



# 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**

**Staff Assistant: Linda Elmer, 286-2232, Fax: 286-3456,  
lelmer@milwaukee.gov**

**Legislative Liaison: Richard Withers, 286-8532,  
rwith@milwaukee.gov**

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Tuesday, May 18, 2010

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, City Hall

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*Meeting convened: 10:02 A.M.*

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

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

**Excused** 1 - Stanosz

### 1. Review and approval of the minutes of the May 3rd meeting.

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

### 2. Training standards for salespersons.

*Richard Withers, Legislative Reference Bureau, had provided members with a memo relating to this issue, which is in the file. Mr. Withers has created a number of suggestions relating to sales training. The discussion at the May 3rd meeting seemed to have alarm company members support in-house training. Mr. Withers suggests having training that demonstrates a knowledge of alarm systems, the documents the owner signs, city regulations and a set number of hours, of which a federal alarm association recommends 14 hours. Mr. Withers would recommend adding an ethics component to the training. Ald. Puente has gotten calls from residents about problems they've had with alarm companies since the task force last met. Atty. Ehrlich will research if the city can limit the contract length, such as three years for residential alarms and five years for business alarms. He has received complaints relating to Pinnacle salesmen out canvassing areas. Mr. Utter said that the industry doesn't support the harassing techniques reported by Ald. Puente's constituents.*

*Mr. Statis noted that his company has a mandatory six-hour training on ethics, which the employee must pass and be recertified in each year. Mr. Utter said that the CEO of APX has signed the best practices statement and if his company is not following these best practices, the company can be dealt with. Mr. Ehrlich is not sure that the city can enforce consumer protection issues (which unethical sales would fall under) as those fall under state law. Mr. Withers thought it might work well to have companies submit a written curriculum and then if salespeople were not following the*

*curriculum, the city would have remedies it could take. The companies' actions would be scrutinized every two years when their licenses are up for renewal. The license application would include a training program. Mr. Utter and Mr. Statis will send their training information to the staff assistant, who will forward it to all members. If a company has a number of salespeople in violation of its training, the sales license of that company can be suspended at the discretion of the Public Safety Committee.*

*Mike D'Amato, Pinnacle Security, said that the solution to the problem of unethical salespersons is that the company be contacted immediately so employees can immediately be reprimanded for their actions and the supervisors made aware that there are problems in the field. Mr. Utter said that he keeps hearing Pinnacle's name as having issues with its operation and that the police should be contacting the company. He wonders what Pinnacle is doing to solve the problem, rather than relying on the police department to contact Pinnacle about its problem employees.*

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

*All members did read the memo from Atty. Brian Randall and Chris Utter, which is in the file. Atty. Randall appeared at the table to discuss his and Mr. Utter's proposed change to the ordinances, which would exclude monitoring companies which are included under the contract of the alarm company, rather than a separate contract for the monitoring company. Mr. Utter said that any company that has a contract with an end user, that business is licensed, which provides accountability for all companies involved with the service. Mr. Pfaff is concerned that the police department would not know which entities are responsible - the monitoring company or the alarm company. Ms. McCarthy noted that most of the monitoring companies do not hold separate contracts and offer monitoring services for 6-7 companies. Ms. McCarthy supported having all monitoring companies licensed as it's easier to track unlicensed alarm companies. Mr. Utter thinks that if an alarm company subcontracts with a monitoring company, then it can blame the monitoring company for any issues that might arise. Mr. Utter is willing to withdraw this suggestion as Ms. McCarthy doesn't think this will work administratively. Mr. Utter and Ms. McCarthy will resolve this issue by the next meeting. The City Attorney's Office will research whether private companies that provide alarm services solely for their companies across the country must be licensed by the city.*

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

*Atty. Ehrlich said that approximately 95% of Municipal Court cases are brought before the court by police officers citing individuals. Under state statutes, an officer, director or management agent of a company must be personally served, which is currently not happening for out-of-state companies due to cost. Richard Paur, Dept. of Neighborhood Services, said that the department uses the inspection staff in the court area to serve people locally and hires a process server for those who are further away. These costs could be added to the general licensing fees. Mr. Paur said that Neighborhood Services requires that companies post bonds from which costs can be taken. The bond requirement is set by city ordinances and the bonds are released once the project has been completed, although there are also bonds which are held by the department for those companies who work in the public right-of-way, rather than on specific projects. Mr. Utter thought that the smaller companies would have a hard time getting a bond of sufficient sum. Atty. Ehrlich didn't think that a bond would be legal. Mr. D'Amato and Atty. Brian Randall said that the companies which were facing denial or non-renewal this past year did agree to accept service by e-mail. All members did support having statements on the*

*applications noting that the company will accept service. Ms. McCarthy must call Ald. Puente and also report back at the next meeting how many companies the police department will serve and, if they will not serve, then why. Service may not be such a financial issue for the police department if 98% of the companies will accept local service or electronic service. If it's a cost issue for the police department, then possibly another city department can cite or can pay for service.*

**5. Proposed changes to city ordinances.**

*Ms. McCarthy read over the suggestions she had previously submitted, which are part of the file. John Whitman, Police Department dispatcher, came to the table to clarify the suggestions as well and to respond to questions from task force members. The proposed ordinances changes are highlighted. If Mr. Utter has any concerns he may speak with Ms. McCarthy as these suggestions will be finalized at the next meeting. For video verification, the video should reflect what is occurring at present, but there are no proposed quality standards for the video itself. Mr. Paur will provide his proposed ordinance changes to Mr. Withers for inclusion. Mr. Withers is now beginning to draft the proposed ordinance, so members need to get any proposed changes to him.*

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

*Mr. Withers noted that first responders were exempted and it was thought they were exempted because it was believed a neighbor might be a first responder. Mr. Withers does think this language needs to be cleaned up and that will be done as part of the proposed changes. Private security officers must have a state permit, which just requires a background check. The ordinances, per Mr. Withers, do not require that security guards be the responders, but they must be provided by the alarm company. The ordinances could be amended to note that private first responders must be security guards permitted by the state, so at least all responders have undergone a background check.*

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

*June 2nd at 10 A.M.*

*Meeting adjourned: 12:02 P.M.  
Linda M. Elmer  
Staff Assistant*