

Appropriations Committee

Chairman Brodeur, Tramontozzi,
Boisselle, Conn, Heavey, Infurna,
Seaboyer, Wright, Mortimer
Absent: Buonopane, Forbes
In attendance: Mayor Dolan, Deputy
City Solicitor Robert Van Campen,
IT Director Jorge Pazos, Mike
Devitas of Surveillance Specialties

Appropriations called to order by Chairman Brodeur at 7:12 p.m. He says there are two orders before the committee which are related. He filed one of them asking the members of the Administration, Chief Lyle and the vendor to appear before the Board of Aldermen to provide information about the installation of security cameras in the City.

Order No. 08-029, Requesting that Chief Lyle and other appropriate city officials appear before the Board of Aldermen to provide information about the planned installation of security cameras in the city. (AL-1)

Mayor Dolan says he supports these two orders. It is difficult to discuss security cameras because living in Melrose, no one is used to them. They seem intrusive and give way to pause. Security cameras are a tool, a deterrent to crime in the community. A resident living near a park has to expect certain things: traffic, stray balls in the yard, and a certain amount of noise. But that resident should not expect people vandalizing their property or alcohol and drug abuse in his back yard. He should not have to deal with ongoing crimes. One should have their civil rights protected without being subjected to inappropriate behavior. Security cameras are a tool to maintain the quality of life in Melrose.

Chief Lyle says the program is to prevent crime in certain areas of the City – the Winthrop School and Wyoming Avenue. These areas are the closest ones to the fiber system to hook up to. He says he grew up in the City and it is not the same place now. It is more populated and there is more traffic.

Jorge Pazos says the locations for the cameras are being chosen by a map of the areas that have high number of calls for police and that are in close proximity to the city's coaxial network at the Police Department.

Chairman Brodeur says he filed this order to seek more information. One of the newspapers reported that if a person does nothing wrong there is nothing to worry about. He found that statement to be un-American. He says he had intended to provide a list of questions to the membership and Chief Lyle in advance of the meeting, but he was concerned about how that could infringe upon the Open Meeting Laws. Instead he drew up some questions to ask.

He asks if the cameras on West Wyoming will focus on the Lincoln School. Mr. Pazos says the focus depends on where the camera will be hung. The administration has a general idea of what it wants to capture. Chairman Brodeur asks if the cameras are hard-wired. Mr. Pazos says yes. Chairman Brodeur asks if they will run continuously. Mr. Pazos says yes, and they will feed back to the police station. The cameras are DVRs, similar to Tivo. Chairman Brodeur asks how much storage capacity is available.

Mr. Pazos says that footage will be kept for 30 days unless it involves an active investigation. In that instance the footage would be time stamped, copied and deleted from the machine. Chairman Brodeur asks if they will work at night. Chief Lyle says they run 24/7. Mr. Pazos says they are low-light cameras and use existing light. Chairman Brodeur asks if they will have a fixed focus. Mr. Pazos says the cameras are programmable to pan, tilt and zoom. Chief Lyle says the officer at the police station monitoring them is also able to operate them. Mr. Devitas says they can be set on automatic patrol but the officer at the station is able take control of them. Chief Lyle says they will be monitored by the dispatcher 24/7. The dispatcher will be trained in how to operate them, and only trained personnel will have access to them. Chairman Brodeur says the newspaper reported about the affect on traffic control but it doesn't strike him that the cameras will be used for that purpose. Chief Lyle says they are not good for traffic control. Chairman Brodeur asks if notices that they are in operation will be posted in the areas. Chief Lyle says no. Mr. Van Campen says discussion took place about the appropriateness of posting signage but the areas under surveillance are public ways. It is more appropriate not to put up signage. Chairman Brodeur asks if there is privacy protection built into the system. Mr. Devitas says there is and it is called "window blanket". The cameras can be preprogrammed to white out windows. Chairman Brodeur asks if there is any else. Chief Lyle says additional security measures will be included in the training of the officers who are chosen to operate the system. Chairman Brodeur asks what the training regimen entails. Mr. Devitas says that training is being set up. Chairman Brodeur asks if the recording includes an audio segment. Mr. Devitas says no, that recording audio requires two-party consent. Without it is illegal. Chairman Brodeur asks if this information is subject to a FOIA request, i.e. if an insurance company wants it to determine who was at fault in an accident. Mr. Van Campen says the tape is subject to disclosure subject to an investigation exemption. Under the law the City is required to retain it for 30 days. Chairman Brodeur asks who maintains the contract and how the City would go about expanding the program. Mr. Devitas says it is under warranty for one year, parts and labor, and ongoing service depends on what the City wants. Mr. Pazos says there is a similar system in City Hall but the contract is pay-per-incident because it is cheaper that way. Chief Lyle says it is an open-ended system and can be expanded. Chairman Brodeur says he is thinking about the illegal dumping that takes place in other areas of the City. He asks if there is the possibility of temporary expansion for a limited period of time. Mr. Devitas says it depends on IT's ability. Chairman Brodeur asks if there is any concern that by placing cameras in a neighborhood that the message being sent is that it is a problem neighborhood. Mayor Dolan says he has always been open about these issues. Wyoming is a thriving business area but there are consistent problems there. The goal is to make every business neighborhood as beautiful as the downtown historic district.

Alderman Boisselle asks if other police resources will be used to implement the program. Chief Lyle says no, that it will be funded by grant money. Alderman Boisselle asks how expansion of the program will be funded. Chief Lyle says with City revenue and grants. Alderman Boisselle asks if there is a policy for misuse. Chief Lyle says there is a draft policy which he will send to the Aldermen. Alderman Boisselle asks if better lighting in the area could be used as an alternative to reduce crime. Chief Lyle says it would help but in the absence of police, the security cameras will help to capture criminals. Alderman Boisselle asks if foot patrols would be better. Chief Lyle says there are foot patrols already in use. Mayor Dolan says an officer is on location every morning and during the day. Alderman Boisselle says the objective of the program is to reduce crime

and asks how that will be measured. Chief Lyle says the number of calls for service will track it. New codes will be implemented and service calls will be tracked accordingly. Alderman Boisselle says Verizon FIOS is coming to Melrose and asks if it will be used to operate the security system. Mr. Pazos says not at this time. The system utilizes remote DVRs and will operate over the existing network. Alderman Boisselle asks if the system is susceptible to abuse. Mr. Pazos says the honest answer is that every system is susceptible to abuse. Alderman Boisselle asks what types of security will be used. Mr. Pazos says there are security measures on the network level and there is password security.

Alderman Conn asks how many communities currently use this system. Chief Lyle says there are a few but that it is cutting edge technology. Alderman Conn asks when it is anticipated to go online. Mr. Pazos says it will be a matter of two months. Alderman Conn asks if this technology will be used to augment manpower. Chief Lyle says yes. Alderman Conn asks if sworn police officers will monitor the cameras. Chief Lyle says yes, sworn detail officers only. Alderman Conn asks if he is going to tie in a disciplinary scheme for abusers. Chief Lyle says there is a discipline component for misuse. Alderman Conn asks if the program will be subject to collective bargaining. Chief Lyle says he doesn't believe so. Alderman Conn says the administration isn't seeking approval for this tonight. Mayor Dolan says they are seeking it at some point.

Alderman Wright says he has received complaints of activities on W. Wyoming and Hurd Streets, and asks the intended scope of the cameras on W. Wyoming. Chief Lyle says it will be from the Lincoln School to Main Street. Mr. Pazos says the camera will be hung on the street facing toward Main Street. Alderman Wright asks how many degrees the camera is capable of turning. Mr. Devitas says 360.

Alderman Heavey says the Winthrop School camera will monitor the playground. Chief Lyle says yes. Alderman Heavey asks if the camera at the Lincoln School will be attached to the school. Mr. Pazos says no, it will be hung on a pole. Alderman Heavey says the camera won't be trained on the school. Mr. Pazos says it will be facing Main Street. Alderman Heavey says it will be looking at residences and asks if it will not monitor traffic. Chief Lyle says no, it will not monitor traffic. Alderman Heavey says it will be trained on residences. Mayor Dolan says it will also focus on businesses and the train station. Alderman Heavey says the basis of the camera placement is based on service calls. Chief Lyle says yes. Alderman Heavey says the people who live in this neighborhood will have the police watching them coming and going 24/7. Mr. Devitas says the cameras will be viewing the public ways – sidewalks and streets. The cameras can be programmed to blank out buildings above the first floor. Alderman Heavey says the idea seems a tad overkill since there is very little crime for the businesses in the area and there is no intention of revealing that cameras are in use. She says from her experience in the Malden Court that she knows the service calls are coming from the triple-family apartment buildings closer to Main Street. There are no businesses there. She says this is overkill – Big Brother – and she thinks the people in this area should know this program is anticipated. She says people have an expectation of privacy.

Mayor Dolan says her concerns are well taken and legitimate. The people from the neighborhood say there is a problem in that neighborhood – drug activity and an assortment of crime. There are 400 to 500 children that play in the parks and walk to school and live in that neighborhood who deserve to go outside and not be subjected to

what is going on there. He believes as mayor that the right of people to live in a safe environment is a greater civil right than impeding criminal activity. Chief Lyle says he is not looking to put cameras in the area that Alderman Heavey is speaking of. They will be placed to focus on the businesses and the railroad station.

Alderman Infurna says she won't repeat everything Mayor Dolan said but she shares those same thoughts. She has one concern about adding lighting. She does not want to have intrusive lighting installed in the neighborhood. She commends Chief Lyle and Mayor Dolan for their proactive approach. As City officials they all owe it to the residents and businesses to provide a safe neighborhood.

Alderman Seaboyer says this order is for cameras in two locations. He asks if future installations will come before the board. Mayor Dolan says he has always kept the board informed and will continue to do so. Citizens have asked about two other locations: Berwick and Grove Streets and Swains Pond. There are no immediate plans to expand. He wants to take it slowly and methodically and do it right. Alderman Seaboyer asks what \$25,000 will cover. Chief Lyle says that money is for a security system at the police station. The cameras will be paid for out of grant money. Alderman Seaboyer asks if wires the City currently owns will be used. Mr. Pazos says the City doesn't own the wires but the existing wires will be used. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the schools will also be monitored through this system. Mr. Pazos says no, that each school is like a little island unto itself.

Alderman Heavey says the \$25,000 is for the police station. Mr. Pazos says they are looking to go from a key pad security system to a key fob security system. The funds also include some wiring that will be used for the surveillance program. Chief Lyle says it is a two-phase project. Phase one is for the police station. It will cost \$34,000 total. The other money will come from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund. Phase two will utilize \$18,000 from the Community Policing Grant. Mr. Pazos says phase two can't be done without doing phase one which includes updating the security system at the police department and running wires for the cameras.

Alderman Conn says he would like to make a few quick points. He does not want to give the impression that the Board of Aldermen is the permitting authority for placing cameras in the city. He also would expect that the operation of the cameras in an inappropriate way would result in severe repercussion.

Alderman Conn motions to place the matter on hold.

Chairman Brodeur asks about internal discipline and if it would include civil liability for abuse. Chief Lyle says he would think it would be criminal and civil. Chairman Brodeur says he is very sensitive to Alderman Heavey's comments. Every effort should be made not to focus on the residences. He is happy to see a focus on public ways, the business district and public property.

On the motion to place on hold, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

Order No. 08-027, APPROPRIATION Amount: \$25,000.00 From: A/C #84052-590000 – Capital Stabilization Fund, Transfers Out To: A/C #019313-551062- Police, Security System

Chairman Brodeur says there is verification from the Auditor that funds are available.

Alderman Conn moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Infurna. Motion carries (one opposed).

President Mortimer motions to adjourn, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Appropriations adjourns at 8:15 p.m.

Maribeth Harrington
Clerk of Committees