

The regular meeting of the **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** for July 2020 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: Terry Fedorchak, Interim Township Manager; Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager; John Frye, Chief of Police; Scott Lynch, Fire Marshal; and Ken Hellendall, EMS Director & EMA Coordinator. Also present via web-conference was Joseph Bagley, Esq., Township Solicitor.

Mr. Norris announced the Board met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel matters and potential litigation 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 May 2020.

Mr. Brockington inquired about the decrease in year-to-date traffic accidents. Chief Frye said he believed it was due to less vehicles being on the road because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Stay-At-Home Order issued by the Governor.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt inquired about the status of activity and police manpower since the civil unrest at the end of May. Chief Frye said there have been no further incidents; however, the SWAT team has been deployed 11 times year-to-date.

*David Scott, 121 Krewson Lane, Cheltenham, PA*, expressed concerns about the excessive use of fireworks throughout the Township lately. Chief Frye stated that Pennsylvania Legislation Act 43 allows for the purchase and use of fireworks; however, there is a Township Ordinance prohibiting use after 10:00 p.m., restricting proximity to an occupied residence, and requiring permission granted by the residence. Mr. Holland said he read articles indicating that the nightly display of fireworks is a form of protest for social injustice. Mr. Brockington reminded residents that many of the fireworks are being set off in Philadelphia, which is in close proximity and impacts Township residents. Mr. Areman mentioned there is an item on the agenda under New Business addressing the fireworks issue.

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

- B. Announcements:

Chief Frye announced the Township received a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission of Crime and Delinquency for the purchase of body cameras. The grant will fund half of the initial projected cost of \$41,461.00. The Township is currently drafting a policy & procedures for all officers to follow with regard to operation and use of the cameras. The intent is to have the officers outfitted in the fall of 2020.

Mr. Brockington thanked the Police Department for their professionalism during the recent storm, pandemic, and protests. The communication during and since these events has been proactive and positive. Mr. Brockington asked Chief Frye to provide details on a letter that was recently received regarding a police incident. Chief Frye stated that an officer was patrolling on Cheltenham Avenue and came upon an individual who was in a private vehicle and was shot three times. The officer quickly moved the individual to his patrol vehicle and transported him to the hospital, where hospital staff said the Officer's quick actions saved his life. The individual's mother wrote a letter of thanks and complimented the officer and the civilian personnel inside the police station who spoke to her and kept her calm. Mr. Brockington also thanked the officer for his actions.

2. **Report of the Fire Marshal**

Mr. Lynch stated there were 220 fewer fire calls year-to-date from 2019, which he attributes to fire prevention. Mr. Lynch stated there was one major incident on May 23, 2020 in which an ex-boyfriend set fire to a closet and bedroom on Wilson Avenue. That investigation is being handled as arson and conducted along with the State Police. The individual turned himself in to authorities.

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

3. **Report of the EMS Director**

Mr. Hellendall stated that EMS is still handling a decent amount of COVID-19 calls with four recent exposures. Mr. Hellendall stressed the importance of wearing a mask at all times when outside of your residence.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt inquired about the inventory of PPE for EMS personnel. Mr. Hellendall stated as of today EMS is ok with PPE; however, they are low on gowns. The county has committed to provide 300 gowns to the Township after they finish moving their warehouse.

Mr. Hellendall also stated they are concerned for the unpredictability of COVID-19 activity in the fall and mentioned that the County is working on setting up testing sites throughout the county in preparation for the fall. He also stated Influenza A & B will be present and that H1N1 is already present in China.

Mr. Brockington asked about the Township's long term care facilities. Mr. Hellendall stated they are working within the State's protocols and the cases have calmed down, mostly due to individuals who have contracted the virus either having survived or passed away. Mr. Hellendall mentioned the State of Pennsylvania has a list of 18 restricted states and anyone from those states is required to quarantine for 14 days prior to entry into any long term care facility.

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

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

Mr. Hellendall stated the rain and hail storm on Monday, July 6, 2020 was significant with 4.67" of rain in less than one hour. Public Safety personnel responded to calls for 3½ hours, including 19 water rescues where nine people were rescued and it was reported that 10 people self-extracted and one swam from her vehicle at Church Road and Jenkintown Road. Mr. Hellendall said the only lesson learned is the safety flood gates need to be deployed immediately during large rain events, rather than waiting to see if there is flooding.

Mr. Hellendall and Mr. Lynch acknowledged the following fire services for their assistance during the storm: Glenside, La Mott, Elkins Park, Cheltenham and Ogontz Fire Companies, as well as Rockledge, Jenkintown, Collegeville, Spring Mill, Upper Salford, Upper Gwynedd, Wyndmoor, Fort Washington, Abington, McKinley, Weldon, and Second Alarmers Fire Departments and the Montgomery County Search and Rescue Team.

Mr. Hellendall stated that after a debriefing, it was determined there was a need to create maps to show where trees, barricades, bridges, etc. are located for services responding that are unfamiliar with the area.

Mr. Areman inquired about the cleanup and if there were any roadways that remained closed. Mr. Clewell stated that fire companies were working on clearing over 4" of mud from Tookany Creek Parkway, the basketball courts, and Veterans Field parking lot. Tookany Creek Parkway remains closed between Beryl Road and Old Soldiers Road until later in the evening.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously received the Report of the Emergency Management Coordinator.

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

Mr. Fedorchak thanked all personnel involved during the storm and was grateful that nobody was hurt. He noted that 11 homes experienced flooding. A list of those addresses will be provided to the Commissioners.

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

6. **Old Business:**

A. Mr. Brockington reminded the Committee that four (4) Wards still need residents to serve on the Traffic Calming Committee and asked that they continue to reach out to their constituents.

8. **New Business:**

A. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Pransky, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners present Community Service Awards recognizing the people and businesses that made donations to the Township, Emergency Management and the Police Department during the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest, to be presented at a future in person meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

B. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Ms. Rappoport, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Commissioners authorize and present a Resolution to the Washington family honoring the life of the late Jack Washington, Sr., at a future in person meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

C. Recommend the Board of Commissioners authorize staff to draft an Ordinance amending Chapter 194, Fireworks, of the Cheltenham Township Code to expand restrictions and penalties for the use Consumer Fireworks in Cheltenham Township

The Committee and Mr. Bagley discussed things that can be changed in the Township Ordinance with regard to prohibiting sales and/or use of fireworks. Mr. Bagley strongly suggested that the Township and residents send letters to Harrisburg via State Representatives to change the current lack of restriction on the use of fireworks in the State of Pennsylvania.

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Commissioners authorize staff to draft an Ordinance amending Chapter 194, Fireworks, of the Cheltenham Township Code to expand restrictions and penalties for use of Consumer Fireworks in Cheltenham Township.

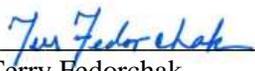
8. **Citizens' Forum:**

*Brook Welsh, 8113 Heacock Lane, Wyncote, PA*, expressed concerns about tractor trailer traffic on residential streets such as Heacock Lane. Mr. Hellendall, a former resident of Heacock Lane provided some background on why this has happened in the past. Ms. Rappoport suggested that it was GPS.

*Barbara Granger, 405 Randall Road, Wyncote, PA*, complained the beeping from construction vehicles at neighboring property. Mr. Bagley stated it is required by OSHA for heavy equipment when in reverse. Mr. Hellendall said he will provide the decibel level requirements by OSHA, which is dependent on the vehicle size. Since they are federal requirements, there may not be much the Township can do. An inquiry will be made to Mike Fleming, Public Works Coordinator.

*Mr. Thomas McHugh, 127 Hewett Road, Wyncote, PA*, stated with the recent flooding, the Township should consider continued work on flood mitigation.

There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Norris, and unanimously approved by the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

  
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Terry Fedorchak  
Interim Township Manager  
per Kathryn Gallagher