

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 2, 2008, 4:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: Chairman Dave Grendel
Councilman Tom Narduzzi
Councilman Jim Piteo

Others Present: Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz
Vice Mayor Riley (left at 5:32 p.m.)
Councilman James Crooks
Fire Chief Peter Nelson
Engineer/Public Service Coordinator Don Ramm
Service Director David Snyderburn (entered at 5 p.m.)
Resident Loren Guell

Chairman Grendel called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Chairman Grendel stated we haven't received the minutes of the August 5th meeting yet, so we don't have those to approve.

Chairman Grendel stated the Safety and Natural Disaster Trailer the City has acquired through Cuyahoga County grant money is outside. Everyone agreed to view the trailer after the meeting.

Chairman Grendel asked Don Ramm to give an update on the Hillside and Brecksville Road intersection signalization.

Don Ramm stated the Law Department has been working on contacting the property owners, letters are going out, and David Burke is setting up meetings with those property owners in the next week, or so, to go over the project and try, initially, to acquire the properties through donation. If that all goes according to plan, with all three of them, he feels that by the end of September he would have all the property taken care of. If that doesn't happen, they would have to go through the appraisal process, which would take that much longer.

Chairman Grendel stated the only property that we don't have to approach is Fortuna. Don Ramm stated that is correct.

Chairman Grendel asked, if we are fortunate enough that all three property owners are willing to donate, what is the next step after that?

Don Ramm stated we have the preliminary design and estimates submitted to us, and I want to share that with the Police Department and have everyone look at it to make sure we receive

comments before it goes to bid. But, certainly, if the properties are lined up, and we are satisfied with the plans, we could move it to the bidding.

Vice Mayor Riley asked if he would do that first thing in the spring. Don Ramm asked, as far as construction? Vice Mayor Riley said yes. Don Ramm said that depends on when we advertise, but some of the underground work could probably be done over the winter, in terms of drilling foundations, etc.

Don Ramm stated today he was emailed a report from Flynn Environmental on the Sunoco soil boring. He hasn't read through the report yet, it is 15 pages. Initially, the email they sent me last week was favorable, that the results were fine, that everything was within allowable limits, so they had no concerns. That was in a quick email, I will have to read through the official report, but that's a good sign. We will probably still have a bid item in the plans in the event we encounter any type of soil that has contamination then we can set it aside and deal with it during construction, but it is nothing that would prevent us from moving forward with the property.

Returning to discussion concerning the Brecksville/Hillside intersection signalization, Chairman Grendel said we liked the poles by Rockside, as far as the aesthetics.

Don Ramm said that's included in the decorative bases.

Councilman Narduzzi said I don't know if it is done, but we had talked about it.

Councilman Piteo said there is a concern about the pole length and how many poles you can put up.

Don Ramm said I posed the question to Elewski's office and, aside from doing another whole separate design to determine costs, they felt the big ones, with two masts, would be a really significant foundation and pole design and cost. So, they opted to put poles on every corner.

Chairman Grendel said I like the fact that on Rockside they have the names of the streets on the masts. We have our decorative street signs, but if you are a driver, instead of looking at the corner trying to figure out what street it is, they could see it on the overhead pole.

Don Ramm said if it's not on the plans it can be added.

Chairman Grendel said it would be good to make it uniform, like on Rockside. If you are from out of town, it helps, and it can prevent accidents.

Vice Mayor Riley asked if lights on Pleasant Valley would be upgraded with the improvement.

Don Ramm said no, that is a county project and has nothing to do with the signals. We could try to incorporate something on our end. He said the Selig relocation will be all new mast arms, etc.

Vice Mayor Riley said from now on, anytime we redo any signalization, we should put those mast poles in.

Don Ramm said we are looking at the study of that intersection and any type improvements that come out of that. Any type of widening to the intersection most likely will get the upgrade at that time.

Chairman Grendel asked if there are any other questions for Don.

Don Ramm said, a question about the loop detectors came up and the video detection, and that was an issue, cost-wise. The estimate was about \$25,000 for the video that Elewski's office put together. The video detection is to detect vehicles to call off left turns. Back and into the cost from the Brookside signal for loops, that is what we have there, you are looking at \$9,000 or \$10,000. That is probably what it would take to get standard traffic loops, so it's less than half the cost. I thought the feeling was they wanted to try out the video. It's a matter the Police Department has concerns with in terms of its functionality. A lot of the bugs may be getting worked out.

Police Chief Nicasastro said there are places that are going to optical systems. There are some advantages and there are some disadvantages. I've talked to a couple engineers and none of them really seem to have strong feelings as to one being better than another.

Councilman Piteo asked if Parma has them on State Road.

Chief Nicasastro said they have some, but I don't know exactly where.

Discussion ensued regarding where Parma may have those systems.

Chief Nicasastro said the biggest advantage is if you have construction you are not cutting off these loops and causing traffic problems. If there is utility work being done they could slice the loops and there would be added cost to replace them.

Chief Nelson said Jim Gibbs said those cameras only have one function—identifying traffic at that intersection.

Chairman Grendel said those are relatively new. We have all loops right now. I think we can wait until technology has changed.

Chairman Grendel asked if there are any other questions for Don Ramm. There were none.

Chairman Grendel said the next item is the discussion of the hunting ordinance. That starts in a few weeks.

Chief Nicasastro said the season starts September 27th and 36 applications for permits went out and only one has come back, so far. We haven't changed anything in the ordinance, everything will be run the same as last year. The only numbers we have to compare to last year are car versus deer collisions. Year-to-date, as of the end of August, 2006 we had logged 15 collisions. These aren't actually accident reports, but all the reports and injured deer that we can account for is 50. In 2007, at this time, there were 76. This year, as of August, we have 57.

Discussion ensued regarding the beginning and end of the deer hunting season.

Mayor Kurtz asked if most of these applications are repeats or new.

Chief Nicastro said a lot of them are repeats, but we can't really keep track until the applications come back.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nicastro to give the Committee an update at the next meeting. He noted that the season runs until February.

Loren Guell said last year a question was brought up about being able to donate the deer for meat. Did we make any progress in setting up that program? Some of the hunters said it's too much of a problem to get rid of the meat.

Chief Nicastro said Jason, from Wildlife, had acquired some donations from these sportsmen's clubs to help. Last I spoke with him, I think he said he came up with about \$500 to pay the processors to process the meat. He's working on it.

Loren Guell said that's a big part, if they don't have a way to get rid of them. The other problem that I am disturbed to see is the City is going to be divided in half, or we are going to have two divisions, because of the highway and the barrier they are putting up there. They are going to be higher than the deer can handle. That will divide the population in two places, down here and the other side. Was there enough hunting on the other side, or any hunting?

Chief Nicastro said he doesn't have the map with him.

Councilman Crooks said there was hunting throughout the City.

Chief Nicastro said there was more harvested on the east side, but it was not insignificant on the west side.

Loren Guell said if you put up sound barriers and that center wall, the deer are going to start funneling down through the underpasses, and that is probably going to create some safety problems. There will be an empty space in the sound barrier and it looks like the center divider is going to be high enough so that you are probably going to have a lot of deer killed on I-77. They will try it, but they won't be able to make it over. That is going to be an issue.

Councilman Crooks said, just for the record, Chief, from last year, there were no reported injuries, no accidents, so there was no reason to modify this in any way, from what you can tell, right?

Chief Nicastro said yes.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nicastro if they are going to get the same personnel to do the monitoring. Chief Nicastro said yes.

Councilman Piteo asked Chief Nicaastro if we have an active animal gate on I-77, like some places have where there is an alarm or sign when there are deer present it will flash.

Chief Nicaastro said no, we don't have anything like that.

Chairman Grendel asked if there are any other questions for the Chief. There were none.

Chairman Grendel said the next item is something we had done extensively last year as far as discussion of the Five-Year Capital Plan but, before we get to that, we will handle the EMS billing and get an update on that.

Chief Nelson said since the last meeting, we had a Council meeting. I met with Bob Williams and he is helping me put together a RFP to send to potential billing agencies. What we are looking for are the services they provide as well as a quotation for fees for service. We put together some key points that we wanted to make sure the RFP addresses the needs in the ordinance. Once we get that out and receive that from companies, we will review them and select a company based on that. Once we get a company, then we will start the process of what it takes to initiate the billing. I'm hoping that we could get something going by the first of the year.

Vice Mayor Riley said that would be a good time to start.

Chief Nelson said he submitted, for the newsletter, information about the program, how it is going to work, how it is going to affect an individual who contacts 911 for the service. If calls come in, we will handle them and provide as much information as possible. As per the ordinance, the Fire Chief will be the responsible person for waiving fees.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nelson if he has received any phone calls regarding that.

Chief Nelson said no.

Vice Mayor Riley said the way we set it up is resident friendly.

Chief Nelson said it is, but when the residents start to see the statement of service from the insurance company we may start getting phone calls. Only because of the fact that as many times as we put it in the newsletter and give presentations to the seniors, they are going to take that statement and, because it may look like a bill, they are going to think they owe that money. That would be the big concern, but I've talked to a number of communities that have just gone to billing, i.e., Bay Village and Pepperpike, and they have had very little problems with that.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nelson to keep us posted and updated.

Mayor Kurtz said the sooner you get that started, there is money in there for equipment for your department.

Chairman Grendel said, now we will move on to item number four, which is the initial discussion of the Five-Year Capital Plan with regard to the safety forces. Of course, last year we did go through that process. We received information in our packets, and he asked Chief Nelson to go over his information.

Chief Nelson said the only thing I want to explain, because it may not be quite as evident, is that if you look at the left-hand column, you will see SCBA Fill Station. Currently, ours is 18 years old. It is not what they call NFPA compliant yet. For this past year, I submitted that as a project to be funded through Federal grant money. I haven't heard anything yet. We have been successful on three of those grants. It's not scheduled to be replaced for quite some time.

Chairman Grendel said on your table you show in the Capital Replacement Fee Schedule column some of these for which money will be set aside per year, because of the nature of the expense, and the last thing is the purchase of that item.

Chief Nelson said yes, and then from that column, if you go down to the smaller table at the bottom where it says Major Capital, and you go across to 2009, all of those items that fit within that fee schedule for 2009 are added up and that came to \$185,000. I also put a note at the bottom that with EMS billing we may have an opportunity to accelerate some of those purchases.

Vice Mayor Riley said as far as putting anything in there about EMS billing, I would just like to keep running how we have been and keep that EMS fund separate for times when emergencies arise, so we are not always spending all the money we are taking in.

Mayor Kurtz said or if you have a situation where the market changes and you can get a good deal on something, like the sewer jet. That was scheduled for 2009. All we did was push it up one year because of the opportunity.

Councilman Crooks said I want to make sure I understand this table because, obviously, this is very important. Councilman Crooks and Chief Nelson reviewed the items on the table. Chief Nelson said miscellaneous may be for new technology that might become available, for example, a thermal imaging camera. We bought some auto pulses last year that just came out. It is for unplanned purchases that technology might bring about, or if a disaster happens and we need a piece of equipment to replace—something unforeseen.

Vice Mayor Riley asked where is the column that says how much we have sitting in there now. Chief Nelson said he doesn't have that, but he can add that.

Chairman Grendel said it would be a good idea to have a column that shows the balances in each of those so we see how we are progressing towards the purchase. It might give us an idea, too, if we have to accelerate it because an opportunity comes up or because the equipment is starting to fail.

Vice Mayor Riley asked, with regard to Ladder 4 purchased in 2003, having a replacement cost of \$1.5 million, how often have we used that Ladder in a fire, where it has been extended. Chief Nelson stated not often.

Vice Mayor Riley said when Mayor talks to Brecksville, Broadview Heights and Seven Hills, that would be when, to me, one of the things he might say is why not do some type of shared purchase, because we have mutual aid. There is no sense in having four cities have a ladder truck that goes up that high when we are only going to need one.

Chief Nelson said I made that presentation to Brecksville. They just bought a ladder truck. We have enough in our area where they didn't need to purchase one. They could have purchased something that would have benefitted our area rather than a ladder truck.

Councilman Crooks said, but, according to this table, we have at least 15 years to begin planning for that.

Chief Nelson said I also put on the table a note about regionalization. That is a hot topic now, in ten years I don't know if it will still be a hot topic. When I took on this position 15 years ago, it was a hot topic. I talked with the chiefs in our area and we always look at the different type of assets to purchase and what enhances each community to provide a different type of service. For example, Valley View bought an air truck. We don't need an air truck because we utilize theirs.

Vice Mayor Riley asked what is an air truck.

Chief Nelson said at a fire we need to fill up STABA tanks. We can bring the unit there and fill them up right away. We have a mini-pumper for wild land firefighting. We are the only one in the area that has it. We are currently looking at a lot of equipment for that. Thermal imaging cameras are another one. In discussing regionalization, this is the thing about the satellite station.

Mayor Kurtz said that is not listed here. We are looking at several different sites, physical locations that present an opportunity for us. Some we have talked about. Three that come to mind would be by BP, by the BIA and the other would be across from the Embassy Suites by the Dalad property. The Chief makes a very good point that, if in fact, we can frame the location and the cost for a satellite safety force facility, obviously, that would change equipment needs and distribution of equipment, and personnel. Our goal would be to carve out a facility, upgrade the technology and also the equipment and personnel for a satellite safety force facility, as well as our main station.

Vice Mayor Riley said I brought this up years ago. I would like to see us do that with a safety satellite and tie in with the county and house hazmat there and the bomb squad and do the central dispatching, too. Make it as big a facility as we can for this area.

Chief Nelson said we made a presentation a few years ago for a central dispatch, but, for one reason or another, it never went beyond the discussion point. We are in a pretty good area, demographically with the communities around us. We are all about the same. This is something on your level that you will have to discuss, whether you accept it or not, is to have a central dispatch, a fire district. A number of communities in this area, Brecksville, Broadview Heights, Valley View and Cuyahoga Heights, etc. It would almost be perfect. It's a hot topic now,

regionalization. I certainly wouldn't want to get on the county level, believe me. That's too big and it wouldn't work for our area.

Mayor Kurtz said what about expanding it to, say, interstate protection. A service that focuses right on any and all aspects of safety for the interstates. We have I-77 and I-480. You can go north into Cleveland and south.

Chief Nelson said we currently have what we call automatic eight for the freeways. Depending on where the incident occurs, dispatch automatically notifies other communities, and we respond, as well. It our jurisdiction and our responsibility, but another unit is coming.

Vice Mayor Riley said, what I meant about the hazmat and the bomb squad, is we are looking for funds to build this station. It will be centrally located and the bomb squad could be anywhere in Cuyahoga County in a matter of 20 minutes to a half hour.

Chief Nelson said I will look into that. Maybe there may be some grant money available.

Mayor Kurtz said there may be some homeland security funding, Federal funding. There is a lot more technology out there.

Chief Nelson said they are doing that now. For example, Solon received a \$1 million grant to put up an 800 megahertz radio frequency tower.

Mayor Kurtz said we should look at that. There is no reason we shouldn't explore the opportunity.

Vice Mayor Riley said when you say communications, the cable or TV channels or the radio stations, they are all looking for an antenna or camera to monitor traffic and news and be able to transmit their signals. If they want to contribute to this, they can mount something on top of a building.

Chairman Grendel said if we could add one more column to show the balance on some of these accounts. Chief Nelson said he will do that.

Chairman Grendel said this gives us something to look at. We will make sure that this is fairly accurate, and Council will look at it to see if there are any changes that have to be done. You have the framework. I appreciate all your work on that.

Councilman Piteo said I just want to make sure I understand the miscellaneous line item. That is in case something comes down the road, or is that actually the amount you asked for at budget time in the beginning of the year.

Chief Nelson said for the most part, yes, for an emergency, or what have you.

Councilman Piteo said these numbers have been the average in what you spend. Chief Nelson said yes.

Councilman Piteo said if possible, we can save some of this money from the EMS billing?

Vice Mayor Riley said I don't want to do that. We are bringing in this new resource, let's not start spending it right away.

Councilman Piteo said I'm not saying right now, but in the process of streamlining, budget time might be a good way to alleviate some of the pressure as far as money is concerned.

Councilman Narduzzi said that's about \$250,000 per year we were thinking about.

Chairman Grendel said sometimes we are able to expense it as non-capital. Finance Director Veres will be working on the life span and the cost of the items.

Discussion ensued regarding EMS billing revenues and that it will help with some pressing needs.

Chairman Grendel said we have Chief Nicastro's table that he provided. I noticed that in the next two years there are some pretty big items on there and it lightens up after that.

Chief Nicastro said it is easier to project short-term than long-term. As it goes out, there are some things that are reoccurring, police vehicles, equipment for the vehicles, soft body armor that we replace every five years, mobile computer data terminals which we try to project replacement every year. If we have a good year, and they hold up, maybe we won't have to. We have forensic computer upgrades and are trying to project the cost of upgrading our in house systems. We picked up a Speed Sentry radar sign, and we seem to be getting some positive feedback, so we are thinking of adding another one down the road. We try to replace a couple of the laser and radar units every year. Some money is available from the Federal Forfeiture Fund for those purchases.

Chief Nicastro said we are working with Jim Gibbs to look at potentially upgrading our whole records management system next year. We have Cisco now, and there are a lot of new products out there. CRISS is upgrading to new software. The State is upgrading for potential software that we could use. Hopefully, that is a pretty high end figure, but it's hard to say. An air purifying system was recommended for the jail, with six people back there it's not always the healthiest environment. SWAT body armor is an item. We currently have four guys on that unit and what they wear is a lot more expensive.

Chief Nicastro said several of our guys have been asking for some type of four-wheel vehicle, not a gator, but some type of ATV with the capacity to carry some items on a small bed. We are talking about a park trail being added, and I think they borrow the Service Department's vehicle to patrol the park in the summertime. This is something I would like you to consider.

Chief Nicastro said I put in the budget the traffic signal upgrade we talked about. Discussion ensued regarding signal upgrading and timing.

Councilman Crooks said I want to refer back to the memo that the Mayor's office put together two Fridays ago. It was very helpful, it summarized our Finance Committee meeting from two Mondays ago, outlining the process of the Five-Year Capital Plan. There are two checkpoints that we need to address. First, departmental operating capital needs should be assessed and the second is infrastructure capital needs. I think that is a great pathway for us to follow. At some point in discussion, we are going to have to discuss, at length, what Vice Mayor Riley said about moving Selig around, and different projects where we are going to need a lot of money. I just want to make sure we are not putting road projects into the Police Department's capital needs.

Chief Nicastro said over the past several years, some of these intersection replacements have come up and it was on the Police Department to put it in their budget, but I think a lot of this is more infrastructure and engineering.

Vice Mayor Riley said it is a safety issue for the whole town, but I agree, it may be infrastructure.

Councilman Crooks said, just for the sake of getting this five-year plan off the ground, take it out of the Police Department's capital budget and put into the second tier of priorities which is total City infrastructure capital needs.

Vice Mayor Riley said Chief Nicastro has some locker room and garage expansion on his table. We talked about expanding this half of City Hall. Maybe we should look at City Hall entirely as far as expanding it to meet all the needs. What the City was 25 years ago, compared to now, are two different things, and how is it going to be 25 years from now.

Mayor Kurtz said Vice Mayor Riley makes a good point. A question we need to answer is, is this the best location for a police station for the next 25 to 50 years. Is there a way to better utilize our best asset for municipal government, and manage our safety forces another way. That is something that needs to be looked at. We may determine that this facility needs to be completely used for municipal purposes and we may build a new station across the street or build a satellite station on Rockside. We may be able to use this facility as a primary station, number one, and then expand to a different location on Rockside, station number two. That is food for thought, because when we get into this final process that is what we will be talking about. We won't be talking about the items we focused on today, equipment needs, we also need to give consideration to facility needs, personnel, training, etc. There are a number of different components that go into that Five-Year Plan in a comprehensive nature.

Mayor Kurtz said this is a good start. This is what we need to do from an equipment standpoint. More germane to the administration, but still for budgeting, would be personnel. Another big component would be the physical facilities. That needs to be addressed, comprehensively, because you will see major dollars--physical facilities and major dollars with respect to infrastructure upgrades--sewers, streets, drain water, etc.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nicastro if \$150,000 for upgrading records is a priority for next year.

Chief Nicastro said, yes, but, hopefully, the cost won't be that high with the issue we have with our current records system. We are still doing half of our reports with pen and paper. After it is computerized, the system will have information from booking, jail, reporting system, and the ticket writing system, all of that is integrated. More of these systems are becoming available.

Chairman Grendel said, so you would then say that is a high priority.

Chief Nicastro said I would say it is a high priority. We can continue as we are for another year, but it really is at the heart of what we do and it is pretty inefficient now.

Chairman Grendel asked if this is a high demand for next year. The police locker room expansion and the garage expansion, are these something you might set some money aside over a two or three year period, like we have done with the Fire Department, and have that money available. By that time, if plans have changed and things are going in a different direction, that money would be set aside and we could use it for the upgrade plans.

Discussion ensued regarding priorities, physical assets and personnel needs, in general, and Mayor Kurtz said this is not an easy exercise. It takes more time to study and talk about physical assets.

Chief Nicastro stated we have two full-time jailers with Ron Corrao who we hired to replace Bob Ornas because he is retiring. We also have two part-time jailers. I would like to ask you to entertain that we be able to change that jailer position from part-time to full-time.

Mayor Kurtz said you need to put together the cost analysis for it and demonstrate to Council what it is costing you now, here is what we are doing to fill in the blanks, and here is what we can do with the benefit of having someone on full-time, in terms of logistics, scheduling, cost, and future planning. That is the analysis you have to review to get a favorable response.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nicastro to have that analysis for three full-time jailers for the next meeting. What is cost, what is the benefit to the Police Department as far as efficiency, etc., and then we will go from there. How having that will free up your patrolmen also.

Councilman Piteo asked how often does a patrolman go to the jail to take care of duties.

Chief Nicastro said it varies, usually it is two or three shifts a week when a part-time jailer is not available. We had Nick Orack and Bob Ornas and then Ron was filling in as many hours as he could, almost full-time, so we had a lot of coverage. Now, with Bob gone, and Ron and Nick full-time, the other part-timers we have are a little limited, so I have a few more shifts left.

Chairman Grendel asked Chief Nicastro to give us a good analysis on that and we will spend some time at the next meeting on it and make a recommendation.

Chairman Grendel asked if there are any other questions for Chief Nicastro. There were none.

Vice Mayor Riley stated I need to leave, but I just wanted to let you know that I had a talk with Kathy Alexie about having her come and help out at the meetings. Gayle is here, but Kathy does shorthand and she has done Planning Commission, etc. We are going to use her for any of the meetings that Gayle can't make.

Mayor Kurtz said, before you leave, we have been upgrading the compensation for Civil Service, Zoning Board and Planning Commission members. Every decade we seem to upgrade them. The last time was 1999 and 2000. If there is no objection, I'm going to put into your packets an increase from \$150 to \$250 a month as compensation for those people who serve on those boards or commissions. Is there any problem with that, or putting your names on as introducers of legislation? There were none. It was mentioned that those increases wouldn't take effect until next year.

Vice Mayor Riley said what about the salary for you, the Mayor, and the Finance Director? Mayor Kurtz said I'm not touching it now, that's not priority.

Chairman Piteo said he has received complaints on the signalization on Brookside. There are two cycles coming from Brecksville before the people get off that side road there, maybe it needs adjusting. Sitting on Brookside, both ways, I used to count the cars coming from Brecksville in the morning in one wave, and now there are two waves and the traffic is backing up from Pleasant Valley, and I am asking if maybe something went awry there. The signal seems a little longer, but morning is when I notice it the most.

Chairman Grendel asked if there are any other comments. There were none.

**Moved by Grendel, seconded by Narduzzi, to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting.
Voice Vote: Yes 2/No 0; motion carried.**

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Gayle Rudary, Pro Tem Clerk of Council
