

**THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO
HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2007**

This meeting of the Health & Safety Committee of Kent City Council was called to order on Wed., Jan. 17, 2007, at 7:40 p.m. by Carrie Gavriloff, Chair.

PRESENT: MR. BARGERSTOCK, MR. DELEONE, MR. FERRARA, MS. GAVRILOFF, MR. HAWKSLEY, MR. KUCHAR, MS. OSWITCH, MR. SCHULTZ, AND MR. WILSON

ALSO PRESENT: J. FENDER, MAYOR; D. RULLER, CITY MANAGER; J. SILVER, LAW DIRECTOR; L. COPLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL; J. WILLIAMS, FIRE CHIEF; C. PEEPS, FIRE LT.; AND W. LILLICH, SAFETY DIRECTOR

Ms. Gavriloff said the first item on their agenda dealt with a grant application through Homeland Security. **Dave Ruller, City Manager**, explained that they have identified this as a potential grant source and would like to pursue it. He said they have talked to the Council previously about areas sacrificed because of budgetary constraints, and preventive measures has been one. He said this grant will allow them to restore or expand their programs, adding he wanted to allow a presentation at this time.

Jim Williams, Fire Chief, explained that **Craig Peeps, Fire Prevention Office**, would do the presentation. He said there are three programs, adding that one is to be used for the purchase of equipment. He said they applied for that grant previously. He said there is a grant for hiring firefighters, adding they have not applied because they must be able to sustain the position long term. He said they also have a fire prevention grant, and they are applying for said grant in an attempt to add some different tools to their programs. He said they want to enhance and expand their programs to include college students and the elderly. He said they need more education.

Lt Peeps said they already applied for this grant. He said as part of his job as the Junior Lieutenant, he goes to the schools. He said he would be the Senior Lieutenant in Fire Prevention soon, and wanted to get a handle on where they were with their programs.

He said they currently have a program for preschool through fourth grade; a fire extinguishing training program with businesses; and they go to the elderly care centers. He said this is not a set program, adding they visit the centers to answer their questions and give them advice.

He said he reviewed what they can offer, adding they need a more set curriculum aimed at their adult population. He said in Kent, 83.6% of all residents are over 18, while 78.4% in the township are over 18. He said they are hitting a very small amount of the population with their current programs. Lt. Peeps said that the total adult population, including Kent State University, is 51,000 adults.

Lt. Peeps said to accomplish an expansion to these programs, they must research and find products that would aid in delivering the programs. He said they had to find sources to finance those products.

Lt. Peeps said the first product is Sparky's Hazard House with the Midas Touch video interaction system, and displayed a brief video clip from the program at this time.

Lt. Peeps said it is an interactive system, and the children can help through the process. He said there is actually smoke that will rise, to better aid the process. He said there is an elderly program also, adding they can curtail it to any age group.

Lt. Peeps said the second system is a fire extinguisher aid. He said they currently use a diesel gas mixture that they place in a metal pan and light. He said people use their extinguishers to douse the flame. He said that while they use dry chemical extinguishers plus liquid fuel, which can be dangerous. He said the one they are looking at is electric, shoots out water, and uses propane for the flame. He said it actually reads how a person sweeps the extinguisher. Lt. Peeps noted there is a button

that would kill the flame. He said this equipment is much more controlled and safer.

Lt. Peeps said they need grants because of their financial picture and the zero increases in their budget. He said their Fire Prevention budget is \$1800, and this total project cost is \$32,160.

Mr. Kuhar asked if they have a program in Kent where residents can have their property evaluated for free, and Chief Williams said they do not have the manpower for residential inspections, but if someone calls with a question, they will go to the residence. He said a lot of phone calls deal with wood burning stoves.

Ms. Oswitch asked about the grant deadline, and Chief Williams said they already applied, as the deadline was on Jan. 10, 2007. Ms. Oswitch asked how soon they would know, and Chief Williams said it could be up to six months. Ms. Oswitch asked how soon after that they can purchase it, and Chief Williams said they would receive the money two to four weeks after the award letter. Lt. Peeps said it will take one to three months for delivery.

Mr. Kuhar asked what kinds of things they can do as they speak of expanding to the adult and student population, and Chief Williams said they currently do not touch the student population. He said they produced a brochure for distribution, and participated in the production of a video after a dorm fire. He said this would give them the ability to expand to sororities and fraternities.

Hearing no further questions nor audience comment, Chair Gavrilloff returned to the Committee at this time for a motion.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE GRANT APPLICATION.

Motion made by Ms. Oswitch, seconded by Mr. Bargerstock.

Ms. Oswitch thanked them. She said she has been vocal previously about getting back into the schools, after losing the firehouse. She said the program is fantastic, and she is thrilled.

Chief Williams began to explain to Ms. Oswitch that they did not stop their training, and Chair Gavrilloff reminded him that there was a motion on the floor.

Ms. Oswitch said she knew they had not quit going to the schools, adding she is glad they are trying to expand the program.

Mr. Bargerstock suggested that as they develop something for the student population that they also consider the off-campus housing. He said sofa fires are not permitted, and people do not realize the peril they create with their behavior while using gas grills or setting bon fires too close to a structure.

The motion carried by a voice vote of 8-0-1, with Ms. Gavrilloff abstaining.

At this time, Ms. Gavrilloff stepped down, and Mr. Kuhar took over as chair of the meeting. He explained the next item on their agenda dealt with the Portage County fire agencies cooperative agreement.

Mr. Ruller said they had mentioned, previously, that the Mayor of Ravenna extended an invitation to area cities to begin a conversation to see who is interested in exploring the concept of a fire district. He said Kent considers themselves to be one of the lead fire departments in the County, so it is important for the City to be at the table. He said that the safety director and fire chief would speak to the issue.

William Lillich, Safety Director: Mr. Lillich said that a lot of the material they see is from a book, "Making the Pieces Fit", by a retired chief. He said it is one of the best texts on consolidated or cooperative services. He said that is the source of a lot of their information. He introduced Chief Williams at this time.

Chief Williams said the newspaper talked about a fire district, adding it makes people nervous because they fear they may lose their fire department. He said they are trying to steer it differently, and are trying to

be more open minded about the process, as they look at what best serves the people. He said a merger may not work in Portage County, adding they want to find the City's best solution. He said they may participate in the process and decide it will not work. He said they talk about cooperative efforts, adding it could be working together for the purchase of equipment. He said they can work together on fire prevention and education. Chief Williams said they can have consolidations, which would merge fire departments. He said they can have joint purchasing authorities. He said they could have fire authorities, which would oversee all county departments. He said they could do contracts or auto aid, adding they have contracts currently with Sugar Bush Knolls and Franklin Township. He said they could have joint facilities, adding that an example is the joint facility shared by Copley and Bath. He said they share the station, and its cost. He said there can be any other combination of service efficiencies and improvements. He said they are looking at how to improve their service.

Chief Williams said the question they try to keep in everyone's head is what is in the best interest of the people we serve. He said it is not for the fire departments nor the City, but for the people they serve and how they can best provide that service.

Chief Williams said he wants to review some terminology at this time. He said mutual aid is what they currently do when additional resources are needed when they call other departments to assist. He said automatic aid takes mutual aid up one step. He said if they have a fire, they would automatically dispatch a unit, without reviewing the situation.

Chief Williams said they can have a consolidation, adding it can be functional or operational. He said the difference is that functional would be more about the equipment, and Mr. Lillich said it would be administrative functions, like purchasing. Chief Williams said that an operational consolidation would be to provide services with fire trucks and EMS units. He said a merger would be where they join with other fire departments. He said contracts or Joint Purchasing Authorities have already been discussed.

Chief Williams said the surviving entity is what is left if they move forward. He said it may not be the city of Kent Fire Department. Mr. Lillich said that diminishing return is where they identify whether they are getting less back than what they are putting into a process. Chief Williams said cost avoidance is how they better deal with unfunded mandates. He said by creating a district, they may avoid buying equipment because other entities may have it. He said an intergovernmental council would be the government agency that would oversee a fire district.

Chief Williams said one question is why they should consolidate or merge, adding it allows for increased efficiencies or streamlined government. He said economies of scale means that buying five would provide a better price than buying one piece of equipment. He said they can shift their ISO rating. He said they are a "5" currently, and with a merger, may reduce to a "3" or "4", which is an increased insurance savings to the residents. He said they can have a forced program examination, which gives them an in depth look at what they are doing to be sure they are doing it at the best and cheapest cost. He said reducing costs is important, and if they can reduce costs, they should merge. He said they could increase their service levels, adding that is good for the people served.

Chief Williams said a merger could result in the elimination of stations, apparatus, equipment, utility costs, insurance and personnel.

Chief Williams said cost savings and avoidance could result from a merger, as well as maximizing their resources. He said the Administration would shrink with a merger, adding they would not have twenty-five fire chiefs. He said they would facilitate coordinated planning, one of the most important components. Chief Williams said they would have stations located in areas based on needs rather than artificial boundaries. He said this is another example of doing what is best for the people they serve. He said it would help with mandated compliance, adding there are issues that force this to occur.

Chief Williams explained the name could change, adding it would not be the Kent Fire Department. He said they could increase the depth of their service, allowing for more backup. He said a consolidation would standardize the services throughout all agencies. He explained that some may provide a basic

level of EMS, which the City can provide an advanced level. Chief Williams said a larger group would equal more political clout. He said they would also have the ability to absorb a financial crisis. He said a merger would also standardize the firefighters' operating guidelines, dealing with knowledge, skills and ability.

Chief Williams said there would be some organizational issues. He said there may be new leadership, with a new chief. He said they may be going into a new direction, adding that some may go from volunteer to part time positions. He said sometimes old baggage can interfere, adding they may have a fire department that does not like another because of an old feud. He said they could see possible reduced work loads.

Chief Williams said there are financial considerations that can be compared. He said one may be tax rates, adding they differ between the municipalities. He said there would be a question of how to finance equipment, adding it could be by debt or available cash. Chief Williams said there could be a capital replacement strategy, adding Kent already has one, but most other departments have not done a strategy. He said this provides for the long term ability to fund major equipment and stations. He said they would have to look at the tax rate history, as some communities may not want to jump up to a hire rate. He said pension plans, salaries and benefits are a concern, as well as unfunded benefits. Chief Williams said they would have to look at the status of infrastructure. He said they may need expansions or upgrading some buildings. He said they would need to look at the assessed values and revenues.

He said other considerations include management issues, such as blending the staff. He said if they merge five fire departments, there is the issue of "What about me" and how they determine who is in charge. He said there would be a change in philosophy. He said they would have newly elected officials, adding it would be a loss of the control system. He said there is the possibility they are so focused on the merger that they forget the services they provide. He said other considerations are the union. He said the IAFF has adopted policies in support of consolidations and mergers. He said they are concerned about their membership. Chief Williams said they want the IAFF's participation in the planning process.

He said some of the keys to success include forming labor coalitions between labor and management. He said they need to control rumors, as they can destroy what they are trying to accomplish. He said they need to move towards research and feasibility first. He said they need to focus on the IAFF's guidelines and procedures, as well as a focus on cost savings. He said they need to remember what is in the best interest of those served.

Chief Williams said a lot of the departments have volunteers, and the question is how to blend them. He said some have the club mentality, adding they have career personnel versus volunteer. He said some volunteers may feel a lack of control, adding they may want to do some length-of-service award programs to keep them interested.

Chief Williams said there are issues with facilities and maintenance, adding they are hidden expenses, such as fuel tanks, dry rot, and poor facilities. He said there are issues of time, distance and demand. He said this deals with how they provide the best service. He said other issues include a transition of the workload.

Chief Williams said there are several keys to success. He said they would need to utilize an intergovernmental committee, with all participating. He said they would identify the desired levels of service at the beginning so they can focus on meeting those levels. He said they would do a taskforce approach to the initial design, mission, goals, and performance objectives.

Chief Williams said that all stakeholders must be at the table, including the bargaining unit, staff from each jurisdiction, as well as elected officials from each jurisdiction. He said they need community leaders and others who may have a particular expertise.

Chief Williams said they need to be thorough and complete in their research, as well as open minded.

He said they need to focus on what is best for our citizens, while capitalizing on the organizational and individual strengths.

Chief Williams said there are potentially difficult areas. He said there are five barriers to cooperative services, that deal with turf politics, money, and power. He said personal agendas may affect the process. Chief Williams said they do not know what the history is between all involved agencies, and there may be issues with labor contracts and its' impact on bargaining.

Chief Williams said they need to look at standardizing rules, policies and programs. He said everyone has different rules, so this can be difficult. He said the selection of staff and reorganization may create problems also.

He said cooperative service attempts may fail because of the five barriers. He said the timing may make them fail. He said they have very diverse cultures, with personnel feeling threatened. He said there may be a lack of leadership.

Chief Williams said the first steps include an informal discussion to see if there is interest by the elected officials, fire chiefs, unions, staff, and the public. He said the second step would be the information and education process. He said it would involve presentations to staff, elected officials, volunteers, career personnel and the media if needed. He said they need to standardize their terminology.

Chief Williams said with the process, they need a systematic approach, and must identify critical benchmarks. He said they must establish a reporting system to keep everyone informed. He said they must deal with obstacles, adding they have to recognize current efforts. He said one example is Macedonia and four other communities. He said they will review their report. He said they will look to them for guidance. He said they would identify current systems, and recommend unilateral improvement roles. He said they may not recommend a full merger, adding it may be something else. He said they can identify other cooperative models, while analyzing efficiencies and recommend strategies for success.

Chief Williams said the methodology is a two part process with a baseline audit followed by an analysis of the options. Chief Williams said there is an aftermath if they move forward. He said there is a loss of focus from service to solving issues surrounding the merger. He said the workload may increase on the individuals. He said it involves mixing up the personnel, and how to blend the cultures.

Chief Williams said some of the most common asked questions include whether there are failures, adding there are some documented examples of failures. He said the issue of their chance for success depends on how open-minded they are to take a critical look at themselves. He said it is asked whether there are casualties, adding this does occur. He said they may have to give up things to get something else. He said one question is "What is Next", adding they will discuss that.

Chief Williams said the first step would be to get started, which is where they are at currently. He said they are seeing if the elected officials want to participate and are seeking their permission. He said the next step is information and education, while the following step is feasibility and analysis. Chief Williams said the fourth step would be to endorse the strategic plans, while the next step would be formal agreements between the agencies. He said that would be followed by formalization of task forces after receiving the approval from elected officials.

Mr. Lillich said they saw a presentation that was given in December to the study group, after Mayor Poland contacted everyone. He said there is another meeting to decide who may wish to go forward, adding that will be a study process to do a full feasibility study, and to begin to analyze options and benefits. He said before moving forward, following that process, organizations will return to their elected officials for further information and their approval, if the elected officials agree with the plan. He said they are present to see if they wish to allow the fire department to participate in this process. Mr. Lillich said that Ravenna and Ravenna Township have already committed, adding he did not know who else was committed. He said they are also present to see if any one of them would be interested in participating in the oversight committee.

Mr. Kuhar called for questions at this time.

Ms. Oswitch displayed a sheet of paper, commenting that she had a lot of questions. She said she spoke with someone from Summit County who is a firefighter.

Ms. Oswitch asked how long they have worked on this, adding she thought they had at least three meetings. Mr. Lillich said they did not attend the first meeting, because of the lateness of their invitation. He said they attended the second meeting, and felt it was not fully organized, which is why they put together the proposal. He said he and the chief have both participated in a study of the subject previously. Ms. Oswitch asked how long this would take, and Mr. Lillich said it depended on the participation, adding it can be one to two years. Ms. Oswitch asked if it had to go to the voters, and Mr. Lillich said a fire district would have to go to the ballot. He said that would remain to be seen, adding there are so many different entities that all have revenues from different sources. He said they have a lot of revenue in Kent that is committed to fire service, and they need to look at what is currently in place. He said it may not be unified into one organization, or they may call for a hybrid form of financing.

Ms. Oswitch asked what other areas are involved in the county, and Mr. Lillich said all entities were invited. He said some have already joined, but they will not know until they see who passes a participation resolution who would be participating. Ms. Oswitch asked if this would exclude mutual aid, and Mr. Lillich said it depended on the final product, adding it would take it one-half mile further. He said they could come out of the study with some processes to allow for more timely responses to major hazards throughout the area. He said if that is the only result, some good was accomplished. He said this would allow a lot of pre-planning and effective guidelines in place.

Ms. Oswitch asked about the residency requirements, and Mr. Lillich said he did not know. Ms. Oswitch asked about updates, adding she heard about this three times before they met. Mr. Lillich apologized they did not know about it. He said that was Phase One of the process. He said Phase One includes what they can do to become more effective while reducing costs. He said as soon as there was a formality discussion, they forwarded information requesting the opportunity to address the Council. He said the last meeting was the first week of December.

Ms. Oswitch asked if these meetings are creating overtime and whether it is a burden, and Mr. Lillich said it will take extra work. He said they do not know how that will occur. He said it may cost something, adding they anticipate some decent outcome. He said he cannot rule out a cost. Mr. Lillich said they are all novices in the process, and may reach a point where they need professional guidance with someone having this type of experience. He said that will be decided by the committee.

Ms. Oswitch asked if Mr. Lillich saw he and Chief Williams as coordinators since they gave the presentation, and Mr. Lillich said all they were trying to do was provide a little structure to the discussion. He said they did not intend to lead the group, adding that is the opposite of what they wanted. He said if there was to be any effort, they felt it would be appropriate to help move them in the right direction.

Ms. Oswitch said she has heard some concerns that existing volunteers at other departments would not have the same level of training as Kent's EMS. She asked if the training would be standardized at the highest level, or if Kent would lose, and Mr. Lillich said the City would not agree to anything if they will lose their existing quality of service. He said that thirty to forty times annually, they are served by other agencies, because of mutual aid. He said if they have a structured process, they would bring the knowledge, skills, and ability to an accepted level.

Ms. Oswitch asked about the current level of fire training, adding she assumes it is high, and whether if it is common throughout the county. Chief Williams said it varies throughout all agencies. He said they would need to identify the knowledge, skills, and objectives. He said they need to look at their goals, and the service levels. He said they will not reduce their service levels, adding he, personally, would not allow that to happen. He said the question would be if they can raise everyone else to that level or an acceptable level. He said they would do nothing to reduce their quality of service.

Ms. Oswitch asked if other areas would have special training when dealing with the university, and Chief Williams said they did some training when they torn down the dorm. He said that Ravenna City, Brimfield, Rootstown, and a few others were brought in to encourage training.

Ms. Oswitch said she wants to be sure they are getting the most bang for their buck. She said it was stated that the City has a lot of equipment, and asked how they guarantee they keep the equipment paid for by the residents. Mr. Lillich said they will make sure about the availability of equipment necessary to serve our community at the same level will be there. Ms. Oswitch told him that it was a "wishy-washy" answer. Mr. Lillich said, as an example, that instead of Kent buying a 100-ft aerial, and Ravenna buying one, they could jointly buy one, locate it strategically for those types of calls. He said Kent has an aging aerial, and will need \$1.2 million in the next few years. He said those are the things that can be built in. He said they do not all have to have one of everything.

Ms. Oswitch asked if other university towns belong to a fire district, and Mr. Lillich said he did not know. Ms. Oswitch asked about the west side station, and whether it would close, and Mr. Lillich said that would occur if only there was a strategic reason. Mr. Lillich said all of those questions would be a part of the financial analysis of the ability to respond in a timely fashion.

Ms. Oswitch said they probably did not look at the financial impacts yet, and Mr. Lillich said that was correct.

Ms. Oswitch said they have revenue generated by ambulance billing, and asked if it would terminate, and Mr. Lillich said it depended on the structure of the organization. He said that if they remained independent entities, with some cooperative process, most of what they do will remain "as is". He said on the other extreme, if there is a merged single service, that revenue would go to that service.

Ms. Oswitch said she was trying to look further down the road. She said if they have a fire district, they may dissolve their fire department that would join a district, and Mr. Lillich said that could happen at that far end of the spectrum. He said that could be a recommendation.

Ms. Oswitch said there is money in the capital to purchase something for the Fire Department. She asked if they should not purchase anything for a while, as they do not know where this will lead. Mr. Lillich said it is 11 years old.

Ms. Oswitch said if they were to merge, who would decide on the purchases of new equipment. Mr. Lillich said they should have enough analysis to chart out the type of equipment they would need as a broader entity or cooperative entity.

Mr. Bargerstock asked which two communities have committed to further study, and Mr. Lillich said he understood that Ravenna City and Ravenna Township are committed. Mr. Lillich said everyone is interested, adding there are two Franklin Township trustees present at this meeting as they are interested in the end result. Mr. Bargerstock asked if the idea was more driven by townships or cities, and Mr. Lillich said in this part of the state, everyone is worried about tax dollars. He said there is some interest in how they can provide a comparable or better level of service, while living within their means. He said this helped drive entities to the meeting.

Mr. Bargerstock asked how the County Commissioners felt, and Mr. Lillich said they have not expressed a formal opinion. He said the County does not have firefighting responsibilities.

Mr. Bargerstock said he has been selling fire insurance for twenty-plus years, adding he has read about some of the benefits to mergers. He asked Mr. Lillich why he needs political approval, as he has the right to study and talk to others. Mr. Lillich said the group decided in December that it was appropriate to present the concept to the elected officials and request a resolution of commitment. Mr. Bargerstock said that part of the presentation hit upon things he has studied, adding there are a number of ways to cooperate with others. He asked what concept they want from Council, and if they wanted to study any and/or all of the concepts. Mr. Lillich said they wished to study anything that seemed feasible to consider.

Mr. Bargerstock said they are not spending money nor approving any one entity. He said the need for his presentation seemed informative, and that they do not need Council's blessing. Mr. Lillich said they do not have to bless it. Mr. Bargerstock asked Mr. Silver if there is a reason for approval by Council, and Mr. Wilson commented it was self preservation.

Mr. Silver said staff would like to know where they want to go, and Mr. Bargerstock said it is hard to know with twelve different ideas. He said he does not know what the political consideration is at this time. He said as an administrator, they have the privilege to study this all day long, and he would encourage them to do so.

Chief Williams said the ultimate decision rests with the elected officials, and they felt it was important to have their commitment on the study. He said some staff time would be involved, and they wanted to be sure they had the elected officials support before moving forward.

Mr. Bargerstock said there is an issue between townships and cities, adding that traditionally, cities offer services that are higher by nature and the citizens decide what they want. He said if they change their entity and all offer better services they may reduce the incentive for townships to ask for annexation. He asked if that was detrimental. Mr. Lillich said that after reading the new annexation code, he is unsure there will be any annexations. Mr. Bargerstock said Brimfield is having trouble providing safety to their residents, and asked if this does not reduce an incentive to merge, and Mr. Lillich said that sounds like a political issue. Mr. Bargerstock said they are asking the Committee for a political decision.

Mr. Schutz called for a point of order, adding that Mr. Lillich cannot make that decision.

Mr. Fender thanked for the information. He said although Mr. Kuhar has asked for questions, statements have been made. He said if they were not informed at this meeting, and had waited, some may be up in arms after hearing rumors. He said the Administration has asked whether the Committee wishes to support this concept. He said he knows the administration will return to them with information. He said there were statements made that no service will be diminished to the citizens. He said they will watch out for what is best for the citizens. Mr. Fender said he has a lot of support for the process, and thanked them.

Township Benjamin said they do not want to see diminished services. He said it is noble to see if there are better ways, especially if they understand the choice may be made to not consolidate. He supported the study.

Mr. Kuhar called for audience comments at this time.

William Anderson, 426 Spaulding: Mr. Anderson said a lot of questions were asked, adding they need to make a study. He said he has served with them on the EMA. He asked how Chief Williams' colleagues at other fire departments feel, and Chief Williams said there is some interest on all levels. Mr. Anderson said they should have a chance to study the process and give a full report. He said they cannot give a full report without a study.

John Bard, 435 Francis: Mr. Bard said it sounds out like this is set up to encompass all of Portage County, and Chief Williams nodded his assent. Mr. Bard said to the west, they would still need aid from Stow. He used the location of the former Dunkin Donuts as an example where they would need stop. He said he understands Ravenna and Ravenna Township to their right, but they are still exposed to the left.

Chief Williams said they already have mutual aid with Stow, adding that will not change. He said he has made the statement that they will never reduce the level of service to their community.

Brian Urban, 401 Spaulding: Mr. Urban said they are talking about consolidation three or four years down the road. He said that some others may not have the same level of training, and asked how they maintain comparable service, when comparable does not mean equal. He asked what becomes an acceptable response time. Mr. Urban said that the response time is fairly quick because of the station

locations, and maybe about five minutes. He asked if seven to fifteen minutes will be acceptable, and what is the cut off point.

Chief Williams said that response times are based on national standards, and they strive to meet those standards with a goal of 95%. He said they do have to rely on mutual aid at times, and some response times could be 9 to 12 minutes. He said that part of the process would be to meet those response times, and to continue to meet the national standards and meet their current standards.

Mr. Ruller said there have been a lot of good logistical questions as well as questions from the residents. He said the Chief and the Safety Director offered great "crystal balling", but they need to study it. He said they owe it to the citizens if there is a chance to do it cheaper, faster, and better. He said a study would allow them to present legitimate, well-thought out answers to the questions raised. He said he wanted to reassure everyone that they will do what is in the best interest of the City. He said they will not settle for less service.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITH THE STUDY OF A COOPERATIVE FIRE SERVICE AGREEMENT.

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

Mr. Bargerstock said he was baffled why they have to approve something the Administration has the authority to do now. He said they are being asked to provide political approval, adding this is short notice. He said what he knows is what was in the paper, his packet, and presented at this meeting. Mr. Bargerstock said he does not know if it is politically acceptable, adding this issue tugs at the hearts of the citizens.

Mr. Bargerstock said the Kent Fire Department is one that the citizens take pride in, and is an asset to the city. He said it is like trying to merge football teams, adding it may be a good idea, and it may be a bad idea. He said he is unsure why he was asked for approval, adding it is not appropriate to ask him. Mr. Bargerstock said he is having problem with making that decision and would like more comments from the public.

Mr. Wilson said he was sorry why Mr. Bargerstock could not see why he was being asked. He said he has seen the staff, in the past, look at one little thing, and get blasted because Council was not aware of it. He noted it was for self preservation. Mr. Wilson said the issue is whether there is any interest in a better service for less cost. He said this is definitely a "no brainer". Mr. Wilson said Ms. Oswitch's questions were good, and they were questions that needed to be answered by the committee studying the process. He said the motion says to look forward, not backward.

Ms. Oswitch agreed, adding she knew a lot of her questions probably could not be answered. She said she was reading about this idea in the newspaper, and it looked like our administration was taking the lead. Ms. Oswitch said it appears to be a great idea, and needs to be reviewed, as there is no money in all entities. Ms. Oswitch said if they can better their services they need to do it.

Mr. Schultz said the commitment helps shape the study. He said if all are interested, it would be better to study all entities, instead of just Ravenna, Franklin Township and Kent. He said without a commitment, they could end up doing a larger or inappropriate study that does not have political support. Mr. Schultz said the commitment is important so staff knows what they are doing and where they are going.

Mr. Bargerstock said he wanted to clarify he was not against the study, adding that is the Administration's job. He said he has a problem lending political approval to something that they do not know much about. Mr. Bargerstock said they do not need permission to look at the creation of a cost efficient, safer fire department. He said he supports that, but is uneasy with giving political approval until the study is complete.

Mr. Ferrara said if they do not give their commitment, Mr. Bargerstock would be the first person to speak about "backroom deals".

The motion carried by a voice vote of 7-0-2, with Mr. Kuhar and Ms. Gavrilloff abstaining.

MOTION TO APPOINT MR. WILSON TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE.

Motion amde by Mr. Schultz, seconded by Mr. Ferrara, and carried by a voice vote of 7-0-2, with Mr. Kuhar and Ms. Gavrilloff abstaining.

MOTION TO RECEIVE REGULAR FORMAL UPDATES.

Motion amde by Ms. Oswitch, seconded by Mr. Schultz, and c arried by a voice vote of 6-1-2, with Mr. Ferrara dissenting; Ms. Gavrilloff and Mr. Kuhar abstaining.

Ms. Gavrilloff said the last item on their agenda deal with cruelty to animals and some suggested ordinance changes.

Mr. Lillich said they requested information after receiving a request for legislation to provide shelter for animals. He said he met with the staff, adding they already have processes that apply in terms of cruelty to animals. He said they felt an ordinance, as suggested, based simply on atmospheric temperature was not sufficient. He said as they looked further into the Ohio Revised Code, they found language in the state code that gives fairly broad powers focused on the humane officer. He said he spoke with the City's animal control officer who works regularly with the Humane Officer. he said Mr. Frazier conferred with the Humane Officer on the state statutes and their benefits. He said that Mr. Frazier reported back there is a fair level of satisfaction. Mr. Lillich sai they do not recommend any additional changes, because Kent's statutes are derived from the state code, and are defined by the state Aministrative Code.

Mr. Lillich said there is one ordinance that needs to be improved, where there is an exception to hunting. He said there is a lack of clarity to the trapping issues in the City, adding this was partially drive by a recent mishap in Kent. He said an animal was killed by an unlawfully set trap. He sai they are sensitivie to this, as there was no clear definition about trappign restrictions. He said the other change is to remove an exception to the hunting prohibition created in 1999 in anticipation to an anenxation that was proposed. He said the propoent of the annexation did not want to lose the ability to hunt, so they inserted the exception to apply to property annexed after Jan. 1, 1999 from Brimfield. He sai none was annexed. He said for htat reason, they recommend its removal from the ordinance.

Mr. Lillich said they are recommending removing that exception and to add clearer langugage on trapping. He said Mr. Kuhar made a point to him earlier in the evning that the propsoed Section (C) of §505.11 reads that "no person shall trap any animal or fowl..." should read "Any game animal or fowl", because there is other trapping for vermin.

Mr. Kuhar asked if they are talking about State of Ohio licensed trappers or State of Ohio liensed nuisance trappers, and Mr. Lillich said it woudl be both, as a nuisance trapper can trap. He said a liensed trapper, only, can move a nuisance. HE sai there are a lot of restrictions as to how or where they are moved, adding they cannot be moved across thecounty border because of disease concerns.

Mr. Kuhar asked if they are going to clear up some of the language in the ordinance to identify leghold and body hold traps, and Mr. Lillich said if someoen is using a humane trap for a game animal, they want the guidelines. He sai they want them to be liensed, with the property owners permission and identification tags on the traps.

Mr. Kuhar said they are forbidding the trapping of game animals, and trappign in the City is by licensed trappers. He asked where the ystand with raccoons, and if that is a game animal, and Mr. Lillich said that wsa correct. Mr. Kuhar asked if it is not a nuisance animal, and Mr. Lillich said it is a game animal, because people trap them for their pelts. Mr. Kuhar asked if that is correct if they are trapped as a nuisance, and Mr. Lillich sadi it is still a game animal. Mr. Kuhar asked if a liensed trapper can capture a raccoon, and Mr. Lillich said that was correct, as long as they are licensed. Mr. Kuhar said anyone with a hunting or trapping liense is a trapper, and Mr. Lillich said they need a trappign liense. He said he d id not know if nuisance trappers held a different liense, and Mr. Kuhar said they do. Mr. Lillich said they would honor that license.

Ms. Oswitch asked if she is not permitted to put a trap on her property, and Mr. Lillich asked what she

would do with it. Ms. Oswitch said she would give it to her dad. Mr. Lillich said there are restrictions on movement, which is part of the problem.

Mr. Kuhar asked if it is fact or fiction that there is a law that because of the spread of rabies, raccoons must be destroyed, and Mr. Lillich said they cannot leave the county. Ms. Gavriloff said there is a criteria on how the animal is behaving. She said if it is not acting as a normal raccoon, they have guidelines to destroy the animal and where to send it for testing.

Mr. Bargerstock said the thing that triggered this was a radio station personality asking about shelter. He said he appreciated Mr. Lillich's work, but still has a question about animals in frigid conditions. He asked if they have the ability to deal with that, adding there are some animals not accustomed to outside weather conditions that are left outside. Mr. Bargerstock said all they have to do is report it and Mr. Frazier would review it. Mr. Lillich said there is a lot more to the cruelty assessment besides weather. Mr. Bargerstock said there is a difference between a long haired husky outside compared to a short haired animal. Mr. Lillich said it would also be different if there was a house, raised from the ground and insulated. He said that is what the professionals take into account.

Mr. Hawksley said he is assuming that there is land in the southern tier where there are deer. He said that he thought people were hunting in that part of Kent, and Mr. Silver said if they are, it is not legal.

Chair Gavriloff called for audience comment.

LINDA CASALE, 815 BRYCE ROAD: Ms. Casale noted that Mr. Ferrara is her servant, adding she is the Acting Executive Director of the Animal Protective League. She introduced their Human Officer, Jennifer Sanderson, in case they had any questions.

MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CHANGE TO THE ANIMAL ORDINANCE, INCLUDED THE SUGGESTED WORDING CHANGE ABOUT "GAME ANIMALS".

Motion made by Ms. Oswitch, seconded by Mr. Hawksley, and carried by a voice vote of 8-0-1, with Ms. Gavriloff abstaining.

Hearing no further business before this Committee, Chair Gavriloff adjourned this meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Linda M. Copley, Clerk of Council

ACTION RECOMMENDED:

- 1) TO AUTHORIZE THE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT
- 2) TO AUTHORIZE FURTHER STUDY ON THE COOPERATIVE FIRE SERVICES AGREEMENT
- 3) TO AUTHORIZE THE SUGGESTED CHANGES TO THE ANIMAL ORDINANCE, INCLUDING THE WORDING CHANGE ABOUT "GAME ANIMALS".