



**SAFETY COMMITTEE
MONDAY JUNE 15, 2015**

COMMITTEE MEETING:

**PLACE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS
7232 E. MAIN ST, REYNOLDBURG, OH 43068**

1. Call to Order

PRESENT: Kelly, McGrady III, Clemens, Long, Skinner, Joseph
ABSENT: Cotner, Barrett

2. Approval of Agenda

Agenda stands approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. Safety Committee – Committee Meeting – May 18, 2015

Minutes stand approved

4. Discussion

a. Ordinance Authorizing Mayor to Enter into an Intergovernmental Working Agreement with the City of Whitehall Police Department, and Declaring an Emergency.

Chief O'Neill: This is something we've been working on for the last year or so and its just a way for us to combine our resources and sort of streamline the way we operate the SWAT team both in the City of Reynoldsburg and in the City of Whitehall. Probably about 50-60% of the SWAT missions that we've done over the last 2 years, we've required assistance from another team and Whitehall is one we normally go to and we reciprocate back and probably assist them on close to half of their missions. When we started to look at it, both Chief Zitzke over in Whitehall and myself, it became apparent that we were duplicating a lot of efforts and there were a lot of assets that we could share and streamline the teams and sort of pare things down and make both teams more manageable and a little less on our individual resources and still accomplish the missions that we have in front of us. So, this is, it's been a kind of a long running agreement that we've had and we're trying to formalize this and combine our two teams.

Mr. Long: I would think the biggest advantage would be giving you the opportunity to train together. You don't think we would be diminishing any capability of our SWAT team here at the City of Reynoldsburg specifically?

Chief O'Neill: No I don't. Like I said, everything from a barricade situation to a drug raid, over the past several years, it's been a joint effort and between the two teams, we're going to try to maintain 9 officers and a supervisor per team so it still leaves us at 20 and there are very few things that we run into that we can't handle with 20 people. It just seemed a little bit, probably a waste for both of us to be carrying a 15-16 person team when we're going to have to call on the other team anyway.

Mrs. Kelly: Chief, say we get into this and a year or two years down the road, you find that it is really not working out ideally or the way that you would like for it to work out for Whitehall or for Reynoldsburg, would either agency have the opportunity to either ask to go back and tweak the agreement? Or to say, at this point it is really not working for where we are?

Chief O'Neill: This is something that we would review on an annual basis anyway and like most mutual aid agreements, there's an attachment there that says in thirty days we can cancel this, so we're certainly not locked into anything and if we get downstream a little bit and find that Whitehall is allowing their team to lapse and they're not carrying their end of it or for that matter if they have that feeling about our team and they want to opt out that is always there.

Mrs. Kelly: Great, Thank you.

Mr. Long: Any other questions for the Committee?

Mr. McGrady: Chief, do we have an agreement with Columbus SWAT as well?

Chief O'Neill: No we don't. Columbus SWAT operates, it's a little bit of a different animal than we're used to. Our SWAT team and Whitehall's SWAT team, we do probably 90-95% of our activity is drug related activity where we're doing high risk warrant service for search warrants. Columbus SWAT is completely different than that. They almost exclusively do barricade situations and high risk arrest warrants. So they kind of operate on a different plane than we do. They have, in fact, 2 20 man teams. One that operates on second shift and one that operates on 3rd shift for Columbus SWAT. So there's not much crossover there and it made a lot more sense for us to team up with a smaller agency that kind of did the same thing we do.

Mr. McGrady: We have all of our equipment requirements?

Chief O'Neill: Oh yeah. We've operated as our own team for the last 20 years. We're pretty well set. But that's a constant evolution there and there is always something that comes up but it doesn't make sense for us to purchase something and then to have someone like Whitehall or Gahanna right across the street purchasing the same thing when we can combine our teams and sort of extend our resources.

Mr. Long: Any further questions?

Mr. Joseph: Thank you Chairman, Chief, do any other suburbs of similar agreements between each other?

Chief O'Neill: Not that I'm aware of specifically. There was a real push put on it a couple of years ago, something called a Core Initiative and it was sort of centered around Whitehall and they wanted to combine resources on a lot of different levels: investigative, training level, something they call field force which has to do with like mass riot type crowd control situations and a SWAT team. It was done on a really big scale and they just couldn't get it all together and a lot of agencies tend to be a little provincial about those, a little territorial, so, if there are agreements in place specific to SWAT teams, I'm not aware of them.

Mr. Joseph: Ok, you had mentioned Gahanna and I didn't know if the idea was to go beyond a single partner at some point.

Chief O'Neill: When this first came up a couple of years ago, the proposal was for our team, Gahanna and Whitehall to all combine. There were some difference of opinion for how different things should get approached with our approach, our philosophy and Whitehall's being very similar and Gahanna's and not quite matching up with us so there would be a certain level of conflict for how we would handle a situation if it were to happen in Reynoldsburg vs. The exact same situation in Gahanna. It became apparent we weren't going to work that out. So we pared it down and went with just 2 for now and we'll always have the option to expand if this works out.

Mr. Joseph: Ok, thank you.

Mr. Long: I can see what you exactly said there as being an issue when coming down to training. If you have 2 different philosophies between the 2 different departments you begin to lose command and control.

Chief O'Neill: The fundamental difference came, when do you take your SWAT team and use it as a massive show of force and storm the gates and when do you surround the neighborhood and wait them out. There are 2 approaches and both of them have their upsides and we couldn't come to an agreement on how to handle certain things so we sort of cut and ran on that one.

Mr. Long: Any other questions from members of the Committee?

RESULT:	REFERRED TO COUNCIL [UNANIMOUS]	Next: 6/22/2015 7:30 PM
MOVER:	Chris Long	
SECONDER:	Cornelius McGrady III, Ward III	
AYES:	Kelly, McGrady III, Clemens, Long, Skinner	
ABSENT:	Cotner, Barrett	