

The regular meeting of the **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** for January 2021 was held tonight via web-conference, Chairman Brockington presiding. Members present were Commissioners Areman, Holland, Pransky, Rappoport, and Zygmund-Felt and Ex-Officio member Norris.

Staff present via web-conference were: Robert Zienkowski, Township Manager; Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; John Frye, Chief of Police; Scott Lynch, Fire Marshal and Kenneth Hellendall; Director EMS and Emergency Management Coordinator. Also present was Joseph Bagley, Esq., Township Solicitor.

Mr. Brockington called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. **Presentation of Community Service Awards**

United States Postal Service Carrier Gregg Marrone was presented with a Community Service award for assisting a resident on the 7600 block of Massey Way with a fire while emergency services responded, preventing a small fire from becoming a larger fire.

Thomas Sullivan was recognized for his distinguished service to the County and Cheltenham Township Community upon his retirement after a 19-year career as the Director of Public Safety for Montgomery County.

2. **Report of the Police Chief**

A. Chief Frye reviewed the Police Clearance and Juvenile Clearance Reports for the month of November 2020.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt requested an update on the impact of COVID on public safety moving forward into 2021. Chief Frye stated the Police Department had some officers get sick in the fall; however, many policy changes have been made and adjustments implemented for the safety of officers and the community alike.

Mr. Holland inquired about the issues at the Greenleaf property. The Chief stated work is continuing to be done to work on Fire Zone violations and easing traffic congestion in the area of the Chick-Fil-A property.

Mr. Holland inquired about the 90% drop in traffic stops. Chief Frye stated that was due to the pandemic. It was a County-wide decision and not unique to Cheltenham; however, the number of traffic stops will be rising in 2021. The Police Department is dedicated to monitoring traffic and being a visible presence.

Mr. Brockington inquired about the timeline on body-cams. Chief Frye stated delivery is anticipated in February 2021.

B. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners present a Resolution to Kathryn Gallagher, Secretary to the Chief of Police, upon her retirement after more than 21 years of dedicated service effective January 29, 2021 at its regularly-scheduled meeting on January 20, 2021.

C. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt an Ordinance amending Chapter 285, Vehicles and Traffic, Section 285-43, "Street and Parking Regulations" of the Township Code to delete a Handicapped Parking spot in front of 1805 Chelsea Road at its regularly-scheduled meeting on February 17, 2021.

- D. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Commissioners authorize advertisement of its intention to consider the adoption of the aforementioned Ordinance amending Chapter 285, Vehicles and Traffic.
- E. Committee members and Staff discussed the need for a replacement prisoner van, which is used to transport prisoners to local court and County court as well as for patrol.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended the purchase of a 2021 Transit-250 Crew Van from Co-Stars vendor New Holland Auto Group in the amount of \$65,000, conditioned upon the receipt of additional quotes for inserts and add-ons after manufacturing.

- F. Committee members and Staff discussed the change in the color of the police vehicles as well as the markings on those vehicles. Mr. Zienkowski expressed his desire for Cheltenham Police vehicles look different than those in surrounding communities. Chief Frye stated the proposed design is cost-effective because it uses decals, not vehicle wraps. Mr. Pransky inquired whether the vehicles purchased in 2020 have been delivered and if they can be delivered in black rather than white so the new design can be implemented right away. If it cannot be changed, Chief Frye and Mr. Zienkowski stated they will look into the cost to have them painted black prior to being outfitted with the new decals. This will be phased in as new vehicles are purchased.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously approved the adoption of the new design for Cheltenham Police Department vehicles.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously received the Report of the Police Chief.

2. **Report of the Fire Marshal**

Fire Marshal Scott Lynch presented the fire report for the month of November 2020. The Fire Board Meeting was cancelled for December 2020; therefore, there were no minutes to submit.

Mr. Brockington inquired how COVID has impacted fire services. Mr. Lynch stated all fire company personnel are following the guidelines presented by Emergency Management. All trainings and meetings are being held via Zoom and personnel are not hanging out in any of the fire house buildings. When responding to routine calls, they wear their fire masks and sit in the windows of the fire trucks. For active fire calls they do their best to social distance with fire masks and respond as quickly as possible to extinguish fires.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt inquired about the data retrieval and accuracy of the reporting for the run reports. Mr. Lynch stated that each fire company enters its run data into the Township-wide fire reporting system and he runs the full report of all companies at the end of the month. There is no access to the data other than to run a report; therefore, the data is not compromised.

Mr. Lynch stated that all members of the Ogontz Fire Company were presented options to laterally transfer to any of the other Cheltenham Township fire companies after its decertification. To-date, none have done so. He stated the equipment is still at the firehouse and no decisions have been made on how it will be handled or liquidated. The next step will be to discuss the liquidation of assets and move certified members who choose to transfer laterally.

Mr. Lynch thanked Mr. Holland for the Town Hall meeting with the Neighbors of Wyncote, specifically for the area around Wistar Drive and Mellon Road. They have distributed 60 smoke detectors and have more on order to install in that area.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously received the report of the Fire Marshal and the Fire Board Minutes.

3. **Report of the EMS Director**

A. Committee members and staff discussed the need to replace the Assistant Chief's vehicle, the model of that vehicle, and disposition of the current vehicle. Mr. Pransky inquired about a hybrid vehicle in lieu of a gas operated vehicle. Mr. Hellendall said it was investigated and the vehicles were more expensive, have less gas mileage, and require the expenditure of \$3,000 every other year for a new battery. The selected vehicle comes with a 100,000 miles bumper to bumper warranty. Mr. Hellendall detailed the reasons for the Assistant Chief to have a vehicle to respond to emergencies, report in off-duty hours, and to be on call two out of four weeks each month to respond to calls. The Assistant Chief's current vehicle is inoperable and has had many expensive repairs. Mr. Hellendall stated that it is an essential vehicle that needs to be replaced. Mr. Holland inquired whether this item was approved in the 2021 capital budget; Mr. Zienkowski and Mr. Hellendall confirmed that it is.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon motion of Mr. Holland, the Committee unanimously recommended the purchase of 2021 Dodge Durango for the Assistant Chief in the amount of \$36,888.00 from COSTARS vendor New Holland Auto Group as proposed.

B. Committee members and staff discussed a Request for Proposals (RFP) for third party EMS billing and subscription services. Mr. Hellendall said outsourcing billing will help the Township increase its collection income because the companies that provide these services have access to programs that the Township cannot afford. For example, the Township writes off approximately \$1,200 a month relate to collections from will. The third parties have access to a service that costs \$20,000 annually that can do this. This is just one of the areas where third parties have the costly infrastructure in place to increase collection rates. Mr. Hellendall said companies do not get paid unless they collect revenue. One company they talked to charges 8% on what is collected and most agencies see a 10% increase in revenue the first year of service. The third parties can also manage the annual subscription program.

This would eliminate one full-time employee, with the service costing approximately the same as the salary of the employee. Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked to have the new Director of Fiscal Affairs involved in the review process. Mr. Areman stated he wanted to make sure the healthcare information of residents would be secure and wanted to know who was liable if there was a breach. Mr. Zienkowski stated that after the RFP the Committee and the Board of Commissioners would have the opportunity to ask whatever and as many questions as they needed to be comfortable with a vendor prior to an agreement.

Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners: Upon motion of Mr. Holland, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend the Board of Commissioners authorize issuance of a Request for Proposals for Emergency Medical Services Billing and Subscription Services, condition upon satisfactory review by the Township Solicitor.

4. **Report of the Emergency Management Coordinator**

Mr. Hellendall reported that Montgomery County is giving the first of two doses of the Moderna vaccine to Phase 1A, which includes healthcare workers and EMS personnel. He further stated that all EMS employees have had their first dose and are scheduled for their second dose the last week of January. He noted that two staff members got sick from the vaccine with symptoms including: chills, body aches, a low fever, and flu-like symptoms for approximately 24 hours. Phase 1B is next group to get the vaccine; however, the definition of who falls into that category is currently being re-evaluated

at the County level. Montgomery County has a pre-registration option so it can take a census of who wants the vaccine. Vaccination and pre-registration information is available on the County's COVID-19 Vaccine webpage (<https://www.montcopa.org/3660/COVID-19-Vaccine>). The County is currently vaccinating 3,000 people a week; however, they would like to get to 5,000 a week. The State has provided 100,000 doses per county regardless of population size. Montgomery County has 990,000 people, where Lehigh County has 100,000 people, making it a longer process for Montgomery County to vaccinate its residents.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously received the report of the EMA Director.

5. **Report of the Township Manager:**

Mr. Zienkowski recognized Mr. Lynch and Mr. Sergio for their work regarding the clean-up at the Greenleaf at Cheltenham site. Mr. Zienkowski thanked the Police Department for their patrols to move traffic along and keep the fire lane clear. He thanked Mr. Holland and Mr. Norris for working with Township officials and Greenleaf management to clear up the unacceptable condition of the property with regard to trash. Mr. Fleming and his Department will begin issuing citations daily to get this situation resolved expeditiously.

Mr. Zienkowski thanked the Board of Commissioners and all Township Staff and employees for working well together and getting the job done.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously received the Report of the Township Manager.

6. **Old Business:**

Mr. Areman provided an update on the PennDOT Limekiln Pike Bridge Project. The bridge will be completely closed from 12:00 p.m. on Friday, January 15, 2021 until approximately 5:00 a.m. on Monday, January 18, 2021. He felt that was not enough notice. The contractor representative stated they are required to provide a two-week notice of the closure. They were notified the last week in December that they had approval and made notifications as soon as they were made aware. The Committee discussed having a flagger at Limekiln Pike and Willow Grove Avenue for this and future closures. If they do not have a flagger, a Police Detail will be used at a cost of \$130 per hour per officer. Letters were delivered to 40 residents notifying them of the closure and the contractor stated "local traffic only" signs will be placed on Brooke Road. Mr. Areman requested this and all future road closures related to this project be placed on the Township website as soon as the Township is notified. The contractor stated the next scheduled road closure for this project is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on Friday, February 19, 2021 through approximately 5:00 a.m. on Monday, February 22, 2021.

7. **New Business:**

A. Discussion on cut-through traffic safety concerns on Sharpless Road, Valley Road, Ansley Avenue and Mountain Avenue.

Mr. Brockington asked why this item was not presented to the Traffic Calming Committee before being presented to the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Norris stated it would be moved to that Committee for review and recommendations before further discussion.

B. Mr. Areman asked that the pedestrian signs that were on the crosswalk in the roadway on Easton Road at Wesley Avenue be replaced.

C. Mr. Areman informed the Chief about drag racing on Limekiln Pike from Waverly Road to Glenside Avenue and sometimes down to the Limekiln Pike Bridge Project between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. He asked for more patrols to address this ongoing safety and traffic issue.

8. **Citizens' Forum:**

Theresa Camerota, 1112 Church Road, discussed line of sight issues exiting her driveway. Mr. Zienkowski suggested removing the hedges on the left side for better sight lines; Ms. Camerota stated those hedges are her neighbors. Mr. Zienkowski stated the Township will reach out to the neighbor to have them removed. Ms. Camerota requested a letter from the Township to PennDOT regarding traffic concerns on Church Road. Mr. Norris asked Mr. Zienkowski to write a letter to PennDOT from the Township in support of a traffic study to evaluate the speed limit and road design. Ms. Camerota is also meeting with Senator Haywood and Representative Nelson regarding this and other issues on Church Road. She also discussed disturbances caused by a neighbor's ATV. Mr. Brockington requested Chief Frye increase speed enforcement in the area.

Mr. Pransky said he will ask the Traffic Calming Committee to consider the drag racing problem on Washington Lane, the ATV issue and the issue on Limekiln Pike.

There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Norris, and unanimously approved by the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.



Robert Zienkowski
Township Manager

per Kathryn Gallagher