

A meeting of the **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE** for September 2020 was held tonight via web conference. Members in attendance were: Irv Brockington, Daniel B. Norris, Wendy Blutstein and William Pillsbury. Staff present: Charlyn Battle, Director of Human Resources and John Frye, Chief of Police. Guests present: Ann Rappoport, Matthew Areman and Liza Meris.

1. Mr. Brockington called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.
2. The Meeting Minutes for August 13, 2020 were accepted.
3. The Committee discussed follow-up items from the last meeting:

A. Update on results from Cheltenham Township Police Department Survey

Chief Frye reviewed the results of the survey, reporting that there were 544 responses.

Mr. Norris said he is concerned that 20% of the community reported that it might not want to call the Police Department. Mr. Brockington said some residents may not want to waste the Police Department's time. Mr. Areman said the comments that were associated with the questions may help us understand why the resident's may not want to call the Police Department.

Chief Frye said there is always room for improvement in how the Police Department communicates with residents. Ms. Blutstein asked if anyone made suggestions on how the Department could better communicate with the community. Chief Frye said people suggested text message alerts and newsletters. The Department will take these suggestions into consideration.

Ms. Blutstein asked if there a crime report that is available to the public. Chief Frye said the Department uses *crimereports.com*; however there have been technical problems with the site and the Department is looking at different platforms to get the data out to the public. Mr. Brockington asked the Chief what platforms other communities are using and what they might cost. Chief Frye said one of the main concerns is the expense of some of the platforms. Mr. Brockington suggested asking the Township's IT Department to build a platform instead of paying for one. Ms. Meris asked if this information could be aggregated by demographics. Chief Frye said there is a good possibility that it can be.

Mr. Areman asked what process the Department is using to analyze the data from the survey, what the take away from the survey is, and would there be a follow up survey. Chief Frye said his staff is currently analyzing the data, they will try and be more visible and improve communication. They will try to do a similar survey again.

Mr. Brockington asked Chief Frye if they would be opposed to the Human Relations Committee helping compose questions for their next survey.

Ms. Rappoport asked Chief Frye if they found any of the open ended responses useful. Chief Frye said there were a lot of positive comments and the negative comments will help them to make improvements.

Mr. Brockington suggested reaching out to the School District to help with communication tools and also to breakdown the responses by race and gender. He suggested that this topic be listed on the next agenda.

Mr. Brockington asked Chief Frye to provide an update on the HUB Program. Chief Frye said Officer Sparango attended the meeting today, referring two more cases that were accepted. More municipalities are joining and it is has been well received.

B. Glenside Fire Company

Mr. Areman provided a brief history of the Fire House and noted that a swastika symbol has been on the building since 1929. At the time it was put on the building, it was viewed as a good luck symbol, but has been a point of controversy over the last several decades. Mr. Areman has had

several conversations with the Glenside Fire Company, which is the owner of the building. Its Board will be meeting this month to discuss the issue and make a decision regarding the symbol.

Mr. Areman said he does not think the Volunteer Fire companies are racist or anti-semitic, but believes that the symbol is anti-semitic.

Ms. Blutstein commented that by the time the building was completed in 1927 the swastika was known as a Nazi symbol. Mr. Pillsbury commented that it's a symbol often seen in India because it's connected to Hinduism. Unless there is a clear connection to a Hindu Temple, it is not considered a good luck symbol anymore; it is a symbol of hate.

C. Point System for Township Contractors/Vendors – No update.

4. Discussion on how to prepare for a protest

Mr. Brockington asked how the Township can prepare for a protest, especially if it turns bad.

Mr. Norris said there were a number of peaceful protests in April and May. The Police Department was out in full force to help prevent looting on Cheltenham Avenue.

Ms. Meirs said there should be a protocol in place and the Committee should talk to business owners.

Mr. Areman said that even in peaceful protests, safety precautions have to be put in place and suggested that Mr. Brockington have a conversation with the Police Department and Emergency Management about their protocols. Mr. Brockington said he will reach out to Chief Frye to see what types of protocols the Department has in place. Ms. Rappoport commented that Police should be aware of outside influences as well

5. Renter vs. Homeowners

Mr. Brockington asked what we can do to make renters feel that they are a part of this community. Mr. Norris said in the next Township newsletter this committee could be highlighted with a paragraph to the rental community. Ms. Rappoport said there is problem with renters receiving publications from the Township and the issue should be addressed. Ms. Meris said the Committee could reach out to the rental community and ask for help from the School District.

6. How to get more People of Color involved in Township Citizens Committees

Mr. Brockington discussed ways to get more people of color involved in Township Committees because there is still a disconnect when it comes to getting people of colored involved, especially renters. Ms. Meris suggested asking people to join. Mr. Pillsbury agreed that word of mouth is the way; however, some of these people still look alike. Even with the best intentions segregation occurs. Mr. Brockington said per the Township Solicitor, there is no limit for members and Ms. Meris is now a member. Ms. Rappoport suggested reaching out to specific groups who can recruit potential volunteers.

Mr. Norris suggested having Mr. Brockington bring this up at the Democratic Committee meeting.

7. Open Discussion-None.

8. Mr. Brockington adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.



Robert Zienkowski
Township Manager

Per Charlyn J. Battle