

**Downers Grove Village Council**  
**Public Safety Subcommittee**  
**August 9, 2001**  
**8:00 a.m.**

**Members Present:**     **Commissioner Gilbert, Commissioner Sisul**

**Others Present:**     **Riccardo Ginex, Village Manager, Police Chief Porter, Fire Chief Russell, Dennis Burke, Deputy Chief Byrne, Lt. Gunn, and Enza Petrarca, Assistant Village Attorney**

Meeting called to order at 8:15 a.m.

Minutes from the July 25, 2001 meeting were reviewed and approved by the Committee.

**Discussion:**

Dennis Burke read his summary regarding the installation of opticom emitters in police vehicles (see attached). He explained that there is no difference between the chrome emitters and the plastic emitters – other than the price. Both have 10 year warranties. He recommended purchasing the plastic one. He explained that the emitters are only a tool to assist the officers travelling through traffic controlled intersections. He stressed that the most important aspect of this project is training the officers. The officers must realize that they still have to watch the traffic control device and wait for the green light prior to proceeding through the intersections. Dennis advised that he reviewed the accident reports involving squad cars for the past three years, and while opticom would not have prevented all of them - it would certainly have helped us for liability purposes. The committee recommended that this item be placed on the August 28, 2001 workshop agenda and that the labor cost be included in the proposal.

The committee requested copies of the police department's pursuit policies.

The committee reviewed the fire department's request for the purchase of a third ambulance. The cost is \$128,131. A meeting was scheduled for August 21, 2001 at 5:00 to inspect the ambulance.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

## INSTALLATION OF OPTICOM EMITTERS IN POLICE VEHICLES

**PURPOSE:** To install opticom emitters into police vehicles to assist in travelling through electronic traffic controlled intersections while responding to emergency situations.

**EQUIPMENT** Opticom Emitters are devices that send a signal by radio frequency to cycle the traffic signal to give a green light in the direction the police unit is travelling. Thus stopping traffic travelling in the other direction. Currently, these emitters are installed in all Fire Department emergency vehicles. The signal from the emitter will begin to be received by the traffic signal from approximately 1100 feet.

**Availability** All intersections within the Village are equipped by the Village, State, or County with opticom receivers except at Warren St. at the Main St. intersection. This is due to problems that could occur with the railroad crossing. (Chief Russell will provide more detailed information.)

**Expense** I requested the Village Garage to obtain quotes for the purchase of the emitters. Also, I received the cost that Bob Schiller, Traffic Supervisor, has for these units. The following prices are from the same vendor, Fleet Safety.

Garage: Plastic encased units = \$432 per unit

Schiller: Chrome encased units = \$675 per unit

Chief Porter advised he would need 24 units to equip his fleet. The total cost for 24 units are: \$10,368 for plastic encased -- \$16,200 for chrome encased:

*I have requested the vendor to provide life expectancy and performance differences between the two units*

**Installation** The units would be installed to be activated when the vehicle has the overhead lights on and in "drive". This is the same as on the fire apparatus. When the vehicle is placed in "park", the emitter signal is deactivated. The Garage personnel advise that this is an easy installation and can be completed in less than two hours per unit.

**Training** The most important aspect of using these devices is training. This device is a tool to assist in safe operating procedures. This does not relieve the vehicle operator from using due caution and prudent judgment while entering intersections. The emitter does not immediately change the traffic signal. Pedestrian crossing lights have a priority and are allowed to finish its cycle prior to activating the emitter's signal to change the light. Also, both police and fire units will have the same frequency, emergency vehicles responding from an opposite direction may capture the traffic signal first preventing the other unit from changing the light.

Bob Schiller advises that confirmation beacons can be purchased and installed on top of the light standards that confirms the unit has activated the signal. The installation of these beacons may have some benefit, but I believe the only light the vehicle operator should be concerned with is the traffic light itself. However, this is a decision for the Public Safety Committee.