



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Richfield, Minnesota

City Council Work Session

November 28, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Supple called the work session to order at 5:45 p.m. in the Bartholomew Room.

Council Members Present: Mary Supple, Mayor; Sean Hayford O'leary; Simon Trautmann; and Sharon Christensen

Council Members Absent: Ben Whalen

Staff Present: Katie Rodriguez, City Manager; Chris Swanson, Management Analyst; Jay Henthorne, Police Chief

Guests: Kyle Whyte, FLOCK safety systems

ITEM #1	PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON FLOCK SAFETY FOT IMPLIMENTATION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. WORK SESSION STAFF REPORT NO. 40
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City Manager Rodriguez turned the presentation over to Chief Henthorne.

Chief Henthorne introduced the topic. He provided a summary of FLOCK cameras and what they can do. He talked about the city's history with mobile license readers. He noted that technology has been mounted on Richfield's police cars in the past but due to the rising costs the department has been exploring other options.

Chief Henthorne said that after further research and discussion with other agencies, they identified FLOCK cameras as the top option. Chief Henthorne believes that, with the rise of car thefts and number of guns they are recovering, it's important to have something in place soon. He hopes these technologies will be able to help address any crimes in the future. Chief Henthorne talked about an experience Richfield recently had with other jurisdictions and their FLOCK system and how it helped track down a criminal in another state.

Chief Henthorne talked about the experience seen by other chiefs have seen with these camera systems and how they have had a lot of success with retail crime and stolen vehicles. He then turned the presentation over to Kyle Whyte, FLOCK safety systems, who introduced himself. Mr. Whyte noted he has worked with many other state and local law enforcement agencies. He said FLOCK safety systems started about 6 years ago in Atlanta. He talked about how local police were relying on RING doorbells cameras to assist in tracking crime. The company found that license plates

would be better for solving crimes. The company looked at creating a camera that could read plates at a lower cost than traditional cameras. Mr. Whyte provided the council with a rundown of the products available. He noted these can provide 24/7 coverage and real time alerts about hot (stolen car) lists and amber alerts. Mr. Whyte outlined how these cameras cannot track people, do not have facial recognition, cannot be used for traffic enforcement, and not used for ticketing. This just captures what vehicle traveled past what point at a specific time. Mr. Whyte also noted that the city would own the data and that information is not sold to outside groups.

Mayor Supple asked about the real time alerts and how they work. Mr. Whyte stated this list is updated every day, 4 times a day, so is a powerful tool. Council Member Christensen asked where the cameras would be located. Mr. Whyte said these cameras are traditionally located on major thoroughfares, highways etc. basically the main arteries in and out of the city.

Mr. Whyte provided additional information about the FLOCK system. He outlined how all the installation and maintenance work is done by their company. He also discussed how the permitting works for the initial rollout of the product. He noted they manage their own permits for utility work, including bringing in their own poles or attaching to existing utility poles.

Mr. Whyte talked about how these products can prevent and eliminate crime. He said these cameras can help proactively monitor the cars entering the city, allow staff to investigate more effectively, and serve as a deterrent once people notice there are cameras installed. He reminded the council that no individual's face or body is scanned, this is all based on the plate and the vehicle description.

Mr. Whyte outlined the privacy settings for the flock cameras. He again noted that the city owns the data which has a 30 data retention, after which the information is automatically deleted. He noted how this system helps take bias out of policing by just focusing on the make of the vehicle in question. He noted this system is compliant with all states laws and tracks all the searches in an internal logbook. He also noted this hardware is already in 4,000 cities nationwide.

Council Member Trautmann noted he had many questions. His first question, understanding how the system works, he wanted to know if the system actively checks for, say, a stolen car. Mr. Whyte said the state system would create an alert. This notice goes out across all jurisdictions that have FLOCK installed and would be tagged if the vehicle passed by one of these cameras. Council Member Trautmann's second question is about the data retention policy, he wanted to know how this would interface with federal programs trying to monitor undocumented community members. Mr. Whyte said that if a federal agency wanted to get access to this data they would need to go through the city. Chief Henthorne noted that they already have a policy in place from the car mounted readers and noted that this data retention schedule removed material sooner than their current practice. Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if it was true that the subpoena needs to go through the owner of the data. Chief Henthorne noted that because the city owns the data the subpoena would need to go through the city.

Council Member Hayford Oleary asked about the internal search trail and how we would audit. Chief Henthorne noted the searches would need to follow current city policy. He said he would need to look at the policy and how it would apply to this new system. Mr. Whyte noted that other agencies do weekly or monthly checks. Council Member Hayford Oleary asked about how accurate this is at reading license plates. Mr. Whyte noted there is a high level of accuracy (typically over 90%) for the cameras. Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if there was a continues video feed for the cameras. Mr. Whyte said the cameras just took a single image and reminded the council there is not a search filter for individuals. Council Member Hayford Oleary asked if 100 percent of the data was deleted after 30 days. Mr. Whyte confirmed that was true unless the agency saved a specific group of info.

Council Member Trautmann said he would be curious about the remedies included in the contract if there was a data breach or if the company's system failed to follow the 30-day retention

timeframe. He also asked if FLOCK had any data breaches in the past. Mr. Whyte said that they have not had a data breach. He noted their systems are on Amazon servers which have a high level of encryption. Council Member Trautmann said he was supportive of this technology but still has some concerns about what level of government can access this data. Mr. Whyte said he would investigate this matter and provide the council with an answer later.

Mr. Whyte went over some examples for when FLOCK cameras helped solve crimes. This included several examples from Wisconsin, Texas, and California. Also noted that FLOCK is good for silver alerts. He talked about how this technology will help close more cases, drop crime rates, and make the community measurably safer.

Council Member Christensen asked about the timeline for rolling out these technologies. Chief Henthorne anticipated early 2024. Council Member Trautmann talked about how this could have helped in investigating the murder of Jonathan O'Shaughnessy.

City Manager Rodriguez summarized the presentation and confirmed the two items the council wanted additional follow up on.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Supple adjourned the work session at 6:23 pm.

Date Approved: December 12, 2023



Chris Swanson
Management Analyst



Mary B. Supple
Mayor



Katie Rodriguez
City Manager