

Ravenna City Council Public Health and Safety Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2019

The Public Health and Safety Committee Meeting was called to order at 5:33 P.M. by Andrew Kluge, Chairman. Present were: Amy Michael, Matt Harper, Paul Moskun and Rob Kairis. Also attending the meeting were Mayor Frank Seman; Finance Director, Kimble Cecora; Director of Public Service, Kay Dubinsky; Fire Chief, Geoffrey Cleveland; Police Chief, Jeff Wallis; Utility Billing Supervisor, Mike Reynolds; Larry Silenius of 123 North Walnut Street, Ravenna, Ohio; Clifford Soudil of 434 Woodland Street, Ravenna, Ohio; Deena Tannert of 784 East Main Street, Ravenna, Ohio; Tim Calfee of 910 Murray Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio and Christina West of 732 Eastland Avenue, Ravenna, Ohio; James Rumsey of 663 Page Street, Ravenna, Ohio; Mike Gubkin of 675 Page Street, Ravenna, Ohio; Marcella Rider of 224 Lawrence Street, Ravenna, Ohio and Duane King of 150 North Scranton Street, Ravenna, Ohio.

Mr. Kluge said the first item on the agenda is 665 Page Street.

Mr. Rumsey said the problem with the neighbors at 665 has been resolved because the people have moved out of the house. He noted he would like to see more of this happening and understands the City has financial issues. Sometimes they have to put more money into one department to fix a problem. That will in turn boost it up and get the landlords to keep their homes nicer. There are counties and other states if they own the property, there is an escrow account where money has to be put back into that property for improvements. If there is some way they can get the landlords to put money aside, if the City could hold it for them, he'd prefer to see that. But then they'd have the money for the repairs and couldn't say they didn't have the money. The other thing is, checking in on these people. He knows it's a task and everybody knows there is a problem. They could be a heck of a lot better city than what they've got now.

Mr. Gubkin said he wanted to thank everybody for allowing them to sleep in peace and through the night. The music is gone. It's been very nice and he's been able to leave the windows up with the fans on. It's great. Thank you. He doesn't know what they did. It was about two days after he was at the meeting, he noticed he got a good night of sleep. He lives right where four train tracks cross and they blow the whistles. The kind of sound being generated from that house was dastardly high. It was so high that it outdid the train whistle and the vibration sounds of the train on the tracks, in the kitchen. The dishes actually shook and that just doesn't happen. He said thank you for the silence. This is a great town and they are on the rise.

Ms. Rider distributed information regarding urban chickens. She lives in the City of Ravenna but grew up on a farm. She would like to have chickens. A lot of people think chickens are dirty but they're not. Not preparing it correctly and freezing causes salmonella. They don't get it from chickens in the backyard. The City ordinance says you can have chickens if they are 400 feet from the nearest inhabited dwelling. That's impossible for anybody who lives in the City. She's got a pretty big City lot. The last time this issue was addressed was in 1998, according to the ordinance. She thinks they should get with the times and a lot of communities are allowing chickens. She gave them a list of cities that actually allow chickens. Cleveland allows for up to six birds per lot. Roosters are not allowed, she gets that. New York City allows an unlimited number of hens, no roosters. Chicago allows them and says they can't be used for slaughter. There are many butchers around and she doesn't think anybody should be slaughtering any animals on their land considering they are not farmers. She was told Akron has a chicken ordinance as well as Stow. Kent passed their ordinance in 2018. They allow no more than six

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chickens in a backyard with roosters and chicks prohibited. As far as the chicks, you can't keep them outside anyway. They talk about how big a chicken coup should be in the ordinance. Over 500 cities have legalized the pet chicken keeping within the last two years. Reports are there are very few complaints about the chickens. Most of the neighbors are delighted to have the chickens. It improves the neighbor relations, especially if the neighbors have kids because kids love to play with the chickens. City chickens do not spread avian flu or salmonella. That is done by bad meat handling. You are going to get more of that from the big farms that have the chickens. They keep them in little tiny coups and they aren't healthy and are pumped full of antibiotics. If you have your own chickens in your own backyard, you don't have to deal with that. You get wonderful, healthy eggs. Farm raised chickens are so much better than any chicken egg you will get in a store. The eggs are taken to storage where they set for 60-70 days. Then they are sent to the store and the store itself puts an expiration date of a month after you buy them. So they are already close to six months old by the time you get eggs. Chickens can be used as pets. There were a ten year old girl in 2007 and the neighbors complained because there were chickens in the City. She took the issue to the city where she was allowed to keep the chickens because they are pets, not farm animals. Neighbors can be fearful about local or concerns for property values. There has never been one documented case of property values dropping because of families having flocks of chickens. On the contrary, some wholesalers and developers as a sales incentive in the cities, offer a free chicken coup for every house or sale. That was in Buena Vista, Virginia. Family flocks of chickens enable local food supplies crucial for the national defense. According to Department of Defense is the food and water supply that are most vulnerable in the United States. In times of emergency, food supplies can be cut to the local grocery store. In less than three days all of the shelves will be empty. The person who has chickens in the backyard has eggs and a potential of having a nice meal on the table. Chickens are biomass recyclers. Chickens eat your food scraps. Instead of throwing everything away, you can feed it to the chickens. Their waste is then composted so there are a lot less things going to the sewers and garbage, etc. She'd love for her daughter to experience the responsibility of having her own chickens.

Ms. Michael thanked Ms. Rider for the presentation. She does have a friend who has chickens and there has been no problem with cleanliness, etc. She also said no rooster and to limit the number of four rather than six.

Ms. Rider said each chicken lays one egg per day for the most part. In the winter it can back off to one every three or four days. She knows one supplier will only sell five. She thinks four is a good number.

Ms. Michael said a lot of young, urban people who do a lot of recycling, it could be a consideration when they are relocating.

Mr. Kluge said he agrees and believes it could be very interesting. He didn't realize Kent passed legislation so he would like to ask them a few questions. One of the things that jumped out at him was when he asked Cleveland about their regulations, they don't require a permit but do have an arm in arm relationship with the health department so if you do get chickens, you

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have to apply for a permit through the local health department. That health department inspects and grant a permit. He doesn't know how the enforcement would work. They get so many property complaints, not for chickens, maybe it's something they need to revisit, just protocol in general; who is the person actually knocking on the door if there is an issue.

Ms. Rider said she agrees with what Mr. Kluge is saying but that is with any animal. She knows where someone won't sell you a dog if you chain it. Her dog is chained out. The farm she grew up on has a huge dog and he didn't come into the house because he'd have anxiety issues. He was chained up all the time but the kids played with him. If you have an animal just to have it and you're not taking care of it, she doesn't care if it's outside or inside, you shouldn't have an animal.

Mr. Kluge concurred noting that going back to the previous point where some of these lots are very small. The City of Cleveland was very strict on how big the lot had to be. He thinks it is an interesting idea. He would like to do more research as to the enforcement.

Ms. Michael said she thinks it is definitely something worth exploring. Unfortunately things in government do not happen quickly. There is a very long process. It's not that they aren't taking her seriously but it does work very slowly. Ms. Rider did a very good job in presenting the facts. But they still have to talk about it. She would suggest keeping the issue in committee and try to find more information and have more discussion.

Ms. Tannert said she has friends with chickens and does housesit from time to time. The chickens are very easy to maintain. In her opinion, the eggs are healthier and cheaper. They aren't noisy and not dirty. She wouldn't have a problem with it and she lives on Main Street. They would need to make sure the homeowner is accountable for keeping them in the yard and not letting them just run rampant.

Mr. Harper asked if the chickens are in a coup all day or if they are out across the yard, free range; do they have a natural instinct to stay within a certain range of their chicken coup?

Ms. Rider said a chicken coup is where the chickens lay their eggs and sleep at night. That needs to be secured. The chickens automatically go inside the coup when it gets dark. There is a solar powered door that shuts when the sun goes down. They can be free range where they pretty much stay in their yard. Chickens know their yard. If you don't want to do that, they have to be protected. Even on the farm, they have to be protected. There is a fence around an area and if they're worried about hawks, etc., fencing can be put on the top of it. Free range means they are allowed to go outside the box they sleep in then they can eat the bugs, etc., outside.

Mr. Harper said he would have a concern that there are a lot of predators such as raccoons, etc. He wouldn't like to see more coyotes moving into the City, chasing the chickens. That would be one of his concerns. He thinks it's a great idea but definitely needs more discussion.

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Mr. Kluge said he would like to keep the issue for more discussion and further research. He will ask the Clerk to keep Ms. Rider up to date.

Mr. Kluge said the next item on the agenda is to accept a donation in the Police Department and the Fire Department.

Chief Wallis said they received a call that residents locked themselves out of their house. Their pet was locked inside. The Police couldn't gain access so they called the Fire Department who showed up and was able to get into a window using a ladder. The residents were very appreciative and wrote a check for \$500.00 for each department.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be referred to the Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Kluge said the next item on the agenda is the school resource officer.

Mr. Cecora said August 15th is the latest deadline for when the school resource officer needs to begin the school year. This is the contract for the upcoming school year, 376 school days. This is the same terms and conditions. It has been re-priced based on updated numbers including benefits, etc. It's somewhat of a clone from the contract last year but with updated numbers. This is the same officer who was in place last year.

Mr. Kluge asked if the cost is split with the township.

Ms. Michael said they never did give anything towards it. She thinks it should be split three ways. There are township kids going to school there as well as city kids. She thinks the School Resource Officer has done above and beyond what is needed and he has made a huge impact with the kids. She is disappointed the township has not offered to help subsidize that amount.

Mr. Moskun said that the SRO does more than what is expected of him.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be referred to the Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Kluge said the next item on the agenda is a request from the Police Department regarding car and body cameras.

Chief Wallis said the body cameras they have are made by a particular company. The car cameras they are looking at are made by the same company. The reason is they are looking for a bigger return on their investment. The compatibility of the body cameras and the car cameras, instead of having two microphones, the body camera becomes the microphone for the camera. Rather than buying laptops that are \$3,000.00 to \$5,000.00 each, the camera itself becomes that

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mobile data terminal (MDT) so that receives the message and all they need to provide is a keyboard and screen. One of those breaks, it costs a lot less money to fix instead of buying a new laptop. It also allows for a little more flexibility. The system they are looking at getting, the files are more compatible. File sharing and a lot of stuff they are trying to do down the road is a goal for the department. When they get requests for reports, those reports will have the video, photos, everything will be attached to the file. This will allow them to go more paperless and would require less supervision because of the way it's stored on the cloud, the supervisors will be able to access it on any of their computers as opposed to the way it is now. The old system they have to go into the computer in the booking room to watch the videos.

Chief Wallis said they have car cameras now. What they did when they got body cameras, the company also makes in-car systems. They are just looking at getting the newer cameras with those because they are more compatible. The body cameras have already proven themselves effective.

Ms. Michael asked if there was a plan to get a couple of cameras in the downtown area, jut to help lessen some of the downtown issues.

Chief Wallis said when they put up the cameras for the traffic lights, people thought they were real cameras but they are just indicators. Everybody was upset. One of the things they need to discuss is if they are going to put cameras up and how that appears. That wouldn't come from the Police Department, it would be coming from Council or the Administration.

Mr. Kluge asked if they've looked into any of the grants like CJAG.

Chief Wallis said the price tag is over a five year period. The cameras themselves are almost half the cost of what they bought the last time. The cost covers the middle of the road one. The savings of not replacing the laptops because those are coming near the end of life. There are 11 cars at a cost of \$3,000-\$5,000.00 per vehicle. The end cost seems a lot but they will actually save money.

Mr. Cecora said that it would be a lease/purchase over five years at 4.85% is \$23,600.00 a per year. That is providing the approval of the credit application.

Chief Wallis said these come with a warranty so if something does break, it is covered over the entire life of the plan.

Mr. Kairis noted the quote says there is ongoing cloud service; is that something they need to pay for?

Chief Wallis said they do have cloud service in their own system. For example, instead of having to purchase a server, it is saved in the cloud and is backed up.

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Mr. Kairis concurred noting cloud service is more economical in the long run. He asked if they should bid this.

Mr. Cecora responded that it is all provided through the State Purchasing. He asked about the shelf life of the equipment and was told it is at least seven years. This is not budgeted and an appropriation for the \$23,600 will be needed as well as authorization for the mayor to enter into the lease/purchase agreement.

Chief Wallis said a lot of the cameras they have now have been through several car cycles and they are going to have to start replacing those anyway so they are looking at replacing them with a better system. In the long run, they are insulating themselves as far as the liability and having better camera systems and body cameras.

Mr. Cecora noted there is some salvage value. There should be some offset on the existing units.

Ms. Michael said she'd really like to know if there is some funding out there to help with the purchase of these items. She does understand the importance of the equipment and how replacement is more expensive at times.

Mr. Kluge said there is so much more to being a police officer now. He asked if the body cameras automatically turn on when the officer gets out of the car.

Chief Wallis said they turn them on. What they are asking for are car cameras, the ones that are mounted in the windshield, turn on when the lights come on. The way the new system will work is when the lights are turned on, that will activate the body camera. Right now it's turned on manually. They've gone through training and any time the officer comes in contact with some sort of police action, they turn the cameras on.

There being no questions or comments, it was decided by those present that the issue would be referred to the Committee of the Whole for further action.

Mr. Kluge said the next two items are discussion points. He wanted to update them on the Portage FEMA advisory board. Emergency Management is pushing out a lot of the plans that are coming through. One is a mitigation plan. They are gathering the data for the mitigation plan will be due in 2021. The City could apply for the mitigation grant if there are any large projects in 2021. They are putting together a tree management plan, too. The active shooter plan is being put together by the County and are coordinating who has what equipment, response times, etc. At the end of May there were so many storms so Mahoning County was declared for FEMA assistance right now. Any homes in contiguous counties to Mahoning can apply for SBA loans if they can prove the events from May 27 through the 29th had an effect on their homes.

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Mr. Kluge went on to say that he spoke with Chief Wallis about traffic calming methods. They spoke with an individual on Shadowlawn who complained about the speeding. He knows they've probably heard from many other people about that so they started looking into different things. He distributed information about Lakewood that has a traffic calming program. It's centered around narrowing the streets, making the driver more cautious about the speed, etc. They have speed humps that are allowed in the State of Ohio. There are chicanes to narrow the street in the hopes they will slow down. As much as he's been hearing speeding and parking complaints he wanted to put it to Council if they have done anything in the past with speeding and maybe look at options. They also need to keep in mind that the Street Department plows these roads in the winter.

Mr. Kairis said he thinks the speed trailer helps a lot. He worries about some diversion like a speed bump, where people are used to driving on a daily basis all of a sudden, they'll be getting complaints about suspensions, etc. He thinks they need to be cautious as to how they approach this kind of thing. They can't just install stop signs and lights. Those go through traffic studies and can be enormously expensive.

Ms. Michael said that some of these neighborhoods are different than the main roads. They might be able to get away with a speed bump or chicane on a road like Shadowlawn. Riddle was another where residents complain about the school buses. They felt the school buses are flying down the road. That area could be trickier. There are a lot of good ideas.

Mr. Kluge said he doesn't think they have to have some real physical thing like a speed bump. Maybe they can get signs printed. As simple as the signs they are seeing to drive like your kid lives here. It could be advocacy.

Ms. Michael said there was a request several years ago to put a sign that said autistic child and that helped because people slow down because no one wants to hurt a child who might come out from between parked cars, etc.

Mayor Seman said in the past, people believed the cars were speeding down a particular road. At that time, they borrowed equipment that measures the speed and records it. What they found on that street was an average of two vehicles speeding per day. The problem was not as much as they thought. Driving through the Fairgrounds seems like 25 mph is pretty fast. As they get the paving done on the main roads, it seems people pick up their speed. Highland and Freedom are going to be pretty long stretches. They can buy equipment that can record the speed rather than just tell the driver. It's a little expensive but if they can put that in an area, they could find out exactly how bad the problem is.

Mr. Kluge said that whenever he talks with people who have an issue with the speeding, he feels like the only response he can give them is that he'll talk with the Police Department to see if they can sit there for a while. He's looking for options and what other communities have done.

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Mr. Moskun said he thinks if they do something like a speed bump it would have to be taken out in the fall and he thinks it would, take away people actually having to think, unfortunately. People had to actually think and pay attention before they had all these things while driving.

Chief Wallis said that they wouldn't just go put a speed bump or hump out when they get a complaint. This would be something where they'd start raising awareness about the speed limit in town. There are different things they can do. When people make complaints, it's not that they aren't checking the complaints and they're putting a speed trailer up and radar and slow traffic down for a little bit. As soon as they get another complaint or the officer isn't sitting there, the speed goes back up. He walks around town quite a bit and there is a speed problem, especially in the neighborhoods. People aren't aware and are distracted. That's why they sit in the school zones. The speed limit is 20 miles an hour and they could write a lot of tickets every day. The idea would be have some physical things to force people to slow down and regulate, not with stop signs, but a way to calm traffic. He spoke with the engineer at Lakewood and the Police Department. Their makeup is about the same size but have 50,000 people. They only use the chicanes and have been quite effective. They did a survey and monitored the road. Bike lanes is also a way to slow traffic down. That is a problem where they do pave a road and it becomes a raceway. This discussion was just a way for them to collectively try to figure out how to solve the problem.

Mr. Kluge said the last item for discussion is a letter that came in the mail.

The clerk noted that a notice was received from the Ohio Division of Liquor Control. All liquor licenses come up for renewal in October. But any objections to those renewals have to be to Columbus by September 1, which is never enough time to act. She thought she'd bring it to their attention now rather than wait.

Mayor Seman said they will be starting negotiations with the five unions soon. Those are the fire, three police unions and AFSCME. He expects to start in August. If there are any concerns, please let him know. They will be starting to look at everything from the administrative point of view this week.

Duane King said he's still having problems with the same neighbor he's had problems with for the past several years. He walked out into his back yard and had a cloud of dust. He's running his business out of his driveway. He has a construction business that he's repeatedly asked that it stop. His wife is standing out there and he could barely see her through the dust. He's not exaggerating. He's out there blowing equipment off. This is ridiculous. He's really disappointed with what he's seen. He can ramble on forever about what's going wrong but he's just not seeing any improvement with this. He brought it up to the service director. She talked to the mayor about it. He talked to Bob about it. He knows about the ongoing problems. He thought the problems were over. He stopped complaining for a couple of years because of personal reasons. It's just getting out of hand. There are several people living in the residence now on and off. Again, with heavy construction equipment, he's sitting out there on Sundays and listening to construction equipment because he just came home from work. It's alright if he's working on his home and improving it, but he's not improving his home. It's a totally

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different story. His street is getting torn up because the neighbor has disintegrated his side of the devil strip all of the time. There are signs here in Ravenna that says no parking on the devil strip. They can park legally in the street, which he did today when painting his front porch. He didn't want to get paint on his vehicle. That helped slow the cars down. They had to slow down to go around him. Scranton Street is in pretty bad shape. Shadowlawn is in very good shape. He has a friend who lives over there so it is a super highway. With that being said, he would just like to see something moving forward. This is just out of hand.

Mayor Seman said they got the car off the devil strip. He follows up and checks. After going out there four or five times and he doesn't see it, they can only guess the problem has been rectified. He was talking with Mr. Moskun earlier who pointed out that it hasn't been repaired yet. He'll talk to the resident about the sawing and the business. The neighbor keeps saying he's moving. He will get in touch with him this week.

Mr. King said he is starting to have marital problems about this. He's really tired. He doesn't want to be the bad person. He's on the right side and trying to do the right thing. If you want to be a slob, go do it in somebody else's town. People said to him that the mud hole in front of his house looks real nice. He was walking in the neighborhood the other day and he had two people talk to him about it. The police say they want the community to help them do their job. That's what he's trying to do. But what it is him blowing a bunch of hot air and being angry all of the time. This isn't right.

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 6:39 P.M.

ATTEST:

Clerk of Council

Andrew Kluge, Chairman
Public Health and Safety Committee