

**Minutes of the Safety Committee
City of Sheffield Lake, Ohio
March 1, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Safety Committee was held Wednesday Mar. 1, 2023.
Chairwoman Stark called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

Present: Stark, Gee, Fire Chief Novak, Police Chief Kory.

Excused: Mayor Bring.

Attending: Kayleigh McCoy, Officer Michael Hendrickson.

MINUTES:

*Motion by Gee/Second by Stark to accept the minutes of the Feb. 1, 2023 meeting with any noted corrections. Yeas All.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

PRESENTATIONS: None.

Reports from Safety Forces:

Police Chief's report – Chief Kory states we had 365 calls for the month of February. The detective bureau is investigating several active thefts, frauds and deaths. Officer Poff is on the road training with Officer McCoy. Officers Sivert, Watkins and Ehlinger will be starting Monday. I will have them on day shift because I could not start them on the road; I am having some equipment issues. Member Gee says I am going to ask some questions to try and get all facts so we can take it from there and make a well informed decision. First, a gentleman named Brian Holb sent me 3 emails. The first pdf was a domestic violence report, and I would have been infuriated if my report would have been shared by someone. I don't understand what it had to do with the K9. I did not open the other emails or attachments. This is highly concerning to me. Chief Kory replies all of that is public record, anyone can request any report. Chairwoman Stark says everyone on council got those emails. Chief Kory says I can take a closer look at it. Member Gee asks I have questions and were any of these concerns brought up during negotiations? Chief Kory responds I'm not involved with negotiations. What concerns are you addressing? Member Gee replies the basement, the dog, etc. Part of those are dated during the negotiation time and I am wondering if the union rep brought any of those up at negotiations. Chief Kory responds I did not sit in on negotiations so I have no idea. Member Gee asks what was the name of the company that trained the K9? Also, Lenny wasn't the first K9, we had one that didn't pass x-rays, what was the name of the company Lenny was gotten from and the name of the training company? Hillary trained the dog; I don't remember her full name off the top of my head. Member Gee asks who chose that company and why? Chief Kory replies we chose that company because we scoured Lorain County and surrounding areas and we thought they were the best. We spent months looking and the pedigree on Lenny was flawless. Member Gee asks who is in charge of vetting applicants for the police dept. and fire dept.? Chief Novak responds after the test is given, we interview each candidate and score them. We take the highest scores, and we invited the top ones into the station and

they all did 4 hours of time at the station to see how they performed there. From there, myself and 3 officers sat down and made the decision. Chief Kory says we took applications for lateral transfer recently and all applications were given to the detective bureau and certified. The people who passed all the background items made it to interviews and then we decided who to hire. Member Gee asks with civil service, what can safety committee and council do to help you with the civil service? Chief Kory replies I would have to sit down and think about and outline. Member Gee asks do you have the training equipment you need available to you? Chief Kory responds a perfect example is the full timers have it in their contract now for the new firearms and weapon lights, AR's, etc, and the way my budget is being spent just on keeping the place afloat down there, we're probably not going to be able to afford our contractual agreements to the union. It will be close. If we do spend that money, the PD will be broke. I probably won't be able to make it through the rest of the year. I am contractually obligated to purchase these items. The AR's alone are \$20-25,000, weapon lights for the guns are \$3-5,000, new holsters are \$5,000, etc. We were looking to trade in our guns for Glock 17's and with the trade in cost, the purchase of new guns is only \$5,000. It makes sense to upgrade our 10-year-old firearms at this juncture. We are trying to cut costs. Chairwoman Stark asks is there a way for you to get us a breakdown of what the contract says, both departments, that you have to have, that the city is obligated to give? Chief Kory replies it says that there will be AR's in all the cars and weapon lights on all the guns. Member Gee asks is there a way that someone can take some time and try to write for some grants to help? Chief Kory replies unfortunately, with the staff I have, they are so inundated with their jobs, that taking any time away is an astronomical undertaking. Member Gee asks the position that was taken away from your department, if that was brought back, would that help with some of those problems? Chief Kory responds yeah, I think it would help a lot. Member Gee asks what would help us get that position back? Chief Kory replies vote on it and run a test. To have that position would go a long way. Member Gee asks currently, how short staffed are you? Chief Kory replies we are at 12 which is our historical high. According to FBI stats, a city our size, in our region typically has 28-31 full-time officers on the road. Personally, I would like to see 15-17 full-time officers. I think that is a realistic number to get us to 100% perfect. Member Gee asks because of the manpower, how much got spent on overtime? Chief Kory responds I will have to look that up, but I believe last year we were over \$90,000. Member Gee says what I am learning is 1st priority is manpower, second is making sure you have the things that are in the contract. Member Gee says now that we are back to 12 officers, are there cars covering everybody? Chief Kory replies I have not done the car assignments yet. If you look at the list, we have cars 2,3,4 &5 and those are our low mileage cars, 720 is my take home because it's not road worthy anymore. Cars 721 and 727 will have over 100,000 miles on them by the end of the year and 729 already has over 100,000. Realistically, we are probably looking at buying 3 cars next year or we are going to be dumping money into these ones. Member Gee asks if a police cruiser could be ordered today, how long would it take? Chief Kory replies Statewide called me and said if I had \$57,000 I could buy the car and drive it home today fully equipped. That is only one car, their show car and can be gone at any time. I have a quote for Dodge out of Indiana who would sell for \$40,000, but is not brand new. If we ordered now, we could have it by

May, but they don't have any equipment which is an additional \$10-15,000. Member Gee says we can bring it up at council, but it would still need legislation, etc. Member Gee asks how do we defuse the situation with the K9 when we just heard all the things we have to address? I have questions about that. If the K9 can be reinstated, but it has already been sold to the officer, does that mean we have to pay a check to the dog also? Chief Kory replies I do not have an answer. Member Gee asks citizen McCoy, do you? Mrs. McCoy replies Josh wants his partner back and is willing to work with whoever he needs to. I'm sure we can come to a peaceful resolution that will not cost the city anymore than it already was. Member Gee says I would personally like to see him reinstated. Again, with the civil service exam, what's it gonna take to get the equipment to study, the training to study? I spoke with you, and you said \$495 would get a tutor kit. Chief Kory responds a tutor average cost is around \$500 a person. Member Gee asks could all your men share one? Chief Kory replies it's an online thing. I don't think it could be shared easily. Member Gee says I did get a group interested in finding out more about that to help you. Chairwoman Stark asks the cars we currently have, to make them pursuit ready to standards, how many do we have that are technically pursuit ready? Chief Kory responds all the cars in the fleet currently are pursuit rated vehicles. The truck that was removed, was not pursuit rated. There is more to it then it's rated to go fast, there are a lot of safety features, etc. Officer Hendrickson briefly explains some of the features. Chairwoman Stark asks so there is no way to make that truck to the standard it needs to be for the dept. to use? Chief Kory replies it would probably cost more than the cost of the truck. Chairwoman Stark asks how long have we had the truck? Chief Kory replies 2-3 years. Member Gee says when they came before council, we were told it was only going to be used to load bicycles, dead deer, etc. and it would not be used for other things. Chairwoman Stark asks so we don't have any exclusive deal with Ford or Dodge where we have to go with them? We can go get a vehicle as long as it's ready and deemed safe for the use we want it for? Chief Kory responds yes, we don't have any contracts or get any discounts, etc. Chairwoman Stark asks what are the criteria levels to be promoted, etc.? Chief Kory replies civil service rules are you have to be out of probation. Our lateral transfers are 6 months and new hires are a year. Chairwoman Stark asks is that the same for the fire dept.? Chief Novak replies you have to have 5 years' experience as a firefighter to sit for the Lieutenant's test.

Fire Chief's report – Chief Novak reports for the month of February we did 94 calls. Our total for the year is 197. The new squad is scheduled to arrive the first week of April. Squad 72 had to have the tires rotated and a sensor replaced. Lt. Mariner is scheduling a CPR class in April at the community center. Last month they recertified the police in CPR. The jet ski project is moving forward. Lt. Davis is ordering the sliding gate and within the next couple weeks we will be putting stuff at the boat launch. Chief Kory and I had a meeting at Brookside school and they said they received \$470,000 through the governor's office to update school safety features. At Knollwood and Forestlawn they are going to upgrade the PA's, put cameras throughout the school and also upgrade the security of the doors. They plan on having an active shooter drill. I want to send some of our guys to Westlake when they do theirs to learn about the rescue task force. Last month we did EMS training with geriatric trauma. Lt. Bowman did a class on building instruction. EMA is planning for the

solar eclipse that is going to happen on April 8th 2024. That is going to be a big deal in our area. They anticipate 1,000's of people coming into Lorain County. I am going to be involved in the planning of it. Member Gee asks with the Sea Doo's, are the police and fire going to train on it? Chief Novak replies yes. Chief Kory states my only issue with it is if I send a guy out on one of them, then I only have 1 officer covering the entire city. Chairwoman Stark asks with the ambulance, they keep saying it is coming, have we talked to them about any type of discount they are giving us for waiting so long? Chief Novak replies I will check into it.

Mayor's report- Excused.

NEW BUSINESS:

OLD BUSINESS: None.

CITIZENS COMMENTARY: *Kayleigh McCoy, 583 Maple Ave.* states I want to tell you a little bit about the situation. First and foremost, Lenny is happy and loved. We are grateful that the state law saw to it that he could become ours for \$1 after this unexpected and unjust termination. Second, despite what you have been told, there are 8 documented incidents that Lenny has been utilized in and assisted on. He has done perimeter checks, he has been used as a deterrent for subjects with warrants as well as been on standby for another agency's slow roll pursuit into our city. 8 times in 5 months in the middle of winter on midnights is a pretty decent track record. Lenny is a tool and not something you want utilized every shift every day. There was so much time put in training Lenny with a world renowned trainer and other jurisdiction's K9 units. He is a puppy and a rookie and still learning the ropes like many human rookie officers. His obedience is amazing, his drug seizures are getting better week by week, his building and area searches are great and he is certified with the state. The reason of the cruiser needing to go back into rotation is a cop out. The cruiser was outfitted for Lenny and was already being used on a full-time basis. It was only assigned to Lenny and his handler and is still assigned to Josh, so he is still driving it, just without Lenny. The F150 not being pursuit rated doesn't mean it is only for pursuit, it's just safety measures. The email sent to the chief regarding the F-150 was not the union demanding it be taken out of service and replaced with a brand new cruiser. It was an informative just so you know, if this should be involved in an accident, there is some liability on the city because it's not pursuit rated. The email was not meant for immediate action, because it wasn't immediately needed at that point. It was more for when it becomes time to buy a new cruiser. This was for no other reason then keeping them and the community safe. I would like to point out that there is a policy in place for the police dept. that if certain criteria is met, our officers can initiate or get involved in a pursuit. At no time did the union demand the F-150 be taken out of service or replaced with a brand new one. If that was the impression, a simple conversation could have cleared that up instead of the knee jerk reaction of terminating the K9 unit. This was impulsive and retaliatory. It follows the same pattern of months of write ups following the filing of grievances, the questioning of promotion practices and an anonymous complaint made to the state after bringing basement issues to the city on multiple occasions to no avail. State law prohibits whistleblowers and those who file complaints from being retaliated against, yet that is what's going on. If this was only about the vehicle issues, middle ground could have been met. If this was not retaliatory in nature, our kind of dog catcher, I say that because we had a dog catcher who is

not the dog catcher because she is not getting paid, would not have been ordered to find Lenny a new home. This has nothing to do with the cruisers. We run a 2 man shift and have 8 cruisers in the fleet. Taking a car that was already being utilized and putting it back in rotation makes zero sense. I urge you to look at the numbers and patterns. Lenny sees Josh gear up for work and gets excited then sees him leave without him. The K9 cruiser remains equipped for Lenny and will remain that way, so what is the real reason. To get back at us for fighting for our rights, making sure we have a mold and asbestos free workplace, making sure our contract is being followed? Josh is passionate about his job, loves being a K9 handler and wants nothing more than to have his partner back. We are begging you to fight for this and hear the truth.

Michael Hendrickson, 33393 Electric Blvd. says I grew up in this city and when I started and was training, we would go to a call for service and there was a 75% chance I knew them. I enjoy working in this town. There are a lot of things I have learned about this town that I never knew. One thing is there is a drug problem in this city. It needs to be taken care of and that is what Lenny was being trained to do. For you to expect him to start cleaning up the streets after 5 months, is just absurd. I agree with everything she had to say. Member Gee asks what led you to believe that anyone on council was saying the dog was not doing enough? None of us have thought that. Mr. Hendrickson replies the mayor and newspaper thought that. Chairwoman Stark says so you mean the administration and not council? Mr. Hendrickson responds correct. Member Gee asks you keep telling us of all the things Lenny has done, I chose not to open the emails because I was stressed after the first one and felt I had no right seeing that information, my concern is what drug busts was he involved in? To my knowledge it has been none, but he is in training. The case we were sent, the domestic violence, how exactly did the dog help? Mrs. McCoy replies he was used as a deterrent and they ended up not catching the subject, he was very violent. A dog's presence deters a lot of things. In that instance, it was to deter the subject not to flee. He was also radioed from Avon Lake about a pursuit and they were told if the subject flees from the vehicle, we will assist in trying to apprehend them. He is a dual-purpose dog. The two instances the mayor brought up are where he did school locker searches. Lenny also does perimeter searches. Someone was ringing a young lady's doorbell and Lenny went and searched the perimeter. When criminals see a K9, statistically and historically they are going to more likely than not, comply. Chairwoman Stark asks the cage is still in the car, the car still says K9 on it, is there any liability to have that on there if the K9 is not currently in use and what's it going to cost to remove that if we have to? Chief Kory replies if we removed it, it would cost approximately \$5,000 to get a new cage system. That cage is specifically designed. We would have to gut the car and it would be out of service for about 2 months probably. I don't think having extra decals in the car creates any liability for us. The city is planning to have those removed. Member Gee says if I understand right, the K9 officer is still driving that car on his shift. Chief Kory replies correct. Member Gee asks then why can't reach some understanding that the dog and officer are in that vehicle on their shift, but the car stays here for the next shift to use? Would someone be objecting to that over in the police dept.? Chief Kory replies I can't speak on that. Mrs. McCoy replies no, if that was the agreement that we came to, then no. The only issue and it's not really an issue because we live so close, is that if Lenny were to get recalled, Josh would have to

drive to the station, pickup the cruiser, drive back to the house and get Lenny and drive to wherever the call was. Member Gee says I personally am against police cars staying in driveways because every time someone has one, we get phone calls asking why is it setting there on taxpayers money. Mrs. McCoy replies I am on the corner of Maple and Richelieu and people fly around the corner, but the cruiser being in our driveway sure slowed those people down.

Member Gee says lastly, I would like to thank our fire dept. chief and police chief for all the help with my veteran in need today.

MEETING ADJOURNED: With no further business before this committee, *Motion by Gee/Second by Stark to adjourn at 8:28 PM. Yeas All.

CLERK OF COMMITTEE AFFIRMATION: This meeting of the City Committee of Governing The Sunshine Laws of the State of Ohio as they may apply. All meetings are recorded and available in Council's Offices.

CLERK OF COUNCIL

Brandy Randolph

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Leanna Stark

I, Brandy Randolph, duly appointed Clerk Of Committee Of Sheffield Lake DO HEREBY CERTIFY that this is a True and exact copy of the minutes of the Safety Committee of March 1, 2023.

PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

Rick Rosso