



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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Thursday, April 15, 2010

10:00 AM

Room 301-A, City Hall

Meeting convened: 10:05 A.M.

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

Excused 1 - Stanosz

1. Review and approval of the minutes of the March 25th meeting.

Mr. Utter moved, seconded by Mr. Runner, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

2. Proposed recommendations relating to contracts and installation regulations.

Richard Withers, Legislative Reference Bureau, has looked at a number of different cities and how they regulate alarm businesses. He thinks that the most efficient method might be to create consumer protection regulations - such as require training or badges for sellers. Mr. Pfaff noted that the city's costs must be covered if salespersons are licensed. If a salesperson doesn't comply with the regulations, that individual could be cited individually. If a pattern exists among a number of salespersons for the same company, then the company could also be disciplined. Ald. Puente noted that standards of salespersons should be set as well as standards for criminal background checks. If salespersons were licensed, fingerprints would need to be taken and a background check done. Licensing of salespersons could be modeled after how bartenders are licensed - the individual's record will determine whether he or she needs to appear before a committee. Mr. Utter didn't know if getting a temporary license for individuals would provide a burden for companies, particularly if college kids are only able to work for the summer months and the licensing process would take a number of weeks. Ald. Puente asked if a background check on individuals is done nationally or only for Wisconsin. Ms. McCarthy also said that often salespersons are only in the state of Wisconsin for a few months, so by the time the buyer complains, the salesperson has already left the state. Mr. Statis felt that having the company be responsible, rather than the individual salespersons, was preferable. Another possibility is to register salespersons, but license the company, which is held accountable for the salesperson's behavior. Mr. Pfaff suggested having the salespeople register and the registration will include a company affidavit that the background check has been completed; the company will hold a private alarm sales

license and that license can be regulated. The company will be responsible for ensuring that training of salespeople is completed (standards to be set by the city) prior to the registration of salespeople. The sales license could be suspended for a number of days or a series of fines created. Ald. Puente noted that there are other legal provisions if salespersons falsely represent themselves as representing a company. The responsibilities of the salespersons and the company must be defined by the city through this body, with the understanding that the alarms sales license would face disciplinary action.

Mr. Utter noted that he spoke with Richard Paur, Dept. of Neighborhood Services (DNS), relating to installation issues. He said that DNS will recommend that NTS1 or an equivalent of training be required for installers and remove the provision that requires a Type C electrician to do installations.

Mike D'Amato, Pinnacle Security, wants to ensure that either the police department or the license division provides either formal or informal notice to a company that a problem with the company exists. He would also encourage that companies provide plans of operation when they are first licensed and Mr. Pfaff would like to have the companies provide digital photos of their employees for a photo line-up. Ald. Puente said that the burden to do the training with the employees is on the company; the city merely wants the affidavit relating to each employee, digital photos of employees and a list of employees, which would then be loaded onto the web site. Ald. Puente suggested charging a fee to the company based upon the number of licensed salespersons it has or intends to have throughout the year. There would be little or no fee for registration as costs, per Mr. Pfaff, would be recovered through the parent license costs. Mr. Pfaff said that the License Division is opposed to an annual license as the current two-year license is more administratively efficient. Mr. Pfaff suggested having a local contact or local contacts added to the current licensing application. As registered salespersons leave a company, the company would also have authority to note that these individuals are no longer employees. Mr. Pfaff also discussed that it would be nice to eventually move to self-registration and self-termination of salespersons. As is currently done, the agent will need to be present at the committee even if local contacts are listed on the form as well.

3. Permitting of alarm systems and/or homeowners.

If the companies have sales licenses and salespersons are registered, there really is no need for the permitting of homeowners. Mr. Utter said that most non-verified alarms are set off by the users of the system. Ald. Puente said that he thought companies could provide information to the city, as part of its license, noting how many users the company serves. Ms. McCarthy said that the city could start citing individuals after the first non-verified alarm, rather than after the third one. Mr. Utter would support more regulation/fines for the homeowner other than police citations. He's also concerned that the city needs to have data on the number of systems operating in the city and feels that the permit system is the best way to obtain this. Mr. Runner noted that the city's concern was with the behavior of the company, rather than the homeowner. Mr. Withers did speak with some third-party companies which act as liaisons between the city and the company and handle the registration/permitting of the companies. The task force, at this time, was not interested in discussing this during this meeting, but it can be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. McCarthy noted that 99% of non-verified calls are the result of homeowner error. Ms. McCarthy does log the non-verified calls from the companies so those numbers are tracked, as well as those false alarms that are supposedly verified by a guard. Mr. Utter wants to track the specific addresses to which multiple non-verified alarms are reported to the city. The city would like to know how many alarm systems are operating in the city. The task force also discussed who will bear

the cost of obtaining the information - the taxpayers or the companies. The data must be obtained, but how that is done is still being debated.

4. Set next meeting date and agenda

Mr. Withers would recommend a final report with bullet points that list task force agreement and then suggested ordinance language. Mr. Withers will provide an initial draft to the chair and then it will be circulated to all members for review and comment.

Monday, April 26th 10 a.m.

*Adjourned: 12:02 P.M.
Linda M. Elmer
Staff Assistant*