

OVERSIGHT PROJECT

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**An Investigation of Police Technology Contracting in DuPage County and
Oak Brook, Illinois**

May 18, 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We live in the era of big data. The rapid technological advances in data collection and analysis have affected nearly every sector of our economy. Police departments across the United States have used data to fight crime and keep communities safe. Data sharing within and between police departments has transformed criminal intelligence and allows police departments “understand rapid changes in crime and criminality.”¹ One study found that the implementation and analysis of Real Time Crime Center (“RTCC”)² data led to improved clearance rates for violent, property, and overall crime in Chicago, Illinois over a three-year period.³ Other studies have underscored the important role data plays in predictive policing, which has been attributed to double digit drops in violent and overall crime in certain jurisdictions.⁴

Data collection, storage, and analysis is expensive. As is intelligence sharing and operational coordination between different police departments, even those within the same county or geographic region. Police departments cannot perform these functions on their own. They lack the technological expertise to do so and need to dedicate their limited resources on street level enforcement. Police departments need and rely upon private sector companies that specialize in this area to conduct vital data analysis and allocate their resources accordingly to fight and prevent crime. It naturally flows that these companies stand to gain from lucrative contracts for their services with police departments across the country.

Government contracting is inherently susceptible to corruption. “[S]ome studies estimate procurement losses due to corruption at approximately ten to twenty percent” (10–20%) of contract values, “even in countries with relatively high integrity’ in their procurement systems.”⁵ The “[c]onsequences for public finances can be dire,”⁶ considering public procurement amounts

¹ Rick Brown, *Understanding Law Enforcement Information Sharing for Criminal Intelligence Purposes*, 566 *Austl. Inst. Criminology* 1 (2018).

² Real-Time Crime Centers (“RTCCs”) integrate a variety of technologies and information with the goal of helping police to more efficiently identify and respond to crime.

³ Rachael Arietti, *Do Real-Time Crime Centers Improve Case Clearance? An Examination of Chicago’s Strategic Decision Support Centers*, 90 *J. Crim. Just.* 102145 (2024).

⁴ Richi Jennings, *Minority Report is Reality, Kinda (and APIEpicFail)*, *ComputerWorld* (Jul. 27, 2010), <https://www.computerworld.com/article/1342094/minority-report-is-reality-kinda-and-apiepicfail.html>.

⁵ Jessica Tillipman, *Buying Blind: Corruption Risk and the Erosion of Oversight in Federal AI Procurement*, 55 *Pub. Cont. L. J.* 175, 182 (2026) (citation omitted).

⁶ A. Abdou, et al., *Assessing Vulnerabilities to Corruption in Public Procurement and Their Price Impact* 3 (Int’l Monetary Fund, Working Paper WP/22/94, 2022).

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to “about one-third of government spending or 13 trillion USD per year” globally.⁷ As we have seen in the United States, public procurement at the state and local level is not immune from the same problems plaguing that of our national government and the governments of other first-world countries around the globe.

Earlier this year, the Oversight Project announced it was launching an investigation into apparent corruption in police contracting.⁸ The announcement came in the wake of news reports highlighting how an employee of the Atlanta Police Department “duped” multiple cities into signing multimillion dollar contracts with the technology company Fusus for policing technology.⁹ The Atlanta Police Department employee, Marshall Freeman, sat on Fusus’s board and failed to disclose his relationship to police departments across the country while he added credibility to Fusus’s capabilities and encouraged those jurisdictions to enter into agreements with Fusus. An ethics investigation conducted by the City of Atlanta (the “Ethics Investigation”) concluded that Freeman’s actions constituted at least an “appearance of impropriety” and recommended disciplinary action against Freeman.¹⁰

The Ethics Investigation found that Freeman used his official city position to promote, recommend, and provide testimonials in support of Fusus’s technology in 15 separate matters.¹¹ On May 19, 2022, Axon Enterprises announced that it had entered into a “strategic partnership” with Fusus to expand the capabilities of real-time crime data gathering capabilities.¹² As part of the deal, Axon acquired a minority stake in Fusus for \$21 million.¹³ Axon announced its

⁷ Mihály Fazekas, et al., *The Corruption Cost Tracker: Quantifying the Costs of Corrupt Contracting and the Savings to be Made from Reform 2* (Gov’t Transparency Inst., Policy Brief GTI-R/2020:02, 2020).

⁸ Press Release, Oversight Project, *Oversight Project Launches Investigation into Corrupt Police Contracting Scandal* (Jan. 20, 2026), <https://itsyourgov.org/oversight-project-launches-investigation-into-corrupt-police-contracting-scandal/>.

⁹ Timothy Pratt & Andrew Free, *“Duped”: How One Atlanta Cop Secretly Shiled for Police Tech*, *The Intercept* (Sep. 2, 2025), <https://theintercept.com/2025/09/02/atlanta-seattle-police-axon-fusus-surveillance/>.

¹⁰ Marshall B. Freeman, No. CO-25-001, slip op. at 1, 13–17 (Atlanta Ethics Off. May 27, 2025) (final dec. & rep.).

¹¹ Nikita Ermolaev, *Atlanta PD Senior Official Violated Ethics Code Over Improper Fusus/Axon Disclosure*, *IPVM* (Jul. 7, 2025), <https://ipvm.com/reports/freeman-fusus-ruling>.

¹² Press Release, Axon, *Axon and Fusus Partner to Provide Enhanced Real-Time Community Policing Solutions*, Axon Enterprise, Inc. (May 19, 2022), <https://investor.axon.com/2022-05-19-Axon-and-Fusus-Partner-to-Provide-Enhanced-Real-Time-Community-Policing-Solutions>.

¹³ Axon Enterprise, Inc., *Current Report (Form 8-K) Ex. 99.1* (Aug. 9, 2022).

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complete acquisition of Fusus on February 1, 2024.¹⁴ Axon paid \$241.3 million to acquire the remaining stake in Fusus.¹⁵

This investigation and report focus on one of the jurisdictions mentioned in the Atlanta Ethics investigation and public reporting: Oak Brook, Illinois. Oak Brook is a community located in DuPage County and is 15 miles west of Chicago.¹⁶ DuPage County has a population of over 937,000 residents.¹⁷ As part of the investigation, the Oversight Project reviewed publicly available email communications of Oak Brook employees with and about Fusus.¹⁸ We submitted further public records requests for additional records that are pending.

Our investigation reviewed public documents and communications in the public domain to shed additional light on the contracting practices of Fusus in the Chicago suburb. This information has received a passing mention in the media but is much more troubling than previously reported. Our investigation found a series of questionable procurement practices deployed by Fusus to obtain contracts from Oak Brook and other law enforcement agencies in DuPage County, Illinois. In particular, we found that the Oak Brook Police Chief Brian Strockis enjoyed a cozy relationship with Jack Howard, a former Fusus employee (now deceased).¹⁹ A review of the public documents reveals this relationship helped Fusus obtain significant advantages in receiving contract awards from police departments throughout Illinois. Our findings include:

- A Fusus employee directed financial benefits to government officials in the form of paying for hotel accommodations via donations to a nonprofit organization.
- Fusus received advance insider information on grant funding opportunities.

¹⁴ Press Release, Axon, Axon Accelerates Real-Time Operations Solution with Strategic Acquisition of Fusus, Axon Enterprise, Inc. (Feb. 1, 2024), <https://investor.axon.com/2024-02-01-Axon-Accelerates-Real-Time-Operations-Solution-with-Strategic-Acquisition-of-Fusus>.

¹⁵ Axon Enterprise, Inc., Quarterly Report (Form 10-Q), at 24 (May 7, 2024).

¹⁶ See Oak Brook, Illinois, <https://oak-brook.org/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2026).

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, *Resident Population in DuPage County, IL* (ILDUPA0POP), Fed. Rsrv. Bank of St. Louis, FRED, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/ILDUPA0POP>.

¹⁸ In this report, we insert screenshots of the actual emails into the body of the report. We are in the process of uploading the full document productions into our publicly available document repository called Doc Depot. See Oversight Project, *Doc Depot*, <https://docdepot.itsyourgov.org/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2026). Once uploaded, they will be available at: <https://docdepot.itsyourgov.org/>.

¹⁹ Curley Funeral Home, *Official Obituary of John R. "Jack" Howard* (Oct. 14, 2024), <https://www.curleyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/John-R-Jack-Howard?obId=33368114>.

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- Fusus routinely received non-public information, including competitive intelligence against competing vendors and confidential government communications.
- Fusus leveraged its relationship with the Oak Brook Police Department to lobby government officials, including the Illinois Attorney General, to promote products to Police Departments at the Oak Brook-FUSUS symposium.
- These actions contributed to DuPage County being essentially forced to adopt Fusus technology for county-wide RTCC and other vital technological interfaces.

The first section of this report analyzes email communications between the Oak Brook, Illinois Police Department and a Fusus representative. These communications reveal grant steering at the local level and that Fusus provided improper benefits to Oak Brook Police personnel. Part II analyzes how this relationship steered multimillion dollar contracts on DuPage County agencies for real crime data platforms and analysis. The report concludes with recommendations to prevent this type of corrupt behavior in the future. We have published some emails directly within this report and have included all communications that we relied upon in our findings as appendices to the report.

Part I. Fusus's Strategy to Monopolize Illinois Surveillance Procurement Through Insider Access, Grant Steering, and Government Endorsement

KEY FINDINGS:

Advance Insider Information on Grant Funding

Date: October 20, 2022

Jack Howard (then Fusus employee) emailed Oak Brook Police Chief Brian Strockis, revealing that an insider connection at the Illinois Attorney General's office had provided advance information about Organized Retail Crime (ORC) grant funding "which opens up next month." Howard stated this information came from "one of my old grammar school friends, who is now working with the AGs office."²⁰ This non-public information enabled Howard and Strockis to position Fusus to benefit immensely from state funding. As shown below, the ORC grant funding quickly became a key marketing tool for Fusus.

²⁰ See App. A (Ex. 1) at 003-004.

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Apparent Grant Steering to Fusus

Dates: February 23, 2023 and July 21, 2023

Fusus and Strockis exploited non-public advance information about upcoming grants, solicited applications by promising approval only if agencies selected FUSUS as their vendor, and lobbied public officials to require Fusus products as a condition of grant funding.

On February 23, 2023, Oak Brook received \$166,889 in ORC grant funding; the same program Howard had mentioned four months earlier. Strockis immediately forwarded the approval to Howard.²¹ On July 21, 2023, Strockis forwarded the ORC grant information to Rosemont, Illinois Deputy Police Chief Blake Fiorito, stating: “Include FUSUS and you’re sure to get approved”; and “I’ve added Jack Howard from FUSUS for any assistance should you need it.”²²

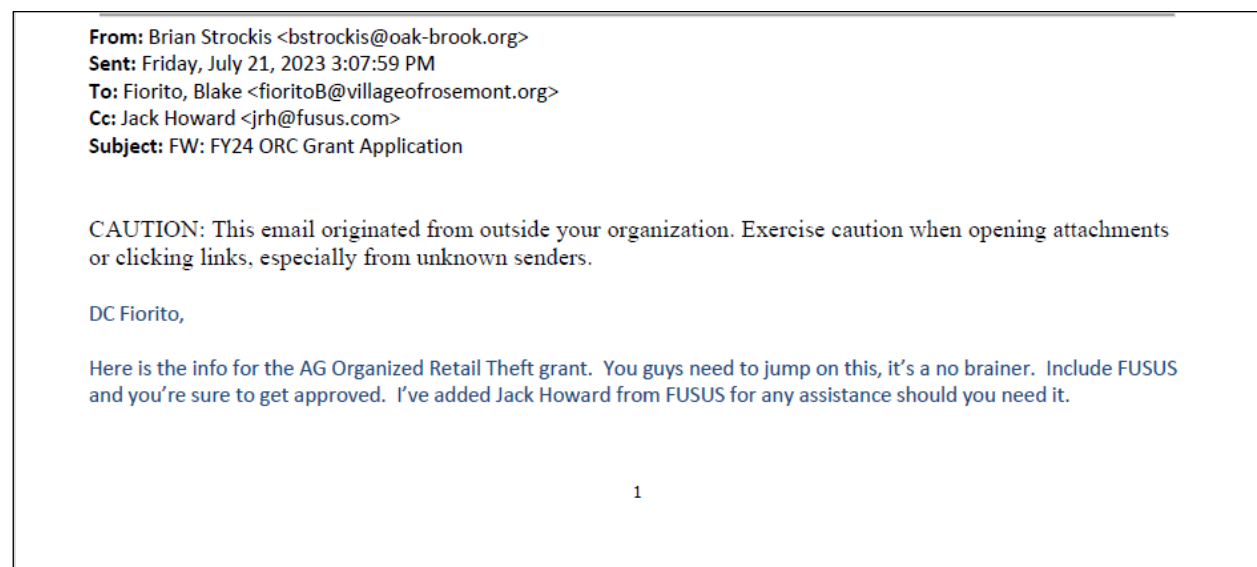


Figure 1. Email from Brian Strockis, Chief, Oak Brook Police Department, to Blake Fiorito, Deputy Chief, Rosemont Public Safety Department, copying Jack Howard, FUSUS.

This shows that Strockis was steering public grant funds to a specific vendor and guaranteeing approval of state funding contingent on selection of Fusus.

Jack Howard and Brian Strockis leveraged their relationships with the Illinois Attorney General’s office to market Fusus technology at a promotional event that Strockis hosted. A key feature of

²¹ See *id.* (Ex. 2) at 006–007.

²² See *id.* (Ex. 3) at 009.

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the event was the availability of public grants to bankroll Fusus's RTCC contracts. Howard and Strockis successfully lobbied the Attorney General to speak publicly about the grant program at their event and showcase FUSUS products. Strockis and Howard went to great lengths to secure Attorney General Raoul's attendance at the Oak Brook – Fusus symposium. They repeatedly requested AG Raoul's attendance at the Fusus event and were ultimately successful.²³



Figure 2. Oak Brook Police Chief Brian Strockis pictured with Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin at the Oak Brook FUSUS Customer Symposium.

²³ See generally *id.* (Ex. 4) at 015–018.

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Financial Benefit to Public Official?

Date: April 21 - May 12, 2023

On April 22, 2023, Norridge Police Chief and FBI National Academy Associates (“FBINAA”) Illinois Chapter President Brian Goss sent an email to Jack Howard containing FBINAA Illinois conference sponsorship materials. In the email, Goss instructs Howard that Fusus must sponsor the conference at the \$2,000 “Director level” because “then I [Goss] can cover Brian’s [Strockis’s] room for one night.” Goss appears to tie his request for the \$2,000 donation to a “possible future partnership” between Fusus and the Norridge Police Department that he heads.²⁴

Howard secured approval for the donation the same day, confirming he convinced Fusus leadership to increase sponsorship from \$1,500 to \$2,000 specifically to reach the Director level required to pay for Strockis’s hotel room at the November 2023 FBINAA conference.²⁵

²⁴ See *id.* (Ex. 5) at 021–022.

²⁵ See *id.* (Ex. 5) at 021.

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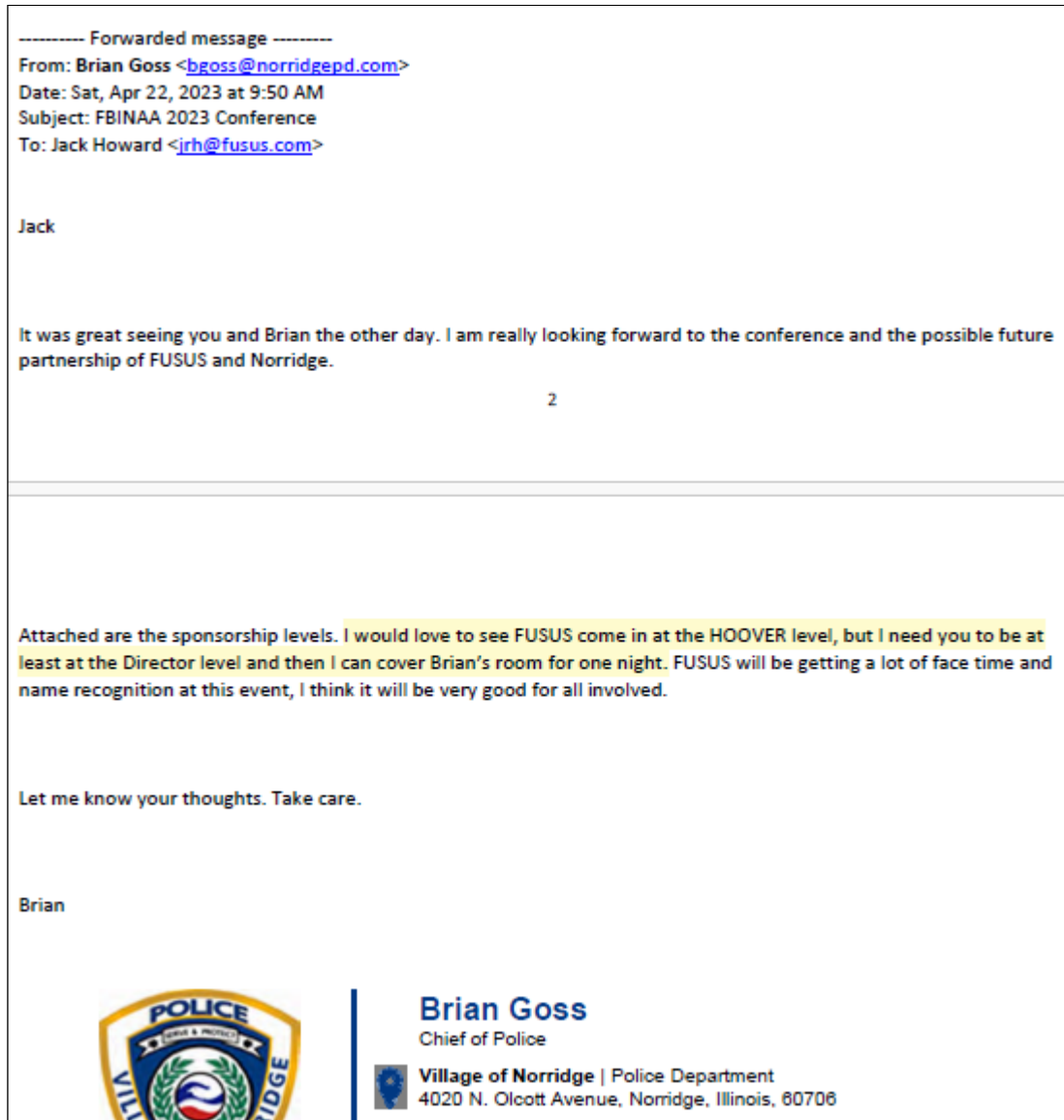


Figure 3. Email from FBINAA Illinois Chapter President and Norridge Police Chief Brian Goss to Fusus's Jack Howard soliciting donations to FBINAA to pay for Oak Brook Police Chief Brian Strockis's hotel room.

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Part II. Fusus Steered DuPage County to Develop a Fusus-Specific Interface to Report Crime Data, Which Led Police Departments Throughout DuPage County to use Fusus as a Vendor

SUMMARY:

This section documents how Fusus manipulated DuPage County, Illinois Emergency Telephone Systems Board (“ETSB”) processes to eliminate competitive alternatives and secure public funding for Fusus-specific infrastructure.

The technology at issue here centers on police departments in DuPage County coordinating with one-another to respond to criminal activities in real time. Specifically, the activities described in this section focus on Fusus’s RTCC software. RTCC software brings together live video and public safety data into one system. It connects city cameras, voluntary private cameras, drones, and body cameras into a single dashboard. To function properly, it must also integrate computer-aided dispatch (“CAD”) data so active calls automatically link to nearby cameras. In agencies using CAD systems from Hexagon, the RTCC must integrate directly with Hexagon to receive real-time dispatch and ETSB data through a formal data feed or, API. This connection allows incident details and location information to trigger camera mapping and live video access within the RTCC.

Recall from the Executive Summary the important role data sharing and analysis plays in reducing the preventing crime. These are vital tools for police departments in similar geographic areas to help them work together to keep their communities safe. We found:

- Oak Brook Chief of Police Strockis appears to have violated County policies by purchasing Fusus technology for Oak Brook prior to county approval and ETSB CAD data integration.
- Fusus became embedded within government technical meetings and internal communications, which allowed Fusus to steer government decision-making relating to a lengthy and expensive technical project that ultimately benefited Fusus at the expense of other vendors.
- Fusus received privileged access to technical specifications, requirements, and decision-maker deliberations for pending police procurements.
- Fusus received competitive intelligence about rival vendors and confidential government emails from Chief Strockis.
- Strockis ignored County Board member questions about the nature of the project and alternatives to a Fusus-specific integration with ETSB data.

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KEY FINDINGS:

Fusus Was Deeply Embedded in Government Decision-Making

Dates:

In December 2022, Strockis submitted an evaluation request form to the DuPage County ETSB 9-1-1 System Coordinator requesting real-time, read-only access to CAD data on the CAD server (created and owned by Hexagon).²⁶ The request specifically stated the data would be sent to Fusus for use in their RTCC software.²⁷

A June 2023 email from Linda Zerwin of the ETSB to DuPage Board Member Yeena Yoo reveals that Chief Strockis violated County policies by purchasing Fusus's RTCC platform for Oak Brook without coordinating with ETSB through proper channels beforehand. Zerwin wrote: "FUSUS is one of the first ones out of the box and we've been chasing it because Oak Brook purchased before we knew they were doing this so we weren't prepared. New chief's don't always know all of the policies in place."²⁸ The policy Zerwin refers to is #911-018, which states: "If the request involves a third party software, requestors should not enter into *any* contracts until the request is approved, in the event that the request is denied."²⁹ Strockis previously attested that he had read and understood this policy on the evaluation request form he submitted to the ETSB in December 2022.³⁰

Project Implementation Schedule: Q1 2023

Future Impact Consideration: DuPage County Agencies are considering implementing RTCC capabilities in the near future.

I have read ETSB 911-018: 9-1-1 System Administration and 911-013: Information Technology and Network Security Policy and believe this request complies with these policies.

Chief Brian Strockis
Print Name

Signature

Figure 4. Chief Strockis's attestation that he has read ESTB Policy #911-018.

²⁶ See App. A (Ex. 6) at 029.

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ See *id.* (Ex. 7) at 031.

²⁹ Final Agenda at 137, DuPage Cnty. Emergency Tel. Sys. Bd., Reg. Meeting (Jun. 25, 2019), <https://dupage.iqm2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=8513&Inline=True> (emphasis added).

³⁰ See App. A (Ex. 6) at 029; Figure 4, *infra*.

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Zerwin appears to chalk the Fusus purchase to Strockis's "new" role as Oak Brook Police Chief and an ignorance to procurement policies that accompanies his new role. But by the time Zerwin sent the email, Strockis had been Oak Brook Police Chief for one year.³¹

Strockis's premature purchase of Fusus software for Oak Brook placed immense pressure on the DuPage County ETSB, which ultimately all-but forced the County to create a Fusus-specific interface incompatible with other vendors. Making matters worse, correspondence between FUSUS employee Jack Howard and Chief Strockis reflects that both were aware of the requirement of ETSB approval prior to finalization of the contract.³²

In January 2023, FUSUS signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement with Hexagon and participated in a "technical discovery meeting" on January 10, 2023 that included Fusus, Hexagon, and county officials ("Tech Focus Group").³³ The meeting reviewed three options for CAD data access.³⁴ Tech Focus Group members "made it clear to Fusus that they were not comfortable with a direct connection to CAD."³⁵ Throughout January-April 2023, Fusus representatives were copied on internal county emails about the interface project and attended Tech Focus Group meetings alongside county officials. On April 10, 2023, Fusus attended a county meeting "as [an] embedded partner" alongside government officials. On April 18, 2023, Hexagon provided sample reports directly to Fusus for data configuration work.³⁶ Throughout the process, Hexagon and public officials raised the prospect of expanding the scope of work to create an interface that would accommodate other vendor interface requests and future vendor requests.³⁷

Strockis's apparent violation of the ETSB interface request policy and Fusus-Hexagon's NDA likely made it impossible for the ETSB to seriously consider changing course to create a generic interface. In fact, this is precisely what the adoption of ETSB Policy #911-018 sought to avoid. One of its stated goals is "to serve the community and first responders in the most effective, efficient manner through streamlined processes and general coding within the CAD system."³⁸

³¹ Chuck Fieldman, *Veteran of Oak Brook Police Department slated to be approved as its chief Tuesday*, Chicago Tribune (Jun. 10, 2022), <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2022/06/10/veteran-of-oak-brook-police-department-slated-to-be-approved-as-its-chief-tuesday/>.

³² See App. A (Ex. 8) at 034.

³³ See *id.* (Ex. 10) at 042–043.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ See generally *id.* at 040–044.

³⁸ Final Agenda at 135–36, DuPage Cnty. Emergency Tel. Sys. Bd., Reg. Meeting (Jun. 25, 2019), <https://dupage.igq2.com/Citizens/FileOpen.aspx?Type=1&ID=8513&Inline=True>.

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As shown below, Strockis and Fusus's strong-arm tactics, including competitive intelligence sharing and circumvention of the proper oversight authorities of DuPage County, pushed the interface development to the point of no return.

Competitive Intelligence Sharing with Fusus

Date: March 21-22, 2023

On March 21, 2023, Dan Murdock of Flock Safety (i.e., a Fusus competitor with similar RTCC platform capabilities) contacted Hinsdale Police Detective Sergeant Louis Hayes to inquire about integrating Flock's camera infrastructure with Hexagon CAD systems.³⁹

On March 22, 2023, Hayes forwarded Murdock's email to Chief Strockis with the note: "I know Murdock is pushing their RTCC platform hard in DuPage."⁴⁰ Strockis immediately forwarded this competitive intelligence to Jack Howard at Fusus.⁴¹ Howard responded with: "I am wondering if this may be the reason why we/you are getting slow rolled by Hexagon?"⁴²

Non-Public Information Sharing with Fusus

Date: April 20-28, 2023

On April 21, 2023, County Board Member Lucy Evans asked: "This is solely for the FUSUS interface for Oak Brook, correct? Or is this for future scaling of the interface so other communities can interface with Hexagon?"; and "Will the FUSUS interface for Oak Brook be configured now such that future vendors/agencies can interface with Hexagon?" She specifically requested clarification on whether this was a "generic Edge Frontier interface that can be built so that future vendors/agencies can connect without needing to engineer an entirely new interface."⁴³

On April 21, 2023, Matthew Theusch explicitly removed all vendor staff from email communications, stating: "Please note, all vendor staff have been removed from this response."⁴⁴ He noted that the ETSB had received "two other interface requests" and that Hexagon was

³⁹ See App. A (Ex. 9) at 039. Hinsdale, Illinois is also located in DuPage County and is about a 10-minute drive from Oak Brook.

⁴⁰ App. A (Ex. 9) at 038.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 037.

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ See *id.* (Ex. 10) at 041.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 044.

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investigating “if a base interface can be created that would serve as a building block for the two other current requests and all other future requests.”⁴⁵ He also noted that “[i]f a base interface is feasible, but would significantly impact the timeline, it would be brought back to this group for review.”⁴⁶

On April 27, 2023 Lucy Evans again asks about the scope and nature of the interface request. She noted that “sounds like [Hexagon] want[s] to delay the work in order to present a change order at the ETSB meeting to scope out the work and expand it to allow for the two new requests and future requests.”⁴⁷

Just four minutes later, Brian Strockis forwards her email (sent after vendors removed) to Jack Howard along with the sarcastic remark “Love that Lucy!”⁴⁸

On April 28, 2023, Fusus employee Shaan Singh responds to Evans using deliberately ambiguous language, stating that ETSB had provided network information “where the FUSUS CAD Core will be housed.”⁴⁹ This reveals Fusus-specific integration work was already underway, even after Evans questioned whether the scope could accommodate multiple vendors. More tellingly, Matthew Theusch had intentionally removed other vendors from the email chain, yet a Fusus employee directly answered a Board Member’s questions about project scope.

This demonstrates the decision had already been made in Fusus’s favor, who stood to benefit from being the sole vendor with CAD data integration. Fusus’s direct participation in answering a board member’s questions shows the decision-making process lacked independence and may have been improperly influenced by Fusus. It is especially damning that Evans’s concerns were forwarded immediately to Jack Howard along with a sarcastic remark. Strockis’s sharing information that was intended to be kept private from vendors likely enabled Fusus to pressure parties to advance the project to a point where alternatives (scope expansion to accommodate two existing interface requests) could not be seriously considered. After all, integrating Fusus with CAD data as soon as possible was a top priority for Fusus, who intended to highlight the exclusive interface at the Oak Brook – Fusus symposium, the same event where Howard and

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ App. A (Ex. 10) at 044.

⁴⁷ *See id.* (Ex. 11) at 046.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 047.

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Strockis invested significant effort lobbying Attorney General Raoul and State Attorney Bob Berlin to speak about ORC grant funding.⁵⁰

As DuPage Technical Strategist Matthew Theusch noted in his April 21, 2023 email, a “base interface . . . would significantly impact the timeline.”⁵¹ A change in scope to create a generic interface would certainly delay Fusus integration beyond the symposium date as it would require the same technical work from ETSB and non-disclosure agreements between Hexagon and at least two other vendors.

On August 8, 2023, the DuPage County Board signed a letter of intent to share the \$20,544 cost for development of a Hexagon-Fusus interface with Oak Brook Police Department and the Oak Brook Terrace Police Department.⁵² The Village of Oak Brook’s resolution stated the project would “allow for real time data to be imported in the FUSUS platform.”⁵³ The Memorandum of Understanding explicitly entitled the interface: “FUSUS Interface to Hexagon CAD (Edge Frontier (Xalt Interface))” and Hexagon’s quote described it as “Fusus Xalt Interface.”⁵⁴ The Statement of Work explicitly stated the purpose was “developing and implementing an Xalt Interface for Fusus.”⁵⁵

The email below reveals the significance of DuPage County ETSB’s Fusus-exclusive interface and how it fits into Howard and Strockis’s broader efforts to exert anti-competitive pressure on DuPage County law enforcement agencies. First, Attorney General Raoul and State Attorney Bob Berlin tacitly approved Fusus products and implied state funding availability for Fusus contracts by appearing and speaking about the funding at a Fusus promotional event. Second, Fusus’s exclusive CAD data integration likely made alternative vendor selection impractical considering the highly technical and time-intensive interface request process.

⁵⁰ *See id.* (Ex. 12) at 049–051.

⁵¹ *See id.* (Ex. 10) at 044.

⁵² *See generally* App. A (Ex. 14) at 054–055.

⁵³ *See id.* (Ex. 15) at 057.

⁵⁴ *See id.* (Ex. 15) at 063, 067.

⁵⁵ *See id.* (Ex. 16) at 075.

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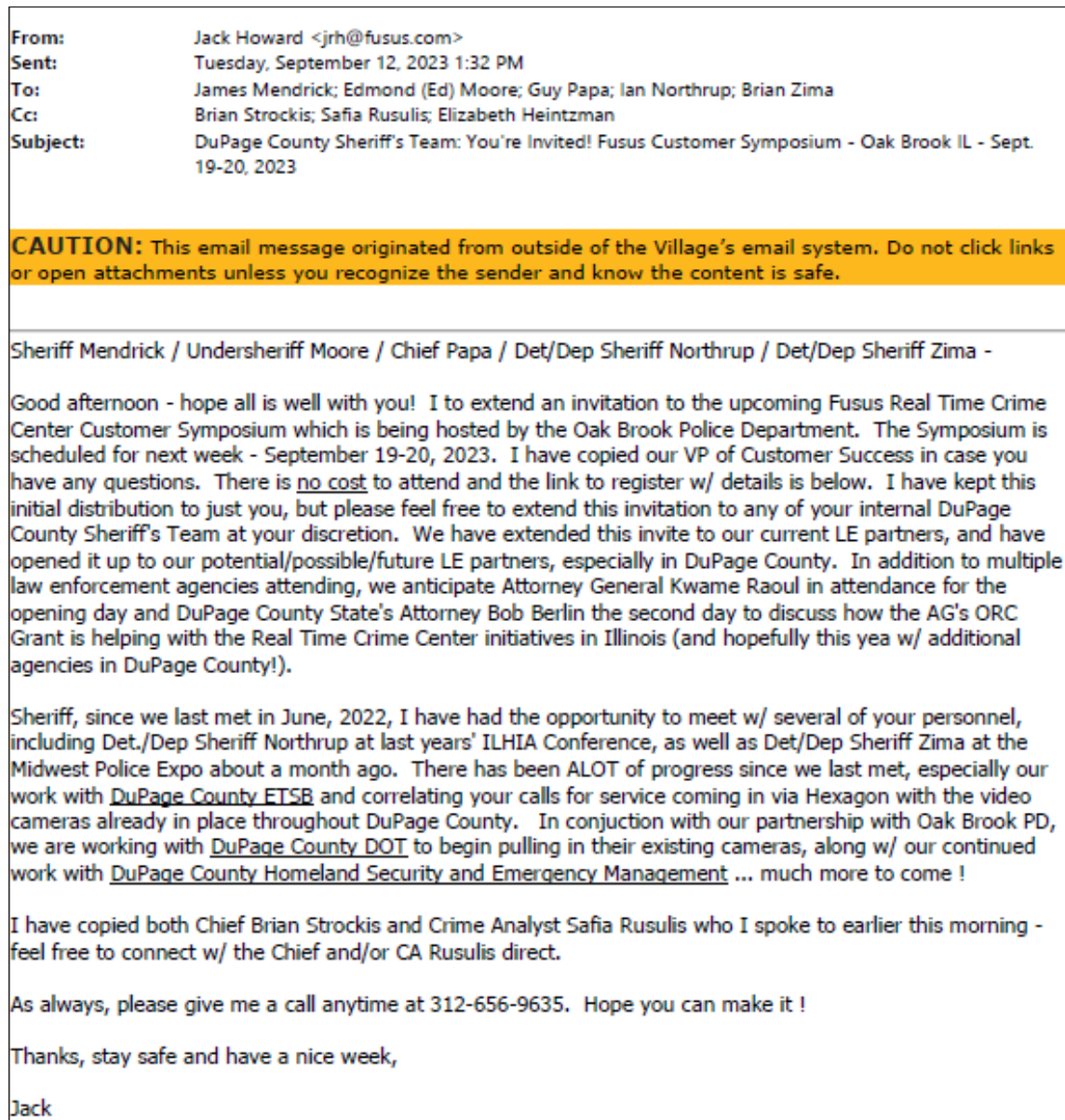


Figure 5. Email from Jack Howard to DuPage County Police Agencies.

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ANALYSIS:

The foregoing findings implicate potentially serious violations of federal and state law that warrant further inquiry and examination by appropriate enforcement authorities. We highlight a few areas of law meriting scrutiny of the Fusus's procurement activities in Illinois. To be clear, we do not conclude from the current record that one or more of the aforementioned public and private actors have violated any of the provisions discussed below. Rather, we conclude that there is a reasonable basis to pursue further inquiry of such.

Section 1 of the Sherman Act⁵⁶ subjects corporations and individuals in both the private and public sector to *per se* criminal and civil liability for bid rigging and procurement collusion conspiracies in government contracting.⁵⁷ Where an organization, government, or agency involved in a bid rigging or procurement collusion conspiracy receives more than \$10,000 in Federal assistance in any one year period, the private and public co-conspirators will also be subject to criminal liability under chapter 31 of Title 18, U.S. Code for soliciting, demanding, accepting or agreeing to accept, giving or agreeing to give, or offering anything of value to influence or reward an action taken pursuant to the conspiracy.⁵⁸ A conviction under either statute carries a maximum prison sentence of 10 years, along with fines reaching as high as \$1 million for individual offenders and \$100 million for corporate offenders.⁵⁹

The Illinois State Officials and Employees Ethics Act prohibits any public officer, member, or employee at the state or local level from “intentionally solicit[ing] or accept[ing] any

⁵⁶ 15 U.S.C. § 1.

⁵⁷ *United States v. Rose*, 449 F.3d 627 (5th Cir. 2006) (“[C]onspiracies to ‘submit collusive, noncompetitive, rigged bids,’ allocate customers, and fix prices are *per se* violations of the Sherman Act.” (internal citations omitted)); *see, e.g.*, Plea Agreement, *United States v. Yong*, No. 22-CR-00053-KJM, at 2, A-1–3 (E.D. Cal. Apr. 11, 2022) (state agency contract manager pleaded guilty to Sherman Act violation for working with two private contractors and other co-conspirators to thwart the competitive bidding process for state agency contracts “in order to ensure that companies controlled by co-conspirators submitted the winning bid and would be awarded the contract”); Plea Agreement, *United States v. Opp*, No. 22-CR00144-KJM, at 2, A-1–3 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2022) (private contractor pleaded guilty to Sherman Act violation for working with another private contractor, a state agency contract manager, and other co-conspirators to thwart the competitive bidding process for state agency contracts “in order to ensure that companies controlled by co-conspirators or himself submitted the winning bid and would be awarded the contract”).

⁵⁸ 18 U.S.C. § 666; *see, e.g.*, Plea Agreement, *United States v. Yong*, No. 22-CR-00053-KJM, at 2, A-2–3 (E.D. Cal. Apr. 11, 2022) (state agency contract manager pleaded guilty to 18 U.S.C. § 666 violation for receiving bribes from private contractors and other co-conspirators in the form of cash payments, wine, furniture, and remodeling services on his home in exchange for his actions in the bid-rigging conspiracy); Plea Agreement, *United States v. Opp*, No. 22-CR00144-KJM, at 2, A-2–3 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 3, 2022) (private contractor pleaded guilty to 18 U.S.C. § 666 violation for paying bribes to a state agency contract manager in the form of cash payments, wine, furniture, and remodeling services on his home in exchange for the public official’s actions in the bid-rigging conspiracy).

⁵⁹ *See* 15 U.S.C. § 1; 18 U.S.C. § 666(a).

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gift from any prohibited source or in violation of any federal or State statute, rule, or regulation.”⁶⁰ A “prohibited source” includes any person or entity who seeks official action by, or either does business or seeks to do business with, the public officer, member, or employee.⁶¹ Those who violate the Ethics Act gift ban are deemed guilty of a state business offense and subject to thousands of dollars in fines.⁶²

Fruit of the Poisonous Tree: Officials Should Reexamine Axon/Fusus Contracts in DuPage County

Axon and Fusus partnered before any of the aforementioned events took place. In May of 2022, Axon announced a strategic partnership with Fusus to

provide agencies better real-time operations situational awareness including streamlined investigative workflows. The partnership will make it easier and more cost-effective for communities to aggregate live feeds from public and private cameras, including closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras, in addition to live video feeds from Axon Body 3, Axon Fleet 3 and Axon Air connected drones, creating a unified operational picture for first responders.⁶³

The Axon-Fusus partnership included a \$21 million dollar acquisition of a non-controlling minority share of Fusus.⁶⁴ Between May 2022 and January of 2023, Axon and Fusus products were actively co-marketed and integrated. For instance, Axon and Fusus actively marketed their integrated platform using the Atlanta Police Department as a flagship success story.⁶⁵ Axon’s promotional materials highlighted a May 2023 incident in which the Atlanta Police Department’s Video Integration Center, powered by Fusus, identified and located a hospital shooting suspect within approximately 22 minutes by integrating CCTV feeds, license plate reader technology, and Axon body-worn and in-car cameras through Axon Respond.⁶⁶ Marshall Freeman, the Atlanta Police Department official at the center of the Atlanta Ethics Investigation for his undisclosed financial interest in Fusus, continued to serve as a public face of this effort to

⁶⁰ 5 ILCS 430/10–10.

⁶¹ 5 ILCS 430/1–5.

⁶² 5 ILCS 430/50–5.

⁶³ *Axon and Fūsus Partner to Provide Enhanced Real-Time Community Policing Solutions*, Axon Enterprise (May 19, 2022), <https://investor.axon.com/2022-05-19-Axon-and-Fusus-Partner-to-Provide-Enhanced-Real-Time-Community>.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *The Real-Time Crime Center: Enhancing Real-Time Policing Solutions*, Axon Enterprise, <https://www.axon.com/resources/rtcc> (last visited Mar. 4, 2026).

⁶⁶ *Id.*

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promote both Fusus and Axon. At the time of Axon's completed acquisition in February 2024, Freeman was quoted endorsing the deal and urging all agencies to "embrace this cutting-edge technology."⁶⁷

Axon's integration with Fusus between 2022 and 2023 meant that by the time the acquisition was complete in February 2024, Axon inherited significant commercial benefits from ill-gotten, entrenched financial positions in places like DuPage County and the Village of Oak Brook, Illinois. For example, the 124-month, \$3.39 million Axon contract with Oak Brook covering body cameras, TASER equipment, fleet systems, and critically, Axon Respond/Fusus integration components illustrates the compounding effect of Fusus's prior entrenchment.⁶⁸ Products explicitly labeled "AXON RESPOND – FUSUSCORE" appear throughout the hardware delivery schedule, indicating that the Fusus RTCC integration was baked directly into the bundled contract Axon offered Oak Brook.⁶⁹ Just as Fusus benefitted from improperly entrenching itself in DuPage County as the first and only vendor with CAD integration, Axon benefitted from the downstream commercial effects first through deep integration and later complete ownership and control of Fusus.

More troubling, Oak Brook Police Chief Brian Strockis submitted the motion to the Village of Oak Brook Board of Trustees recommending approval of the \$3.39 million contact which the Board ultimately approved. Ironically, Strockis complained to the Village of Oak Brook Board that "[t]he DuPage County consortium extended their contract with Hexagon . . . through 2027 and [it] was extended without consultation from consortium members who have expressed significant concerns with the Hexagon platform since its inception."⁷⁰

First, Strockis strong-armed DuPage County to create an interface connecting Fusus with Hexagon's CAD software. After Axon acquired Fusus, Strockis began pressuring Oak Brook to replace Hexagon's Records Management System ("RMS") with Axon's RMS.⁷¹ In his motion, Strockis described Axon RMS as "far superior," and noted that Oak Brook had "expressed interest in opting out" of Hexagon.⁷² Unsurprisingly, Strockis submitted a motion to the Board on May 27, 2025 recommending that it authorize a Memorandum of Understanding between

⁶⁷ Joanna Putman, *Axon Acquires Real-Time Crime Center Technology Developer Fusus*, Police1 (Feb. 1, 2024), <https://www.police1.com/police-products/real-time-crime-centers/axon-acquires-real-time-crime-center-technology-developer-fusus>.

⁶⁸ *See* App. B at 001–017.

⁶⁹ *See id.* at 006, 008–009, 051.

⁷⁰ *Id.* at 091.

⁷¹ *See generally id.* at 091–093.

⁷² *Id.* at 091.

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DuPage ETSB and the Village of Oak Brook for the AXON RMS interface project to interface with Hexagon CAD.⁷³

Our findings compel a reexamination of Oak Brook's existing Axon contracts. The \$3.39 million, 124-month consolidation contract approved in July 2024 and the subsequent May 2025 MOU authorizing an Axon-specific CAD interface with DuPage ETSB are the downstream product of a vendor capture scheme that began with Fusus's improper entrenchment in DuPage County law enforcement infrastructure. Fusus obtained its foothold through the conduct documented in this report: insider grant access, competitive intelligence sharing, undisclosed financial relationships, and the engineering of vendor-specific public infrastructure that foreclosed competition. Axon inherited those entrenched positions through its 2022 minority investment and 2024 acquisition of Fusus, and Chief Strockis—whose relationship with Fusus representative Jack Howard is central to this investigation—was the official who submitted both motions recommending Board approval of the contracts that cemented Axon's dominance.

CONCLUSION:

“Whether it is a purchase made by a small town or a multi-million-dollar contract with a federal agency, bid rigging and procurement collusion raise costs for taxpayers and can erode the public's confidence in government.”⁷⁴ In light of our findings and analysis, the Oversight Project accordingly calls upon public integrity and commercial regulators at the state and federal level to conduct an exhaustive investigation into the conduct of public and private actors mentioned in this report for potential violations of federal antitrust and bribery statutes, as well as state ethics provisions.

⁷³ *Id.* at 094–095.

⁷⁴ Sandra Talbott & Derek Whiddon, *Promoting Competition and Protecting Taxpayer Dollars: A Federal and State Response to Bid Rigging in Public Procurements*, 39 *Antitrust* 21, 26 (Spring 2025).