



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes PRIVATE ALARM SYSTEMS TASK FORCE

**ALD. ROBERT PUENTE, CHAIR**

**Ald. Willie Hines, Jr., Richard Pfaff, Ann McCarthy, David Stanosz, Raymond Statis and Christopher Utter**

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Monday, May 3, 2010

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, City Hall

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*Meeting convened: 10:01 A.M.*

*Ed Ehrlich present for the City Attorney's Office.*

**Present** 5 - Puente, Pfaff, Statis, Utter and McCarthy

**Excused** 2 - Hines Jr. and Stanosz

**1. Review and approval of the minutes of the April 26th meeting.**

*Ms. McCarthy moved, seconded by Mr. Statis, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.*

**2. Training standards for salespersons.**

*Richard Withers, Legislative Reference Bureau, is out ill and was unable to research this issue. This item will be held until the next meeting and Mr. Withers's attendance.*

**3. Monitoring Companies - licensing and regulation.**

*Minnie Johnson, citizen, appeared at the table. She had earlier appeared before the Public Safety Committee relating to problems with her alarm company. She also spoke to members of this body about the problems she had with her alarm company.*

*Mr. Utter said that Atty. Brian Randall had drafted a document relating to talks between the two of them. These were attached to Council file 091420. Mr. Utter said that Ms. McCarthy should not have to navigate her way through alarm company bureaucracy in order to report an issue to them. The recommendation is that if the owner signs a contract with the central station (monitoring company), then the monitoring company must be licensed; otherwise just the alarm company is licensed. The Task Force recommended that subcontractors be held responsible through the parent company's license, unless a customer directly buys an alarm service through a business such as Radio Shack or Home Depot and then contracts with a monitoring company for service. Mr. Utter would prefer that any company that a customer signs a contract with be licensed. This matter will be held until the next meeting so all members can look at the recommendation by Atty. Randall and Mr.*

*Utter.*

*Roll call taken at 10:15 A.M.*

**Present** 6 - Puente, Hines Jr., Pfaff, Statis, Utter and McCarthy

**Excused** 1 - Stanosz

#### 4. Citing of non-local alarm companies.

*Mr. Ehrlich was not supportive of requiring companies to have local agents that must accept service; if the company offers that is one thing, but to set it as a requirement might be inconsistent with state statutes. Mr. Ehrlich will research this and report back at the next meeting. Richard Paur, Dept. of Neighborhood Services, said that with his department the licensed agent for the company is the individual who receives service. The agents must be in Wisconsin and if not local, the department hires a process server. Mr. Utter would like to do the same thing that the department does as it relates to serving of non-local agents. The license division follows the same procedure, except no department is willing to pick up the cost of non-local service. Mr. Paur will research how often non-local service is done, how it is done and who picks up the cost of service. Mr. Utter thinks that if there is a local contact then there will be fewer instances of servicing non-local companies, but the city cannot require a local agent to serve. Citing of non-local alarm companies is the biggest obstacle Ms. McCarthy deals with as part of her job.*

*Ms. McCarthy discussed the police department's standard operating procedure document which was provided to members and the file. She accumulates all citations within that same month and then issues citations for all false alarms. Ald. Puente would like to encourage the department to cite individuals as false alarms occur, rather than accumulate over the course of a month. Atty. Ehrlich noted that there is no legal requirement to notify them individually rather than cumulatively. Atty. Randall reinforced that the out-of-state companies do support having a local contact that can be contacted so all the citations do not accumulate unbeknownst to the company. Atty. Randall thought that the vast majority of companies would agree to accept service through the mail, so that might be a solution*

#### 5. Proposed changes to city ordinances.

*Mr. Pfaff would prefer that the License Division get a photo of the individual, rather than a photo of the company identification. Mr. Pfaff will let the Task Force know what its pixel/size requirements are for photo identification.*

*Ms. McCarthy had provided members with documents last week, which were attached to the file. Ms. McCarthy would like to create a system of escalating fines for both false alarms and non-verified alarms. Mr. Ehrlich will research how forfeitures are currently handled by the court and the possibility of escalating forfeitures. She also recommended that the language be added to note that information noting that a panic alarm has been activated can be communicated through a phone call to the police dept. Ms. McCarthy also suggested having language added to note that if private security is at a business site, that that security can function as a first-responder. The Task Force supported both changes, so the Legislative Reference Bureau will draft both those changes.*

*Ms. McCarthy also noted that there are private companies that provide their own internal alarm services with their own, internal monitoring services, but they don't dispatch first responders, they just call the police department. Mr. Pfaff believes these companies may be exempt from licensing due to an opinion from the City Attorney's Office. Mr. Utter thinks that those companies are in the monitoring business as they are monitoring a number of businesses (albeit the same company) across the country. Ms. McCarthy would also like to have language added to include video-verified alarms and do so just by taking text from the current SOP to do so. The Task Force supported this change as well. The police department is currently looking at multiple-trip alarms and how the department will respond. Ms. McCarthy will see if she can get this issue resolved with the department's position prior to the completion of this body's work. The department will get more current statistics for the Task Force to look at and the department's position.*

*Mr. Paur would like to have the Dept. of Neighborhood Services recommendations included relating to licensing and permitting of installers as part of this body's recommendations so that it can all move forward as one document.*

**6. Regulation and licensing of private first responders.**

*Ald. Puentes noted that there are concerns about regulating and licensing private first responders. Mr. Pfaff noted that we currently don't license first responders, but the city does have the authority to do so. His section has never gotten any complaints relating to first responders, except for the response time limit, which is currently 30 minutes. Mr. Statis would like to see some regulation of first responders as they are going to individuals' homes. Mr. Utter thinks they should be regulated, but he doesn't think this falls under the scope of this body. Mr. Runner thinks the responsibility needs to be upon the alarm company, not the first responder company. Ms. McCarthy doesn't receive many complaints relating to first responders - more information on contact information for first responders would be helpful to her. Mr. Pfaff noted that alarm companies are required to tell the city who their first responders are and update the city within 10 days of any changes. The city can require any information that the police department needs.*

*Mr. Withers will research why first responders were specifically exempted from licensing in the original ordinance. Ms. McCarthy said that the companies that had multiple violations had never sent a first responder; the police dept. was called directly. This matter will be held until the next meeting so Mr. Withers can see why the original exemption was created. Because first responders typically do not go into establishments, they may not need to be regulated, although they can go into establishments if an access route is available, such as a broken window or open door.*

*Mr. Withers will also research if the state licenses or regulates security guard companies functioning as first responders.*

**7. Set next meeting date and agenda.**

*May 18th at 10 a.m.*

*Meeting adjourned: 12:03 P.M.*

*Linda M. Elmer*  
Staff Assistant