

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 30, 2008 4:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM**

Present: Chairman Dave Grendel, Chairman
Councilman Tom Narduzzi
Councilman Jim Piteo

Others Present: Mayor Gregory Kurtz (arrived 4:39 pm.)
Vice Mayor Riley
Councilman Anthony Togliatti
Fire Chief Pete Nelson
Police Chief John Nicaastro
Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm
Economic Development Director Ron White
Tom Priebe, Civil Service Commission

Chairman Grendel called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

Moved by Grendel, seconded by Narduzzi, to approve the minutes of the August 5, 2008 Safety Committee Meeting. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

Chairman Grendel stated we have an adjustment to the September 2nd Safety Committee meeting. Jim Riley was removed as a member of the Committee and replaced with Jim Piteo. That has been corrected. There were some other minor things such as Pepper Pike being two words.

Moved by Grendel, seconded by Narduzzi, to approve the minutes of the September 2, 2008 Safety Committee meeting as amended. Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.

Chairman Grendel thanked Gayle Rudary for the good job on the minutes in the absence of Clerk of Council Sue Kurshuk.

Chairman Grendel stated we'll begin with Don Ramm with the update of the Hillside/Rt. 21 intersection signalization. In review of the last meeting we were wondering if we were going to receive donation of the right-of-way or if we would need appraisals and go that route.

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm responded I received an update from Dave Burke in the Law Department. He has contacted and met with two property owners on the east side – the Sunoco station and the beverage store. While they're in favor of the project, they are not in favor of donating. They want to be compensated so he is going to be pursuing appraisals and should be following up with some cost in the next couple of days. He has not met with the third property owner, which is the southwest corner but he has a meeting scheduled this week and we

should know better where they stand. The likelihood is that they'll be taking the same position. As soon as I hear about the appraisal costs, whether it exceeds the \$7,500, we might have to bring some legislation forward. Perhaps we can get something on the Council Agenda for the October meeting if needed.

Would it be possible to entertain somewhat of a conditional motion that if costs come in and exceed \$7,500 we can proceed?

Vice Mayor Riley stated I'd like to comment. I know the people in the Sunoco stated and beverage store don't own the property. I would like to see us make the landowners spruce of those properties on both sides.

Mayor Kurtz asked, who is saying they won't donate?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied Dave Burke has had a meeting with the owners, Melvin Wisnieski.

Mayor Kurtz stated I know who the one landowner is. Aren't you working with them right now on their property?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied they're the same as on Archwood?

Mayor Kurtz replied yes. In all fairness, if it was any of our properties and it takes away from the true value of the property, that's one thing. But if it's cosmetic in nature, then what is the problem? Didn't you just recommend that we support a provision on the Archwood reconstruction where the City is going to take over the street where we don't put an 8-inch waterline in? We can do a 6-inch or an 8-inch and tie into a 6-inch?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied correct.

Mayor Kurtz stated that's going to save them a substantial amount of money. In all fairness, unless it's going to diminish the value of their property, if it's going to take away parking spots, if it's going to take away something that's tangible in terms of the use of that land, then I understand. But if it's not, I think we need a diagram. I think we need to see the impact on each property, and if it's something cosmetic, then they should donate it. If it's something that's substantial, then obviously, in all fairness, the law says that we have to reimburse, unless they waive that. That's my belief.

Vice Mayor Riley commented that's why I'm saying let's be good neighbors. I know we installed a sidewalk on the one property.

Councilman Piteo commented, Tim, the guy that leases the Sunoco, his only concern when I talked to him was that his business was going to be slowed down because we were going to close the road. I didn't think we were closing the road completely.

Mayor Kurtz replied there will be no road closing. So the tenant doesn't have a problem. It's really the owner we have to communicate with. So what is the issue? We need to get appraisals?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied that's right. Dave Burke is pursuing costs for those.

Mayor Kurtz asked, do you have diagrams of each property and the areas that we're going to need?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied yes, but not with me.

Mayor Kurtz asked, can you put that together for us?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied yes. We decided to look at the bigger picture and what we would need ultimately for the widening of the intersection down the road, so we were going to get it all at once.

Councilman Piteo asked are we still talking a turn lane in there, on the east side?

Mayor Kurtz replied I'm not sure but I know I'm getting call from people who think we're putting a highway down Hillside. I told them no. That's for the intersection. So you need to get a sketch and you need to show us the impact to each property. Then we can determine if we need to go for an appraisal, or if it's a small enough parcel, I'll call both of them and ask them to consider donation. Even if they don't, we probably need an appraisal for the donation. Let's get the appraisals. How much are they?

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm replied we don't know yet. We should have a figure in a couple of days.

Mayor Kurtz responded, maybe \$1,000 a piece. I should be able to authorize that. We'll get the appraisals. Once we get the appraisals then we'll bring them back to Council as a whole if we can get everything organized between now and the Council Meeting. We'll talk to them and see if we can get it worked out.

Chairman Grendel stated I'd like to also see a sketch.

Mayor Kurtz replied we'll take the sketch of the existing property lines and color in the areas that we need for the upgrades.

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm stated we should know what the third property owner will do later this week after Dave Burke meets with him.

Vice Mayor Riley stated we should also look at it going north. I don't know how much land is available south on Hillside. The Convenient and funeral home have that river rock area if we need to use it.

Engineering Coordinator Don Ramm stated we have plenty of right-of-way there by the funeral home.

Vice Mayor Riley stated if we're going to align the intersection on the east side by taking some of the Sunoco land, we might light it up.

Chairman Grendel stated as far as the traffic signal we've always said that sooner or later there will be more houses going in on Troiano's subdivision. We talked about having something similar to Chestnut. Coming from the valley there is a certain timeframe when there is a lot of traffic.

Mayor Kurtz replied after work.

Chairman Grendel continued and also after school with the primary school being there. Traffic backs up down Hillside.

Mayor Kurtz stated so we should look at it more comprehensively in terms of two traffic control issues. One, westbound in the afternoon when school lets out and the other one could be continuous because when we put another one hundred or so houses in Troiano off of Hillside that will have an impact in terms of traffic demands.

Chairman Grendel commented I would imagine that when Hillside is redone going into Seven Hills it's going to be more inviting for people to use even more than it's used now.

Mayor Kurtz stated we'll put the sketches together and bring them before Council or the Committee and debate the issue.

Engineering Director Don Ramm stated for adding the east and west left turn lanes for Hillside.

Chairman Grendel stated we'll discuss and update on the deer hunting ordinance now that it's deer hunting season.

Chief Nicastro stated we had 205 permits go out. We have had 116 that have come back and been approved. We had one lot we did not approve that was on Brecksville Road. It was in the middle and the back lots were all just wide open and you could be seen from about six different residences. Being on Brecksville Road, we didn't think that was a great idea and so that was not approved.

We haven't anything from the first week so we'll see how it goes.

Chairman Grendel stated Loren Guell has spoken out on this topic at previous meetings. He's not here today. He says we should pursue having the deer meat processed for some of the homeless shelters. Possibly the City can put a fund together to in a small way benefit some of these shelters.

Chief Nicaastro responded, one of the issues that Jason Hadsell was working on from his end was to get sportsmen's clubs to donate money for processing. I spoke to him Monday and he said to hold off. He said they had about \$500 which will process about ten deer. He's meeting with them to try and get something going and will let me know. I would rather keep this low key for the hunters who are out there and might work with us. I don't want to get everyone stirred up more than necessary.

Chairman Grendel stated we'll keep that on the radar screen. I think it's a good benefit especially with the economy what it is now.

Chief Nicaastro stated you can figure around \$50 to process a deer.

Chairman Grendel stated, you're going to update us on personnel.

Chief Nicaastro stated Ron Carrao started full time in the jail on September 15th. He replaced Bob Ornas full time. We have a part-timer. Unfortunately, they moved the jailer training school a month back. We have Russ Varga a resident in town who will be starting part-time. He'll be going to training in October.

We've interviewed the top ten patrolmen on our list to replace former officer Mike Shippitka who has left. We have narrowed it down to three and are in the process of scheduling a second interview for those people.

Also, as a result of Council repealing the ordinance banning weapons in the parks and outdoor areas, the Service Department has removed the signs.

Chairman Grendel asked how soon the new patrolman would be onboard.

Mayor Kurtz replied sometime during the fourth quarter. That's the goal.

Chairman Grendel stated we'll move onto Chief Pete Nelson regarding the fire hydrant cleaning and painting.

I believe Councilman Narduzzi had received some complaints.

Councilman Narduzzi replied I had one phone call and talked to Chief Nelson about it.

Chief Nelson stated that was resolved and straightened out early in the project. We've had no other calls since then.

Chairman Grendel asked they're not doing anything differently than on Brecksville Road? They've not taking any shortcuts or anything?

Chief Nelson replied no. They had an issue with pellets on a driveway. We contacted them and they came back right away and took care of the issue.

Councilman Narduzzi asked did they vacuum up the paint that comes off of them?

Chief Nelson replied yes, the paint and the pellets are both vacuumed up.

Chairman Grendel asked how many hydrants had been completed since the contract was signed.

Chief Nelson replied initially they did 100 the first time. In the second round they completed another 100. We have a two year contract with them. Beginning in 2009 they will be doing 200 more.

Chairman Grendel asked so they've done 200 already?

Chief Nelson replied correct.

Chairman Grendel stated so they've done Brecksville Road and Pleasant Valley?

Chief Nelson replied they've done Brecksville in total. They've also completed Pleasant Valley and done some hydrants on Granger Road. Back off of Rockside in some of the higher traffic areas – Oak Tree, West Creek, Rockside Woods north and south have been completed. They've also done some hydrants on Summit. We're trying to get some of the high visibility areas. Next year we'll probably continue with Chestnut, Hillside and make sure there is a good mix. We want people in the community, as well as visitors, see the beautification process.

Chairman Grendel stated our ultimate goal is to complete all the hydrants. Once we have all of them done we'll probably be ready to begin the process again.

Mayor Kurtz commented there are over 800 hydrants.

Chief Nelson stated as far as the bid, initially there was a pretty large discrepancy in the cost.

Mayor Kurtz asked we made that a renewable contract for a second year, correct?

Chief Nelson replied it is a two-year contract through 2009.

Chairman Grendel asked if there was anything new to report regarding the EMS billing.

Chief Nelson replied John Veres, Maggie Osysko and I met last Friday with a representative from one of the billing agencies. I was hoping and prepared to make a recommendation to the Mayor regarding the company. However, since then one of my guys, Jim Wheeler, came back from a conference that he attended which was sponsored by Fire House. Fire House is a software program that we use for data collection and submitting our information to the state. When he was there, they had made a decision to do EMS billing and open it up to more communities than what they've done in the past. For the last ten years they've only done EMS billing for those communities who have greater than 150,000 calls – none but the big cities. Houston was one of the bigger accounts. Part of what they were offering us, and we don't have it in contract form, but preliminarily they said that they would charge four to five percent for a

community our size. The company we were dealing with was talking seven percent. Also, we have been looking at going to all electronic documentation. Currently we do both. We would like to do away with the written portion. Fire House indicated that they will provide us with laptop notepads of the software to be able to do mobile report writing and also air cards to be able to transmit that information for EMS billing directly to Fire House. We don't have any of this cemented yet because we just found this information out. We're making a call into the Fire House people and meet with them to see what they will supply us.

Chairman Grendel asked where they're located.

Chief Nelson replied I believe they're located in Austin, TX. They have no fire departments in Ohio that currently contract with them. We would be the first. Again, they're previous exclusion of all fire departments with less than 150,000 calls probably precluded them from coming into Ohio. How many communities in Ohio would have that volume of calls? I know Cleveland does their own EMS billing. Since Fire House has opened it up we are now eligible. We don't have a lot of calls compared to some of their larger communities but they're fee is structured around how many calls that we have.

Mayor Kurtz stated put it together.

Chief Nelson stated a two percent difference is significant so we've going to be taking a look at that company.

Chairman Grendel asked of the support would be more difficult with them being located in Texas. They're not local.

Chief Nelson replied because there not local, if there was a problem, there might be some delay, although we have been working with Fire House. For the last six years we've had their software. There is a regional rep that we have direct contact with. He has always provided us good service with our software program.

Chairman Grendel stated so there is a track record with that company.

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Chairman Grendel stated we'll pursue that then. Again, we'll keep this on the agenda on a continual basis to keep updated.

Finally, on our agenda is the retirement of Asst. Chief Frank Kruszewski.

Chief Nelson replied it is confirmed. The Asst. Chief submitted a letter of resignation to the Mayor. October 10th is his last day. He's a great guy and we're going to miss him a lot. With that, we've also been preparing to replace his position. The Mayor has scheduled a number of interviews with our lieutenants for this coming Thursday. Also, I have scheduled some interviews for a new hire to replace as they move up. That is scheduled for October 22nd and 24th. We'll be going through the same process the police are going through. We will be

interviewing the top 11. One individual who is on the list will be sworn in this Friday in North Royalton. His name is Mark Lewis. Mark's dad works for the City of Independence. He's given me a letter to remove his name so we'll be actually interviewing the top 11 people for that one position. In our panel for the interview we're going to incorporate four individuals from the fire department – myself, two officers, the union president and then we're also going to invite an individual from Civil Service and our Human Resources Director Heather Glaze. She will also be involved with the interview process. We'll get back to everyone after that.

Chairman Grendel asked so you'll recommend the top three and go through the same process?

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Vice Mayor Riley asked both chiefs, the DROP Program was started after 9/11?

Chief Nelson replied those who first went into it will be starting their seventh year in January.

Vice Mayor Riley asked but it came about after 9/11 or was that always around.

Tom Priebe replied before.

Chief Nelson stated seven years ago.

Vice Mayor Riley stated so it came after that?

Tom Priebe responded it came after that but that wasn't the reason.

Chief Nelson added that had nothing to do with it.

Vice Mayor Riley asked you're only allowed to be in the program for a total of eight years?

Chief Nelson replied correct.

Vice Mayor Riley asked and there is no way for the City to find out who is participating in that program, correct? Are we going to get hit with a bunch of retirements all of a sudden?

Chief Nelson replied I know who in our department is in the DROP Program and how long they've been in.

Mayor Kurtz stated the question is, if you're in the DROP Program and you complete your eight years, what happens?

Chief Nelson replied you have to then separate service or you lose your DROP money that's saved.

Chief Nicastro added you lose so much. You can stay but you lose so much of that money.

Mayor Kurtz asked so no one is going to stay after eight years?

Chief Nelson replied I would think not. There is some discussion about extending it to ten years.

Vice Mayor Riley stated my point is that if someone has six years in the DROP Program and I'm a lieutenant, I don't want to give one of those guys this assistant chief position because two years from now I'm going to have to replace them again, if we're looking for consistency in our department.

Chief Nelson replied it could be a consideration I guess.

Vice Mayor Riley stated I'd hate to give someone a position, train them and we're going to lose them in six months to a year, or even lose them quicker than two years. I don't know how the Committee feels about that but that would be one of my considerations in the interview process.

Mayor Kurtz replied I'm not sure you can take that into consideration in your interview process.

Councilman Narduzzi added it might be considered discrimination.

Mayor Kurtz added plus functionally, how do you plan the future leadership of your department with an unknown?

Chief Nelson replied absolutely right. The unknown is that the individual does not have to stay eight years. He can separate at any time he wants.

Mayor Kurtz stated what I'm saying is if you're looking at planning the future of your department. We all have a termination period from the chief all the way down. If you already have a timeframe for your retirement, if you're leader enough to plan your future and not just look at yourself but you're worried about the future of the department, you know when you're going to anticipate retirement. You usually prepare for that by putting people in position to grow for the future job. The problem is, if you have a vacancy and somebody is in this program and they only have a couple of years left, you've just trained to put somebody in a stopgap sort of situation, rather than a full position of leadership where you're going to be there for five or ten years to make a difference. It could present a series of issues that need to be addressed.

Chief Nelson replied absolutely.

Mayor Kurtz commented I wonder what other communities have been thinking and what happens. This affects smaller communities more so than larger.

Chief Nelson replied most communities utilize the Civil Service process to hire. It's a little different. You are absolutely right though.

Mayor Kurtz asked, does Civil Service have a position on this?

Tom Priebe replied you have to follow the hiring rules. The DROP Program doesn't go into effect for that. If you're doing a promotional exam, it has nothing to do with it.

Mayor Kurtz said but you see my point.

Tom Priebe replied yes. When you're interviewing you're in the process of checking out who is going to be there the longest. If you look at our department right now and the ages, you can figure that anybody who has more than 25 years and has the retirement age is probably in the DROP Program. They'd be foolish if they're not.

Mayor Kurtz asked anybody who has 25 years of service?

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Tom Priebe added and then for retirement you go into the DROP Program. You're foolish if you're not in that program.

Mayor Kurtz asked if it was the same for the police department?

Tom Priebe replied yes. We could lose a lot of people in a hurry, not just promotional.

Mayor Kurtz asked so I can pretty much assume that anybody with 25 years is in the DROP Program? Is that safe to say?

Chief Nelson replied yes. Financially it's inappropriate if they did not go into the program.

Mayor Kurtz stated that being said, it all comes down to decisions and money but the point raises a very important consideration when we're looking at the future of our departments' configuration, leadership configuration, right?

Chief Nicastro replied yes. You may have somebody go in the DROP after 25 years with the thought that they're going to stay three years and leave. Maybe they'll say they will stay four or five. It's not that much different than the way it was because the pension used to top out at 33 years. Are you going to judge the person for where they're at in their career?

Mayor Kurtz asked but if you're talking an assistant chief or chief position, and he's in the DROP Program and only has two or three years to go and they're in a succession planning mode of assistant chief to a chief, say you're assistant chief for a year or two and all of a sudden you're only going to be a chief for a year or two?

Chief Nicastro replied you're talking about a guy that has 30 years in. If the DROP wasn't there, you still have a guy that's likely to leave in three or four years.

Vice Mayor Riley said I always thought the chief stayed. If you get to that point in your career as a fireman or policeman and you had no chance of becoming chief then you retired. But if you were the chief you would stay on those extra years.

Chief Nelson responded there are communities who do go outside of the department and they may even select a retired individual, retired chief or assistant chief.

Mayor Kurtz stated as pointed out, I just wonder if we could conceivably have a chief for a two-year period. I'm not so sure that's in the best interest of the long term planning of the department. I don't know if there is any way to define that. What Civil Service is saying is that's not something that's part of their regulations or rules. So when we get a list, we don't have a column that indicates so many years in the DROP Program. From a City's leadership position we're trying to promote and plan for our future where your leadership is going to be in place for a period of time where they can have an impact. I'm not sure a year, two or three is really enough to make a difference.

Chief Nicastro asked, is there a recent ruling about retiring from the pension system and trying to maintain the same position in the department? If you hire a retired person from outside they will come here and be under PERS.

Mayor Kurtz replied right.

Chief Nicastro stated for example, if you had a police chief that retired from DROP but he'd stay on under PERS in the same capacity.

Tom Priebe replied I don't know.

Chief Nelson replied I'm not sure.

Mayor Kurtz stated let's check that out. You raise a good point. We're going through this whole process and all of a sudden there is a set of circumstances that could limit and have an affect on who we hire.

Vice Mayor Riley stated when the tests were given this year I was surprised at how few applicants took the test. I don't know how many men our in our fire department with 25 years or more but let's say that three years from now five men retire. If we don't have a long list of applicants, we could be in a bind.

Chief Nelson said we had 27.

Vice Mayor Kurtz stated 27 met a minimum standard. Twenty seven had to get to a point of a minimum standard both physically and through other testing in order to get on that list.

Chief Nicastro stated we have guys that didn't get into the program until 27 or 28 years. When that first eight year period hits, we're not going to have a big group of guys leaving. Down the road we have a big group of guys who have around 20 years and they're all going to get at 25.

Chief Nelson stated we see the same thing.

Tom Priebe stated a lot of departments didn't go in right away because they weren't sure of it.

Vice Mayor Riley asked what is the benefit?

Tom Priebe replied you freeze your retirement at 25 years. Then you go into an annuity program and it builds up.

Chief Nicastro stated instead of retiring at 25 years you into the DROP. Now the pension that you would have collected goes into an annuity. Every year you work you collect your City salary and that 60% of your top three years keeps going into the annuity for eight years so you have a big chunk of cash and your pension is frozen at the 60%.

Vice Mayor Riley asked, what was the reason for this program?

Tom Priebe replied to cut the retirement and to keep people in the department.

Mayor Kurtz said to stop them from retiring and incentivize them to stay involved. So as the guys hit 25 years now normally they're participating in DROP.

Chief Nelson replied normally. Most of them are in DROP.

Chief Nicastro stated you can retire at 60% of your top pay basically only a lot of people can't afford it. Some guys have had enough and want to get out and get another job.

Chief Nelson stated the annuity is an awful big carrot that they dangle in front of us. It's probably safe to assume that most people will go at least three to eight years in the DROP Program.

Mayor Kurtz responded but if I'm hearing correctly, in eight years it's over. You have to leave.

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Chief Nicastro stated there's talk about extending it.

Mayor Kurtz stated I think another set of circumstances has just been presented.

Chairman Grendel asked so when they retire they get frozen at 25 years and they also have the annuity then to supplement that?

Chief Nicastro replied yes.

Mayor Kurtz asked so 25 years is at 60% of the top three years?

Chief Nicastro replied yes.

Mayor Kurtz stated and then the annuity kicks in and that becomes "x" amount of money.

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Chief Nicaastro added, cash.

Mayor Kurtz stated so at the end of eight more years they'd be fully vested in it. Do you get that money in one lump sum?

Chief Nelson replied you probably wouldn't take it that way.

Mayor Kurtz asked so you have options?

Chief Nicaastro replied you have options.

Mayor Kurtz asked, is that taxable?

Chief Nicaastro replied yes, taxes are taken out.

Vice Mayor Riley commented I know when my dad retired from Cleveland they were hit with a bunch of men retiring. They were allowed to bank overtime and sick time and get that all at once. The city just didn't have the money to pay it.

Tom Priebe said departments like Independence and Cuyahoga Heights, anybody that isn't like Cleveland, they want to have these men stay a little longer. It builds the pensions up and keeps the money in the pension plan. They're making it easier for the guys to retire, still keep working and earn some money. If you're Independence or Brecksville and not being run by Cleveland, the guys are foolish for not taking it.

Chairman Grendel asked and if you don't retire in eight years then you lose the annuity?

Chief Nelson replied a substantial portion.

Mayor Kurtz commented a person would be foolish not to retire.

Chief Nicaastro responded you lose all the interest and the City's contribution.

Mayor Kurtz stated well then that's a no brainer. That puts us in a tough position all of a sudden.

Chief Nicaastro commented unless you can stay under PERS and I don't know the answer to that. You'd be out of the police pension as if you hired somebody from outside that was retired but I don't know. I'd have to check on that.

Chief Nelson stated I don't see why you couldn't. You'd be retired from one community and go to another community.

Mayor Kurtz stated nobody would really want to do that for 30 years.

Chief Nelson replied you'd be surprised.

Vice Mayor Riley asked how many years Chief Dugan had in Cleveland.

Chief Nelson replied he had close to 30 years.

Mayor Kurtz asked but he wasn't part of the DROP Program was he?

Chief Nicaastro replied no. There was no DROP then.

Vice Mayor Riley said he retired from Cleveland and worked here. Then he retired from here and is working somewhere else.

Chief Nelson added, full time.

Mayor Kurtz stated I guess the bottom line is that it presents a set of challenges in planning the future of the safety forces departments. We'll have to look at that.

Chief Nelson stated if you recall, it was a good year and a half or two years ago when I started preparing the Safety Committee with regard to the DROP Program and where our guys are at, and making you aware that all the officers are at that point where they were in the DROP Program.

Mayor Kurtz stated I recall discussion where they were participating in the DROP Program but I'm not sure there was a good understanding of how it worked – the incentive and disincentive to participate. I understand now from this conversation that you're very much incentivized to participate in the program after you have your 25 years in, but the downside for a smaller community would be that now you have a certain window from 25 years to 33 years of service because eight years would be the maximum. In that window, if you have vacancies in top positions, you have to reevaluate some of your decision making in order to plan long-term.

Chief Nelson responded I think we have a little easier task at it because we appoint the assistant chief and fire chief, whereas with other communities you would take the Civil Service test and take the one who scored highest on the test and put him on.

Mayor Kurtz stated so you could be the chief for one year and gone.

Chief Nelson replied yes.

Mayor Kurtz stated that makes no sense to me – and not know anything about it.

Vice Mayor Riley commented if you assistant chief and chief started around the same time, you could lose both of them around the same time.

Mayor Kurtz stated these guys with 20 years in.

Chief Nicaastro responded we have a group with around 20 years.

Mayor Kurtz stated in five more years they're going to hit that magic 25 and it will be interesting. This presents a different set of circumstances. I'm not sure when the legislature or anyone considered some of these ramifications in terms of future planning.

Chief Nicastro stated it was to keep cash in the pension fund because it was running short.

Mayor Kurtz stated I can see a real challenge for anyone who deals with civil service in the chief's position because they could appoint a chief and he could be there one year and then retires.

Chief Nelson responded they have to retire.

Mayor Kurtz stated I'm glad this was brought up.

Chairman Grendel stated you have flexibility then with the two top positions as far as that goes.

Mayor Kurtz stated I'm not so sure I have the knowledge or if it's available. We don't have that third column of how many years someone has been in the DROP Program to use as part of our assessment.

Chief Nelson stated it's pretty safe to assume because we know how many years.

Mayor Kurtz stated so we have to look at everyone who has 25 years, they've been in the program so many years and they have so many years left. It's a pretty safe assumption except for those who didn't get into it right away. That's the criteria we have to look at.

I think in all fairness to the chiefs we need to have that column, that information available for Council and the Mayor so that as we plan the future we have some idea.

Councilman Narduzzi responded I would run that by Legal though.

Several people speaking at once.

Vice Mayor Riley asked Chief Nelson and Chief Nicastro to prepare a list for the next Safety Committee meeting of when the men in each department started. That will help us to figure it out.

Chairman Grendel commented somebody can retire from another force and become chief.

Chief Nelson stated they would have to be in PERS.

Chief Nicastro stated once you retire from police and fire, you're out but then you may come back in public service.

Chairman Grendel stated that may make it more advantageous. If you're looking at your list and almost everyone will be retiring in a couple of years, that may force you to look outside.

Mayor Kurtz responded go younger or go outside.

Tom Priebe stated you also have to remember if you look for someone from the fire department that's already in another fire department, he can just transfer his retirement plan over to here and you don't know where he's at.

Mayor Kurtz responded right. That's a limitation. It's interesting.

Chief Nelson stated Tom Priebe brought up a good point. You could construe this as age discrimination if that's the criteria you use.

Mayor Kurtz responded I just want to see how many years of service everyone has.

Chairman Grendel asked if there was anything else to be discussed.

Chief Nelson stated that the fire department would be having a live burn at 4811 Chestnut in partnership with the TRI-C Fire Academy. It is scheduled for October 17th, 20th and 21st. Frank Rini owns the home. He is required by contract to have the house down and the basement filled by the Friday after the 21st. We will have flyers go out to the residents in that area and will have signs posted on Chestnut stating that a live fire drill is taking place.

Chairman Grendel asked if it was close to the Seven Hills border?

Mayor Kurtz replied it's right by the corner of Poplar and Chestnut.

Chief Nelson stated this will not be a complete burn. We'll be setting fires within the home and doing some training on that. Mr. Rini will then come in and bulldoze it down.

Chairman Grendel stated it will serve a purpose with training.

**Moved by Grendel, seconded by Narduzzi, to adjourn the Safety Committee Meeting.
Voice Vote: 3 yes/0 no; motion carried.**

There being no further business to discuss, the Safety Committee Meeting was adjourned at a.m.

Gayle Rudary, Pro Tem Clerk of Council
