

The regular meeting of the **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** for April 2021 was held tonight via web-conference, Chairman Brockington presiding. Members present were Commissioners Areman, Holland, Pransky, Rappoport, and Zygmund-Felt. Ex-Officio member Norris was not in attendance.

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. Bagley announced the Board met in Executive Session twice prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel, potential litigation, potential purchase of real property, emergency preparedness and protection of public safety and matters which if discussed in public would violate a lawful privilege.

Mr. Brockington called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 7:40 p.m.

1. **Report of the Police Chief**

- A. Chief Frye reviewed the Police Clearance and Juvenile Clearance Reports for the month of February 2021.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked why domestic disturbances increased almost 35% from 2020 and why moving violations were down. Chief Frye believed the increase in domestic disturbances was due to the stay-at-home-order that has carried over into 2021 and the decrease in moving violations still has to do with COVID precautions. He did note that officers are keeping a visual presence on a regular basis.

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

- B. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for New Holland Ford in the amount of \$172,315 for the purchase of five (5) new 2021 police vehicles.

There was discussion regarding the need to replace police vehicles every five years. Mr. Holland asked if it was possible to extend the life of the vehicles 1-2 years. Mr. Zienkowski stated that 3-4 years is an average turnover of police vehicles and five years is the limit, since they are in constant use at all hours year-round. Most vehicles have a 100,000 mile/60 month warranty. The vehicles are being turned in at 80,000-100,000 miles. There are 42 vehicles in the fleet, and approximately 20% of the fleet has been replaced between 2020 & 2021. Chief Frye said no vehicles were purchased in 2019.

Mr. Brockington asked what is done with the old vehicles. In the past, they were given to other departments. Mr. Zienkowski does not recommend this because of mechanical issues and lack of fuel efficiency. There is a trade-in value and any trade-ins would offset the cost of the new cars. If they are not traded in, they will be sold.

It was asked if the new vehicles would be hybrid. Chief Frye said they would, but the two new hybrid vehicles are already experiencing mechanical issues. Maintenance on these vehicles has to be done at the dealership; it cannot be done at our maintenance yard. When asked why the vehicles are idling so much, Chief Frye explained that officers are parked watching traffic and writing reports, and it is not good to keep turning the vehicles on and off.

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee with a 5-1 vote recommended the Board of Commissioners approve a purchase order for New Holland Ford in the amount of \$172,315 for the purchase of five (5) new 2021 Police vehicles (Ayes: Brockington, Zygmund-Felt, Areman, Pransky, Rappoport; Nay: Holland)

- C. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for Havis in the amount of \$27,738.60 for the upfitting of the 2021 Police vehicles

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee with a 5-1 vote recommended the Board of Commissioners approve a purchase order for Havis in the amount of \$27,738.60 for the upfitting of the 2021 Police vehicles. (Ayes: Brockington, Zygmund-Felt, Areman, Pransky, Rappoport; Nay: Holland)

- D. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for the 2021 SWAT Assessment in the amount of \$5,000.

Chief Frye stated the CTPD participates with nine other jurisdictions within the Montgomery County SWAT-East Region and the fee goes towards equipment, vests, training and vehicles and that Upper Dublin Township takes care of the coordinating of all payments.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously authorized purchase order for the 2021 SWAT Assessment in the amount of \$5,000.

- E. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for Keystone Munitions in the amount of \$9,000 for the purchase of 9mm ammunition.

Mr. Brockington asked what was being done with the old ammunition and Chief said the Department went through most of it during training exercises. All officers are required to qualify annually on weapons training.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously authorized a purchase order for Keystone Munitions in the amount of \$9,000 for the purchase of 9mm ammunition.

- F. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for Havis in the amount of \$4,560 for body camera docking station installation in the patrol vehicles.

Mr. Pransky asked if the docking stations will be able to be moved from one vehicle to another given the new vehicles on order. Chief Frye said they will and that the body cameras have been delivered. Training will begin at the end of April, and all officers will be equipped with body cameras by mid-May.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously authorized a purchase order for Havis in the amount of \$4,560 for body camera docking station installation in the patrol vehicles.

- G. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for two (2) Sergeants to attend the Northwestern School of Staff and Command in the amount of \$8,400.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked what criteria decides which Sergeants will attend. Chief Frye said interested Sergeants submit a request including qualifications, and of those qualified, it goes by seniority.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners authorize a purchase order for two (2) Sergeants to attend the Northwestern School of Staff and Command in the amount of \$8,400.

- H. Chief Frye provided a de-briefing of an incident at Wal-Mart on March 31, 2021. At 6:56 p.m., a man with a gun entered the Wal-Mart at 1000 S. Easton Road, which was also the location of an Active Shooter incident in 2018. Chief commended the teamwork between CTPD and Springfield Township, their training, and compliance by the suspect to make this a safe arrest.

- I. Consider recommending the adoption of a Resolution honoring Sergeant Nicholas Viola upon his retirement after 26 years of dedicated service to the Cheltenham Township Police Department.

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution honoring Sergeant Nicholas Viola upon his retirement after 26 years of dedicated service to the Cheltenham Township Police Department at the April 21, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting.

- J. Sergeant Jarreau Francis gave a presentation on the Department's accreditation with the PA Chiefs of Police Association, Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (PLEAC). CTPD is one of only 127 agencies out of 1100 that is currently maintaining accredited status. Sgt. Francis went over the four critical areas that are reviewed, the benefits, and the community interest, and stated that accreditation is an ongoing process, reviewed every three years.

The Committee complimented Sgt. Francis on the presentation and asked how the accreditation impacts daily operations. Officers are required to complete online training, stay updated on changes and complete knowledge checks annually or more as needed, through PowerDMS, the program used to track training and updates. Mr. Areman said he is pleased to see how engaged the Police Department is in this accreditation process. He also suggested there should be guidelines on interactions between Police and schools.

Mr. Areman also asked if there were updates at the PLEAC level on an increased focus between the community and people of color. Sgt. Francis said yes, as updates are issued twice per year and are dictated by current events. Chief Frye stated that vital and critical training is done annually to ensure consistency and application of the PLEAC practices. Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked if PLEAC has an emphasis on diverse hiring. Chief Frye said that recruiting and training is a major focal point and several boxes need to be checked, but diversity is not one.

Mr. Brockington requested residents be able to view the presentation on the Township website and invited Sgt. Francis to make this presentation at the next Civil Rights Task Force.

## 2. **Report of the Fire Marshal**

- A. Mr. Lynch presented the fire report for the month of February 2021 and the minutes of the Fire Board Meeting from March 4, 2021.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt noted some errors on the report. He also commented that the average of nine personnel responding to calls is reassuring since there was consolidation of fire companies. Mr. Lynch said he would review and correct the report.

Ms. Rappoport requested again that going forward the number of outside companies responding to Cheltenham calls be included in the reports on a regular basis. Mr. Brockington agreed as well.

Mr. Brockington thanked the Fire Marshal and the Glenside Fire Company, for arranging a last-minute escort back into the Township on Saturday April 4 for the Cheltenham Girls Varsity Soccer Team, who won the Championship game. GFC met the girls' bus at the Fort Washington exit of the turnpike. Mr. Brockington said the girls were excited and it made their day.

Mr. Lynch reported that membership is up in all four fire companies. Membership retention and recruitment is working.

Mr. Lynch reported that after meetings of the four fire chiefs over the past couple months, La Mott Fire Company has been approved to leave their district. Mr. Lynch has been in touch with the County and the 911 system and the changes have been implemented. He relayed that at 4:20 a.m. on April 13, 2021, crews were sent to the Elkins Park House at 7900 Old York Road and encountered smoke in the hallway on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor and a haze on floors 6-9, which was later determined to be from an external source and not a fire in the building. All four companies were on scene, a great response for fire safety in the Township.

- B. Mr. Lynch provided a de-briefing on a house fire that occurred Friday, April 2, 2021 at 1:29 a.m. at 200 Deaver Road. Fire was confirmed by 911 and upgraded within two minutes of dispatch. When the chiefs arrived to the back of the house, two floors were well involved. Police were able to get the occupants away from the house and to the ambulance to be checked out. All responding companies worked together and had the fire under control in 45 minutes.

Mr. Lynch tracked the fire back to electric recliners in the family room, but is not sure if it was the chairs themselves or the power strip they were plugged into. Mr. Zienkowski noted that the time of response was eight minutes from dispatch to water on the fire and commended the Glenside Fire Chief for an incredible response time. Ms. Rappoport was grateful to everyone that the family was safe and Mr. Brockington thanked the Police & EMS for the team effort.

On Monday, May 3, at 7:00 p.m., the Glenside Fire Company, Police, and EMS will be visiting the 200 block of Deaver Road at the residents' request to hand out smoke detectors, make sure they are in the correct locations, and work with families on escape plans. Mr. Lynch invited the Commissioners to attend.

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

3. **Report of the EMS Director & Emergency Management Coordinator**

Mr. Hellendall presented the EMS reports for the month of February 2021. He commented that EMS providers across the state have noticed a significant uptick in mental health issues related to COVID. The ambulance association locally and statewide is working to better train EMS providers to deal with these emergencies. EMS is currently mandated by their governing body to transport mental health patients to the emergency room. Five states have amended this to transport to an appropriate mental health facility and that measure is working its way through PA.

Mr. Brockington asked how the HUB program would work with EMS. Mr. Hellendall did not have an answer at the moment but noted that EMS must abide by their regulations and training. Mr. Pransky asked if there is an accreditation with a course for mental health. Mr. Hellendall said not at this time; however, one will be created and Paramedics and EMTs will receive continuing education credits for it. Ms. Rappoport reminded everyone that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Advisory Committee has some mental health professionals who offered resources about COVID and mental health issues. Mr. Hellendall would be happy to talk with them or have them make a presentation at an EMS meeting, but they have to be very careful to stay within their scope of practice.

COVID-19 calls are on the increase again, and Mr. Hellendall has had six exposure reports this week, up from one every other week just a month ago. He said people are getting complacent and stressed the importance of continuing to wear masks. The vaccine does not prevent you from getting or giving COVID; it only prevents you from dying from it. There are currently no extra vaccines to make up for the clinics cancelled due to issues with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Multiple clinics are open, but do not provide a choice in which vaccine you receive.

Mr. Pransky acknowledged Township resident Brooke Welsh for teaming up with Deputy EMA Coordinator Kim Kirschner to establish a network to help get vaccines to residents. This has been a huge help to the Township and Mr. Hellendall expressed his gratitude.

Ms. Rappoport recognized York Pharmacy for its service to the community. Mr. Hellendall said that he would recognize them at a later date, as they are still serving their extensive waiting list. Mr. Brockington asked if Mr. Hellendall is aware when local churches receive vaccines. He said that the church at the corner of Oak Lane and New Second had so many left over that they were standing outside with signs. Mr. Hellendall said he was not aware of their vaccines until the next day – it was set up between the religious organization and a pharmacy. He said there are more clinics opening up

and many of them are not fulfilling their quotas. If he knows of a clinic, he will be happy to advertise it, but the clinics have no obligation to tell the Township.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously received the report of the EMS Director & Emergency Management Coordinator.

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

- A. Consider recommending approval of the purchase of security cameras from Total Security Solutions, Inc. in the amount of \$7,492 as part of the Building Safety Plan for the Township Building and Public Works Building.

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners approve the purchase of security cameras from Total Security Solutions, Inc. in the amount up to \$7,492 as part of Building Safety Plan for the Township Building and Public Works Building, pending obtaining a price differential between a 3 megapixel and a 4 megapixel cameras.

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

Mr. Zienkowski updated the Committee on the meeting hosted by State Representative Napoleon Nelson between Cheltenham, Jenkintown, Springfield, PennDOT, and SEPTA to discuss issues within the Townships. Issues discussed included road maintenance, trash pickup, drainage issues, catch basins, broken pipes, and traffic concerns, especially on Church Road. A template will be created by Cheltenham officials to identify the issues and offer solutions.

A question asked last month regarding murals on PennDOT walls & bridges is currently under review at the State level. As soon as they make a conclusion, they will let Township officials know. In the meantime, the Township will suggest projects to submit to PennDOT to review.

There was a concern at last week's Public Works meeting about the removal of the "No Turn On Red" sign at Ashbourne and Oak Lane Road. PennDOT has agreed to put the sign back up. The Township will install it and will have all paperwork at next week's Board of Commissioners meeting.

Mr. Zienkowski provided an update regarding the installation of the solar stop signs. A letter has been drafted to go to neighboring residents notifying them that the signs will be installed soon. The Board of Commissioners will be notified and it will be put out to the public prior to installation.

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

6. **Old Business:** None.

7. **New Business:**

Mr. Areman asked Chief Frye to discuss the countywide Unwanted/Expired Drug Take-back Day sponsored by the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office & Police Chiefs Association. It will be held on Saturday, April 24, 2021 and the Police Station has a disposal bin located in the front lobby. Due to COVID, the disposal box has been closed because it was at capacity. It will be emptied by the County before April 24 so it is available to residents. Ms. Rappoport asked why EpiPens are not accepted. Mr. Hellendall said that EpiPens and other needles must go into a red sharps container that cuts off the needle. These containers can be found at pharmacies.

Mr. Brockington inquired about the status of a new Township website. Mr. Zienkowski said it is currently in the works. He said he hopes to provide an update in the near future.

8. **Citizens' Forum:**

*Emily Steinberg, 411 Randall Road*, asked if there will be an opportunity for residents of Cheltenham and Springfield to meet with PennDOT to discuss the problems and if there is a way for the Cheltenham residents to get in touch with the Springfield residents, because it is her understanding that Springfield residents along Church Road were having the same issues.

Mr. Zienkowski intends to invite PennDOT to one of next month's public meetings to address a number of concerns from residents. Mr. Holland said calls with PennDOT will be ongoing and there will be small working groups to address specific areas needing attention.

Ms. Steinberg asked if there was any further information on PennDOT conducting a truck study along Church Rd. Mr. Zienkowski said it was discussed during the call and the Township will make sure to include that on their template to PennDOT. There is a third party entity that PennDOT uses that will provide the details of the study once it's completed.

*Theresa Camerota, 1112 Church Road*, thanked everyone for the reports which answered a lot of questions. She requested a separate meeting to be clear on what is needed on the state roads as well as some local roads. Mr. Zienkowski agreed to a separate Zoom meeting.

*Mirka Augustine, 1017 Greenwood Avenue*, said the Traffic Calming Committee is not addressing people who live on Church Rd and said it is disheartening. She asked what small working groups with PennDOT would look like. Mr. Holland said there are multiple issues PennDOT would need to address with multiple municipalities and the goal is to have each municipality work on their individual issues and come together to address. The groups would include PennDOT, Commissioners, and Township Staff and it has yet to be determined if residents would be included; but the Commissioners would consider the request. Ms. Augustine requested a follow up on this.

*Tom Mullian, 1112 Church Road*, did his own traffic studies along Church Road in Wyncote, with personal access to a radar gun, on April 7 and April 11. Traffic was monitored between Greenwood Ave & Washington Lane across from 1112 Church Road. Thirty vehicles were sampled from each direction and all 60 exceeded the posted 25mph signs by varying degrees from 28mph to 51mph. Mr. Mullian stated that it is 25mph at the curve. Chief Frye clarified that the speed limit along Church Road is 35mph.

*Olga McHugh, 127 Hewett Road*, requested the Township address speeding cars at Thomas Williams Park, noted that there is more traffic noise in the Township, probably from ATVs. Chief Frye stated that if they are spotted in Cheltenham, the Police will try to stop them.

*Liza Meiris, Hewitt Road*, agrees that Church Road should be safe and is optimistic about the meeting with PennDOT. She said using police traffic stops to address speeding issues is going to take advantage of the police and is not right or effective. She said this would require more police cars, and stops are inherently dangerous for both police and the person being pulled over. She suggested exploring signage and educating people first instead of being punitive.

There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Norris, and unanimously approved by the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.



Robert Zienkowski  
Township Manager

per Eileen Wass