

Item 23-1407: Resolution #13-R-23 To Use ARPA Funding for Flock License Plate Reading Cameras for APD

Common Council

Wed, Dec 20, 2023 7:00PM

Mayor Jake Woodford 34:15

We can move on now to public participation. We have one member of the public sign up to speak so, Patti, come on up. We ask that you please keep your comments concise, no longer than five minutes and only speaking on items which appear on the agenda. And if you'd please state your name and address for the record then go right ahead.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 34:32

My name is Patti Heffernan and my address is [XXXXXX] in Appleton. I am a downtown business owner and I am here to speak on at the vote to purchase Flock cameras with dollars that are earmarked for mental health and substance use disorder. My business has two arms. It is training, consulting, and technical assistance for recovery-oriented systems of care. That's just a really fancy way of saying state and county governments ask me to tell them what works and how to do it and just make them do it, fix it. So that is our side of the business there. I actually can't—I believe we have all 50 states, and one territory where we have offered our services.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 35:24

Our direct service program, however, is local here. It is wraparound support services for families at the intersection of substance use disorder and child welfare. We have a 94% success rate. There is not another organization that can say that. So, what I am here today to say is, is it's my understanding that the reason that we want these cameras is to reduce violence. That's something that I want too, and it's my understanding—somebody please correct me if I'm wrong—is that the reason that we're citing for this is because these cameras helped catch a serial killer in California? Is that right?

Mayor Jake Woodford 36:07

We don't—during public participation, you just go ahead and speak we don't have a dialogue.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 36:13

So, what I can say about Appleton is that our serial killer rate is zero. We don't have any murders in the last year. In fact, we are one of the safest cities in the country. What was that 100%—100 of the best cities to live in that we just heard about? So, while I am also interested in making sure that we have non violence issues in our city (because we do have violence issues in our cities), I did bring some information today. I'm a tactile learner. The tech does not work for me. So, I brought So, I work in nonprofit. I don't So, I'm just in the interest of time, there are just some highlighted pieces in here that I would like to go through, because this is very relevant to the American Rescue Plan Act because this information came from the Center for Nonviolence, which works in conjunction with SAMSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency, which is also a federal agency, and ARPA dollars are federal dollars.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 37:16

So CVI programs, or community violence intervart—innavent—intervention (forgive me) programs. They work to reduce homicides and shootings, through trusted partnerships between community stakeholders like ourselves, and individuals that are most affected by gun violence and in partnership with government. These programs connect individuals most at risk of committing or experiencing violence, or both, with the community members

who have walked through a similar path with whom they trust and respect. These trusted partnerships with staffs rooted in the community they serve. The CVI programs are able to identify and best serve the resources to support alternative avenues to conflict resolution. Most of the—most common models include—and please, if anybody would like this link to this article, I feel I will have no problem sending that out. I do believe I sent this to a couple alder people who may also be able to send it to you too.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 38:17

So, I'm just going to hit the highlights. There are hospital-based violence intervention programs focused on preventing retaliation in domestic violence situations. There's the violence interruption or street outreach programs led by interventionists who live in the community and can build trust and relationships with participants with their lived experience. It's focused on building relationships, again, with those community partners and with the government agencies, to bring together those who have perpetrated and been victimized by gun violence to help fix the harms.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 38:51

The group violence intervention is—this is where law enforcement is concerned. This is to cultivate trust with law enforcement, community stakeholders, and service providers, including myself.

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:06

About 30 seconds remaining.

Patti Heffernan (Helios Recovery Services) 39:08

Okay. The results speak for themselves. Homicides and non-fatal shootings down by 60% (30% in Chicago). And in Oakland, California, as we spoke of before, the city's gun violence dropped by half over a seven-year period and went down by 50% in just 18 months when implemented in the city of Chicago. So, I am also very interested in cultivating nonviolence in our cities with the actual violences that we are dealing with in reality here in the city of Appleton. Thank you so much for being here and giving up your Wednesday evening to listen to me. Thanks.

Mayor Jake Woodford 39:48

Thank you. There's nobody else signed up for public participation, but if you'd like to speak, if there's an item that appears on the agenda, come on up, need your name and address for the record, please.

Josh P. (Resident) 39:59

[Josh P. at XXXXX] I just wanted to echo the same concerns that the last speaker had with the Resolution 13-R-23. I don't think allocating the funds for these cameras really addresses the root cause. I think the money should be allocated to some of the programs previously mentioned. So that's all I had.

Mayor Jake Woodford 40:31

Thank you.

[Cut]

Mayor Jake Woodford 50:01

We'll just take these up in order. The first is item 23-1407 Resolution 13-R-23 to use ARPA funding for Flock license plate reading cameras for APD. We have a motion and a second to approve. We'll open the floor for discussion. Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 50:29

Thank you, Chair. I'd like to thank Chief Olson for taking the time to speak with me about this on Monday. I took up a lot of her time, so thank you. In speaking with Chief Olson, I wanted to go I guess further in depth about the decision making for where the current cameras are and for funding options in the future. I had asked if pursuing this funding was a directive that she gave, and she said she had not nor had she spoken with the author of the resolution in person or at length. She explained how the APD team did a thorough analysis of the camera contract in the fall, and chose the most appropriate locations for the initial camera implementation.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 51:14

She stated that studying the locations and the number of cameras was ongoing. So, it could be possible that APD could request an additional placement at some point, but there were serious concerns about the use of one-time funding for an ongoing expense, the maintenance of the contract, especially with concerns about possible increases in the contract, similar to what we saw with the body cameras.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 51:38

Most importantly, I asked Chief Olson if these extra cameras were the top funding priority for the APD. And her answer was no. She went on to further explain that there are options for the addition of more cameras in areas that are at higher risk for illegal activity at no cost to the city. So given that I will not be voting in favor of this resolution that uses funds for mental health and violence prevention that will also benefit the APD. And I would urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 52:10

Further discussion. Alder Schultz.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 52:16

Thank you, Mayor. Thank you, President Van Zeeland for reaching out to Chief Olson and having that conversation. This is insightful. I did a lot of research on my own and not much to share, except that, you know, funds have been spent almost 60—50% of ARPA funding has gone into community policing, jail and criminal violence prevention, expansion of jails, that sort of thing. So, it's not an abnormal, but I do feel like this is not an appropriate use of those funds given what we really should be spending it on. And I know we have significant dollars waiting in the wings for programs or proposals to come forth. And I think we need to push our community to do that.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 53:03

But I think we have, number one, already approved 19 Flock cameras, a pretty significant system that by all measure's working well. We also have a pretty advanced network of intersection cameras that we use daily. If you go to any kind of traffic court hearing, you'll see that we're using intersection cameras quite regularly to track vehicles, watch incidences, review traffic accidents, that sort of thing. So just—we have to be mindful that this is a this flat cameras a specific use specifically targeted to tracking license plates, and I don't know that it'd get the use, I think, that the addition of 10 more cameras to a system that we've already approved. It feels like a lesser degree of point of diminishing return, I guess. If those 19 are going to work, and I think they have been proven to work, then that's what we should start with and as we review it going forward next year, the year after and determine "Boy, it would have been nice to have two or three more cameras in this route around this arterial street." We can probably review and at that point, but I too will be voting against this use. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 53:03

Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 54:16

Thank you, chair. The category on which we all as a Council have set aside some of these funds is because—is defined as "community wellness, mental health and violence protection or prevention". So, I feel that this particular resolution fits right underneath that category quite well. In fact, that was confirmed at the Finance Committee meeting from discussions with many of the staff members. In fact, I was—we were told that that meeting that the CEDC Department stated that there were available funds within this category and that this qualified under those particular guidelines that we as a Council set aside, but also that our—follow ARPA funds, requirements.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 55:23

I'm satisfied to vote yes, in this regard. And I hope that many of my colleagues will consider it as well, just because of the initial placement of these Flock cameras—there was a reason for it. There was a reason that 29 were placed. So, to say, "Chief Olson had to cut these back in order to make it work within her budget, but we don't really need those additional cameras," is not necessarily a truthful statement.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 55:54

And I would like to ask, please, if Chief Olson could explain to us the additional costs that would come with the removal of these cameras, and then if the cameras need to be replaced again. So, if we come to a final agreement that, yes, those additional cameras that we're talking about here are needed, what are the additional costs that come with that? I believe there is a—she mentioned it, but I would like it confirmed here—I believe there's a placement fee and those sorts of things. So not only is it going to be saving us money with this additional \$2,500 to \$3,000. But it's also going to be saving us money to not have to replace those cameras based on what was originally decided as the network that Appleton needed.

Mayor Jake Woodford 56:42

Chief Olson.

Police Chief Polly Olson 56:46

I have Director two.

Mayor Jake Woodford 56:47

Okay.

Police Chief Polly Olson 56:47

Thank you. I was just trying to find the data. I don't have it with me for that extra cost. So, I'm just trying to do it by memory from the last meeting. But it's my understanding, it's about \$36,000 over five years for the—in savings—to add the 10 cameras on now versus adding them in down the road.

Mayor Jake Woodford 57:15

Further discussion. Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 57:22

Thank you. Thank you, Mayor. Just a couple things. As I listened to the—or got the information at the committee meeting and have been thinking about this a lot, I'm comfortable voting for it for some specific reasons. It's an authorized use of ARPA money—we consulted with our consultant—we were told. So, there's no question about can we use it for this; it's an eligible expense. It doesn't take all the funds in this bucket. It's a percentage, and I don't remember the figures. But it's not a—it's obviously some of the bucket, but not a large percentage of the

bucket. And as Alder Hartzheim mentioned, we heard that there are still enough funds in the bucket to address the other needs with community wellness and mental health.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 58:15

So, it—in my opinion, it—I really don't look at it as a this or that thing, because there's enough money in the bucket to do this and that. So just want to make sure that we're clear, we're not, you're not taking all the money for this. There's still money, plenty of money, available for those other important programs that were referenced during public participation.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 58:35

I also wanted to comment on the Flock camera system. And I would like, if we could, just to hear from the chief on what types of things—and I know she's given some specific examples of what flock cameras can do. They do much more than catch killers. They do that as part of crime prevention and crime solutions, but there's many other benefits of the Flock camera system. And if we could just have her comment on those benefits and maybe give an example or two of what that system does. I think that's all I had for notes. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 59:13

Chief Olson.

Police Chief Polly Olson 59:14

So, I do have some information with me that I can update the Council on where we're at. Without doing a deep dive into the success that we've had with them thus far, we've solved about 42 hit and run crashes, solved about 22 retail theft incidences, made arrests in about six different domestic violence incidences, assisted with—the cameras have assisted with about 20 major crime investigations, the most recent being the Brau Haus shooting where the suspect vehicle was IDed in the downtown area. We've had 39 stolen vehicles recovered. In addition, yes, they help out with all sorts of different types of cases including welfare checks, missing persons, things of that nature.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:00:05

Alright. Alder Alfheim.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:00:07

Thank you, chair. And I appreciate Chief Polly giving us all the information we continue to ask for. I know it's a it's a big load. I think everybody through committee and this meeting is making it clear that it is important to us that we take care of our community. That is not in question. What's in question is whether we're going to—what started with asking for \$25,000 to be coming out of the ARPA funds which the majority of which would have gone to mental health and community wellness has now turned into [\$125,000], and it continued—and on a continuing basis, some of those dollars roll. That's a much larger conversation.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:00:51

I have a couple of issues. One, I'm not sure it should be the alders who come up with solutions to problems that haven't been identified by the APD themselves. I would much rather have Chief Polly come to the safety licensing meeting saying "This is what we need. We need more. And this is why." That's not what happened here. What happened is an alder came to the table and said "We should do this." And now the Chief is trying to come up with reasons for all the questions that we asked. And I think that's unfair. And I don't think that's the way we're supposed to legislate.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:01:28

The second issue I have is, this is a situation of: can we do it? Yes. The consultants are wonderful teams and Finance have validated that we certainly have the legal ability to do what's being asked of us here. The question is whether we should? I think in all the discussion we've had about the value of the these tools, what we're hearing is that it is catching the bad guys. It is catching after the fact. And that's what they're there for. And we know they're doing the job. I would like to be solving these and have less problems happening. I would like to have to catch fewer bad guys and prevent crime. In order to do that, I do believe we should use as many of the ARPA dollars as possible in the community where it is needed in education, in reduction, in resources to reduce the issues before they start. If we're going to spend money, I would like to help work on the problem not on another solution to catch it once it's gone wrong.

Aldersperson Kristin Alfheim (District 11) 1:02:31

So, I would, one, like to vote this down and, two, ask that the Council go directly to the source and start talking with them instead of coming with a solution, and then we spend all these hours trying to backtrack through it. I don't think that's the appropriate use of us.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:02:51

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:02:53

Thank you, Chair. I don't think anyone's disputing that these cameras are helpful. But I don't understand why we would be spending money we don't know how we can maintain in the future, when there is a possibility that we can have places where the PD is already responding to, pay on their own behalf for a camera that will allow us to do the same thing. Why would we spend that money? And perhaps—could we have Chief Olson discuss how the Flock system works in that regard with the with community with the community Flock program.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:03:39

Chief Olson.

Police Chief Polly Olson 1:03:41

Thank you. There is a community program that Flock has sales folks that do work with municipalities to do outreach to say businesses such as—I'm just gonna throw some names out there, so Walmart or Target, might be banking institutions, Kwik Trips, businesses of that nature, to get them to invest in purchasing a contract for Flock camera to be installed either in their driveway areas or parts of their parking lots that could assist with reducing crime related to—say if it's a banking institution, things related to that. But they do take on the costs themselves versus the municipality having to take on the cost of that. There is a specific salesperson that also works with school districts to fund cameras on school properties as well.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:04:42

Alder van Zeeland.

Aldersperson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:04:43

Thank you. So, when we hear Chief Olson say things like well, "They were helpful in us locating a suspect in retail theft," if that business—and I guess correct me if I'm wrong, Chief Olson, but at the cost of the camera for As a community member, that is, as far as we understand it is \$2,000. For \$2,000 they have access to that information and can work with the police department directly. I just think that's a better investment. You know, we're still getting the work done, and we're getting the work done in a targeted manner. And I don't know why we wouldn't do that.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:05:21

And I would just—just to be clear, chief is indicating that that it's likely more than \$2,000, but that would be—that'd be something we could get. If there's a specific question from Council then we can we can contact Flock and get specific pricing details. Alder Hartzheim.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:05:42

Thank you, chair. To follow up on what Alder Croatt was saying as far as this is a very small percentage of what's available, I believe there's a million dollars available in this particular bucket. And the \$125,000 would be for five full years. And that is obviously 12.5% because I'm a numbers nerd. There—this bucket has three prongs, community wellness, mental health, and violence, protect—prevention. Not one of those is more important. We wouldn't have made it a three-pronged bucket.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 1:06:16

Obviously, mental health is a very large issue that we need to deal with as a community. But the other two are not less important. And the other two are distinctly addressed with this particular resolution. Community wellness. We have to—if we want a healthy community, we have to be able to solve crimes and stop future crimes from occurring. Violence Prevention. Alder Alfheim said, you know, "I'd like to stop this at the beginning," but sometimes the beginning is the end of the last thing that happened. So, someone committed a crime, their license plate has come up, and we—they've been found. We've now prevented a potential nother crime. So, of this three-pronged bucket, we're going to use, potentially with this resolution, 12.5% have a giant bucket and use the rest for this mental health problem. I think that that is something that we should remember as we discuss this further. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:07:21

Alder Doran.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:07:23

Thank you. Going to take us back a little bit, I guess, to the beginning of this resolution, which came out of discussions prior to the budget. When this was first brought before the Safety and Licensing Committee, when chief Olson explained that originally, the Police Department had installed 29 cameras under this pilot project. Chief Olson had explained I think at the time that the 29 cameras were based on their sort of mapping out of the city where they felt were priority intersections, where these could be of highest value to the city. Through the budget process, internally, that was whittled down to the 19 cameras that came before us in the budget. So, this resolution isn't me trying to solve a problem. This is responding to an issue that was brought forward. The police department originally asked for 29 cameras, not 19. So, this is an opportunity for us to fully fund the request that was originally brought forward by staff, not by me.

Aldersperson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:08:31

The—we've heard that the money's there. We don't have mental health organizations lining up to take the rest of those funds at this point. And if they do, there's plenty of money left over after this. When the resolution originally came forward for \$25,000, that was out of several discussions with both Chief Olson and the budget manager for the police department, and it wasn't until the day they originally came forward before committee that we heard back from Flock that there was in fact the additional charge for managing or maintaining the cameras during that time which necessitated the additional \$100,000. But we have an opportunity to have these additional cameras for five years paid for through these ARPA funds. And as we've heard, this qualifies for use under that fund. And we also have the opportunity to choose not to renew them in the future. If budgets preclude us from being able to do so.

Alderson Chad Doran (District 15) 1:09:36

But what we know is that these cameras work. We know they help solve crimes. And if the police department comes to us in the future asking for more cameras, my guess would be that we would approve that. If it's one or two or five or however many that would be, we will probably approve that. So why would we not want to take the opportunity now to save money while we can for something that we're probably going to end up doing in the future anyway? This just makes sense, guys.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:11

Alder van Zeeland?

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:10:12

Thank you, Your Honor. I'm not sure who to direct this question to, but Alder Doron said that the police department brought forth a proposal for the 29 cameras, and I don't recall ever having a proposal. In Safety and Licensing when it came to us, I believe it was only for the 19 cameras. Is that correct?

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:35

That's correct. The pilot was 29 cameras that was originally selected by the police department under the free trial that was being offered by Flock. So, the proposal that came forward to Council was the 19 cameras.

Alderson Katie Van Zeeland (District 5) 1:10:49

Okay, great. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:10:51

Alder Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:10:53

Thank you, Chair. I think we'd be having an entirely different conversation if the proposal was can—should we fund a Flock camera system in the city of Appleton. We've already decided to do that. We have already approved funding for 19 cameras. I understand how effective they are. We just heard of a list of many of the things that they were effective at solving.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:11:16

I guess I'd have one question if I could for Chief Olson, and that is given that the pilot program was 29 cameras and that resulted in that pretty incredible list of actionable things that you were able to do with that information catch. By reducing it by 10 cameras, how in—how much of a reduction in the effectiveness of the Flock system do you feel that's going to result in? I guess I'm trying to get a sense of we've gotten it cameras we've approved, do 10 more—how much more effective are those 10 cameras versus going with the 19 as they are now? Half as effective? A quarter? A tenth? That's—I guess I'm trying to understand a little bit better what a 10 additional cameras would do.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:12:08

Chief Olson?

Police Chief Polly Olson 1:12:11

Thanks for the question. However, I don't know that I can provide an answer for that. What I can share is that there are today about 87 agencies within the state of Wisconsin that we share cameras with. So, we do have a pretty extensive network across the state. I won't know what the—because all of the cameras are still

operational to date. They will be until the end of the year, I'm told. So, when the 10 cameras go away, I don't know what kind of an impact that's going to have.

Police Chief Polly Olson 1:12:43

I do know that, you know, we do have the capability of the 19 cameras to make some adjustments on placement if needed. If we find that there's another intersection or another space that, you know, would—they'd be more effective, we can move them. But yeah, I can't provide an answer for you.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 1:13:02

Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:13:04

Alder Wolf.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 1:13:05

Thank you, Chair. So, on the ARPA money \$1 million worth, I've established how I believe that funding should be spent. I believe it should be spent in grants to nonprofits who will come forward for that money once they know it's there. I doubt that they are saying "Well, we don't need that." I also think Aldersperson Alfheim, what she had to say was pretty perfect with what I would say as well. So, I'm just not going to repeat those things. But I will be voting against this. I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:13:52

Alder Meltzer.

Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 1:13:54

Thank you. Yeah, I think that there's been no dispute that Flock cameras are effective, but I haven't seen a single piece of evidence establishing that we'll get a better outcome from the additional 10 cameras. I also think that it is a disturbing sort of linguistic gymnastics to assert that crime solving is the same thing as violence prevention. It is not. I encourage you all to vote against this. Thank you.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:14:24

Alder Croatt.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:27

Thank you, Mayor. I can see the direction this is going, but just a couple of comments. What I'm hearing is the opponents are saying that they can't support it because it's not coming from staff which, in my opinion, is something to consider, but I certainly think it's perfectly fine for an aldersperson to submit a resolution based on prior discussions during budget time about a particular issue.

Aldersperson Chris Croatt (District 14) 1:14:54

And then the second one is that it's taken money away from other uses in this bucket which it's my understanding—and if I if I could—I have not talked to Director Homan about this, but if we could have her comment on if this would be approved and this money would be taken out of that bucket, it's my understanding that there's still enough money in the bucket to address the needs of the community as it relates to wellness and mental health. Could we asked her to comment on that because what we heard—we heard that at committee.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:27
Director Homan?

Director Kara Homan (Community And Economic Development) 1:15:29
That's correct.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:37
Alder Firkus?

Alderman Brad Firkus (District 3) 1:15:40
I don't know if this is necessary anymore but call the question.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:15:44
All right, we have a motion to call the second. There are two in the queue. Do we have a second? We have a motion and a second to call the question. As I said two in the queue. All those in favor of calling the question please signify by saying aye. Any opposed? All right, the eyes have it. The question has been called. Please cast your votes.

Mayor Jake Woodford 1:16:16
Motion fails five to seven. The item has been denied. Move on to the next item from the—Alder Wolff, a point of order.