

Safety Committee Minutes

Honorable Council
City of Newark, Ohio
April 1, 2014

The Safety Committee met in Council Chambers on Monday, March 31, 2014 at 5:30 P.M. with these members present:

Alex Rolletta, Chair
Marc Guthrie
Jeff Rath

Curtis Johnson
Carol Floyd

We wish to report:

1. Police Chief Steven Sarver discussed the Division of Police 2013 Annual Report.

Chief Sarver- I am not here so much as to discuss this but to answer any questions. As I have done since I have been the Police Chief here in the City of Newark, sometime around February, March I compile the annual report and send it out to “everyone Newark” and I always give Council an opportunity to see the report and if there are any questions I am always more than willing to answer any questions but I don’t have anything specific on this.

Mrs. Floyd- where in here does the neighborhood impact fit into this under patrol?

Chief Sarver- in 2013 if you remember we didn’t have one but it is a part of the patrol.

Mrs. Floyd- I just want to say as someone who has two block watch groups in her Ward I greatly appreciate that unit being there. Jerad Conley has come to several meetings as well as a couple of other officers. That is very helpful to the residents when they know that there are some police officers out there that know their concerns.

Mr. Guthrie- first I want to thank you for the organizational chart that is really helpful. One of the things that I noticed was that there was a big increase in service calls which is admirable that you are able to do it with your staffing. When you look at the crime statistics there is sort of a modest increase but the number of service calls is significant, close to 4,000. Does that tell us that you are getting a lot of calls where there are no charges filed.

Chief Sarver- as you can see we list every potential type of call that we could answer, whatever the call is categorized as, computer wise, we show you how many of those there are. When we do a business check, you will see check area. If a police officer comes on the radio and states he/she is going to check a business at a particular location they get a card stamped because we want to know where that police officer is in case he/she says they need help. That counted for 1,715 of our calls for service. So it is not so much the public calling us to do something, every time we have an incident we stamp a card. The reason

why I set these up like this is because you can go and look at each individual category and see specifically versus 35,000 calls for service. As an example juvenile complaints, kids playing in the street, riding a tricycle, they are playing basketball, 1046 calls were just for that. We have become very aggressive with having an officer once during their tour of duty stop by a school in their assigned area and do a school check. School checks were 983. This is just a police officer telling dispatch that I am at blank school, they stamp a card so that if someone ever says do you check our schools? I don't want to mislead you into thinking that we had close to 40,000 calls where people call for help. Those are the different types of calls for service that we have.

Mr. Guthrie- under the calls for service, I understand the definition better now, on the next page it shows the statistics, the growth which is almost 4,000 from 2012 to 2013. Then on the next page crime statics breaks out the different crimes for a 4 year period. There must have been a couple of categories over here under calls for service that had really significant increases. Do you have any idea what those might have been for it to jump 4,000?

Chief Sarver- Because there are so many of these it is easy to give you a four year picture of 8 or 9 different crimes but when we are looking at 80 some different categories for calls for service to try to set those up for a four year period, what you can do and please don't take this as sarcasm, I have given you an annual report for the last five years just compare one year to the next. If you need hard copies, I have copies of all of them. You did make one comment that crime was slightly up. We have 9 different categories that are indicated here and only two categories was crime up. Breaking and entering a significant increase about 36% and theft. All other 7 categories had decreases in crime. We attribute the breaking and entering and theft because these deal with property crimes A) a piece of the economy, although the economy is getting better and drug use in society today. The easiest way to get money to go buy some heroin or meth is to steal something and sell it for two bucks. The people on people crimes and the serious crimes such as breaking into somebody's house or stealing people's cars, all of those categories are down. Think of a city the size of Newark, there were 29 aggravated robberies, meaning force was used or a weapon in an entire year. That is not even quite 2 ½ a month. To say that Newark is a safe community that is a great indication.

Mr. Johnson- I just want to say that this is a very comprehensive report and well done and I appreciate it and I am not exactly sure why we are spending all this time on it.

Mr. Guthrie- Mr. Chairman I would like to take credit as to why we are spending time on it. It makes sense frankly for all of the division heads or being represented by the department head to review their annual reports. It is a very comprehensive report. I would hope that I am not the only member of Council who had any questions but if I am than I am more than glad to ask them.

Chief Sarver- I will answer any questions you got specific to the annual report.

Mr. Guthrie- one question but I don't know if it directly relates to the report but can you talk to us a little bit about the communication system and what you see as a priority as a fix with the communication system.

Chief Sarver- we are still in conversation with the County, the County as you are probably well aware is going to a combined 911 police and fire. It hasn't been launched yet, they

have been waiting to do it. We have asked them for over 2 years in terms of if we wanted to become part of it what it would cost. We have 8 dispatchers that we value very much who are excellent people they do a great job and they are a part of our family and we wouldn't want to lose them. But as a responsible Police Chief and as a responsible Safety Director and Mayor we all have to look at efficiency and cost effectiveness. The County will not talk to us yet as to whether this is going to be beneficial to us or if it will be cost effective to stay and do what we are doing. If we are going to continue dispatching our own services than there has to be upgrades to our communication system. That communication system was put in there during 2005 way before I came on board and they didn't put the best system in there. The Mark system is the go to system of choice throughout the State of Ohio and to do that we have to buy 70 some radios. I did get some good word today that the City of Houston who was in a stage 2 process and ended up selling all of their radios back to Mark. Those radios which were about \$8,000.00 can be bought now for \$795.00. They are refurbished but even then if we bought 70 radios at \$800.00 that is quite a few bucks. The big stickler to this is that Marks people charge a \$30.00 licensing fee per month for every radio that you have. That is where the true expense comes in to play. Bob Carson informed me today that he is in negotiations with Marks to see if they will give us a two year hiatus if you will, not charge us the 30% to see if we are in a better position in two years to afford that. It is \$360.00 a year for one radio. We are in the process; we are looking at different options. We are getting by with what we have now but we recognize in the future we are going to have some serious issues that we need to address.

Mr. Guthrie- so it is meeting the current standard that you want it to meet then as far as efficiency?

Chief Sarver- I can call on my radio now and somebody will answer it.

Mr. Guthrie- do you want to share with Council any capital priorities such as replacement of police cruisers or what kind of plan that you would like to be on in the future.

Chief Sarver- with all due respect I think that is a discussion that you would have to have with the Director of Public Service they have a handle on what the Capital Improvements are. We recognize that the Police Division is not the only piece of this city that needs equipment. We like other people are constantly looking for other equipment. I realize that those dollars only go so far and that is really in somebody else's hands other than mine.

Mr. Guthrie- Chief do you have any idea as to where you are as far as planned retirements this year?

Chief Sarver- for this year maybe 2 on the horizon. We know of one definitely, he has indicated that he has a contract on his house and when the house is sold he will be leaving and just one other has been talked about.

Mr. Rath- Chief thanks for being here tonight and taking the time I appreciate you being here. I know that you network with other Police Chief throughout the state and most likely the U.S. How familiar are you with Canton?

Chief Sarver- I am familiar with the city I am not familiar with any of the issues with their Police Department.

Mr. Rath- the only reason I ask is because I read the other day that Canton was the second most dangerous city in the U.S. It had a list of the top 10, Canton was number 2 and it was the only Ohio city.

Chief Sarver- was that a recent article

Mr. Rath- yes it was a week or two ago, it was a headline on Yahoo. What I wanted to ask you was I know Canton is probably about 23,000 larger than Newark. Why is Canton so dangerous, why is it so much better? Can you make a comment towards that?

Chief Sarver- no, I have been through Canton, I don't know what type of city it is in terms of its' economic woes. Why it is that way I wouldn't have a clue. I would be more than happy to research it for you though.

Mr. Rath- no that's not necessary I was just curious. Thought maybe with it being the second most dangerous city you might have heard about things that happened there and why.

Chief Sarver- speaking for Newark I continue to say that this is a very safe city. I wouldn't be afraid to walk on the streets at night, to be in the downtown area. The men and women of our Police Division get out there and do an earnest job while they are here. It has been 20 some years since a Newark Police Officer has fired his gun in the line of duty. That is tremendous, a compliment to those men and women.

Mr. Rolletta- on page 13 it mentions extra coverage during peak hours, how many additional on patrol would that typically be.

Chief Sarver- our first shift and second shift we call them team 1 and team 2 and three and four. There are 7 officers on each of those shifts. When you hit third shift which is at 10:00 at night there are only 5 officers assigned to each shift but because of a 5 hour overlap you get extra police officers on the street between 10:00-3:00 in the morning.

Mr. Blake- Mr. Chairman, Chief I want to thank you again for coming tonight because as a new member of Council it is helpful to have some public discussion about these things and you put so much time into these reports you might as well have some discussion about it. I want to thank you personally for presenting tonight. I had three areas related to the report that I was hoping you could address for us. One was a strategic plan that was mentioned in the report. Could you speak a little bit about that process and who is involved on that committee and specifically the residents that might serve on that committee, is there some diversity that serves on your strategic plan committee? Secondly, as a part of your strategic plan you talk about strengthening relationships so I was curious under the Detective Bureau or the war on drugs, could you speak to any type of relationships with other social service agencies or the courts or maybe just strengthening relationships as it relates to crystal meth and heroin the war on drugs? Lastly, the training. Are officers required to go through some regular training for handling mental illness and other diversities such as race, color, gender that type of thing? So I guess strategic plan, strengthening relationships and the war on drugs and then training of officers dealing with diversities.

Chief Sarver- We initially did the strategic plan way back in 2009 so it has been 5 years since we have done it. We mixed different people from government, we brought in different segments of the population to show diversity, we brought in school people, people from the Prosecutor's office, and we had other government officials and citizens.

We had a good make up. The strategic plan is on our website and it is always current. In the initial part of the strategic plan it will list you every person who was a part of that committee. What we did was bring everybody together; we didn't want this to just be our goal. We wanted to know what the community wanted what other government entities wanted. We wanted to find out regionally what our goal should be. So we create the goal and the whole idea is to work in partnership. Part of our mission statement is to work in partnership with the citizens of the community. There are several different social service agencies that we work with. Licking County Job and Family Services, the Central Ohio Drug Task Force regarding the war on drugs, the Prosecutors office, and neighborhood unit impact is a big piece of this. What I encourage you to do so I can better answer your question, is just look at the strategic plan. In that we identify what the goals were and then we wanted to find out what the strategies are. How do you reach those goals? In order to have strategies you have to have measurements. If we really want to reduce crime how much do we want to reduce it? You have to have ownership; it has to be assigned to somebody who is responsible for seeing it done. Every year and the most current one is on the website as well, we go in to see what goals we have accomplished some are just put off because they just weren't reachable that year then it becomes part of our goal. Our 3 year strategic plan is a professional plan so it's not as if you do a 2012 & 2015 and you wait for 2015 to end to start a new one. In the beginning of 2013 we went back and saw what we fixed in 2012 and where did we fall short so then it became the 2013, 2014, 2015 plan. Our current plan is 2014-2016 so every year we go in and see how we are doing. We definitely work in partnership with several different parts of the community to achieve these goals. There were several things that were mandated by the State of Ohio. This year and most years the State of Ohio will credit every Ohio Police Officer \$25.00 for one hour of training but every person in that Police Department has to attend that training. The Ohio Attorney General's Office has really beefed up E-OPATA where you can go online and do a training course. So for 2014 each Police Officer in the State of Ohio is required to do a minimum of 4 hours of training. We have 70 Police Officers including myself that will complete that 4 hours of training and every one of us will get \$100.00, now when I say us it is not me individually but in 2015 they will write a check to us a check for \$7,000.00 for attending that training. We can use that \$7,000.00 for any type of training that we want. We are set up on what we call overlap Wednesday. Our officers either work Sunday through Wednesday or Wednesday through Saturday with the exception of the administrative staff that works Monday through Friday so on Wednesday everybody in Police Division works this is a way that we use what we call an overlap Wednesday to do training. It could be firearms training, self-defense, and driving instructors training; it could be we are in the Prosecutor's office discussion Courtroom testimony. Our officers get hundreds of hours of training each year. Sometimes there is a push for cultural diversity; right now the big one is how to deal with people with autism and developmental disabilities in general.

Mr. Guthrie- I have another question but I would like to direct that to the Directors. Would Director Rhodes or Director Spurgeon like to address my question regarding the plan for cruiser replacement?

Alex Rolletta, Chair