

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 6, 2018 AT 4:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CAUCUS ROOM**

Present: Chairperson Patricia Wisnieski
Councilperson Tom Narduzzi

Others Present: Councilperson Dale Veverka (arrived at 4:54 p.m.)
Vice Mayor Dave Grendel
Mayor Anthony Togliatti
Police Chief Michael Kilbane
Fire Chief Steve Rega
Assistant Fire Chief Jim Wheeler
Fire Lieutenant Don Reis

Absent: Councilperson Kathleen Kapusta

Chairperson Wisnieski called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Chairperson Wisnieski said the first item on the agenda is to approve the Safety Committee meeting Minutes from April 9, 2018.

Moved by Narduzzi seconded by Wisnieski to approve the Minutes of the April 9, 2018 Safety Committee Meeting. Voice Vote: 2 yes/0 no; motion carried.

Chairperson Wisnieski said the second thing on the agenda is the Fire Department update by Chief Rega.

Fire Chief Rega said I was going to see if Mike wanted to go first because I might be a little long winded.

Police Chief Kilbane said mine is pretty short. First off, a personnel update; as you know, where we are top heavy is we have a bunch of officers who are in the retirement zone. We have one for sure who is going to retire in 2019; and we have at least five others who are eligible to retire any time. They haven't given us any plans. I asked them informally to please give me as much advance notice. I would prefer a six month window for replacement. We have an active Civil Service list; so once we get a retirement date, we will ask the Mayor for a hire replacement. I would like to get it early enough so that we can get the new hire through the academy and at least into the Field Training Officer Program prior to the departure. So, it minimizes the overtime expenditure, the backfilling on the shift.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked how long is the Civil Service test good through?

Police Chief Kilbane said I believe it was certified last year right around the end of the year, so we have about a year on it. We still have some really good viable candidates on it. That's the list that we hired Mr. Harper off of, and he's working out fantastic. There were a couple who were in the same ballpark as him when we interviewed the first group. So, hopefully some of them will still be available when the time comes. So, I think it's not going to be a function of not having viable candidates on the list when it comes to it.

A couple of financial things; the grant that we had for the license plate readers at 21 and Rockside, I was informed that we got a second round of funding for that so we will be able to get cameras in all four directions. They are going to install those, optimistically the County wanted to have it done by the end of the year; but I don't think the weather is going to agree with it. So, it may be spring before we get the north/south cameras up. We have already used those cameras to solve a couple of crimes. We are using them right now for a robbery we had at the pizza shop at Rockside Corners last week. They are definitely proving their worth for us; and we share that data with other communities too that have had people going through our intersection, we are trying to plot timelines and things like that.

Also, we were just informed by the Attorney General's office that we received a grant for body armor. On our Capital Plan we have it to purchase new vests; they expire next year for the whole department. We had it budgeted for \$35,000. It's a joint grant from the Attorney General and Ohio Workers' Compensation. We are going to get \$23,944.50 reimbursed to us after we purchase the vests. That represents 75% of the cost of the vests. So, the exposure to the City is, Dennis crunched the numbers for us here. We are going to be \$7,981.00 out of pocket; and again, we had \$35,000 in the Capital budget for that. So, that's going to be a pretty significant savings.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked and that's for 2018 or 2019?

Police Chief Kilbane said it was in the 2019 budget, but John said the funds are there because we had it in the Federal forfeiture fund. He said it's just a matter of moving the funds up to if we want to do the purchase this year. There's usually a lead time because they are custom made vests. So, they come out, they measure each individual officer, and then they custom make the vests. Usually it's four to six weeks; so legitimately this could be pushed back to 2019 for the purchase. We are going to have the legislation, I believe it's prepared for next week's Council meeting for this; but that was a pretty significant get. I was glad they had an initial round of funding, and they said they were going to have a 30 day turnaround time on it; it was 45 days and I hadn't heard anything. I called down there, and the lady from the Attorney General's office said they had such an overwhelming response, but ours was the second application in. She goes you are at the front of the line, and then a week later I got the award letter.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked is there a use for the old ones?

Police Chief Kilbane said well that's the rub. The National Institute of Justice certifies the vests; and the Kevlar material in the vests they certify for five years. After five years it's not certified. Technically, you will have problems if you use it; but ballistically they still work. We have had

15 year old vests that we have taken down to the range and thrown every round in inventory, and it stops it, all except the high velocity stuff. It is not meant to stop it anyhow.

So, a lot of times there are donation programs for them. I know there are some departments that don't have the funding. It's better to send an officer out on the road with a used vest than no vest at all. So, we don't simply throw them away; we repurpose them.

With the new vests too, we were able to include in the price. Dennis in Purchasing did a fantastic job beating up the vendor on a price; but we included an upgraded trauma plate that will stop high velocity rifle rounds.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked does the canine dog have a vest too?

Police Chief Kilbane said it's funny you mention that. Eddie Ripepi from Verso, and he owns SRT Canine; he is going to donate ballistic vests for both of our canines. He is waiting.

Chairperson Wisnieski said we need to recognize him when he does that.

Police Chief Kilbane said yes, definitely. He is just waiting because our newest canine, Rambo, isn't fully filled out yet; and they custom fit the vests for the dogs too. He wants to wait until Rambo is fully grown, probably about another four or five months; and then he will have both of the dogs fitted for vests.

Chairperson Wisnieski said very nice.

Police Chief Kilbane said that is pretty much all we have going forward. Any questions?

Chairperson Wisnieski asked how about the Capital budget, any changes or do you want the first of the year to review it again?

Police Chief Kilbane said if we stick with the same review process because besides the vests, the only major capital purchase was the vehicles. Again, we are okay for this year because we are still going to be able to purchase vehicles; but Ford informed us that they are no longer going to make the Police interceptors after next year. So, our options are very limited for what is out there. They are trying to push everybody into a hybrid Explorer which is a lot more expensive than the Police interceptors they are selling now. None of the other manufacturers have tried to get a presence in the Police fleet market yet.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked so everything is Ford?

Police Chief Kilbane said everything is Ford. We have had real good luck with Ford. Our Service Department is very comfortable working on them. The one mechanic over there is a long time Ford mechanic. So, ideally we would like to stick with a product that we have all the in-house expertise in. That decision may be taken out of our hands though, depending on what happens after next year. Lieutenant Kroeger has already reached out to Statewide and sort of put

a pre-order in for next year's vehicles to make sure that we will reserve some of the supply of the 2019 interceptors that are still available because I imagine they will go pretty quick. Jason Hall from Hall Public Safety that outfits the vehicles for us; he gave us a heads-up when he got the warning from the manufacturer. So, we were able to make some arrangements to at least reserve some for us. They haven't even released the pricing on them yet for next year.

Vice Mayor Grendel said we went away from Ford back in the early 2000's. I forget what we went with.

Someone said Dodge.

Police Chief Kilbane said and that was the same thing. For decades Ford had a lock on the Police fleet business with the Crown Victoria. That was reliable. They had worked it out. It was the perfect fleet vehicle. It was heavy duty. It was built for 24/7 operation. For some reason they decided to move out of the fleet business, and Dodge tried to get into it with the Chargers; and at first it was great. They were powerful. They were well handling cars and stuff, but mechanically they didn't hold up well. They had transmission issues. They had suspension issues. There were some corrosion issues with them. You don't see many of them. I think the Ohio Highway Patrol is one of the only agencies that stuck with the Chargers. Everybody else jumped to Fords as soon as they got back in the fleet business.

Mayor Togliatti asked did you want to give any update on the dispatch personnel transition?

Police Chief Kilbane said well we are in the process of transitioning. Ideally, as of January 1st, they are going to become Chagrin Valley dispatch employees; but they are still going to be working here out of our facility because the new facility in Brecksville won't be operational. The target date is the 1st of February. We want to get our operations merged and moved in there. Chagrin Valley has already got the personnel packages. Our HR Director has been working with him to make sure the transition is going as smoothly as possible. The comparison to compensation benefits is very close so nobody is going to be taking a big hit or anything like that. We are working diligently to make sure we are staying in contact with the dispatchers through the whole process; so they are confident. I think they understand that their best interests were our paramount concern through this, making sure they were all secure.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked what was the target date for opening?

Police Chief Kilbane said February 1st is our target date, and we will probably gradually move operations over. We will get Brecksville up and running first, then us probably about five days later; and then two weeks after that we will bring Seven Hills and Broadview Heights in. We have already had commitments from all the cities being dispatched out of Cuyahoga Heights. They have committed to move over, and the City of Brooklyn is going to move over to the new dispatch center as well.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked so we aren't losing any dispatchers?

Police Chief Kilbane said no. As a matter of fact, they offered our part-time dispatcher a full-time position. They actually need more. Nobody is losing. It's just a name on a shirt that is changing. They are going to be doing the same job with the same equipment.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked how does that save money? I am not catching that.

Police Chief Kilbane said well because Chagrin Valley Dispatch runs the operation, and it's economics of scale. Because it's a larger operation, they have more resources. They charge us a cost per call to dispatch. So, over the long run it's going to save us because our personnel budget. Between the capital improvements, the investments we have to make in equipment, the personnel costs, the benefits costs, that's going to be reduced down the road. The initial capital buy in to build the new facility is an initial cost savings. We aren't going to realize cost savings until we get into it down the road, but then it's going to be continuing cost savings going forward.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked that's the trend throughout the State?

Police Chief Kilbane said and that's one of the things too. The State of Ohio has mandated that Cuyahoga County reduce the number of public safety answering points. It's a fancy word for 911 dispatch centers. They have to be down to a total of no more than five. Originally, there were 48 in the County, and I think we are down in the 30's now; and everybody is in the process of consolidating. We were one of the lowest call volume PSAP's that was a full-time PSAP in the County. We are the second lowest call volume. The only one lower than us was Olmsted Township. They have since moved into the County dispatch operations. They had actually come out. They had paid a visit the Mayor several years ago, and where going to all the cities and letting them know that the County was no longer going to support standalone dispatch operations; but we were already in the process of talking with Brecksville to consolidate and stuff. So, they were happy with that.

Vice Mayor Grendel said really we have no choice in the matter as far as that.

Fire Chief Rega said we really didn't have a choice, but the way we got into it was pretty good. We had gotten a State Capital Grant for roughly \$200,000; so it offset a lot of the initial costs, and then also splitting that four ways with the other communities. It really lowered our costs. Even though it seemed like a lot, for a lot of the communities the buy in is much higher. Compared to the other communities too, we were able to keep all of our dispatchers employed. Many other cities, just like when Brook Park went over; they didn't have the capacity in Parma to absorb all of Brook Park's dispatchers. They could only hire a couple of them.

Chairperson Wisnieski said I believe for the most part, it controlled the transition instead of having it mandated on us and being at the disposal of whatever.

Police Chief Kilbane said we chose where we were going to go rather than have somebody tell us; and I think we are moving into a very high quality situation. Chagrin Valley does it right. They have done this transition in numerous other cities.

Vice Mayor Grendel said they have been around for a long time.

Police Chief Kilbane said 18 years I think. Originally they started with just five villages on the east side, and they expanded from there. Now they dispatch for some really high volume cities, and they put a lot of time and resources into training. Their dispatchers are all top notch. I think ours are going to assimilate very well in there because we tend to stress training with ours as well. Again, there is going to be growing pains. There are going to be new procedures, new policies. I am sure there is going to be stuff we didn't anticipate that's going to pop up, but we are up to the challenge.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked how many communities does the Chagrin Valley dispatch center handle?

Fire Chief Rega said I think they said by the time they are done they will be up to 28. They are doing merges in other areas.

Police Chief Kilbane said they just did a big merger on the east side with about a half a dozen of municipalities on the east side that moved into a facility in Cleveland Heights. So, we will be their third location.

Fire Chief Rega said they had 9 going in initially, and they have room for 3 more. I think that by the time we get in, they will already have those spots filled.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked is Cuyahoga Heights going to be part of this too?

Police Chief Kilbane said all of those cities are moving up there with us, shortly after we get up and running. They have already made the commitment to do it. They were in the same position we were a few years ago; they had to make a change, they had to make a decision. The Mayor has evaluated different options, and this was the preferable one.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked should we have another discussion as to what's going to happen with all the equipment or that area?

Fire Chief Rega said well some of that equipment will actually stay as it interconnects with the jailing portion of that.

Chairperson Wisnieski said okay, so we will still utilize that.

Police Chief Kilbane said the dispatch consoles themselves are going to move over to the new center; but those are the ones that we just purchased. They are the Motorola 7500's. They are the state of the art.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked is that the screen where you can see where the police cars are?

Police Chief Kilbane said absolutely, except over there they are going to have much bigger screens, and it will be integrated with all the municipalities. So, not only will they be able to see where the Independence units are, they will be able to see where the Seven Hills units are and the Brecksville units are, and everything else. For large scale mutual aid stuff, and for fire response; it's going to make operations more efficient.

Vice Mayor Grendel said very good. Thank you.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked any other questions? There were none.

Thank you Chief.

Fire Chief Rega said I have some handouts. You know me, I like handouts.

I have some recap points from the last time. The new ambulance is all set for a January, or at the latest, February delivery. We are already sending some equipment off the old ambulance, some brackets and things like that to be put into that; so that's on schedule.

The brush truck that we ordered is scheduled for May right now. Again, some of that equipment will get transferred out to the factory where it will get installed on the new vehicle.

Currently, unfortunately we got the report that our Engine 1, which is our E-1 Cyclone engine has a Cummins motor in it that is burning excess oil after repair by Cummins. I do have legislation that got put in just yesterday for funding to possibly do some repairs on that if we can't get it covered under warranty. The warranty issue is still up for debate on that. They are breaking the engine down now to see what the failure was, whether it was a Cummins issue or not. I will say that we have done maintenance all along on this vehicle, so it was somewhat of a surprise to all of us; and they are going to review that probably later this week, Friday or Monday to find out what is going on with that. I have legislation on the docket for next week for them.

The smoke and CO program for the seniors 65 and older, will probably be rolled out in January. We do have the CO and smoke detectors on the agenda for next week for the purchase. We will be awarding a bid on that. So, we had to get them in and work on some of the details and then push that campaign out.

Just to add to the dispatch discussion, the Fire Department has been working on our CAD information; and we had to map out all of the different occupancies and residents within the City. We had to redo our map for a more accurate response model for the CAD system. In other words, we want straight divisions on addresses on Brecksville and not maybe have it one side of the street or the other. We were trying to clean all that up, so we have been working on that with Chagrin Valley. They will also be out Thursday to talk to all the regional chiefs about a station learning program that will be going into our station. They have some equipment they will install that will work with our intercom system and whatnot that they can dispatch us from the new center down in Brecksville. So, we will all for the most part be linked where they just hit one

button and through the CAD it will alert the different stations. So, that's a nice, new piece of equipment that's going to be going in. That is part of that package build out.

Building upgrades, we did finish the air conditioning on the administrative side, and they made some adjustments on that as well. Dave did a good job of getting it at a low price, so we have funds available to do the other side of the building. Again, these are older HVAC systems.

The kitchen renovation that we had scheduled for this year, we are still working on that. The AV build out, we are looking at that for maybe next year. This is the training room that we use at the station. The AV equipment is a little bit older, and now with the new LED lighting which is just getting wrapped up this week, it's kind of bright in there; and the screen is not as conducive as it was. So, I will be working with Kyle on that so we can upgrade that.

Again, capital wise, most of the adjustments were in the Public Lands for the Fire Department. Saving the money on the air conditioning, we were allowed to look at the additional air conditioner on the other side of the building and also possible exterior landscaping upgrades next year and/or some exterior lighting upgrades. We do have the older lights out there, they use a lot of electricity. We upgraded the inside, and it's worth taking a look at if we can save on the outside. So, that's something we are looking at in the Public Land's Capital funding.

Getting into personnel staffing, I have another sheet for you. The last time I reported, we were watching the numbers closely as far as the run volume goes. We have definitely been seeing a marked trend as our call volume is going upward from year to year. I know with Vista Springs coming on line and some of the other development down on Rockside, we are probably going to see a continued upswing in call volume. The major medical facilities down on Rockside, the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, both operate an urgent care that are pretty well utilized by the community. I know the Clinic, the last time I talked to Cathy Luks, it was somewhere upwards of a quarter million people who go through there every year. So, that's quite a few folks, and some of them end up having to be transported by us. DaVita Dialysis is another one that's a heavy user that's gone upwards in their run volume over the last three years.

Just looking at Vista Springs, I have made contact with Concord's Fire Chief, and they just opened at the beginning of the year; and he did say it's kind of a slow because it's a private pay facility, it is kind of slow to occupy, but he sent me his run volume. I can see where they had two to three calls a month for like the first six to eight months; and then starting in like July, August, September they jumped up to like eight to ten calls a month. So, I think it's one of those things where as they start getting occupancy they will see an increase in run volume there.

I did talk to Macedonia's Chief as well, she too had a slow uptick in the run volume; and I believe they ran last year around 89 calls. I talked to Chief Lasky out of Parma, and their facility is a little bit larger, it's 160 beds; these other two facilities and ours is about 94. He is at 80 calls for the year, and they just opened at the beginning of the year as well. So, I think we need to expect a good jump from 80 to 100 calls. Now I will say that we will work with them as far as making sure they are calling us for the right reasons because they too have their own contracted services that they can utilize; and part of that is staying on top of that to make sure they are not

calling us. We have done that a little bit with some of the urgent cares, we have talked to them and asked them why are you calling us for certain things and making sure it's an appropriate way to call. So, that's kind of helped us a little bit, but it kind of goes up and down.

I know we have Topgolf coming in. We have the new party center. It has brought us to the conclusion that we really need to start looking at additional full-time staffing. For the last several years we have looked at part-time staffing, and this past year we had upwards of 20 people. We did hire three this year, and one of those already just gave me a letter saying he got hired full-time; so we are going to be losing him. So, I think since 2012 we have had upwards of 12 part-time employees, and we have lost about half of those to full-time employment elsewhere. We have one employee who has been on longer than 2012, but we continue to try to bring those part-time personnel in; but we end up training them up really good, and we lose them to other departments. We have hired a few too, which is good. That's a good thing. So, we are going to continue to try the part-time side, but if we get the consistency in staffing for where we are headed as far as this upward growth, we really believe we need to put on three additional full-time staff.

What we would do is, our test is expiring in December; so we would look to probably give a test in January or February of this year. We approached Civil Service about that. I do have one firefighter who is currently on medical leave right now. Also, we are down one employee right now, but we hope after the first of the year try to get these three people on staff. I think if we do that, and we get them trained up, then we will see. When Vista Springs opens and some of these other facilities come on line later in the year, then we should be right in line with having additional staff to cover that.

Chairperson Wisnieski said sorry Chief, how many full-time do we have?

Fire Chief Rega said currently we have 21 full-time firefighters, and then we have three Lieutenants, which are non-bargaining. We have a 40 hour person as well, and then the Assistant Chief and myself; but as far as the line personnel, we have 21.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked along with three additional staffing, is there more equipment that you will need too?

Fire Chief Rega said well there will be personal equipment that will be needed, but we won't have to buy additional vehicles or anything of that nature. That is the same thing with the part-timers too, and it was just pointed out to me today, every time a part-timer comes in, we outfit them with roughly a couple of thousand dollars' worth of new gear because we have to custom fit it, then they leave, then we have to alter that gear for the next person. So, it's always a challenge, but anybody coming in part-time or full-time would require new gear to be provided to them.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked we are going to keep the part-time people we have?

Fire Chief Rega said yes. You will notice in there on the second page of the run volume that you are looking at that, you will see that since 2015; the way to interpret this, we have gone up if you compare present to 2015, 13 1/3%. If you look the second page, you will see how our run volume is coming in as far as time of day; the second page at the top represents in green the time between midnight and 8:00 in the morning, and then in the afternoon it's from 4:00 p.m. to midnight. Now what you will see with Vista Springs as being a 24 hour facility, we will look to see a jump there as well. I know we had a couple of new hotels come on line that will bolster that a little bit as well. We do staff additional part-time during the day; we usually have a pretty good increase in calls during the day, and what we are seeing is more back to back calls. So, guys will be out on a call, and we will get a second call or even a third call. The prevalence is coming up a lot more with us being busy like that.

Councilperson Narduzzi said it just happened Sunday, my brother Jerry had a heart attack. So, I got the call so I went to his house. Well the ambulance was going down 21 the other way, so I turned around and followed the ambulance, and it went to Rockside somewhere, and he went up Pleasant Valley. I didn't know it, I saw the ambulance.

Fire Chief Rega said and you have to remember when we go on a call, we try to get three personnel, and we try to get three on the second one; sometimes we are at two. It's not a single resource going on, it's a vehicle with multiple personnel so we don't use up our current staffing. Then we have to go back to recalling personnel or using mutual aid.

Are there any questions on that?

Fire Chief Rega said the 2018 data is projected there over the last two months as far as the remainder of the year, but we are on track for that.

Moving on to EMS billing rates; I had a meeting with our EMS billing company which is Medicount Management.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked and how long have we been with them now?

Fire Chief Rega said since about 2011 or 2012, shortly after I became Chief.

Assistant Fire Chief Wheeler said 2012.

Fire Chief Rega said so looking at our EMS billing rates, I know we don't really look at these too often; although the last time we did was March of 2016. This is the history of this. Where it says Advanced Life Support and it says N/A; that was a new category that was put in, so it wasn't available before that. I believe that came up in March of 2012 when we made those adjustments.

Now just to let you know, we did have changes in Medicare billing and what they would pay for. They started doing more write offs on certain things, and that was in 2015 and 2016. So, we made some adjustments there to increase things to kind of offset that; but this time I had a meeting with our billing company, and I asked them what is the average billing rates for all of

your clients. They have over 312, a couple of them are little bit lower because 10 of them only do BLS calls, they don't do advanced life support. These are the average billing costs that they have. So, I wanted to look at this and stay ahead up to the current curve with the billing rates. So, at this time I am suggesting in the Advanced Life Support section to increase that by \$100. In ALS II would be a \$50 increase, and then the mileage would go up \$1. I know the last time we did make this adjustment, we kind of made a big jump; so at that time it was recommended that we look at this more often and take little bites out of this. So, this is why I am bringing this to you at this time. Now this is something that we could discuss and put on the agenda for next month; it doesn't have to be done right away, but again I think it's the proper trend. One of the things about Independence, and all cities are unique. We have a high amount of private pay individuals through this billing process. So, by increasing these too we also get a little bit more in on those people who pay full pay.

Now on the flip side, everybody gets a bill; but residents and people who work here get the soft billing where they take just what the insurance provides. So, there really is no impact there. Any questions on that?

Chairperson Wisnieski said I definitely like the fact that we are doing this more often than waiting that four years and having to do some type of jump. What do you think Tom?

Councilperson Narduzzi said well I'm just looking at the advanced life support, it went up \$100, but then the advanced life support II only went up \$50. Then when you look down here, the average is \$988. What is the difference in support?

Fire Chief Rega said I will tell you that advance life support II, we have some of those; we don't have a ton of them. Basically, that's when you have a full arrest, and you are administering multiple drugs. So, they will look at multiple procedures that are being provided. So, if you are just going on a call providing oxygen, IV and maybe one drug; that's going to be an advanced life support call. If you go there, and it's a full arrest and you are doing multiple drugs, multiple treatments; then there are certain criteria they have to get before they bill out a certain way.

So, if you were to look at our chart of what we bill out for, you are going to see the ALS being a lower chunk of that.

Chairperson Wisnieski said I would prefer to do it now then wait until some of these.

Fire Chief Rega said I think we are using a good methodology in that we are averaging what everybody else does to see what the trend is instead of just coming up with a number.

Chairperson Wisnieski said that's definitely a good way to look at it.

Fire Chief Rega said I will tell you like for Medicare and Medicaid; we don't have a lot of Medicaid, but it's a flat rate. So, if it's a Medicare patient, it's like \$235 is what you are getting. A lot of these rates look pretty high, but in the end, they aren't. There are a lot of write offs or adjustments on these.

Just to let you know or remind you, our billing company is at a 7% rate; so they handle everything for us, and their percentage on that is 7%.

Chairperson Wisnieski said and when we interviewed them and that, we kind of looked at that.

Fire Chief Rega said we did look at that, and we did look at the services they provide, like a lot of the data I could get, I could just walk right in and run a report. A lot of the companies couldn't do that at the time we switched to them, and I think they continue to do a good job. They contact me, they sit down and meet, they give us actual reports as well on what we are doing and recommendations. So, I think they do a pretty valuable job for us.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked any questions on that Tom?

So, the rollout for this.

Fire Chief Rega said what I would do is I would probably put some legislation together and make adjustments through the Law Department; and then we could put it out in December. They can take two months to push that through, there is no timeline on that. It can go through two Council meetings.

Chairperson Wisnieski said give it a chance for all the questions to be asked.

Councilperson Veverka asked does it have to be reintroduced in January?

Vice Mayor Grendel said it doesn't carry over.

Mayor Togliatti said it would be on First Reading twice. It would have essentially two readings.

Fire Chief Rega said I will do that then.

The next one is Brycer which is a company that provides services to us with our fire prevention. What we did is we contracted with this company. It really doesn't cost us anything. What they do is they are like the clearinghouse for all reports coming through with alarm system inspections by a third party company. The testing company comes in and tests the alarm system, and their report goes to Brycer; and then we have a window into their software system to track all the testing going on. That's for alarm tests, sprinkler tests.

Fire Lieutenant Reis said the whole front page tells you.

Fire Chief Rega said the way they work, and the second page is what we contracted them for as far as pricing goes for each report. So, if I am a testing company, I go in and test your fire alarm, I have to pay the \$10 to Brycer and I upload the report; now if there's a problem with that alarm system and there's follow up repairs, I would make those repairs, and I would have to upload the repair report. There is no cost to that. It is just a one-time charge for that. The only thing that is multiply charged is I think the hood systems.

Fire Lieutenant Reis said the Ohio Fire Code requires those tests more than once a year. So, your commercial kitchen exhausts are done twice a year. The Ohio Fire Code doesn't require the Fire Department to oversee exhaust cleaning as far as hood systems go, but you are required to notice if they are dirty and that falls under the FPA requirement to get it cleaned. There are no reports for that. So, it's just the hoods, the spray booths and the special suppressions are twice a year.

Fire Chief Rega said but they also report on the yard hydrants and all those things that are maintained. These reports go to Brycer, and Don then has a window into them, he follows up. He gets reports. He's able to send them letters that they have not completed a repair, all through Brycer. It's a pretty good service. At this time Brycer wants to increase their fee for these items and then also provide an additional service on top of that. What they are willing to do now is to, on top of just being a collection house for the reports and providing that window into their system with some kind of categorization of it; they are also going to make phone calls for us to people to say hey did you fix this particular deficiency. A lot of times what we are encountering now is the company will have come in and fixed the deficiency, but they didn't upload the report that says they fixed it. So, Brycer will follow up on some of that. Don does follow up on this as well; but there is a huge volume of this type of activity going on, so it helps him to organize it a little bit better. So, Don are there any other parts of that service?

Fire Lieutenant Reis said no, currently at the \$10 fee; and then \$10 fee we got in because we started this process almost a year and a half before we implemented it back in May of 2017. We got in at that pricing range, and they kept it at the range while we were getting in. Their pricing policy, and it actually increased. So, no new people coming in pay the \$10. Again, that's the testing companies that do it; but what we got for that is about 35 days before a system needs to be tested, they send out a letter that appears to come from my office to our businesses to remind them that their system needs to be tested. If that is overlooked, and it goes past due, they will send out another letter. They will also make phone calls now on overdue systems and also deficiency notices. What the increase does now, we will get them to follow up with phone calls on the deficiencies themselves if they are not completed or fixed. Sometimes they are fixed, and the testing company doesn't enter them, which we encountered some issues with that. We are going to work to do maybe some things next year; but the increase Brycer gets is more in line where their price model is at, but yet it is still below what the National standard is and gets us additional services under phone banks to call and make sure that our systems are up to snuff and safe for all of our residents, employees and businesses in the City.

Councilperson Narduzzi said so we do the initial inspection, and then we give the information to them.

Fire Lieutenant Reis said no, testing companies have to come in and test these. I witness many of these tests as the inspector to make sure the tests are done correctly. The testing companies are certified still through the State, looking at their cards to make sure they are not expired. Then the testing companies themselves send the tests or upload the tests to Brycer. I am copied on it. I review all the tests, and I submit that I reviewed them so that now the testing company can see that I reviewed them and make sure they are entered correctly. If there are deficiencies

sometimes; by mistake a testing company will enter it as non-compliant. I will reject that report and send it back to them, and then they will list the deficiencies. We can upgrade those deficiencies based on severity; or I can downgrade them that they are not even deficient. For example, some of our Rockside Road businesses were built in the 1970's, and I have a couple of alarm companies that want to continue to cite the pull stations as above ADA level and call it deficient. Well it's not deficient, until you do a full remodel to come to be compliant with current code because you have to look at the code in which the building was built by. So, in that instance I can go into that one line item and mark that it is not deficient; but yet if they had some horn strobes out, that's still needs to be repaired. So, it allows us to upgrade and downgrade problems and then follow them and track them on a monthly basis to see that they are repaired in a timely manner.

Fire Chief Rega said again we have a ton of businesses out there, a lot of these people have multiple per day, and Don can't catch every one of them. So, when that technician sends that report up, Don still gets eyes on it; and it's also viewed by Brycer. Brycer is looking at this in terms of Ohio Fire Code, and they will flag all the different deficiencies as well so Don can see them. So, it's a good system. One of the things I will say on top of this that we are looking at for next year is possibly some legislation that would require the testing companies to register with our Building Department because if they choose to not continue to not send these reports up, at some point we can say well we are not going to allow you to work in the town if you are not going to follow our rules because this is a big circle here. We have to take care of these deficiencies and make sure they get repaired. If they don't send the report out, there is a gap there; and we have to try to chase them down. So, that's something we have looked at possibly doing next year, but at this time, it's a fee increase with some service increase on this. This is something that we would have to put through Council as we push a contract through with them, I believe it was early in 2017. This would just be an adjustment or addendum to that, everything else is staying the same.

Councilperson Veverka asked how big would the adjustment be?

Fire Chief Rega said it's just going from \$10 to \$13.

Councilperson Veverka asked on an annual basis?

Fire Chief Rega said I don't know that. I don't know what the adjustment time was on the last one. Don, did you say right as we were joining them was the adjustment?

Fire Lieutenant Reis said they increased their fees across the board. We beat the start up.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked what was our annual fee at \$10 an hour, do we have that number? What it cost us for a year?

Fire Lieutenant Reis said it doesn't cost the City anything. Brycer charges the testing company to submit this report. We see nothing.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked so why does it have to go through our legislation?

Fire Chief Rega said because we are requiring, as a Fire Chief, I am requiring them to submit the report to Brycer on this. So, the testing company, we are aligning that out that they can't bill any more for this for that report to be uploaded. It kind of puts a cap on what Brycer can do too.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I'm not following the whole thing.

Fire Lieutenant Reis said they can't change our fees without talking to us, so they can't sit there and turn around. When they bill the testing company, the testing company has the option to either absorb this cost or pass it on to the business in our City. I would say that the majority of them, but not all of them, pass this fee on. They call it a City fee. So, through legislation we have some oversight to what they possibly do. If you think about it in terms of backflow and tests that all commercial water has to be done in our City, there is a company called BSI that does a non-party reporting. The County has been doing that for about five years, and their fees are about \$35 to \$40. You can see some increases in the fees as you go along, but we don't want our businesses to see a jump in that without our input on that. So, that's why I am handling it this way.

Councilperson Narduzzi said okay.

Fire Chief Rega said the theory is too that if the testing company is charging us for this upload, they could absorb that cost knowing that there could be more work out of this as well if that person is going to call me to fix that problem; but some of them do push it down to the businesses.

Chairperson Wisnieski said and then remind me again what's legislated or what's the timeline on this change.

Fire Chief Rega said I would probably submit something next month, and it could be read twice. There's no hurry on it. It's just that they are going to provide that extra service, and it would be nice to have that in place early next year.

That's all I have.

Councilperson Narduzzi said as far as the EMS billing goes, I know what John's going to say, why don't we do it right away because it doesn't cost our residents anything.

Fire Chief Rega said no it really doesn't.

Councilperson Narduzzi asked so why wouldn't we do it right away if we are going to do it?

Fire Chief Rega said just if they wanted to discuss it more or if there were other thoughts about it. I know the last time we did it, it was a big jump; and there were some concerns.

Councilperson Narduzzi said you know you get two more months of this higher billing.

Fire Chief Rega said as soon as we adjust the rates, it would go into effect.

Chairperson Wisnieski said so the only snafu we might run into is introducing it in December, and that there would be so many questions that it would die in committee; and then the first of the year we would have to reintroduce it. There's also a chance that we may just go ahead and pass it in December, right? So, why don't we proceed and see what kind of questions we may get.

Fire Chief Rega said okay.

Chairperson Wisnieski said and then take that chance that we can pass it in December. Does that make sense? I agree with you, why wait.

Fire Chief Rega said as far as the staffing increase, any other questions on that?

Vice Mayor Grendel asked will there ever be a time that we will need another facility on Rockside? We talked about that 10 or 15 years ago.

Fire Chief Rega said will there ever become a time. No, I wouldn't say that. I think that we would like to try and tackle other options to handle that. I know one of the things I mentioned before is we are all close to the freeway here, maybe working with ODOT and putting in an access because part of it is to get down there. If we could get on the freeway, we could get to the north end of town very, very quickly. That's a lot more cost effective than building a station, adding more vehicles, splitting our staffing and trying to maintain that. It's not very effective when you have some guys here and some guys there, and you want to do a training; but now we are trying to move personnel around.

Vice Mayor Grendel asked have they done that in any other communities? Are there any other situations that they do allow the community to get on?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I see it with the State Highway Patrol.

Fire Chief Rega said I don't know. I always thought, and this was my opinion that we have a salt bin there, and I know they like to salt the roads in the winter; and it would be a lot shorter jog for them to get on and off. So, there might be some leverage there to discuss that. I don't know, but it would be a definite positive for both Police and Fire.

Police Chief Kilbane said it would benefit us as well. The Crowne Center camera is a fantastic tool for spotting those because dispatch can let both of us know exactly hey you have to get on at Pleasant Valley or you have to get on at Rockside, especially with the Cloverleaf area. It has to be very pinpointed as to where the incident is; but having that access instead of having to loop all the way around to Pleasant Valley to get northbound would be tremendous.

Fire Chief Rega said but working with ODOT, that's lot of discussion; but it's an option for us.

Chairperson Wisnieski said when you think of the burden of putting another facility, what we would have to spend to put in another facility and adding more equipment and that.

Vice Mayor Grendel said it makes much more sense to pursue that.

Mayor Togliatti said Seven Hills has a senior care complex coming online sometime late next year, and I don't know how they will be responding to that.

Several people began speaking at once.

Fire Chief Rega said that could potentially impact us as well because if they are busy on another call, they are going to call us and Cuyahoga Heights.

Police Chief Kilbane asked does Brecksville have a new one they are building too?

Fire Chief Rega said I didn't hear that. They have several already.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked how do they do that? So, does Seven Hills have a full-time?

Fire Chief Rega said they are all part-time.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked so how do you keep building knowing that your personnel can't handle it?

Fire Chief Rega said I don't know.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked do they plan on relying on mutual aid?

Fire Chief Rega said I don't think they do that. I'm not sure that they thought about that.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I guess as far as personnel goes, I would like to see some kind of chart just like we budget out for five years like that; a chart from you guys and a chart from Police. You said next year you can have five people retiring.

Police Chief Kilbane said that's the problem with the Drop Program, there is literally a five year window where they could go. They could go at year one when they are eligible, they can stay the whole five. It's hard to predict because you have that five year span where they can go.

Councilperson Narduzzi said you said we have one more year.

Police Chief Kilbane said we have one that has to go next year because he's maxed out in Drop; but there are at least five others who are in the window who could go at any time.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked and Chief did you give us one? I thought when we were initially discussing changing the number, did you give us something with the personnel?

Fire Chief Rega said when we were increasing the ordinance on that. I did not give you an indication of when people were retiring, but I can tell you right now we probably have two people who could leave in the next two and a half years. I have one who is out on a prolonged injury leave right now. I don't know what he's doing. He is also eligible for retirement.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked are you talking more of a needs analysis type thing?

Councilperson Narduzzi said absolutely.

Chairperson Wisnieski said maybe we should resurrect that. I thought you gave us something.

Fire Chief Rega said I guess I just need some more information on what you are looking for. Are you looking for an age bracket on how old the department is and which people would be retiring? Is that what you are looking for?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I'm actually looking for this, the numbers. This tells me right here that at some point we are going to need to put on guys.

Fire Chief Rega said I talked to John about this, and a new firefighter coming in at first year pay with benefits and healthcare is just going to be under \$80,000.

Councilperson Narduzzi said so you are looking at \$320,000 extra for the first year?

Fire Chief Rega said \$240,000.

Police Chief Kilbane said and one of the other concerns is too with the hiring cycle. I know North Olmsted went through this. Years ago they went through a hiring spree where they hired ten or eleven officers at a time. Well for instance in the past two years, nine officers have retired; so that's nine replacements they have to have in a two year span. My suggestion would be to hire an officer every year or every other year and stretch it out so you are slightly overstaffed for a few years; but then you are not saddling an Administration down the road with a huge expenditure where they have to hire a bunch of people at once. So, you will be staggering the replacements down the road.

Chairperson Wisnieski said and you will use that to overlap and train and get the next one ready.

Police Chief Kilbane said it's a pretty significant expense; and more so for the Fire Department because the equipment they have to outfit that firefighter with.

Councilperson Narduzzi said I agree, and I also agree that if you are only going to hire one or two people a year, you get the cream of the crop because now you are planning ahead. If we have five people go, now you are picking.

Police Chief Kilbane asked how far down the list do you have to go?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I would rather count on.

Mayor Togliatti said be as proactive as possible.

Councilperson Narduzzi said exactly. It just makes sense to do it that way.

Police Chief Kilbane said and Steve brings up a real good point too, the entry level salary is a significantly less investment than you are paying somebody who has 30 years on with longevity and everything else and at the top step of the salary scale.

Fire Chief Rega said we made adjustments in the contract, probably three or four contracts ago where we went from four years to top pay to six; so that was made to try to make it a little bit better for the community to bring a person on. It would space out that increase in bringing that new person in. So, that was made as well.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked so what would you like to see?

Councilperson Narduzzi said I don't know what I want to see, but I would like to get it on the table and start thinking about it and have Council look at it and have John involved so we can plan ahead.

Police Chief Kilbane said it could be a spreadsheet with everybody's hiring on it, and then we could just project out a 25, 33 year projection so if they go right at 25 or they stay for five years of Drop or they go all the way to the end of Drop. It would at least give us a ballpark of the window, and you will see the clusters that were hired at the same time 27 or 28 years ago. Those are the ones who can all go at the same time.

Councilperson Narduzzi said although it's not like we have to hire three guys this time because we talked about it once before I do believe; I guess as long as we are talking about it. We know what to expect, we know it's coming, and everybody is on board with it. If we have to do it, we have to do it. It's not like oh my God we have to hire three guys, where are we going to come up with the money.

Police Chief Kilbane said where in the previous three years we would have hired one each year.

Fire Chief Rega said I know we are looking at the numbers. Over the last four years the City has been growing quite a bit. Some years it has jumped quickly. You kind of plan that out. You really don't know where it's going until it gets there; so we are seeing a good upward trend the whole time. If it would have leveled out, hiring a guy every year may not have made sense. Where we are going now, and I think bringing that to you now at the increase that I think makes sense; we will just have to see where it goes from there. We could definitely get a chart together of where people are at, when they are expected to retire; but everybody is a little bit different. Somebody might retire at 25 years and not get into that Drop Program.

Police Chief Kilbane said there are other things too like if they are prior military, they can buy their military time towards their retirement. So, maybe they only have 20 years on, but they were in the Army for 8 years; they get that time, and that's 8 years tacked on that we don't know about.

Chairperson Wisnieski asked any other questions?

Councilperson Narduzzi said so I guess where do we leave that at. What are we going to do?

Fire Chief Rega said I was planning on if there was going to be a Finance Committee meeting to look at the finances of that; so maybe I could prepare something for that. I don't know if that's a better avenue.

Police Chief Kilbane said get the spreadsheets and then the onboarding costs with salary, benefits, equipment for a new officer.

Councilperson Narduzzi said just a planning tool. Nothing is cast in stone, just a planning tool for Council I guess.

Vice Mayor Grendel said we could always plan something for December.

Chairperson Wisnieski said that makes sense. That is a good tool for all of the departments.

Any other matters for the Safety Committee? Anything anybody wants to bring up?

Any comments from the audience?

Resident Chris Zamborsky said I have a question. I understand your jobs are thankless in a lot of regards, but does the Swift Reach system, can you call at the street level or neighborhood level or is that not a capability?

Fire Chief Rega said it's usually handled through our IT Department, but Dispatch has the capability to do it as well.

Mr. Zamborsky asked can you call at the street level?

Police Chief Kilbane said yes.

Mr. Zamborsky said I'm just letting you know, I would think about this. The September incident, if that was in your neighborhood, would you like to know that a gunman was on the loose?

Police Chief Kilbane said there's a couple of reasons for that. Number one, you don't want to induce panic. We did notify, there was a school that was close to our security perimeter; we did put that school on a lockdown. We did notify the other schools just in case, but we had him

contained in a specific perimeter; and we had enough officers there. Notification does a couple of things, it has a negative effect on a law enforcement response. First off, everybody wants more information; no matter how comprehensive that Swift Reach is, our dispatch center would get calls where is he, what's he wearing, is it safe? Secondly, you are going to get members of the public who are going to try to help you; and they are going to grab their shotgun and go out looking for him.

Mr. Zamborsky said I understand that, and I'm really not second guessing you; but there were people in my neighborhood who saw the Police and came out and got chased back into their houses. I was in Cincinnati. I got a text at quarter to 10; somebody picked this up on the Police radio or dispatch or whatever; and of course, I called my mother and told her to stay in the house. So, to me it seems the risk/reward is a tough call, and I understand what you are saying. I would just like everybody to think about that for any future incident. If you don't use it then, when is the appropriate time to use the system?

Police Chief Kilbane said it's for traffic incidents, for road closures, for hazards if there is a chemical spill, hazardous weather conditions, power outages; it has a lot of utility. We used it when there was an issue with the City's printer, there was an issue where they made a mistake on the City's newsletter. We used Swift Reach to let people know that the one they were getting was going to be inaccurate, the correct one will be coming. It has a lot of administrative uses beyond just emergency use, and it's much like the Amber Alert, you don't want to get into the boy who calls wolf. If you overuse it, people tend to ignore.

Mr. Zamborsky said I understand. My comments are not just my own, there were other people.

Police Chief Kilbane said I understand.

Councilperson Narduzzi said the Chief and I had this conversation, and I disagree with him 100%, but I'm not going to fight that battle. It could have been a totally different situation if that guy would have taken somebody hostage.

Chairperson Wisnieski said my question is, how do you know what to do? How would Chris's mother know what is the right thing to do?

Councilperson Narduzzi said you just stay inside the house just like Chris was texting her and telling her to stay inside the house.

Mr. Zamborsky said so somebody contacted her.

Chairperson Wisnieski said I get what you are saying because really you want them to do the right thing, but how do they know what is the right thing.

Vice Mayor Grendel said so in this case we do have the capability, it's just whether or not, the pros and cons.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Police Chief Kilbane said it was my decision to do it that way based on the circumstances.

Mayor Togliatti said and they thought it was a very intense Police presence in that neighborhood, and anyone who was out on the street was contacted by the Police face to face and told to get inside.

Police Chief Kilbane said we had eight different agencies that responded out there. We had between 50 and 60 officers. We had officers at every intersection at every street, so we had visual with each officer. So, there was a chain around where we had him contained, and anybody who came out was within visibility of an officer where they could say please go back inside your house.

Vice Mayor Grendel said you have the experience, not only here but throughout the country. That's a topic of discussion what is the best way.

Police Chief Kilbane said absolutely. Every situation is different. If there were multiple suspects, if it was a different type of area. It is just like when we update our active shooting training. It used to be shelter in place and lock yourself in; well sometimes that's the absolute worst thing you can do. You have to look at the totality of the circumstances and make decision as to what is the best course of action for those specific circumstances.

Mr. Zamborsky said thank you.

Moved by Narduzzi, seconded by Wisnsieski, to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting of November 6, 2018. Voice Vote: 2 yes/0 no; motion carried.

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 11/07/18
