

COMMISSIONER BRIEF — ONE PAGE

Flock Safety Contract No. 25-0364 · Board of Commissioners meeting, August 17, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

The contract. \$219,000 over two years for twenty-eight devices — twenty license plate readers and eight pan-tilt-zoom video cameras — signed administratively at the Sheriff's request. No notice, no public hearing, no discussion, no recorded vote of this Board. The same agenda that receives this brief gives 0.96 acres on Market Street (Item Z26-07) published notice, mailed letters, a posted sign, Planning Board review, a public hearing, and a recorded vote.

The searches. The County's own data export shows 2,980,082 logged searches touching the network in sixteen months — a measure of outside agencies' access, not of local "hits." Roughly ninety-six percent are attributed to users outside the Sheriff's Office, and the County redacted every searching agency's name, while six peer North Carolina agencies released the identical field, under the identical law, in days.

The reach. In all five unredacted North Carolina audits made public, roughly ninety percent of the eyes on the data were out of state — beyond the direct reach of North Carolina's retention, sale, and traffic-enforcement safeguards. The issue is not whether a search "hits"; it is who may look.

The moment. On August 13 the vendor's chief executive announced sweeping safeguards — seven-day retention, mandatory audits, required case codes — and said: "The short message would be, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that the system has failed you." None of it amends this county's executed contract. Citizens in twenty-one North Carolina counties are actively opposing ALPR; three counties have already voted it out.

The power. Addendum Paragraph 29 lets the County terminate at any time, without cause and without penalty. This program exists by county contract and county appropriation. Whatever the Sheriff's operational independence, the purse and the pen belong to this Board.

The ask — a ladder, in the order a careful board would climb it:

First, pause: request disenrollment from nationwide open-network sharing — preserving the Sheriff's own local access in full — and direct that the unredacted searching-agency audit be produced to this Board. Second, calendar a noticed public hearing on Contract No. 25-0364 at the September 17 meeting. Third, at that hearing, take the recorded vote on the cameras' future — DeFlockILM's position is that termination under Paragraph 29 is the right outcome.

Reasonable people can disagree about whether this technology should remain. What is no longer reasonable is refusing to put the question before the public and its elected Board. No Commissioner need decide the cameras' fate this afternoon. The first rung asks a Commissioner to own only this: that a program watching a quarter-million people should face them once.

Full letter, Report, and every source: DeFlockILM.org · 3,034 petition signers, 1,734 in New Hanover County