

The regular meeting of the **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** for July 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 Weed, Deputy Chief of Police; Scott Lynch, Fire Marshal; and Kenneth Hellendall, Director of EMS and Emergency Management Coordinator.

Mr. Brockington called the meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order at 7:36 p.m.

**1. Report of the Police Chief**

- A. Deputy Chief Weed reviewed the Police Clearance and Juvenile Clearance Reports for the month of May 2021.

Mr. Brockington and Ms. Rappoport noted that year-to-date burglaries and thefts were down and asked if there was a reason. Deputy Chief said it is possible that staffing at stores has gone back to a pre-COVID level and loss prevention officers are more active. Ms. Rappoport noticed that domestic disturbances and auto accidents have increased since last year. Deputy Chief Weed speculated the accidents have to do with people getting out more. Unfortunately, Police do not know why domestic disturbances are increasing.

Mr. Brockington asked if there were many calls on Independence Day regarding fireworks. Deputy Chief said there were some calls, but not many. He also mentioned that the Glenside Parade was the shortest parade in recent years.

- B. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution honoring Officer Christopher Gallagher upon his retirement after more than 29 years of dedicated service to the Cheltenham Township Police Department at the July 21, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting.
- 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 amend traffic regulations to ADD Handicapped Parking in front of 7651 Massey Way at its regularly scheduled meeting on August 18, 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. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for All Traffic Solutions under PA COSTARS contract 012-133 for two (2) new SpeedAlert 18" portable radar message signs in the amount of \$9,210.00.

Mr. Areman asked how many total signs the department has and how is it determined where they are placed. Deputy Chief Weed believed this would bring the total to 6 and the locations are based on complaints from residents and where they would be most beneficial. He added that the signs are rotated every few weeks and the department has extra batteries for quick turnaround. Mr. Brockington asked if an Officer has to be the one to replace the batteries and Deputy Chief Weed said it may be able to be changed by anyone.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended approval of a purchase order for All Traffic Solutions under PA COSTARS contract 012-133 for two (2) new SpeedAlert 18" portable radar message signs in the amount of \$9,210.00.

- F. Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended approval of a purchase order for CODY Systems in the amount of \$4,800 for the annual reoccurring subscription costs for the department's automated traffic ticket and crash reporting software.
- G. Consider recommending approval of a purchase order for Lund GSA Industries, Inc. in the amount of \$5,841.45 for five (5) Lund boxes to secure patrol rifles in the new 2021 vehicles.

Deputy Chief Weed explained these boxes will house the department's AR-15s in the new Police vehicles. They are more secure, have a combination lock and fit properly in the new vehicles. After the civil unrest from last year, it is important to ensure that these weapons are secure.

Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended approval of a purchase order for Lund GSA Industries, Inc. in the amount of \$5,841.45 for five (5) Lund boxes to secure patrol rifles in the new 2021 vehicles.

- H. Deputy Chief Weed announced that Sgt. Joseph O'Neill, Detective Ryan Murray, and Officers Brian Hopkins, Mark Gindhart, Donald Baldwin, David Choi, and Brian Walsh will be receiving their 20 years of service recognition at the regularly-scheduled Board of Commissioners meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

Mr. Brockington noted it is something to brag about how many of the Township's officers have been here for the long term.

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

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

- A. Mr. Lynch presented the fire report for the month of May 2021 and the minutes of the Fire Board Meeting from June 3, 2021.
- B. Mr. Lynch noted a new Mutual Aid Response report is now added to the packet. Starting in January 2021, it is broken down by date, station, and call dispatch & arrival time.
- C. Mr. Lynch said he and Mr. Hellendall met with former Ogontz Fire Chief Art Gordon who returned 10 of 16 portable radios, and the water rescue boat has been returned to Emergency Management. The radios have been sent to the County to be reprogrammed and will be distributed to the other fire companies. Mr. Brockington asked where the other six radios are. Mr. Lynch said they have not been returned yet. The conversation with Mr. Gordon was very casual and they did not press the issue feeling it was better to be handled during litigation. Mr. Hellendall added that the radios were shut off in December, so they cannot be used.
- D. Mr. Lynch noted they received a request from Carl Perkins, former Ogontz Fire Company volunteer, to laterally transfer to Elkins Park Fire Company, which was granted. He added that membership at all four fire companies continues to climb.
- E. Mr. Lynch gave an update on 515 Stahr Road, an apartment building in Elkins Park that was evacuated due to structural concerns. The owner and contractor have been given the paperwork for permits and the steel beam that was required by the structural engineer was delivered, set in concrete, bolted to the floor and has been attached to the I-beam. The gas lines have been replaced and there is a meeting with the owner, building inspector, structural engineer and fire

marshal on July 20 on site to go over everything. Additional issues have come up that need to be addressed with the owner. The left side of the building has a considerable bulge in the outside wall and the structural engineer will evaluate. The roof will also be evaluated since three tenants reported that the third floor takes on water when it rains. The fire alarm service has been discontinued for lack of payment; it is required by code to have a monitored alarm system so this will need to be taken care of before occupants are allowed back. Mr. Lynch has been in contact with the residents making sure they are okay.

Mr. Pransky asked if there was further investigation into whether or not the owner has insurance on the property because there has been conflicting information. Mr. Lynch has not been able to come up with anything and has calls into colleagues who have dealt with this scenario and will stay on top of this. Mr. Brockington suggested he and Mr. Lynch discuss more because there are ways to find out what mortgage company he has. Mr. Holland noted if the owner has a mortgage on the property, he is required to have insurance but it is a matter of if he purchased insurance or if the mortgage company force-placed insurance. The mortgage company would only require basic insurance on the property and not anything for the tenants.

Mr. Areman asked if any criminal investigation is pending. Mr. Lynch spoke to Detective Cupo recently and no decisions have been made yet.

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

### **3. Report of the EMS Director**

- A. Mr. Hellendall presented the EMS reports for the month of May 2021 and there were no questions.
- B. Mr. Hellendall updated the committee on EMS staffing. There are eight active volunteers and more are waiting to be trained – it's good that the community is getting involved. The bad news is that full-time staffing is down. Paramedic George Discavage retired last month, Paramedic James Randolph has accepted a position in education at Children's Hospital but will remain as a part-timer, and Lt. Wass broke his hand yesterday and is awaiting doctor's orders. Mr. Hellendall believes he will be out 4-6 weeks. There is a list awaiting Civil Service approval for hiring paramedics, but EMS will be severely short staffed over the upcoming weeks even with everyone pitching in. Mr. Brockington asked if Lt. Wass' injury was job-related; Mr. Hellendall said it was an off-duty injury.
- C. The EMS Ambulance that was ordered four months ago has been delayed to 2022 due to the chip shortage in the automobile industry. The Assistant Chief's new vehicle has also been delayed with no expected date of delivery. Mr. Holland asked if the Township paid for these vehicles up front and Mr. Hellendall said that no money was put out up front.

Mr. Norris asked Mr. Hellendall to comment on the grant that was received. Mr. Hellendall said EMS received a grant for just over \$22,000 dollars from the Pennsylvania Ambulance Association. These grants were given to over 500 EMS agencies across the Commonwealth. Assistant Chief Barto did a stellar job to insure we received this grant.

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

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

Mr. Hellendall presented the EMA reports for the month of May 2021 and there were no questions.

Mr. Hellendall thanked everyone who reached out to Deputy EMA Director Kim Kirschner and offered their thoughts and prayers. They are much appreciated. The baby had his first surgery and is on track.

Mr. Hellendall discussed the most recent storm and noted that Cheltenham got lucky and did not have any major flooding. Mr. Areman said there was some minor localized flooding in his Ward, but no issues. Mr. Hellendall complimented Chris Clewell and Robert Coyle on checking every inlet and making sure the streets were clear. Mr. Areman complimented Ken's team and the Public Works Department for all the work they put in ahead of time preparing for the storm.

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

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

Mr. Zienkowski thanked Scott Lynch and Al Sergio and their teams for their hard work and efforts responding to emergencies. He also thanked Mr. Lynch for following up on businesses who are repeat offenders with fire alarms. Most recently, Mr. Lynch contacted a large retail store in the Greenleaf Shopping Center and told them the doors would be locked until they had a contractor fix the alarm system, which seemed to work.

The Greenleaf Shopping Center is moving backwards in their compliance and Mr. Lynch and Mr. Sergio have a meeting scheduled with the new management company to discuss holes in the road, lack of maintenance, businesses who have been cited for zoning infractions, and traffic at Chick-fil-A that has been rerouted and is backing up on Cheltenham Avenue and is creating hazardous conditions. They will be put on notice to come into compliance or the Township will start the citation process again. Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked if the fines the Fire Marshal placed have been paid yet. Mr. Zienkowski said the courts are just opening up to hear these cases and they will be coming in front of the Judge now.

6. **Old Business:**

Mr. Holland asked for an update on the Police body cameras. The Deputy Chief said body cameras are up and running and are reviewed by Supervisors per policy. The officers like having them and he feels the public likes having them too as it will build trust with the community by keeping everything transparent.

7. **New Business:**

Mr. Zygmund-Felt proposed that the Board of Commissioners authorize funding of the routine maintenance costs based on estimates submitted by the four fire companies in the amount of \$36,196. Mr. Areman agreed that this is a good use of Township funds and it is an ongoing expenditure for the volunteer fire companies. He suggests this be incorporated in discussions going forward as it is a relatively fixed, but ongoing cost.

**Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Norris, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners spend \$36,196 to reimburse the four fire companies for various expenses specifically noted by each.

8. **Citizens' Forum:**

Theresa Camerota, *1112 Church Road*, noted that a final copy of recommendations for safety measures in traffic calming on Church Road between Washington Lane & Greenwood Avenue has been emailed to the Commissioners. She and her neighbors have reached a point to move on and thanked the Township Manager for passing along their recommendations to PennDOT. She will also give a copy to State Representative Nelson and Senator Haywood. She appreciates the support and advice given and looks forward to the next steps. Mr. Brockington wanted to make sure Ms. Camerota knows about the meeting with Rep. Nelson and PennDOT on August 17, 2021. The recommendation is that Rep. Nelson and Senator Haywood engage in conversation with PennDOT

concerning the trucks on Church Road. Ms. Camerota thanked Ms. Rappoport for passing along an email of an issue from the Board of Commissioners meeting in 1915 where neighbors were complaining about speeding vehicles, honking horns, and not stopping at stop signs along Church Road. It put the ongoing issues into perspective.

9. There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Brockington, and unanimously approved by the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.



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Robert Zienkowski  
Township Manager

per Eileen Wass

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