

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2009**

This meeting of the Health & Safety Committee of Kent City Council was called to order on Wed., April 1, 2009, at 7:25 p.m. by John Kuhar, Chair. Chair Kuhar said they would be discussing the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant.

PRESENT: MR. AMRHEIN, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUHAR, MR. TURNER, MS. WALLACH, AND MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; W. LILICH, SAFETY DIRECTOR; J. PEACH, POLICE CHIEF; AND L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL

ABSENT: MS. SHAFFER

Dave Ruller, City Manager, explained there are two components to this discussion. He said the first went out in their original packet. He said they distributed information on the COPS grant on Monday.

Mr. Ruller said the Bryne Justice Grant is a 100% grant, with no strings attached. He said they have already some determination regarding the available monies, and Mr. Lillich has broken it out into areas where the money could be used.

Mr. Ruller said the second piece is worthy of bringing forward, but it comes with some decisions. He said it is not a 100% grant, so there is some cash the City must contribute. He said the amount to be contributed is less in the first three years, but is a significant amount in the fourth year. He said it is a COPS stimulus program, adding it is funding for more officers. He said the grant pays for three years, and the City must guarantee four years, and will be picking up the full cost of the officers in the fourth year.

Mr. Ruller said Council expressed interest previously. He said in August 2007, Council was very strong about filling more vacancies and expanding the Fire Department personnel. He said that is why they are making Council aware about this opportunity to leverage money. He said the second piece is deliberative, and they need input as to how strong Council fills about more officers on the force. He said that **William Lillich, Safety Director**, will cover how the money will be used and discuss the actual dollars. He said there is no commitment of cash at this time.

Mr. Ruller said their recommendation is to allow the staff to apply for these monies. He said they may not get anything, so it would be a moot issue. He said they may get something, and would have a number of months to decide whether to accept the monies. Mr. Ruller said Mr. Lillich has assured him there is nothing wrong with declining a grant. He said they do not have to make that decision at this time, but wanted to bring it to the Committee's attention. He said they would recommend putting it in the pipeline and see what happens.

Mr. Lillich said the Bryne Justice Grant funds are allocated, based on the Part 1 crimes, as reported to the FBI. He said there is a pot of money set aside, and a big formula is developed for splitting the pot. He said in Kent's case, it is almost \$46,000. Mr. Lillich said there is a disparity provision. He explained if a subdivision is allocated more than 150% of the County's allocation, and the County bears more than 50% of the prosecution costs, they must enter into a disparity agreement. Mr. Lillich said they have done this previously. He said this year, the grant people have determined what the disparity sharing would be. He said they have to give thirty days public notice, and the application deadline is May 18. He said they also have to go through the agreement process with the County on the disparity settlement, and decide who will be the lead agency. He said he has been in contact with the County to start the ball rolling.

Mr. Lillich said there are seven areas of funding for this type of grant usage. He said the Police Department has identified four subject areas that are important. He said **Jim Peach, Police Chief**, would

describe these programs.

Chief Peach said these are one-time monies, and are not recurring or on an annual basis. He said they look at what has the longest term positive effect. Chief Peach said that after reviewing the needs of the department and the community, they felt that issues related to community policing help build trust and confidence in the Police Department. He said this can be demanding, but fruitful.

Chief Peach said they currently have two canines on the force, and wanted to get one more year out of one of the canines. He said the dog is having health issues, and is nine years old. He said they planned to retire the dog at the end of the year, but that will be sooner, depending on the outcome of some tests being conducted. He said they designated some of the grant funds for canine acquisition and training. He said in the past, they had some volunteer social groups that donated money, adding he was always uncomfortable going that route. He said this would provide outside funding, without affecting the police budget.

Chief Peach said the second item dealt with a citizen policy academy. He said this is found in more affluent communities. Chief Peach said that members of the community get the opportunity to learn the workings of the Police Department better. He said those wishing to participate would receive background checks. He said they anticipate the academy being eight to twelve weeks, three to four hours, one night a week. He said the participants will be provided a lot of information about the Department and the City. He said they can foster relationships with the information provided, providing important contacts in the community in the future. He said they feel they can dedicate the personnel to this academy, and have already started working out ideas. He said it is innovative, and a strong plus for the Department and the City, particularly if they are able to create bigger partnerships.

Chief Peach said they have recommended some money be used for the bicycle patrol. He said this began twelve years earlier, when they embarked on a significant program. He said they purchased bikes, trained sixteen to seventeen officers in a forty-hour training session. Chief Peach said they augmented their regular patrol. He said this is not intended to replace the cruiser, but to augment patrol when they have extra staffing. He said they also directed the bike patrol for some community policing programs. He said the officers met people, started conversations, and overall, it works out well. He said at the time, they had forty-four or forty-five officers. He said that during that period of time, many of the officers left or retired or became senior officers. He said he will not have captains riding bikes.

Chief Peach said they have six volunteers for this program. He said they would use them to augment the CDBG community policing program, as well as daily operations. He said they can make contact and do some problem solving, adding that dialogue is significantly important.

Chief Peach said any run over funds would be dedicated to their CDBG community policing program. He said they must exhaust the grant entirely. He said the administrative fee for the police academy is \$2,000. He said it will take considerable time, adding they are comfortable with the programs. He said there are no matching funds required nor payback.

Mr. DeLeone said the Chief mentioned he was uncomfortable with outside donations for the canines, and asked why. Chief Peach said there are a lot of different needs in Kent, and he always felt awkward when people wanted to donate to the canine program. He said it was appreciated, but he was uncomfortable. He said it is just the way he feels, personally.

Mr. DeLeone asked if they still have the bikes, and Chief Peach said they do, adding they anticipate close to \$1100 for repairs. He said some of the tires are dry rotted. He said there are different sizes, based on the officers' sizes. Mr. DeLeone commented they were expensive bikes at the time.

Ms. Wallach asked if this is the grant that costs nothing, and Chief Peach said that was correct.

Mayor Fender said the citizen police academy is intriguing, and asked how many people this will accommodate. Chief Peach said it would be for twelve weeks, with classes of fifteen to twenty community

members. He said they are planning on four academies, with two in 2009 and two in 2010. He said they hoped to touch sixty to eighty people in the community. He said people have to be screened, adding that Council was welcome to attend. He said they hoped to provide those who attend with knowledge about the City of Kent, as well as the Police Department. He said it is vital for them to appreciate what they now have to know what has occurred previously. He said there would be one class during the week.

Mr. Ferrara asked if more money for the bike patrol would better communicate a message that would be more effective than the police academy, and Chief Peach said they would not learn as much. He said a way to teach the community is by having dialogue. He said some of the classes would include how to safeguard yourself, what to do when you witness a robbery, and self defense. He said they have Metro SWAT teams during Halloween, and this would inform the citizens. He said that more insight and understanding leads to more trust. Mr. Ferrara asked how many people will come to all of the academy, and not those sessions that interest them, and Chief Peach said they will get a certificate, when it is over, based on attendance. Mr. Ferrara asked what that gets them, and Chief Peach said it is personal recognition. He said other communities have to do screening to hold back their numbers. Chief Peach said that enthusiasm is the key.

Mr. Lillich said that one of the other benefits is that it builds up a core in the many neighborhoods in Kent enabling the Police individuals to reach out to, adding that by building these relationships, they have support in the neighborhoods. He said this helps with their neighborhood work.

Chief Peach said a lot of the other communities have alumni associations for their academies. He said it is what they make of it. Chief Peach said some even have graduation dinners. He said Kent's will be "nuts and bolts," and an opportunity to learn more and to have more confidence in the Police Department.

Mr. Ferrara asked what happens if they do not need to allocate all of the resources, and whether they can shift them, and Chief Peach said they can, adding no money is turned back. He said if they find out that the academy is not productive, without a lot of enthusiasm, they can dedicate those monies to the bike patrol or community policing. He said they have identified four programs where the monies could be spent in any combination.

Mr. Wilson asked if they see this as a chance to build interest in neighborhood watches. He said they have done this before, and the groups feathered out. He said these people could be leaders.

Chief Peach said that when members of a neighborhood approach the police, it is about specific problems. He said after they organize, with the assistance of city resources, and the problem is abated, the groups disappear and disband. He said they are hopeful people will be more inclined to assist with volunteering. He said they hope for a greater level of trust and confidence, and hope that by attending the academy, they will achieve that trust and confidence.

Mr. Turner said that was his issue, adding he wondered if it could be a catalyst for the neighborhood watch programs. He said the people will know what the police are about, adding it can create an impetus for neighborhood watch programs.

Chief Peach said they have many discussions about councils and watches, adding they are seeing more apathy than ever before. He said this may instill confidence and initiative. Chief Peach said if that occurs, it is a win/win situation.

Ms. Wallach asked about the difference between a police academy versus making presentations in the neighborhoods, and Chief Peach said they do that with current resources. He said they do have criteria, adding it includes common interests and how to take charge of a neighborhood. He said it fades after a while. He said the citizens police academy will be captured in the classroom, adding they will know more about the community, the Police Department, and the needs of the community. He said they may broaden that perspective, to how to help the neighborhoods and be better citizens. He said this has resulted in other communities that had a police academy.

Mr. Turner asked about the prospects of involving younger people so they get an understanding, like a cadet program, and Chief Peach said there are programs similar to that concept. He said it is more intensive and more difficult, as they are dealing with juveniles. He said they do not have enough people to do that type of program. He said the grant monies pay for some of the salaries, but not all. He said they will be bringing in different people, soliciting other resources. He said a cadet program would be more expensive.

Mr. Lillich said that Mr. Ruller has had experience with this in some other communities, and suggested the could share what he has seen. Mr. Ruller said the Chief is right, adding that each program is different. He said he can understand Mr. Ferrara's reaction. He said in the other cities where he has served, this has been one of the most popular programs. He said they had graduating classes in the fall and spring, and had to turn people away. He said that all he can say is that it does a terrific job building relationships. He said they talk about the neighborhoods, but know they cannot be everywhere all of the time. He said they need to cultivate neighborhood pride, and this starts that awareness of how police work, from the safety perspective. He said they cannot undersell the idea of building relationships.

Mr. Ruller said he can tell them the people love this program. He said they gave them the chance to ride in a police car, and let them go to the shooting range one night. He said they allowed them to put on vests, and they watched the dogs in action. He said they were experience what it feels like to be tasered. He said they can see the professionalism of the force, which is not always evident in newspaper articles. He said the most popular shows on television are shows about police. Mr. Ruller said the people are curious, and this gives them a look.

Mayor Fender asked if this would involve the university students and faculties. He said he does not know a lot about the whole program, and assumed people would see the needs of their neighborhood, be it vandalism, college students, or juvenile delinquency.

Chief Peach said that while the university is unique, the concern for the academy will be for the permanent residents. He said in response to the Manager's comments, they will not visit the firing range, and the student with the lowest GPA will be tasered.

At this time, there was no audience comment.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE APPLYING FOR THE BRYNE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT.

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 7-0-1, with Mr. Kuhar abstaining.

Mr. Lillich reminded them that the \$47248 listed on the overhead where monies already approved this year and in 2010 through CDBG funding for the community policing component.

He said the next issue was the COPS Hiring Recovering program. He said some of these programs are running along fast and furious. He said on March 9, the application materials became available, and by March 16, they had been revised three times. Mr. Lillich said the deadline to apply is April 14, and the application he has is one hundred pages. Mr. Lillich said they felt it was still worthwhile, as it looks at the costs of covering the basic benefits for the police officers for three years. Mr. Lillich said they are required to keep that individual for one more year. He said they have to show a need to increase staffing or show where their budget was going to bring about layoffs, otherwise they have to pay back the money.

Mr. Lillich said there has been a lot of misunderstanding about this program. He said that some felt it would not cost anything, but that was wrong. He said over four years, the cost would be \$99,000, with the first three years being economical. He said this would help them get their staffing up, during a period where they could use the staffing but do not have the funds. He said in the fourth year, they hopefully could afford those extra positions. He said they are going to have a significant turnover in their staff in the next two to three years. He said without some additional staffing to prepare for that time, they could have forty-two officers in three years, with only thirty-seven of them being seasoned officers. He said this funding could help get ahead of that situation.

Mr. Lillich said they found their chart was off by \$8459. He said they thought the uniforms were part of the basic employment package, and the grant says they are not part of the package. He said the grant pays for entry level salary and the associated benefits package, such as health care, pension, unemployment, and medicare. He said the City is responsible for everything else. He said they keep getting more information, and that probably will change again. He said they are unsure of the likelihood of getting this money. He said there is \$1 billion dedicated to this program, but there is a lot of tough competition. He said they can decline the funds later.

Mr. Hawksley asked if they give partial grants, like two instead of three officers, and Mr. Lillich said he did not see reference to that. He said they do not want part time or auxiliary officers, and will only fund full time officers. Chief Peach said it specifically said full time officers, adding they could be awarded monies for one, two or three officers.

Mr. Hawksley asked if he was to assume they are applying for three people to add one for each shift, and Mr. Lillich said it will be for additional staffing on the road, and depends on the needs of the department at that time. He said he did not want to tie the Chief's hands.

Mr. Amrhein asked how understaffed they were for a city the size of Kent, and Chief Peach said in terms of population and the crimes they experience, they are comparable to Cuyahoga Falls. He said they will receive \$900 more from the Bryne Justice grant, but did not have to give more to the County. He said they have 102 officers, while Kent has 42 officers. He said given their statistic and numbers of calls, they are reactive, and are unable to be proactive based on the number of people on the force. He said that 2500 physical arrests are extraordinary. He said they received the fingerprinting machine, valued at \$80,000, from the Attorney General's office because of their volume. He said it depends on the demographics, adding that the Justice Department indicates that college and resort communities should have enhanced staffing. He said he did not know the norm, but did know they were significantly understaffed.

Mr. Amrhein asked if this could be a break even if they save on overtime, and Mr. Lillich said this could reduce the overtime to some degree, but not eliminate it. He said they have some duties that generate overtime, such as going to court. He said 80% of the time, that generates overtime. Mr. Lillich said they could see some reduction on duty staffing, but he cannot quantify that.

Mr. Lillich said that the data was supplied by the Bryne grant. He said the UCR numbers drives the distribution of funds. He said only one community got more than Cuyahoga Falls, with all other communities having less activity than Kent.

Ms. Wallach asked if this was a one time program from the stimulus package or a new ongoing program, and Mr. Lillich said it is from the stimulus monies. He said they got another law enforcement grant program earlier in the day. He said it is a competitive grant, and they must contribute 20% and have competitive criteria. Mr. Lillich said they felt the monies were limited, until they get closer to the end of the four-year time frame, when communities may ask for an extension.

There were no further questions nor audience comment at this time.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE APPLICATION OF THE COPS RECOVERY PROGRAM GRANT.

Motion made by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 7-0-1, with Mr. Kuhar abstaining.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE AN EXECUTIVE SESSION PRIOR TO THE CONCLUSION OF THIS MEETING FOR AFSCME NEGOTIATIONS AND POTENTIAL LITIGATION.

Motion made by Mr. Ferrara, seconded by Mr. Hawksley.

Roll call was taken on the motion. Voting aye: Mr. Amrhein, Mr. DeLeone, Mr. Ferrara, Mr. Hawksley, Mr. Kuhar, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Wallach. Mr. Wilson abstained. The motion carried by a voice vote of 7-0-1. Chair Kuhar recessed this meeting at 8:05 p.m. Following Executive Session, he reconvened this meeting

at 8:33 p.m.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE AFSCME CONTRACT.

Motion made by Mr. DeLeone, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 7-0. (Mr. Wilson left because of a conflict with the AFSCME contract).

MOTION TO RECESS THIS MEETING.

Motion made by Mr. Hawksley, seconded by Mr. Ferrara, and carried by voice vote of 7-0.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair Kuhar adjourned this meeting at 8:34 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) TO AUTHORIZE THE BYRNE JUSTICE ASSISTANT GRANT APPLICATION
- 2) TO AUTHORIZE THE COPS RECOVERY APPLICATION
- 3) TO AUTHORIZE THE AFSCME CONTRACT