulls unnecessary paperwork. It allows the officers to get out there and do some work.

Finance Director Blaze asked there's a Lieutenant in the Detective Bureau isn't there?

Police Chief Butler replied correct. This is for 2022, and what I am saying is that Lieutenant would be overseeing it. He's still part of the 5 until he retires. He's on the next slide. I have a whole slide dedicated to him.

For the Task Force, we have DEA, HIDTA; and I am hoping to add somebody to the Diversion. What is Diversion? Diversion is for prescriptions, and it is for fentanyl and narcotic analgesic drugs. So, right now we can all say that we may know somebody, some families who have lost somebody to fentanyl usage. It often times starts in the medical industry where people are passing bad scripts. Doctors are just giving scripts that they shouldn't be giving. This Task Force

is dedicated specifically to that. We have the Cleveland Clinic. We have Drug Mart. We have CVS. We have Walgreens in this City, just to name a few that are doing this. Somebody gives them a bad prescription, we can now turn that directly over; and we are making a direct impact, not giving it to other agencies, and we have a stake in it. So, that's something I would like to see eventually. That is a ways off, but that is the overall dream.

Okay, upcoming steps. This is important because everything I am telling you isn't going to happen tomorrow. It's not going to happen in a month. It's not going to happen in 2 months. It is impossible. There's going to be a lot of steps to get to where we need to be at; so this budget isn't even going to be affected until July, maybe August or September of next year where we even see a lot of these changes; but what we can do first and foremost is our Lieutenants. We had people waiting on the Lieutenant's test to get promoted for a while. If we promote our 3 Lieutenants, making our number to 5 before the end of 2021, we can then shift our focus to Sergeants and start getting closer to this level. If we promote them to Lieutenant right now it frees up the spots to promote Sergeants. The Lieutenants are still going to basically be Sergeants until we get Sergeants; but we can't get to that point until we promote them.

Lieutenant Wilson oversees the Bureau. He will remain in this position. He retires around the end of 2023. This additional fifth Lieutenant spot is not forever. It's not going to last forever. It's only until Wilson retires. When Wilson retires, we can pivot and look for other things; maybe at that point we look at the Deputy Chief position. I know it works very well in the Fire Department. We can definitely look at it at this point, but we are waiting until Wilson retires. We are not moving him or doing anything else. He's been here 33 years. He is still going to run the Bureau and help us out in training new officers. Succession planning is very important. Both detectives are going to be leaving in the next 2 years. If we don't train people and have those who have the experience train them, I don't want to know what that's going to look like. The total number of Lieutenants will be 4, back to the original ordinance number. So, this is a temporary increase I am asking for. Murphy, Martin, Buehner and Tinnirello will control the shifts and have some administrative responsibilities. It's important especially if we go to this 2 person system, Lieutenants and Sergeants, Lieutenants are still trained in admin. They are getting the training that they need to be proper managers and stuff like that. We can elevate their training and give the road Sergeants different types of training. So, that's all relative, and I can speak on that later.

No Deputy Chief will be made in 2022. This will keep the payroll down and account for that Lieutenant position that is there.

Upcoming Sergeant steps. Once Lieutenants are made, we will only have 2 Sergeants out of 5. This means that Lieutenants will be doing the same duties as I said. We announce the Sergeants test in January 2022. I have already met with the Civil Service Commission. I am getting all of my ducks in a row for the eventual approval of that if this gets approved. It takes 6 to 8 weeks for them to study for the test. That is March of 2022. Civil Service I have heard it's around the ballpark of about 4 to 5 months to ratify the list, that's June. Sergeants would be promoted around July, maybe August. Then we are going to have the supervision coverage; but then again we will still need Patrolmen and stuff like that. You can see this is a ladder. This is going to be

in steps. I am not saying hey tomorrow all of a sudden Chief Butler is elevating our budget to an extra million dollars or something like that. I am not doing that. This is a slow, gradual step to get us to what Sergeant Murphy has already talked about, the road coverage, the lights, the cars so that we can be seen.

Lieutenants on the road. Again, I already kind of talked about this. I don't want to tell you too much; however, Murphy hit on this, and this is really good. The overall department has become much younger. The next 3 years we are going to lose our veterans. We need the Lieutenants, we need the Sergeants to be able to help guide these new officers, give them new opportunities, get them in roles, crash reconstructionist, report writing classes, things like that which will let them find avenues that they want to do and they can excel at. The only way we can do that is a supervisor. Having supervisors in the Admin building up here, I can only help so much; and at the end of the day I am always going to look like, the officer is going to be like I can only talk so much. If we have a Sergeant working next to them on the road, the Sergeant can identify proper skillsets, they can give them those opportunities and help enhance the shifts. That's really the big part about that. Can we enhance each shift? Can we have a traffic reconstructionist on every shift? Can we have somebody who is certified in a special type of standardized field sobriety test on every shift? It might not work every night, but the nights that they are there, they are a tool and a resource that we never had before.

Retirements, 9 to 10 retirements within the next 3 years. The big thing which most cities fail at, and I know Independence will not want to be like that, is they wait until the person leaves. Hey, you are retired, cool; now we are going to try to hire somebody. The hiring process takes 6 to 8 months to get somebody through the door. That is interviews. That is testing. That is backgrounds, 6 to 8 months; and then remember, you are not really a person while you are in FTO for 3 months. So, they are not part of our count. So, if we know somebody is going to retire and say this is my retirement date, I am in DROP; we should be starting that process 6 to 8 months earlier. That's why I am giving us that leeway in the ordinance. If I am asking for 37, and our ordinance says 41, we elevate it to 38 for a short period of time, and when this guy retires, we are back down to 37. We are buying us that time, and that guy leaves, we do not lose service to the residents. We don't lose the cars on the road, and that's the shock that always ends up happening is oh why don't we have anybody? Well, 2 guys retired. We have to wait 8 months to hire somebody.

Training, I kind of talked about this succession planning, finding the niches for people. It is a passion. I have already spoken to 2 different national training groups that Independence will host. That means we get free seats. That means we will be the central of training for the County. We are the heart of Cuyahoga County. Everybody should be coming to us. There's no other department, everyone else is too far out. Everyone can come here much easier. Up north Post Polytechnical we hosted for before, and I talked to them today; they are going to host and Command Presence. They specialize in de-escalation and other types of trainings; and we would get seats in each class for free. We would host the trainings in our Civic Center. I have already met with the Civic Center, and they love the idea. They like having groups come in.

One to two years, post that patrol test. Overall plan, fully functional 37 to 38 officers, part-time officers to fill the gaps. Train new detectives. Sergeant Borowy in the SRO, he retires in 12 months. Kick that Sergeant position over to the Bureau, have him trained by Wilson, ready to go when Wilson leaves.

I am going to talk a little bit about equipment, and then I have my SWAT guy here as well. Sergeant Martin is going to talk a little bit about why this is. I will first and foremost state this is a little redundant for both Councilperson Narduzzi and Mayor Kurtz. They have both been super supportive. They have seen these things, so this is going to re-hash a little bit, and I do apologize to them.

First and foremost, I think this has just been a perfect storm of how long some things have waited. I have seen this in law enforcement throughout my careers; some departments are like oh we are not going to replace this. You can make it work. Guys don't really like to hear that. So for example, this is our laser. This is our radar gun that we currently use. This is from 1998. This gun is 1998. This is what they use on the road. It gets an error about 50% of the time. This one is one that's in the lineup, and it does not work in any capacity; so we at least put our little post-it note on here. One of the officers did that. I called the company, and these are obsolete. All of our units are obsolete. They do not repair them. They can't fix them. They are heavy. They are bulky. You guys can all touch them and feel them a little bit later and see how much they weigh. I called the company, and it's only \$2,000 to get a new one. They are lightweight. They are a different material. If we ever want to go to a higher class one where we want officers on highways like getting pictures of cars and stuff like that, I got quotes for that as well. We don't have the manpower right now but one day we could. I have the quote, and it's in your packet of how much these cost for a total purchase of 3.

Body armor, I am not really going to talk too much about this. I am just going to have my guy talk about it, and I even have a visual demonstration for you guys as well.

Sergeant Martin introduced himself. I am in charge of a day shift here in Independence patrol. I am the Team Leader for the Regional SWAT Team that our department is a part of. I am also a part-time member of the Violent Fugitive Task Force with the marshals. So, body armor equipment is kind of something that I am very familiar with.

Body armor is like a baseline need for an officer. Obviously, it's something that every officer needs, and there are different qualities for sure. This is what we have right now, and for those of you who haven't seen it, I will pass it around. You can tell that it's heavier, and it's not very flexible and doesn't fit well as far as being able to move and having agility. Something like that, it applies to everything from a shooting platform for an officer right up here in the control joints. It can impinge your platform to if you are dealing with somebody who is combative; being in bad body armor might put you at a disadvantage. I know the Chief is a martial arts guy, and if you don't have your flexibility and freedom of movement, somebody can take advantage of you in that because the officer will be in a bad position. It affects that, and it also affects all the way down to our officers are out in the community a lot. That's the great thing about our department. We work Home Days. We work fireworks. We work Christmas Tree lighting; we work all sorts

of things. We are out there at Home Days, and sometimes it's like 90 degree heat. We have that bulky, heavy, uncomfortable piece of equipment on. You are out there sometimes on your feet for hours at a time.

What we are looking to go to is this. What I am about to hand you, and you just held that; so you might think like ballistically well the bigger, heavier thing is going to be better ballistically; and what I mean by that is what type of rounds will stop it. That's a level 3, and this is a level 3. It will stop the same thing. Now, I will go ahead and pass it around.

I know for me, I'm a gear guy; I will go out and I will purchase things that are comfortable for me. I have tried plenty of things, especially being on SWAT and the Fugitive Task Force. I can be in uncomfortable positions for long periods of time, especially on a barricade or something like that. That is awesome. What we have currently, not so much.

Police Chief Butler said also if you would take a quick look, not to call him out or anything like that; if you look at Sergeant Murphy sitting down, you see that this is not actually fitted correctly onto him. I already had a company come out, and they are using Sergeant Martin as a model. They fitted him for free with brand new technology. He is going to have that in about a month; but they fitted it to all aspects of him. They measured everything to make sure this was form fitting. We don't want to look like turtles as Police where you sit down and there's that. Imagine having to get out of a car fast in a terrible incident, stuff like that. This all is part of it. It shouldn't be hitting his belt. That is currently where it is. It is resting on top of his belt. That is why that's on here.

Radios, so right now we have Kenwoods. It's fine, a long term solution, I am going to eventually look to grants and stuff like that to get us to Motorola. I will state that I reached out to CVD. Chief Rega gave me a great idea. We are going to look to re-calibrate some of our radios. It's like \$5 a radio to make sure that they are operating at peak performance that these models can. We have not done that since we got them which was 5 or 6 years ago, and officers have complained about volume spikes, things like that; so for a very small amount of money, we can re-calibrate all the radios. I have already spoken to Nick DiCicco, and we have a date coming up here soon.

Something that I know City Council has talked about, body cameras. I can first and foremost tell you every officer that I have met with so far wants body cameras, all of them. Nobody is against this. The body cameras, I am looking for grants. I am hoping that by the end of 2022 to get body cameras for every officer in this department. The reason why the body cameras are very important is, one liability and two the safety of our officers, three showing the level of professionalism that our officers already have. This department has so many good officers, and who you guys have all hired blows my mind. These are the most elite level officers that I have ever met. I recently watched the video from in August where the news reporter was talking about us helping change a tire. I just got a letter from the Principal of Chardon High School, she had an accident. She said that the 2 officers, her daughter has anxiety, they were so helpful and nice, her daughter now likes officers. She had never seen anything like this. She wrote me a long letter which I will share at some point; I just didn't bring it with me right now. These are the

type of feedback that we get. These body cameras will show what they are doing. I can tell you all day, look we have one officers or 2 officers responding to a hotel; and I won't name any in particular hotels. I would like to show you a video at a Safety Committee meeting and kind of show you what is going on. I think this is something you all would like to see at some point, and it gives you an inside perspective. At the end of the day, I am just up here, I am a voice; if I could show you, I would rather show you than tell you. That's really what I want to get to, and that's what body cameras are. Hopefully, they are a way of the future, and I am working very hard to get that.

Chairperson Narduzzi asked can we go back to the vests for a second?

Police Chief Butler replied yes sir.

Chairperson Narduzzi said so I don't think anybody in this room will deny us going with a better vest; so what's the turnover time, what is the process of doing that? We just bought some vests last year if I am not mistaken.

Police Chief Butler said you buy vests when new officers come in. So, when a new person comes in, you spend some money. We have some grant money, and we do have money in finance to do some of this. If we did a bulk giant purchase for the entire department, we would be owing some money to start. The process is once I get you a price, and the price is approved, the ordering takes 2 to 3 months to get those units. Now again, Sergeant Martin should have his in a month, and anybody who wants to see it, he was also allowed to design the vest carrier.

Uniformity is important to me; so every officer would be in the same looking vest. They would have the same markings. It's very professional, and it matches the professional demeanor of our officers to look the same. Yes, it's about a 2 to 3 month turnaround once they are ordered. I already have quotes from 2 places, and I am just trying to calculate that. What happened was that either originally when they were purchased, we went with a State contract. We went with a lower quality; so they are like these are really cheap. They are not really cheap, I apologize, that was not what I meant by that. These were less expensive, and we might be able to save here or there. When it comes to body armor that really isn't a question of what we should be saving. A lot of departments are moving to this, we would be one of the first to have a fully outfitted department that has the best of the best; but most departments are moving to this. Most armor companies are getting rid of that; they are moving to the softer thing.

I will answer any questions. I am sure there will be some questions.

The uniform, this is more for my finance meeting with the Mayor and with Vern. I am looking to try to get the same uniforms for our officers. This is a big bloated breakdown. Currently we give every new officer about \$5,000 to give them everything head-to-toe. We are giving them too much money, and then we only give them \$1,000 a year to buy your own stuff. After taxes that's about \$600. I am most likely going to drop that allotment down, I am not going to count guns and vests; those are things we provide anyway, it shouldn't be part of the \$5,000 and use the rest of the money to pay for shirts and pants throughout the year for our officers. I want us to look

the same. Right now if we stood up, Sergeant Murphy come here, we look radically different. The shirt is different, everything is different. I want comfort. I want accessibility, but I want us to look a certain professional manner that when we show up, the resident's first visual of us gives that off; and right now we are all in different outfits. When you give a person money, and I am not saying we are taking that away because they need it to buy shoes and stuff like that. They are going to find the cheapest way to go on Amazon and buy a cheap pair of tactical pants. They are like \$15 or something like that, and they get ratty. They get worn, and when I see some of our officers, I am like why would you do that because I can just provide you the pants; and we can just look uniform. It's not a lot of money. It's not going to change. Currently, my budget is around \$6,000 to \$8,000; and I am going to try to get the uniform budget a little bit higher just so I can provide the necessary supplies so we look the same and we carry ourselves the way that we act.

So, that is the presentation. Let me see if I have anything else for you guys that I brought with me. I did not. Anything else from Sergeant Murphy or Sergeant Martin? They are here to answer questions as well just so I am not the only one answering questions if you have them. Does anybody have any questions?

Jim Riley said what you said about the uniforms and looking alike. My father was a Policeman, and his shoes were shined, and everybody looked the same. Can you do that with the vehicles too because there are times when I don't even know if it's an Independence Police car driving by me or not. I don't know when they went with that. One year they started mixing things up as far as the cars.

Police Chief Butler said uniformity is important. The light bars should look similar, stuff like that. This is not sacrificing quality. I will always say that. We want our guys to have quality. We want them to be comfortable. We want them to have the tools that they need, but we do it responsibly where they look uniform. The car shows up, and it looks uniform. The markings are the same, everything should be looking the same to a certain extent. If we want to change something else, or the Mayor has an idea or something, there is always room to grow; but for the most part, uniformity is important to me.

Chairperson Narduzzi said so as everybody can see, Chief Butler is very detailed. I mean I have been involved for 18 years now here, and I have never experienced detail to this extent of the department, the structure, the way he presents himself; we are in a different phase, and I hope that everything works out for you because I can see good things coming from all of this. So, we want to keep moving on.

Mayor Kurtz said here's your helper.

Chairperson Narduzzi said I'm here to help.

Police Chief Butler said I need everybody's help, we are a team.

Chairperson Narduzzi said so let's get to some tough questions now. So, everybody in this room has heard multiple people ask them how do we police Rockside Road? Rockside Road is a detriment to Independence, although it's our bread and butter, it's a problem. I want to come out and say that. So, what do you see as way to police Rockside Road to make it, I'm not going to say safer, better.

Police Chief Butler said that's a good question. I am an old school type of a cop. My mantra is light it up. You get those lights going, people are going to see the blue. The criminals, the bad guys, they are not going to want to come. Like if we have the manpower, and we have the people that can actually patrol it and light it up and encourage the traffic stops, encourage our guys to be pro-active; that's what they need. I think Sergeant Murphy really hit on a very important thing. They are at that point of we have to wait and see. If we are too pro-active and we get involved in something, and we arrest someone that is doing something wrong, we have 2 officers pulled from the road; and we don't want to leave our third guy waiting on Seven Hills to back us up. We need to be there for him or her; so that's the big thing. If I have the manpower, we are going to do that. I am going to be doing special details. We already do that where we give some overtime on the weekends to try to get extra patrols over on Rockside Road. I am looking to join, and this on the agenda, the OVI Task Force. The OVI Task Force is University Hospital has a countywide program with all the departments where they provide money for overtime if we are looking for drunk drivers, speeders or seat belt violators. They don't control who we give tickets to or anything else like that; they just want to see that we are doing work. They don't expect us to be like okay we cited this person, we have to cite every person. That is not what this is about. What it is, we are getting an influx of money to give additional overtime so our officers can work it and be there and be visible.

Anything that we can do outside of that, I am still looking at potential suggestions; but I don't want to abandon our community as well. So, when we have these 3 guys, and I push the 2 on the traffic details and stuff like that on Rockside Road, I want the community to know that at night they are safe. They have more than one Patrol Officer going to their streets, and that's really the outlook.

Rockside Road is completely manageable. I had guys tell me if I had this, I could be more pro-active, I want to be more pro-active. We have had guys do prostitution engagements where they are calling, finding out numbers, getting people cited; we just had that last week. We had an officer do this by himself. Our officers have the skills, they have the training; they need the time because they have enough officers to support them, but right now it is the overtime and lighting it up, encouraging the pro-active things.

Having the right Lieutenants in place to push that message. I have said this a million times, and I said this earlier, I can say everything I can until I am blue in the face. At the end of the day you hired somebody that wants to work really hard for you, but if I walk up to a Patrolman and I am like I need you to make more traffic stops, not necessarily more tickets, not necessarily anything else, they are going to be like the Chief is separated. If I have the Lieutenants and Sergeants that are working next to them saying guys we are doing this, we are going out there together, that's going to increase these numbers. It's going to increase comradery, it's going to increase our

visibility on Rockside and to our residents. That's why this structure of Lieutenants and Sergeants on the shifts controlling the young guys and directing them where they are needed, that's why it's so important. The strategy is we get the leadership, we push them. So, right now it's just my message. I met with a vast majority of the officers and telling them what my outlook is on the department. I am learning about them, their backgrounds, their families, where they live, how they got here; and I am just telling them this is what I am looking for. I want those officers one day that want to be in the Bureau, what are you doing now to get yourself there? I need those additional looks. Show yourself, show what you are doing and get out there and get me what you can. So, Rockside Road is important. We are going to make sure it's top-notch.

Chairperson Narduzzi said so we hit on that, and we hit on the OVI Task Force. So, Number 6 would be the jail. So, the Chief took me down to the jail, and he pointed out a few things to me. First of all, I took some pictures, but it's kind of rundown. There's doors hanging off. There are drawers with drawer hands missing. It really needs to be updated in some fashion; but he also pointed out that the jailer is down there by himself, and we have to talk about the part-time jailer. We have to have a Patrolman in there with him when he's booking somebody because there is no way to tie this guy down to keep the jailer safe. He is all by himself. So, when you take that Patrolman off the street, now you have 2 guys in the basement with one bad guy, and you have 2 guys out on the street, one guy on the street. So, I think it would be a very simple fix to, I don't know what they call it.

Police Chief Butler said there are handcuffing benches, there is stuff like that. I know the Mayor has looked at a broad look; how do we update? How do we move the department to 2021 and 2022? There have been so many good ideas on these things, but yes, the jail is something, if anybody wants to walk through, I will show you what we are working with right now. We are in very close confined quarters. We have a jailer that only works daytime hours right now; so if we arrest anybody, an officer has to come in every hour and check the jail. They have to. That's just legally what we have to do. If we had a part-timer that was there, they could do it; and the officers could just bring back people, bring back 3 people. We have a jailer, they will check it for you; but instead we have the officer constantly boomeranging back and forth. Even if they made it to Rockside Road, in 45 minutes you better start your way back there because it has to be done on the hour for us to pass our State inspection test.

So, there's a lot of holes in that. I spoke to Nick DiCicco about them watching the cameras from CVD, and he stated that they will if you call us and tell us. So, that's another thing, but are we really getting that from them or even our own if we had our own dispatching center. I don't know because they are going to be on the computers. They are going to be watching this, they are watching the road, they are answering the phones. If we have somebody back there that's actually watching them, it limits the liability. God forbid we have an incident in the jail. We are a facility that houses people for a couple of days. People that commit crimes can have medical issues. They can have depression, and stuff like that. We have been okay so far, but that's amazing in a lot of regards. I worked in Cleveland Heights, and we had a jail that was very similar to this, but different.

Chairperson Narduzzi said and we have no one down there on the weekends when it's your busy time.

Police Chief Butler said and I know I relate Cleveland Heights here. I understand 2 totally different communities. I love Independence and stuff like that, I am just using my own experience and stuff like that. You have to remember, we are dealing with the hotels. We are dealing with Rockside Road and stuff like that. It's a different type of enforcement. It's a different type of community to a certain extent, and our guys just want to be able to pro-actively do it. If we are pulling people in, we have the options to arrest people, the word is going to get out. It used to get out way back in the day that you never drive through Cleveland Heights because there were a bunch of ticket crazy people that were going to get you, and I even heard somebody that I arrested, they are like, yeah the people in jail told me not to drive through Cleveland Heights. They went around the city because of what we were doing.

Mayor Kurtz said the Chief eluded to, and I wanted to announce the fact that I have asked him to talk to all of his team about facilities because we are going to have that on the agenda for Public Lands & Buildings. We are not going to be ready for that this quickly, but the charge is we have a 40 year old building, a 40 year old facility; and we need to determine, one what do we need for the next 40 years. The people that are part of this team, how do they see the future of policing. Unlike the Fire where Police are out on the streets, they still have to have a base of operation, or several bases of operation, depending on the overall strategy. So, the bottom line is we need to determine what the composition for our facilities is going to look like, the composition, we are talking about the actual manpower; and so what is going to be like in 10 years to police, the technology. How do we come up with a facility that's going to be appropriate and flexible to accommodate future technologies, future opportunities. So, I have charged him with that responsibility to make sure everybody under his responsibility has input into this strategy because there are no cookie cutter answers. I don't have the answer. I just know I have a responsibility to provide to Council and to the electorate if necessary the opportunity to make a good decision that will allow these people, the people that we charge with protecting us the best work environment, the best tools and manpower to do their job.

So, I just want to make sure there is an overall of understanding that Public Lands & Buildings, Safety, Council as a whole, the community, all have to participate in the process that gives us a long term strategy that we can grow into, but still manages things on a day-to-day basis. So, there's a lot of overlap.

Even if we went to fix up the department right now, the current situation, we couldn't do in a vacuum, we couldn't do it while we are there because they have different protocols and legal and liability that we don't know the segments of the community. So, I just offer this sound byte of information to you as a preparatory comment so that everyone is aware that we need to take a long term view of this and find something, adopt a strategy that everyone has input into, that we can sell to the community an overall solution long term. Thank you.

Police Chief Butler said I will reiterate that Friday I met with the Brecksville Chief. I saw their brand new Police Department. I am going to wait a little bit, Rocky River built a brand new

Police Department. I am already talking to that. I have looked at RFP's. In three weeks I am doing what I can. I am showing that I am willing to work 24/7.

Mayor Kurtz said well I don't expect you to do it yourself, you have a team. Your management team should be front and center because everyone has to have input.

Police Chief Butler said Chuck Wilson is coming with me to Rocky River. I am going to be working with all of our guys. I think you can see today, I seek their input. I value their voice, and they have a lot to add. I mean this is the core. I am up here, and these are the guys that are hitting the ground running that are directing daily.

Mayor Kurtz said I appreciated the fact that you had them here, not only to demonstrate but also to share their experience so that all of us can understand what we are lacking and how we can improve and the benefits of that. So, thank you.

Police Chief Butler asked any other questions?

Chairperson Narduzzi asked any other questions from the committee?

Councilperson Trakas said thank you. Sorry I couldn't join you in person. I wanted to go back to the 2 things to talk about so that I understand on headcount. So, we wanted to add headcount, but not in patrol but in supervision. Is that what I was led to believe?

Police Chief Butler said on the road it would be an increase in the actual supervision on the road. So, the overall total, I don't have the Power Point up anymore, I apologize; but the overall total for the road would be at 7. Right now the total is at 6, 5 and stuff like that. This increase would put us at 7 with 2 Supervisors and 5 Patrolmen. So, yes the overall increase on the road in personnel is still there.

Councilperson Trakas asked so in terms of actual Patrolmen, is our headcount going up for the next year anticipated, or would it be level?

Police Chief Butler said it would stay the same.

Mayor Kurtz said we just hired how many people in the last months?

Police Chief Butler said we hired 2.

Mayor Kurtz said 7 people in the last 6 months. Two still don't count yet as the Chief said. If you take those 7, and that's the baseline we are talking about. It's not today, it's once we get everybody in the mix. We put 7 people in the past 6 months to get to the point for patrol. What I also heard was we are going to have the Sergeants and Lieutenants in that mix at the same time, which gives us the flexibility and gives us that leadership that we are looking for. So, we are going to have a full complement based on the ordinance for the future.

Police Chief Butler said the Sergeants are on the road. The Lieutenants are on the road. The Sergeants can take reports. They do so currently. Sergeant Martin just took a very important report that he was talking to them about before this meeting; but they still take reports. They will still be running radar. There will still be lights. There will still be boots on the ground.

Jim Riley said so you will have working supervisors on the road.

Police Chief Butler said and I have spoken to them. Anybody who has a chance to become a Lieutenant, I have spoken to them about this plan; and honestly, there has been no push back of any kind. They like this. They are going to get on the road. They have some administrative tasks to do, but they are going to be out on the road. They know this.

Councilperson Trakas said now another question Chief along those lines. In terms of deployment within the community; I know we talked about Rockside Road, but I also think it's really important to show the flag and patrol the neighborhoods. I think the residents have concerns that we have not been as visible, and obviously we don't have the headcounts, so you have to have priorities. With full headcount of 7 per shift, which I am glad to see by the way, it's one more than Chief Kilbane thought was optimum so I think that's appropriate. How do we patrol the neighborhoods better? Does that get people to also be in neighborhoods and make sure that people, that we are investigating there too?

Police Chief Butler replied absolutely, no question. It depends on the day. Like on the weekends, it might be 5 near Rockside Road and 2 over here in the neighborhoods or 4 and 3 during the week; but let me tell you this, when I meet with the officers there are 3 things that are really important to me in policing, and just so you all know this, traffic stops, building checks, that's businesses, houses and stop and talk, walk and talks. That means I park my car, I see some kids in a park, I am going to talk to them. I am going to get out of my car and go inside a business, and I am going to say hello to the people in the business. If I have the people to do that, and they have the time to get out of those cars, those are the 3 things that I am looking to track. Where are our officers doing that? There's more than one way to police. I am not saying every single officer has to be doing traffic stops. They don't need to do a million building checks, but you need the officers that can keep up with these 3 tasks to show a pro-active approach. Then on the back end which I showed you with the Special Operations Units, we have more follow up. So, if somebody gets a house broken into, now we have these 2 part-timers to take care of some of the paperwork, the court filings for the Bureau. Get the Bureau out, let them talk to a resident, call the resident, make them feel like we are going the extra mile for them. That's where these people come into play. It's not just what you see on the road either because these people on the back end need to help as well.

We recently had a case where a juvenile threw a pumpkin at a mailbox; so we are bringing in the SRO's. So, that is a team. You have to look at it as the whole thing combined. If you have that manpower, we are all working in unison. If not, we have 3 people who are waiting for something to happen and not doing that extra step.

Councilperson Trakas said one other quick thing. Just as a sidenote, personal preference, not City policy, but we always try to buy American where we can so when it comes to uniforms and equipment. I think that's important, and I use the Marx Police radios. The National Guard has those, and I would encourage you to take a look. You talk about Motorola, and I think that's a pretty good product. There is also a lot more support for that out there which I think is pretty important if anything goes down. I would continue to encourage you to look at the Motorola product, I think you are on the right path there.

Police Chief Butler said thank you Mr. Trakas.

Chairperson Narduzzi asked if there were any other questions for the Chief. There were none.

Chief, I thank you very much for the detailed explanation of everything that was on the agenda, and I thank you guys for coming in too, especially giving your time up and showing us, I appreciate it. With that, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Moved by Walchanowicz, seconded by Kapusta to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting of November 16, 2021. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 11/17/21
