



**TOWN OF WINDSOR
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SEPTEMBER 15, 2025
HYBRID MEETING**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilor Mary Armstrong, Chair of the Health & Safety Committee, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with Deputy Mayor Darleen Klase and Councilor Lenworth Walker present.

Staff Present: Peter Souza, Town Manager, and Donald Melanson, Police Chief

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Linda Alexander, 155 Fieldstone Drive, expressed support for license plate readers, stating she appreciates certain types of electronic surveillance that contribute to public safety. She noted that while she values privacy, she trusts the police department to use technologies like license plate readers appropriately to ensure public safety.

Hillary Carpenter, 45 Bradford Drive, expressed concerns about the Flock surveillance camera system, suggesting Windsor may be exposed to liability. She requested that the cameras be turned off until a comprehensive assessment could determine whether their use by other police departments complies with Connecticut law.

Charles Jackson, 310 High Path Road, a Windsor constable, mentioned his experience with cameras in Charlotte, North Carolina, noting that the city had removed its cameras and chose not to reinstall them in school zones despite having the opportunity to do so. He advocated for more thorough examination of the issue.

Eric Weiner, 72 Palisado Avenue, raised several concerns about the Flock system, asserting that the technology goes beyond simple license plate reading by recording vehicle features and aggregating data. He argued that Flock's data retention policy is misleading since they maintain "perpetual, nonexclusive" rights to the data. He stated that Flock had previously authorized ICE and border protection to use the system despite claiming they would not. He recommended turning off the cameras immediately to assess whether they align with town values and budgetary requirements.

Kenneth Erman, 428 Broad Street, expressed concerns about Flock cameras, particularly regarding data ownership. He noted that as a business, Flock's primary motivation is profit rather than solving crime. He suggested Windsor consider implementing speed cameras and traffic light cameras instead, which have clear state guidelines. He also

recommended speed bumps similar to those on Pleasant Street to manage traffic in residential neighborhoods.

Joe McAuliffe, 218 Preston Drive, asked about the policy governing license plate scanners in police cars, noting a perceived policy change around 2020 regarding their use.

James Chabot-Weingart, 20 Tiffany Drive, questioned whether Flock's system is less expensive because part of their compensation includes ownership of Windsor's data. He also expressed concerns about potential data breaches of large centralized databases.

3. DISCUSSION OF AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READERS

Don Melanson, Chief of Police, stated the fixed LPR units are motion activated and take a still image of passing vehicles. The images are of the rear of a vehicle (after a vehicle passes the camera) and do not capture occupant descriptions. The LPR cameras are not staffed. The system is able to alert officers and dispatchers for various reasons. For example, if a stolen vehicle or suspect vehicle license plate is entered into a region wide crime database and that license plate is detected by an LPR in town, an electronic alert is issued. This allows for real time information to be followed up by our officers and detectives. Authorized law enforcement personnel can search the system only when there is a legitimate investigative reason and each search is recorded for accountability.

Collected data is retained for a limited period (30 days) unless linked to an active investigation. Searches are logged, and unauthorized use is prohibited. As noted above, the system does not capture photographs or personal information about drivers or passengers.

When Windsor first initiated the use of the Flock LPR devices, a setting labeled "Enable Nationwide Lookup" was enabled. This allowed WPD personnel to search nationwide if their case necessitated a wider search than just the State of Connecticut. Until recently, we were unaware that this setting, in return, allowed other agencies not granted individual access to WPD data to search the data if a full registration plate was entered. Since that realization, the Police Department has removed out of state access to our LPR data while the Town Council reviews various policy considerations. To reiterate, only agencies in Connecticut currently have the ability to search our LPR data without requesting specific permission from WPD administration.

The stationary LPR units offer 24/7 monitoring and have been a valuable tool for the Windsor Police Department by enhancing investigative capabilities and strengthening overall community safety. They have been vital in investigating violent crimes, property crimes including stolen vehicles and vehicle burglaries, evading accidents, and locating missing persons.

The LPR system gives investigators information that would otherwise rely on chance or witness memory. For example, if a car is used in a robbery, many times the victim and witnesses are only able to provide cursory vehicle information, such as the make, color and style of the vehicle. The LPR system can help officers identify the suspect vehicle and where and when it was last seen, giving police a direction to focus on.

Chief Melanson provided examples of successful use cases, including identifying vehicles involved in domestic violence incidents and hit-and-run accidents. He emphasized that officers can only access the system for criminal investigations, not for motor vehicle offenses like speeding or stop sign violations. He explained the difference between the Flock system as compared to the mobile license plate camera system and what information they capture. Both systems work on the basis of a hot list. Police officers use this data on a daily basis.

Councilor Armstrong asked how many Flock cameras we have. Chief Melanson said 16.

Councilor Armstrong asked if Flock is less expensive than the other cameras. Chief Melanson stated he didn't know if they are necessarily less expensive. He noted the Flock system doesn't require additional replacement or repair costs on top of the lease payment.

Councilor Walker explained how the Council had received quite a few emails regarding the Flock system and concerns regarding privacy issues. He will go with whatever the committee decides to do.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked questions regarding the policy of the Flock system and who would have access to it. She explained what she thought the policy was and Chief Melanson confirmed what she said was correct.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked if they do audits. Chief Melanson said yes they do it on a random basis usually about once per year.

Deputy Mayor Klase stated when you look at ACLU data retention guidelines, their preferred guideline is one day. What does a one day or 15 day retention do to the Police Department's enforcement ability? Chief Melanson stated it wouldn't be beneficial as reports are not usually submitted until one or two days later or more in many cases.

Deputy Mayor Klase asked if the town has contracts with Flock, the license plate reader vendor, etc. and do they go to the town's legal counsel for review? Town Manager Souza to his recollection in 2019 the town was using the standard contract because those vendors were associated with the State and they went through the procurement process for both systems.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the officers have body cameras and if they are trained on how to and when to use them? Chief Melanson responded yes they are trained and are required to use the body cameras.

Deputy Mayor Klase suggested the committee recommend that the Town Manager develop a comprehensive ordinance addressing all types of data collection systems, including considerations for storage and security.

Councilor Walker asked if the State already has a contract or ordinance in place so we don't have to reinvent the wheel. Town Manager Souza responded that there are model ordinances that the State has developed for traffic enforcement, the red light cameras and speeding enforcements. He is not sure if there is a model one for the license plate readers, but he believes there are policies from other towns that could be reviewed.

Deputy Mayor Klase proposed that the town's legal counsel review any future contracts to be sure they are in alignment with State laws. She stated she would be alright with what makes sense whether it be an ordinance or policy.

Deputy Mayor Klase mentioned the idea of having a small citizens board of three. She stated perhaps as they draft the policy and the ordinance, they can think about a feedback session and possibly an ordinance may be more effective.

The committee discussed the time frame of when all this information could be ready for their review. Town Manager Souza stated to get that comprehensive perspective in a week and a half is a challenge.

Deputy Mayor Klase said perhaps Town Manager Souza could let the committee know at their next meeting on the 29th what he thinks is a reasonable timeline. The committee agreed.

4. STAFF REPORTS - None

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) June 17, 2025 Special Meeting

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Walker to approve the unapproved minutes of the July 17, 2025 special meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

The next Health & Safety Committee meeting will be held on September 29th at 6:30 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Klase, seconded by Councilor Walker, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted by,

Helene M. Albert
Recording Secretary