

## Safety Committee Minutes

Honorable Council  
City of Newark, Ohio  
July 5, 2022

The Safety Committee met in Council Chambers on Jul 5, 2022 following the Service Committee meeting with these members present:

Mark Labutis, Chair  
Spencer Barker  
Beth Bline  
Michael Houser  
Jeff Rath

We wish to report:

1. Presentation by Chief McKee from the NPD on the FLOCK camera system  
**Chief McKee** – Thank you for your time. Obviously with depleted manpower, the police department needs to look at efficiency. I've been doing that through the use of technology as much as possible, with the online reporting system and other internal things to automate paperwork and so forth. We came across this system a couple years ago. This company has been in business for a while, I have a representative for technical questions if you have them afterwards. Otherwise I'll just give you a brief example of what we are talking about and I will also send full council some other stuff digitally that is a little more interactive. FLOCK safety first started in basically an HOA. A guy got tired of getting his car broken into, so he came up with the system on how to basically, it's a license plate reader system We currently have a couple on our cars from a grant, however, they are infrared technology and only do the reflection off the license plate. FLOCK safety noticed they were missing a whole lot of avenues by doing that, so they designed a product that utilizes motion. So, any vehicle, bicycle passing by the camera will have its photo taken, although not complete video clips, a photograph none the less. They've also integrated algorithms into that to read various details and characteristics of each vehicle. We've all seen the mini van with all the little people on the back window. If we were looking for a vehicle such as that, traditional LPR's would only pick up mini van and a certain color. We can actually search for stickers on the back window, roof racks, caps on the back of a vehicle, different characteristics, their technology breaks it down. That's sort of how they work and you can put them throughout the city. There are cities just east of us using them, Heath is coming on board, Sheriff is coming on board, they all tie in together, if there is 1500 law enforcement agencies across the US using them we would all tie into that system. It

reads off of the NCIC system that warrants and stuff are put into and we can also put a local database in for vehicles we are looking for. As soon as a vehicle triggers one of these cameras that's either the license plate or the vehicle description, it sends an immediate notice to the car to tell us a vehicle has just entered a specific area. That makes us so much more efficient. When you look at the breakdown of the cities that have utilized this, FLOCK safety is going to tell you that it can be up to 70%. Mr. Rath you know how statistics work. In your packet there is an actual Dayton study that the city of Dayton did in two separate neighborhoods with FLOCK safety. That's close enough to us to have some raw data that we can use from 2018 for a three year period and they saw a 40% reduction in one neighborhood and a 10% in another. The area around Cleveland currently each city is coming on board and what they've seen is the cities who do not have FLOCK safety, their crime goes up, because once criminals start realizing this, that they are going to be detected on camera, they stop going to those cities to do property crimes, retail crimes. That is one of our big problems in the north end the Walmart, Home Depot, Kohls, the people who steal from them are the people who steal from the all over central Ohio. We can put their information into this system and anytime they trigger one of these cameras we would know that they are coming into that area. Phase 1 is for us to get them. We have applied for an open grant to get them, however, to sustain it we will need funding beyond that. In looking at this in phase 2 and 3 we would start reaching out to the HOA's like Park Trails, they have 2 exits and 2 entrances, they would need 2 cameras and it would seriously reduce a lot of the crime they have in that neighborhood. Walmart, Kohls, if they would all put them on their entrances and exits it would all tie into our system and integrate with it. So, the people they want to target they would know and we would know when those people enter and exit into those areas. This technology is absolutely amazing. In the grant packet I've listed a few crimes that we have caught with just Ring cameras and that sort of technology, this is way above and beyond that. We had the near fatal hit skip on 21<sup>st</sup> Street, if we target the retail areas that would've caught that. The bank robbery up north would have garnered a description much faster because the camera would have taken a picture of that vehicle. It is such a great investigative tool and will do such good for us I don't know how we could turn it down. What would happen is , the other cities are getting it and the bad guys are just going to come here because we don't have it. The company put out a map of how many cameras we should have, we obviously can look at that monetarily and figure it out. We don't own them, they come in and put them up, there is an introductory cost of \$2,850 per camera the first year, after that it's \$2,500 per camera, they handle all the maintenance on them, the replacement cost, if we don't want them anymore, they come and take them down. If we want more, they come in and put up more. I will tell you from talking to them for a very long time now, most cities get more instead of taking away. For ease of use it ties into our system, it's web based. It does not have any sort of facial recognition technology, it's just a vehicle description tool for us to use. 70% of crimes are committed by somebody in a vehicle. If we can target that and get 70% down to 40%. In the packet I have our list of property crimes, so figure out statistically what 10% of that would be we would have a reduction that's a serious thing to or victims in our neighborhoods if we can reduce property

crimes by that. Catalytic convertor crimes, we get those people who are in a certain vehicle, we put that into the system. We know throughout all the shifts when they trigger a camera it's going to say this person just passed by. Once again, an incredible investigative tool for us. I didn't want to take too much time away from what we have going on after this, but the study is in there, our stats are in there as far as property crimes and how it would decrease it. Our objective is to decrease violent crime by 15% the first year, same way with arrests and also property crimes by the same as those. Utilizing this new technology FLOCK safety with it integrating with all the departments around us where criminals travel to and fro, going to Walmart in Heath and then come here and steal right after that and then heads to Zanesville or Columbus, it will truly tell when someone comes in and when they come out. This technology is also currently being sought after by our drug enforcement task force, they will use it for a different purpose. For us I'm looking at using it for what really matters and those are the victims in our neighborhoods and the property crimes are what matters to them, that's a quality of life issue. If we could just reduce that and have more efficiency on our officers part, it's an absolute win win in my opinion. If you look near the end of the packet you'll see what one actually looks like. They have a solar panel on top of them, it's just a small infrared camera. In looking at cost, for the first year they recommend we put up 26 cameras in the City of Newark. We can probably reign that in a little bit, so was what we suggested in the grant, however, they have engineers who mapped out the city to be optimal. I tend to want to trust their engineers. If we did 26 cameras, for the first year that's \$74,000 and then to maintain that is \$65,000 annually. We would have to budget for it moving forward. That cost compared to what it would do for our citizens safety, I think is well worth it. For the cost of half an officer, I can make all of my officers more efficient. A lot of people say this is big brother watching you, but to combat that, every 30 days FLOCK safety dumps, permanent hard drive delete all the information they have. So, we would have 30 days to utilize that data to solve a crime. So, they're not keeping it, they don't want the information, it's only used by us. Only accessible by us and other law enforcement agencies.

**Mr. Houser** – Is there any concern with people vandalizing the cameras?

**Logan Herra, FLOCK safety** – In terms of cameras being vandalized, yes it has happened before, but we don't see that very often.

**Mr. Rath** – How high are they off the ground?

**Mr. Herra** – About 10-11 feet off the ground.

**Mr. Rath** – What are you mounting them on?

**Mr. Herra** – One option is a solar pole, that is 14 feet long set about 2 feet into the ground, on a wooden utility pole, third option is on a light pole with a solar panel on top of it, these are the 3 most common.

**Chief McKee** – Each camera covers two lanes of travel, so like on route 16 we would need a camera on each side, 21<sup>st</sup> Street, the monster has 5 lanes, we would probably miss the turn lane, although I've seen people drive in it like it's another lane, you're not supposed to, but once again they have engineers that figure out the best locations.

**Mr. Barker** – How does the system communicate back to the officers, is it cellular, what is it.

**Mr. Herra** – The storage is actually through Amazon web services for 30 days, but it's coverage just like our cell phones are.

**Mr. Barker** – So the \$2,500 encompasses that cell service bill as well.

**Mr. Herra** – Yes, an easy way to put it is there are no additional costs for the City of the department.

**Chief McKee** – And that Amazon server will have a heightened sense of security.

**Mr. Rath** – you quoted statistics from two neighborhoods in Dayton, one had a decrease of 40% and one was 10% why the dramatic difference in the two.

**Chief McKee** – Part of it was they didn't have as many cameras in the one neighborhood at the time and unfortunately different neighborhoods have different crimes.

**Mr. Rath** – Obviously retail theft is a big problem, some may want the cameras more than others, but has there ever been an opportunity for a retail store to sponsor a camera to be sure they have one.

**Mr. Herra** – We have various types of customers, law enforcement is one, if a Walmart or a Home Depot or Menards wanted to front the bill for cameras that's a good way for them to reduce theft in their stores.

**Chief McKee** – I we go this route, which I hope we do, we plan on assisting them because the more information only helps us. So we plan on talking to Walmart. Kohls, Kroger any HOA's, but those places are going to need sustainable funding because there is an additional annual cost, but if you have a neighborhood that is structures correctly you could minimize your costs, such as Park Trails, even Park Ridge across the street. They would have to come up with funding, like \$5,000 annually for park Trails 2 cameras and if it's worth it to their citizens then it's going to be worth it. I'm going to kind of be their salesman a little bit, but bring them along. He drove down here just on a phone call, so they are very accessible, through this whole process gathering information I have not heard any negative reports as far as their customer service goes. So, I can attest to that. I think it is up to these people to see if it is something they want to fund and budget for long term. I would hope their shrinkage at those store would amount to way more than the cost of a camera annually.

**Mr. Rath** – I know that retail theft and catalytic convertor theft is a problem, correct me if I am wrong, but I think the root of all that is drugs, so you mentioned the drug enforcement task force is looking at this as well.

**Chief McKee** – FLOCK has a mobile version, so they plan on using the mobile version, the Sheriff department if they get the funding plan to put one on every exit ramp along 161 and 70 in the county. We're tied into that same system so that is significant information we would get knowing someone is coming this way.

**Mr. Barker** – So say we get the grant, figure out funding, I just want to make sure, Chief you or another officer and someone from FLOCK are going to go out to these HOA's and work on the buy in and hopes to contact retailers and hope some will pick up the cost for their own facilities, then that's finalized and they install and as soon as they install, we are running, correct?

**Chief McKee** – Correct. We've been preaching to the neighborhoods already, we plan on doing a public campaign on this, because once the bad guys know this is here, I'm okay with moving crime somewhere else. You'll hear me say, Buckeye Lake is beautiful this

time of year, okay, I'm okay with getting the crime out of our city and moving it somewhere else. I want to make it uncomfortable for the bad guys and this allows me to do that.

**Mr. Barker** – In that email follow up you are going to send out to us will you share the 26 locations they have recommended?

**Chief McKee** – Yes sir.

**Ms. Bline** – Are these mobile units part of the 26?

**Chief McKee** – No the drug enforcement task force is going to be using those.

**Mr. Herra** – The falcon camera is what we've been talking about, a stationary sits on a pole. But if the City wanted to look at another product there is a falcon flex camera, a little bit different pricing, say if the city got 26 cameras and wanted an flex one also, we would just drop that off at the police department because that would be one they could move around, put it here for a month then somewhere else for a month etc.

**Chief McKee** – That's not saying that in the future we couldn't add something like that to help target areas where we are having issues.

**Ms. Hottinger** – I just want to understand what is your direct ask of Council now?

**Chief McKee** – I would rather you fund this now than count on this grant, however, I understand that the City has to be fiscally responsible and that if our grant becomes available we should look at that, which we have. However, that grant is only going to be for the initial process. So, if you have the money, maybe someone else could use the funds better than us, if not then we can obviously wait. I would rather move forward with this as soon as possible, so, my ask is going to be forget the grant, let's just go and do this, however that's a decision for you.

**Mr. Houser** – If you get the grant and we've already funded it, can that money be kept and used.

**Chief McKee** – That's a Barbara question, I will get you the answer to that.

**Jonathan Lang, 1684 Emerald Ct.** – Let me just clarify, procedurally, is it just funding or do we need to approve an agreement with the company. I am anticipating a lot of privacy concerns from the citizens.

**Chief McKee** – I have a whole packet that will answer all of those questions for you.

**Mr. Lang** – Procedurally when we are asked questions who would we send people to, to get answers.

**Chief McKee** – It would be through the Service Directors office because it would be a service contract.

**Mr. Barker** – If there is vandalism on one what is the turnaround time to have another one installed or serviced?

**Mr. Herra** – If there is vandalism it's a \$500 deductible, if it's just a camera that is old and dying we replace that at no cost. We have technicians in Ohio and it would just be a matter of me saying hey we need somewhere at this place at this time and obviously we want to get that camera up and running as fast as possible. Three to four weeks is what we see usually.

**Mr. Barker** – If the department needs technical support, is there something in the contract regarding you providing our officers support for the system?

**Mr. Herra** – We provide tech service. We don't have a 24/7 line or anything like that, but we have several points of contact that are available most nay time of the day by text email or call.

**Mr. Labutis** – Thank you for providing us with this packet.

**Chief McKee** – I'm going to provide a much better one with more information and answers to questions like Councilman Langs.

The meeting has been adjourned

Mark Labutis, Chair