

ALARM ORDINANCE REVIEW  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2010  
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ALARM ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2010, in the CITY MANAGER'S CONFERENCE ROOM, located at CITY HALL, 201 SOUTH CORTEZ STREET, Prescott, Arizona.

A. Call to Order.

Due to a conflict in schedules, the meeting was called to order by Member Suttles in the Lower Level Conference Room.

B. Roll Call.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

ABSENT:

Member Suttles  
Member Blair (represented by Member Linn)  
Member Lamerson

None

C. Discussion of alarm ordinance.

Chief Kabbel began the discussion by stating that people have the right to defend their personal property. Law enforcement is not charged with protecting their personal property. If a burglary happens, law enforcement investigates and tries to find the person that did it. The International Association of Chiefs of Police's first recommendation is a verified response which means that when a property owner hires an alarm company to monitor their property, it is on them to first verify that a crime has occurred, and then contact police.

He said that their second recommendation is that if a community wants the police to monitor private property, then they should pay a fee so they know who they are and if they get an alarm sounded they can contact the owners.

Member Lamerson said that during the last Council meeting no one said they had an issue with charging for false alarms. What they did not support was requiring everyone to register their alarms.

Member Suttles said that if Mr. Lamerson did not want the Police Department to know he had an alarm and his alarm went off, it would then go through the alarm company. Chief Kabbel explained that the problem is that the alarm company calls the Police Department. If the owner was only calling the alarm company there would be no problem. He said that the permit is to help the Police

Department provide better customer service so they can secure the house and notify the owner.

Member Suttles said that her issue with the process was the additional staffing. Chief Kabbel said that when they presented it at the Council meeting he had recommended a trial period of one year, but they would like to change that to two years to see how it rolls out and provide an honest assessment at the end of the two years.

Member Lamerson said that he had no problem with paying a fee for the service; he had a problem with a mandatory requirement.

Lieutenant Reinhart said that the problem is that once the Police Department is called to the site they are responsible for making contact with the owner. If people want to involve the Police Department then they should give them an opportunity of having current information on file. He said that a lot of agencies throughout the country have a permitting process for alarms. Member Lamerson said that there were a lot of people that register their guns, but it was not mandatory.

Member Suttles asked how they would make a party responsible if it was not mandatory. Member Lamerson said that if they chose to not be on file, and the Police Department was called for a false alarm then they should be charged for the service.

Member Suttles asked how they would pay for the program if it was voluntary. Chief Kabbel said that it would be done off of the fines. He said that in looking at the goal, to reduce the number of officers and hours going out on false alarms, if they had a permit and knew whose house it was, they could shorten the call to 15 minutes and get their officers back on the street.

Chief Kabbel said that if people do not want to have a permit and provide the City the information to help them, then they should go through their alarm companies and not involve the Police Department until it has been verified that a crime has occurred.

Member Suttles asked how many alarm companies there were in the area. Chief Kabbel said that there were around 50 from all over the country. He said that they cannot mandate the alarm companies to give the City the contact information.

Member Suttles asked if they could take the Police Department out of it altogether. Chief Kabbel said that once the alarm goes off the alarm companies contact the Police Department. Lt. Reinhart added that if it is a private alarm the neighbors will call in if it goes off and then it is affecting the entire community.

Member Linn asked if most the problems were from businesses or residences. Chief Kabbel said that it was from both. He said that they average nine alarms a day that were false.

Member Linn asked if they were set up to do the billing. Chief Kabbel said that was what the computer module would do. It works with the current records management system, pulls the specific information and does the billing.

Member Linn said that she had a problem with it being mandated. Lt. Reinhart said that the information requested was very limited. He said that the charge for the permit was to cover the administrative costs and allows them to get updated information to keep the records currently.

Discussion was held on the possibility of having those that did not want to provide the information sign a waiver eliminating a response from the Police Department unless it was verified by their alarm company. After some discussion it was agreed that such a process could become cumbersome for the Police Department in knowing who they were and were not to respond to. Mr. Kidd noted that it would be difficult in those instances where there is no alarm company involved; when someone has privately installed an alarm.

Chief Kabbel noted that before the change was made they would have a concerted education effort to notify everyone of the need for a permit.

Discussion then began on the fee involved. Member Lamerson said that he thought the fee should be structured based on whether it was residential or commercial. Chief Kabbel noted that they do the same job regardless. He said that the biggest difference would be between an alarm and a panic alarm as they would respond in a different manner. He said that if they have a panic alarm, someone has to be pushing the button. It could be a home invasion or a bank robbery.

Brief discussion was held on fire alarms. Chief Kabbel noted that since the Fire Department has mandated businesses to have fire alarms, the businesses are doing a better job of making sure they work properly.

Member Linn said that she had a problem with the \$15. She would not have a problem mandating it, but without a fee.

Chief Kabbel asked Member Lamerson if he would support a permit without a fee. Member Lamerson said that he did not like the mandate. If the ordinance allowed someone to choose whether they register or not, he would support it.

Discussion was held on the fee itself. Chief Kabbel said that he would not have a problem doing \$15 for the first year and have it free thereafter as long as there was no change in the information. Once someone moved, or changed ownership,

they would file for a new permit at \$15. Member Suttles said she would support that.

Member Suttles asked how someone would be corrected if they do not know about it. Lt. Reinhold said that one of the things in the ordinance was that after the second false alarm they have to fill out a "corrected action" report to outline what steps were taken to correct the problem.

Discussion was held on a two year trial period. Chief Kabbel said that they could still come back at the end of the first year and give a report. Member Linn said she had no problem with the two years. Member Suttles said that her concern was with bringing on a part-time temporary person and after two years it becoming a full-time permanent employee with benefits. Chief Kabbel said that after the first year they would have a better idea of whether it would need to be a part-time permanent position.

Chief Kabbel noted that the computer software cost was a one-time \$6,000 and an annual support cost of \$900. He said that with the permitting fees up front, they could use those to purchase the equipment.

Member Linn asked if they had anyone in the department working part-time that would like to work full-time. Chief Kabbel said that their crime prevention person is part-time and would be interested, and it would fall into her realm.

Member Suttles said that they will have to convince her that they need a person permanently. It was agreed that it could be reviewed at the end of the first year.

Discussion was held on whether they could have a voluntary program. Chief Kabbel was asked to prepare an ordinance for both a voluntary program and a mandatory program. He said that he would try to get that done within the next week and circulated to the members. If they were comfortable with it, they would place the item back on the September 28, 2010 Council meeting for further consideration.

D. Adjournment.

There being no further business to be discussed, the meeting of the Alarm Ordinance Review Committee of September 8, 2010, adjourned at 11:00 a.m.