

**MINUTES
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
FARMINGTON HILLS CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL – COMMUNITY ROOM
SEPTEMBER 23, 2024 – 6:00PM**

The study session meeting of the Farmington Hills City Council was called to order by Mayor Rich at 6:00pm.

Council Members Present: Aldred, Boleware (arrived at 6:07pm), Bridges, Bruce, Dwyer, Knol, and Rich

Council Members Absent: None

Others Present: City Manager Mekjian, City Clerk Lindahl, Directors Rushlow and Schnackel, Police Chief King, and City Attorney Joppich

PRESENTATION OF COURTS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (CLEMIS)

New data analyst position

Mayor Rich addressed the importance of ensuring equitable policing in Farmington Hills, in practice and in data. The City is committed to understanding and addressing any disparities reflected in policing data. To enhance data-driven decision-making, a crime data analyst position was authorized in the 2024-25 budget to help the City better interpret and utilize data.

Police Chief King gave an update on filling the data analyst position, which is a non-union position created to support the Department’s community outreach, administration, and investigative efforts. The job posting went live on September 3, and since then over 67 applications have been received. The pool was narrowed down to 10 highly qualified candidates, and interviews are scheduled for Thursday and Friday of this week.

Perceptions of inequitable policing

Councilmember Bridges expressed continued support for the Police Department but raised concerns about the high percentage of traffic tickets issued to African Americans. Over the past four years, African Americans – who make up approximately 18% of the City's population – accounted for 40% of traffic citations. Councilmember Bridges questioned whether the Police Department was doing enough to address perceived racial biases. He asked whether the new data analyst would focus solely on data analysis or have other duties as well. He noted the concentration of tickets in certain areas, suggesting a need to reassess policing strategies based on actual crime data rather than socio-economic factors.

Chief King confirmed the data analyst would focus on analytics while also assisting the investigative division with crime prevention and investigations. Chief King pointed out that 12 Mile and Orchard Lake was one of the busiest intersections in the state and remained a focus for data-driven traffic enforcement. He acknowledged room for improvement but stated the Department follows a behavior-based policing strategy, not one influenced by demographics of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic abilities or disabilities. The Department focuses on fair, impartial, constitutional policing.

Clemis presentation and discussion

Jim Manning, Past Director and current Business Relationship Manager for the County's CLEMIS operations, explained CLEMIS' role in data collection and its history as the largest consortium of law enforcement agencies in the U.S. Mr. Manning emphasized CLEMIS' commitment to data transparency, noting that CLEMIS collects mandatory fields based on state and federal requirements, with individual agencies deciding what additional information to collect. CLEMIS uses BusinessObjects software to facilitate data mining and report generation.

Mr. Manning highlighted issues identified in the Winbourne report, including data inconsistencies and the use of non-retrievable fields such as narrative sections. He explained that while CLEMIS can generate reports based on various data points, agencies must ensure that data is correctly entered into searchable fields. Farmington Hills has made recent improvements, making more data fields mandatory, which positions the City among the top tier of agencies in terms of data collection, particularly regarding traffic stops and activity logs.

Police Department Comments

Chief King reiterated that Farmington Hills officers do not police based on race, gender, or socioeconomic factors but rather focus on behaviors that warrant enforcement. He outlined several measures already in place to address potential biases:

- Complaint Handling: The Department has increased the accessibility of its complaint process. Complaints can now be submitted through various channels, including email and phone, leading to a significant rise in reported incidents. The increase reflects the Department's commitment to investigating all allegations rather than an actual increase in misconduct.
- Tracking Officer Behavior: The Department uses an early intervention system to monitor officers' actions, including use of force, traffic stops, and arrests. If an officer's actions fall outside a normal deviation (10% higher or lower than average), the Department investigates to determine if bias is influencing behavior.
- Data Monitoring and Internal Analysis: The Department regularly analyzes data related to use of force, pursuits, and other high-liability activities.
- Training: The Department continuously trains officers on fair and constitutional policing practices.

Discussion on Data Collection and Potential Changes

Councilmember Bridges questioned whether the data collected was sufficient to understand policing trends and reduce perceived racial disparities. Councilmember Bruce suggested tracking the race of officers issuing citations and comparing ticket patterns by officer demographics. Chief King agreed to explore this and emphasized that the new data analyst would help the Department better utilize existing data.

Noting that he had previously been Police Chief of Farmington Hills for 23 years, Councilmember Dwyer stated there had never been any allegations of racial profiling reported in the media during that time. The City had longstanding procedures to train officers on racial profiling and while there had been some problem officers in the past, appropriate disciplinary actions were taken.

Councilmember Boleware provided background on the City's efforts to address concerns about the perception of racial profiling, referencing a Miller Canfield study that found no direct evidence of racial profiling but underscored the importance of addressing public perceptions. She shared personal

experiences and reports from the community about African American men being stopped without clear justification, stressing that, regardless of data supporting such claims, the perception of racial profiling persists and needs to be addressed to improve community relations. Boleware also highlighted the City's collaboration with Lifeway for diversity, equity, and inclusion training as a proactive measure to tackle these concerns.

Mayor Rich pointed out that perceptions are reality for many residents, and the City needs reliable data to respond effectively.

Councilmember Bruce reiterated that examining citation data by officer race could help determine if racial profiling was occurring. He noted that if Black officers issued citations at similar rates to their White counterparts, it would challenge allegations of profiling. Police Chief King said this data could be provided.

Councilmember Knol emphasized the importance of considering regional traffic patterns, such as the high volume of travelers using 696 and exiting at Orchard Lake. She opposed implementing any form of a quota system in policing.

Councilmember Aldred supported hiring a data analyst and emphasized the need for accurate data collection.

Councilmember Bridges asked Chief King to provide a list of the changes made in data analytics since the Winbourne report was completed.

Chief King shared that Farmington Hills Police Department recently achieved its third reaccreditation, making it one of only 10 cities in Michigan to reach this milestone.

Updates on CLEMIS and Future Plans

Mr. Manning explained that CLEMIS is undergoing a transition to become a quasi-public authority, independent of Oakland County government. This move should increase CLEMIS' ability to attract more funding. A planned \$25 million investment will upgrade CLEMIS's technology, making its applications more user-friendly and accessible on mobile devices. The transition will officially begin in late 2024, with full implementation expected in 2025.

Conclusion

Key takeaways of tonight's discussion centered on addressing the perception of racial disparities in policing in Farmington Hills and maintaining community trust by enhancing data transparency. The hiring of a data analyst was viewed as a significant step toward more comprehensive data-driven policing. As CLEMIS undergoes its transition, Council expressed optimism about leveraging enhanced data capabilities to address public concerns and ensure fair policing for all residents.

DISCUSSION ON THE OAKLAND COUNTY NINE MILE PATHWAY TASK FORCE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Special Services Director Schnackel explained that the Nine Mile Corridor project first came to City Council in October 2022, when a resolution was approved to support and participate in the Regional Nine Mile Corridor Study. The study was funded by Oakland County Parks and Recreation and conducted

by OHM, covering 2022 and 2023. It included Farmington Hills and six other Oakland County communities working together to explore the feasibility of an urban trail stretching from Hazel Park to the I-275 trailhead, prioritizing a corridor for non-motorized transportation with sidewalks that are 8 to 10 feet wide in some sections. Around 11 of the 18 miles already have such pathways.

Next Steps and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners is expected to present the Memorandum of Understanding at their September meeting. This MOU is a non-binding agreement that aims to formalize collaboration among the participating communities. The goal is to strengthen future grant applications that could help fund sections of the pathway, but at this time, there is no funding secured for construction.

The MOU has been reviewed by the City attorney's office for approval of form and content. The MOU had been included in a recent Council update and would appear on a consent agenda.

Funding and Support

There is currently no funding for the actual construction work; the county's financial support is limited to organizing the group and continuing the planning efforts.

Councilmember Aldred expressed support for the project, noting the detailed information in the MOU and the list of potential grant sources. He emphasized the importance of pursuing grant funding to achieve project goals.

UPDATE ON CANNABIS PETITIONS

City Attorney Joppich updated Council on a petition to allow marijuana facilities in Farmington Hills, which was found insufficient due to problems with signatures and legal compliance, leading to its rejection by the Clerk. The petitioners sued the City; the Oakland County Circuit Court ruled in favor of the City on September 5th, keeping the proposal off the ballot, which has since been printed and distributed.

Similar petitions in a "four cities" case were also rejected, with the Court of Appeals ruling that the Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act (MRTMA) allows ballot initiatives to change only the number of cannabis facilities, not regulatory details like zoning or licensing. The case is now before the Michigan Supreme Court, but no decision has been made. The City will monitor developments, although any Supreme Court changes are unlikely to affect the current election cycle.

ADJOURNMENT

The study session meeting adjourned at 7:17pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carly Lindahl, City Clerk