



MINUTES
Committee on Public Safety
Tuesday, July 8, 2025 @ 4:00 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Pehlivanoglu called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm

PRESENT

Council Member Trini Pehlivanoglu, Chair
Council Member Adam Hussain, Vice Chair
Council Member Kost, Member

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Boak, Council Office Manager
Matt Staples, OCA
Joe Neller
Chief Backus, LPD
Officer Pratl, Assistant LPD Chief
Ali Peeler, via virtual

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM JUNE 10, 2025 AS CORRECTION TO THE SPELLING OF ANDY MARKOWICH TO MARKOVIC. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Peeler spoke on a request to change the noise ordinance. Currently states the officer has to witness the noise event, which she believes is unreasonable. She asked them to consider allowing audio video security cameras from homes/businesses, with the SCRAM practice that is already being used for other violations.

PRESENTATIONS

City of Lansing Public Safety Update from Lansing Police Department/Economic Development & Planning/City Attorney (no representative from EDP present at the meeting)

Red Tag Violations

Council Member Pehlivanoglu referred to the red tag and the wording that references Chapter 1460 of the ordinance, and asked LPD what their practice and policies are on how they handle someone living in a red tag property. Officer Pratl stated it would be based off public safety, non-violent misdemeanor crime. The people are allowed to be in the location for said violations to make repairs. For these types of crimes, they rely on discretion. They look at the type of infraction; is it renter or owner occupied. There is also a piece of the availability for other housing. Every call for a red tag is going to be different, case by case. Regarding a property on Shepard street, was set for demolition, and typically there are no occupants when that close to demolition. In the case of this property, code did call LPD for assistance due to a disagreement, and when officers used their discretion, with direct order the occupant did leave.

They want compliance voluntarily. Council Member Kost asked what happened after he complied, when in this case the occupant returned. Officer Pratl admitted the LPD has been to that site on multiple occasions, but at this time he was not present so cannot speak to that particular instance. Council Member Kost then spoke about another property in the City, where LPD arrived and told occupant they could not be there, and then told them he would wait until the occupant left, and that worked. Officer Pratl concurred that multiple times in one day is excessive, and something like that could have been done in the first or second call. Council Member Hussain asked about LPD call on red tag property at night or weekend, and if there is coordination with on call Code and HRCS. Officer Pratl noted in after hours it is more difficult, and in the past the practice has been to call HRCS, but for fires not. They are communicating with their on call, but can improve on it. If it is major they communicate with HRCS Director. Council Member Pehlivanoglu spoke on the officers discretion and asked if there is a threshold, and at what point is criteria met so they act and make sure a person is not in the structure. Officer Pratl stated there has to be probable cause to get into the home, and if they cannot build the case they cannot "break in". Each person's threshold would be different. Mr. Staples noted that what the Assistant Chief is stating is correct; there are all sorts of nuances, they work with LPD. There are cases pending currently for trespassing in a red tag, so they are using it. Council Member Kost asked if the City has gone after a landlord when they let people live in their red tag rentals. Mr. Staples stated they have advised EDP, to provide OCA with information they would need. A lot of tenants are not always trusting of authority but need a place to live. The Committee concurred that the community needs to take the Red Tag seriously because there are penalties and there are health and safety hazards. Council Member Kost asked LPD if when they remove someone, do they call Code for a "board up", and it was confirmed by Officer Pratl. Not knowing what Code practice is, but if they see that a door or window is open they will board up what is open and accessible.

City Ordinance – Chapter 654 Noise

Council Member Pehlivanoglu noted in the packet there an email thread on the member from the public, and asked LPD how they move forward on these. Officer Pratl noted that "discretion" should not be misread as not important. Calls are based on priority level; it is important that every noise complaint is different, sometimes the City ordinance is vague on what can and cannot be done. It speaks to decibels and LPD officers do not carry decibel readers with them. Mr. Staples confirmed that in the criminal context, it is important "beyond a reasonable doubt", look at it as if "this is going to trial and do they have the evidence they need". Sometimes it can be difficult based on the evidence they have. OCA does work with LPD when they have questions to discuss which parts of ordinances are applicable in ways to disseminate to officers. Council Member Pehlivanoglu the ordinance speaks to an officer witnessing, and asked if they have an issue or risk with accepting those documentation from a resident when coming to a conclusion. Mr. Staples that to submit and item of evidence, they need to lay a foundation which means they need the person who recorded it to come in and testify – what, when, where and how. Potentially with a decibel meter, they might need to provide evidence that it is calibrated device, might need an expert from the company to testify it is accurate. It is harder to get into hard evidence when getting into court. Again, the big issue is foundation. Council Member Hussain asked OCA can they do a sworn affidavit, and Mr. Staples noted no, because it is criminal the person has to be present so the other side can question them. Council Member Hussain noted maybe council needs to consider rewriting the ordinance and making sure the officers have decibel readers out in the field. Mr. Staples stated they would need the people accessible and verify the equipment is reliable. Council Member Pehlivanoglu concurred with getting right equipment. Council Member Kost noted that the decibel – 654.07 speaks to noise of vehicles, and OCA concurred. Mr. Staples noted that it is not any of these are rare, it is just needing to make sure everything is in place. Council Member Kost noted that the ordinance does refer to language not used any more, so the Committee could work with OCA to updating. Council Member Hussain asked the Chief about the noise ordinance enforcement. Chief Backus stated he has to weigh the quality of life, in terms of noise in exhaust they have been taking enforcement and in that instance it is worth the traffic stop. The Committee concurred on reviewing and updating the ordinance. The committee will be reviewed at the next meeting.

LPD Summer Safety Plan

Officer Pratl noted during the summer months there are higher call volumes and this year is no different. These are things the LPD does already; there is a community driven, multi effort plan to promote overall safety. This includes in-house specialty units; 5 key initiatives.

Bike Patrol Blitz – through out summer months, community service units picking neighborhoods to put bicycles out to interface with the public.

Pop-Up Patrol – approach for officers randomly stopping into parks; setting up grills, tents, games, races; face to face interaction.

Walk -n-talk – putting officers out on foot in neighborhoods. Approaching people walking, sitting on their porch allowing them to stay informed on issues and quality of life issues for them.

Night Watch – an effort to proactive address the hot spots; identified from data driven efforts from crime analysis and community input.

Aggressive Driving Enforcement – deploy officers in high complaint zones to address moving violations.

Council Member Pehlivanoglu acknowledged someone signing in for public comment via remote, but public comment has passed and she will follow up.

Council Member Hussain asked how are they doing all 5 initiatives with current staffing. Officer Pratl said they set aside grant funds for overtime efforts. Council Member Hussain asked how is the unit Community Policing Officers (CPO) – there are 12 spots and 5 are filled, and all prioritized. They are priorities on crime data and community input. Council Member Kost acknowledged that some of the initiatives he has seen the changes already with the cameras, officers on site, and sees the benefits of these things happening. Council Member Hussain asked how the motorcycle unit is staffed. Officer Pratl said they have 3 officers and lead by a Sgt. and once vacancy.

Council Member Hussain went back to the red tag item, and asked when they call HRCS are they responsive. Officer Pratl couldn't not confirmed exact time, and Chief added they call on their social workers in LPD first as well.

Update on recent Gun Violence in the City

Overall Update on Public Safety in the City

Council Member Pehlivanoglu spoke on recent data, summer moving through the summer. Chief Backus stated in June, July and August they pay attention to summer and past years. They compare to the past and want to keep up with it. In some cases it is an area, and the responses they have gotten from communities and they are also helping with assisting with a calming presence for anything in the future. From June 29th – July 6th there were no fatal shootings, and that lead into incidents. With talking to neighborhoods they are finding out what areas are a hangout and they are tracking it to keep a future presence. What ever transpires they can track to make sure it does not get worse. Council Member Pehlivanoglu asked how soon they alert the public for assistance. Chief Backus stated where there are shootings, the media is on site immediately, and so the officer on site ask for assistance. When they get new information, and comes that it is information that they do not need to hold for investigation; that would be vehicle and weapon information, etc.

Council Member Kost asked what criteria is met where LPD considers it is "cooled down". Chief Backus stated it depends on the calls; how big is the crowd, ask the owners what they want from LPD to assist. Council Member Kost acknowledged the LPD assistance on the property on Hosmer and LPD willingness to move cameras around because that changes the dynamics. Council Member Hussain asked if they have looked at comparable cities, and are the comparison similar. Chief Backus stated vs. Kalamazoo – the same size, they had an increase last year and Lansing had a decrease. In Lansing it is looking at who is behind it, why it is happening from day one to have a strategy. Council Member Hussain asked what is happening at State level, and Chief Backus stated that it has been changed, but in either version there are funds for hiring and funding officers tied to eliminating violent crime.

Chief Backus spoke on the overall health of the City, letting the Committee know that as far as the first 6 months of this year there are 55% decrease in homicides, 20% decrease in rapes, 53% decreasing in

arsons, 21% decrease in burglary, 16% decrease in larcenies, 27% decrease in vehicles theft. There is 41% increase in felonious assault; which is an assault resulting in injury for hospital care.

Council Member Kost noted that when looking at crime mapping they can see the areas are the same. Chief Backus stated they look at frequent calls .

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Submitted by: Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on July 22, 2025