

**SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 21, 2006**

The Safety Committee meeting was held on November 21, 2006 at North Royalton City Hall, 13834 Ridge Road. The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Lisa Uffman-Kirsch, Robert Stefanik; Larry Antoskiewicz, Chief Paul Bican, Chief Mike Fabish, and Sun Star Reporter Joanne DuMound.

Absent: Denise Bobulsky.

Motion was made and seconded to **approve the minutes of the September 19, 2006, meeting.** Ayes 2/nays 0.  
**Motion approved.**

**OPEN RESIDENT DISCUSSION:** None.

**UNFINISHED/ONGOING BUSINESS**

**1. Police Department Status**

Chief Bican reported things are status quo. They are within budget and down personnel.

**2. Fire Department Status**

Chief Fabish reported he thinks they are doing pretty well. They are trying to get through the year to an optimistic next year. They filed a grant application under the Fire Act Grant - all across the country, fire departments are applying. We received a grant for \$196,000 for a radio system. We tried to secure about \$300,000, but were asked to cut it back. Our radio system had become antiquated. We are one of the charter members of Southwest Regional Communication System, the 800 Southwest System, and the technology began to change a few years ago. They were upgrading to digital equipment instead of analog. There have been several new cities come on board like Berea and Middleburg. NASA is considering coming on board. Cleveland Hopkins Airport Fire is on board. The radio system is expanding. We have a lot of capability, but the new additions were all buying the new digital system that Motorola has available. It gives better communication. We lost our ability to communicate with everybody else because we didn't have the digital radios. So we applied for a grant to upgrade our portables, our base stations, and our mobile units, and we received the grant for \$196,000. Our city share will be \$21,800. The money set aside for the Highway Advisory Radio System was taken into consideration. We had tried to find a radio system that could be used for broadcasting information to residents. We weren't happy with what was out there, so we didn't make the purchase. That money stayed in a capital account, and that's where it is planned for the money to come from. They are in the process of completing the grant requirements, and plan on making those purchases next year.

Many things are happening in the emergency preparedness portion of our community, the CERT program. Our city has taken possession from the county of equipment necessary to open two PODS (Point of Distribution.) In the event we have to vaccinate or distribute some type of medication, we need a certain amount of equipment. We have two locations designated: the High School and Valley Vista School. The apparatus necessary to administer medication will come as needed, but we need certain equipment to open up to handle people. We picked up the equipment about a month ago. In doing inventory, there were some shortages which are being worked out with the county. When the County representative called several weeks ago, they wanted to know how soon we could open up a clinic and what the two sites were going to be. The Chief felt it would take us a little time to get going. We have always been under the impression that we would need to vaccinate the community, and would have a window of 96 hours. We have 32,000 people, and in 96 hours, that is a little over 300 people an hour. They are actually pushing for 48 hours to do a community vaccination. While we have a well-organized CERT team, he feels that is nearly impossible. One of the things that make it difficult for us is that we don't have a way of communicating instructions to residents. We have never had an air raid warning system, but that would not communicate instructions. He has been looking at several other systems that phone residents....sometimes called a reverse 911. The one that he's looking at now is Swift Reach. The communities in the valley have it because of their flooding. They give people specific instructions about the rising canal and evacuation.

We only have public radio or the regular media channels to tell residents we want them to be at a specific POD at a certain time. With all of our organization with our CERT team, etc., it's still dependent on the ability to communicate to residents. The Swift Reach cost for our size city is \$500 for installation of the basic equipment, a \$500 retainer fee per month, and 3-1/2 cents per call. They have us listed for about 10,000 phones in North Royalton. That's not cell phones or computers, but they can be an option. If people if they want to be contacted on their cell, they would need to give us their cell phone number.

Chief Fabish feels Swift Reach is a good system after spending time researching and asking questions. His concern is being able to afford \$500 a month. It can have a number of call groups set up to mobilize the firemen, the street, sewer, police departments, City Council or any group desired...it will do it in seconds. Either a touchtone phone or Internet connection is needed for access, and administrators have passwords. Then a message is created. This system would work really well to inform residents to report to the POD at a certain time or whatever the emergency might be.

It has never been introduced into our city because we don't have many natural disasters. Most of the communities have flooding or are coastal areas with a bigger threat of natural disasters. Our big concern would be bio-terrorism or some kind of release — like an accident on the turnpike that caused a gas cloud to escape where we would need to notify people. We can designate quadrants, territories, etc., and the computers take over. They have five centers across the country. They have generator power, 24-hour-a-day staffing, and security. If one center goes down, another center can take over.

The retainer would be \$6,000 per year. To compare, we would need two radio systems in North Royalton to cover our community. Not all people can receive those broadcasts in their homes. Two of those would cost \$60,000; and effectiveness of the radio transmitters after ten years of transmitting would be questionable. So this is not necessarily as expensive as originally thought. We don't have anything reliable to notify residents. Regardless of how good our CERT team is or how well organized we are, we need to send correct, accurate information and instructions to people whether they're sheltering in place or otherwise.

Chief Fabish thinks our community should look at this. Considering various departments being able to use it, \$6,000 is not that expensive given the service it can provide. In an emergency, \$6,000 would be peanuts.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch felt the comparison to the Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) is compelling with that cost being \$60,000. She assumes the technology for the Swift Reach system is kept up-to-date via the \$500 per month retainer. She asked if HAR kept the technology updated or if that was a one-time purchase.

Chief Fabish responded that we buy it and then it is ours. Swift Reach maintains, changes and upgrades it. We don't have equipment here to maintain.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if the HAR could get obsolete.

Chief Fabish responded that between the two, he would prefer the Swift Reach. He would also like to have a couple of warning sirens. We can purchase them from CEI who will install and finance them.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked how he would propose paying for this.

Chief Fabish responded it could come through the Mayor's office or each department pay a portion of the total \$500 monthly maintenance fee. The key is organizing and having a plan so if we have to use it, we are not running around figuring out how to program it. He would suggest making it territorial by wards or divide the City into quadrants. These logistics would probably be done by Police, Fire and CERT. We've got a good nucleus of a team. We are acquiring equipment. The CERT team wants to purchase a trailer. He has \$5,000 dedicated toward CERT in his budget, and he thinks they are going to put in \$5,000. The trailer would be similar to the one we have. We could keep the equipment stored and ready for mobilization. The title of the trailer would be in the city's name. He has been looking at trailers, and we are pretty prepared.

Chief Fabish said these are some things that have been going on this fall. He thinks Swift Reach is a good piece of equipment, and it's certainly the right time. If things change in ten years or we decide we don't like it, we don't pay any more.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if the first \$500 is upfront.

Chief Fabish responded \$500 upfront.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked how long the contract is.

Chief Fabish responded that it is annual. He asked them historically about raising their prices. They have never raised the price. They are basically pricing you on the number of people. If you have over 10,000 homes, the cost might go up.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked how long this particular company/product has been in operation.

Chief Fabish responded since 2002.

Mr. Stefanik asked if Strongsville has their own reverse 911 system.

Chief Fabish said he didn't know. He looked at this and another one. Independence, Valley View, and the others in the valley - they are called the quad cities - are using this one. He talked to the Valley View Chief about their last flooding. They can get out several thousand calls in a matter of minutes. You can have up to a 30-second message at 3-1/2 cents for the call. In the event we have to use it, we would be charged for the calls, about a couple hundred bucks, depending on the areas.

He looked at how they would mobilize even our public works people. Right now, one guy calls a guy who calls the next guy - we can't do it that way in an emergency. This system can call twenty people in thirty seconds. It will keep calling, depending on how we set it up, until it reaches that person or the voice mail machine, etc. We don't have any technology or equipment to maintain. That's always the hard part for us. If something breaks, who will fix it if the person went out of business, etc.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that it looks like he might be discussing this with his budget requests.

Chief Fabish responded he wanted to be sure Council had advance notice of it, and hopefully recognize it as a pretty good deal.

Mr. Antoskiewicz asked if the reduced grant amount for the radio system is enough to transform the entire radio system to digital.

Chief Fabish responded yes.

Chief Bican clarified only the Fire Depart. system, not Police. They are two steps behind the Fire Depart.

Chief Fabish said they had to cut one computer device. We received an e-mail stating, 'In reviewing your grant, can you live with this system if we trim ...?' He heard if you get that letter, you have good consideration if you can live with it. He wasn't going to risk losing the entire \$330,000. They trimmed about \$100,000, and he knew we could live without some of the trimmed items. There was programming software and stuff we can borrow from Brook Park. There is one computer in there for about \$30,000. He is going to try to work with Motorola. We have been authorized on a number of radios. If the government says we get forty, we have to take forty. He is hoping they can credit us if we don't use all forty portables and turn some back in. He is meeting with Motorola next week. He has to work within the grant parameters, but thinks there is some room to work.

Mr. Antoskiewicz asked if basically we are one computer short of what he would like.

Chief Fabish responded yes, but it is a pretty sophisticated system. It will definitely put us in operation at least for the next ten years ... until Motorola does something else to change the equipment.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if our \$21,800 share is without the computer, or would there be additional cost.

Chief Fabish responded he wouldn't know until we talk to Motorola and see how we can best use the money we have.

### **3. Traffic Concerns at Get Go Gas Station, W 130<sup>th</sup> & Albion.**

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked for an update from Chief Bican.

Chief Bican reported that the company has figured out their gas delivery trucks can't get in there if we close the two entrances as discussed; so, it fell through. Now we just keep officers there periodically to monitor the situation. So far, there have been no problems - no accidents.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked about the other recommendations from Lt. Chilcott's memo like use of their employees as flagmen in the parking lot or hiring off-duty police officers to assist with traffic control.

Chief Bican responded they did not agree to do these things...unless it gets bad enough that they are inconvenienced and they have to do something about it.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that #5 on the list can't be done because of the gas trucks, and asked if any of the other ideas, #1-#4 on the list, are a priority right now.

Chief Bican responded no.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if these would still be options if it gets worse.

Chief Bican responded yes, if it gets worse.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if the gentleman (non-resident) who brought this issue up understands this.

Chief Bican responded that Lt. Chilcott talked to him several times. He thinks he understands there is only so much we can do. We can't shut down the gas station. We can't force them to put up barriers.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch said she's wondering whether he's expecting to see some change there that's not going to happen.

Chief Bican responded to refer him to the Police Depart. if he calls, and he'll have Lt. Chilcott talk to him.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if it was the Chief's recommendation to remove this item from the agenda.

Chief Bican said he would. If we get other complaints, we should call him. They'll try to deal with them.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked whose ward Get Go was in. It's in Councilwoman Bobulsky's. Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated that item will be removed from the agenda.

### **4. Proposed Towing Service Legislation**

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch reported the proponent sent a letter to Chief Bican with a copy to the Mayor stating, "After giving it much thought, I would like to inform you that we have decided not to pursue it any longer. I would much rather see goodwill with you and the city rather than any ill feeling, and that someday it may lead to a mutually beneficial synergy together. B&D Towing is still eager and willing to offer the City of North Royalton our towing services on a steadier basis whether it's an emergency automobile tow or the need for heavy duty wrecking service." Item removed from the agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS****1. Parking in cul-de-sacs**

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated this item came from the Streets Committee; brought up by Councilman Willey. She thinks the general question was can it be allowed in the future because it's not allowed now.

Chief Bican stated the only place he knows is one cul-de-sac in Southampton Woods where we have allowed parking at one time of the year when they had a party. He thinks that was a couple of years ago.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if that was by permit.

Chief Bican responded right, because it is an oversized cul-de-sac. He doesn't see how we would allow it in other cul-de-sacs because they're fire lanes. A cul-de-sac is a fire lane.

Chief Fabish stated that his sister lives in Brecksville, and they have pretty large cul-de-sacs, and sometimes people will park along the circumference of it, but we worry about blocking a hydrant. On some of our cul-de-sacs now, we don't have a hydrant in the circumference. For that reason, we usually put it at the mouth or where the straight part goes into the beginning of the cul-de-sac. We usually worry about snowplowing, so they have been putting the hydrants closer to the mouth of the circle. He knows it is a problem for people who have a large gathering —how they are going to park all of the people if their driveways are short. He thinks we need to have it depend on the overall size of the cul-de-sac. The Fire Department has decided they're not worried about swinging the circle anymore. They just stop in the middle of the street if they have to do something.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if this would be a local determination, Title 8 or from the State Codes.

Chief Bican responded he would research that to find out.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated first we should determine if both of them feel that it is a safety hazard.

Chief Bican responded that it doesn't matter from their standpoint. They just considered it a fire lane.

Chief Fabish responded that he thinks they could be used on special occasions for block parties, etc. once a year, but he doesn't think it practical to allow it all the time.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated she can see the issue of snow plowing.

Chief Fabish stated that the snowplows would never be able to plow.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch said stuff would be thrown onto cars. Then we'd have calls about broken windows.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch stated it would seem to create a bigger nightmare. She asked if every road with a cul-de-sac has "No Parking in cul-de-sac" signs.

Chief Bican responded not anymore. There used to be, a lot of them have disappeared.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if we give consideration on citations if people park in cul-de-sacs without signs.

Chief Bican responded no.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if it's one of those laws they are expected to know.

Chief Bican said about twelve years ago, they posted every cul-de-sac, but over time the signs disappeared.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if replacing them is something he feels we should do a little at a time.

Chief Bican responded that the signs aren't cheap.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked what the committee wanted to do.

Mr. Stefanik suggested taking it off the agenda. We'll let Don know if he has questions to contact us. He didn't know what his problem or concern was.

Mrs. DuMound stated some people always parking on the cul-de-sac got a ticket. She was at one of the meetings, and it may have been one of the oversized ones. It seemed like people were parking in there regularly. She didn't know if it was a resident or an acquaintance who was parking.

Chief Bican added that we need more cops.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch asked if she's hearing we should leave the code as is and remove it from the agenda.

Mr. Stefanik said that sounded good to him.

There being no further business, there was a motion for adjournment by Mr. Stefanik, a second by Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch. Vote 2-0.

Mrs. Uffman-Kirsch adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.