

The regular meeting of the **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE** for August 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; 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. Chief Frye reviewed the Police Clearance and Juvenile Clearance Reports for the month of June 2021.

Mr. Zygmund-Felt asked about the continued significant decrease in crime in 2021. Chief Frye said it is hard to tell what it can be attributed to. He noted that there was an uptick in retail thefts in July, but said he thinks it will decrease as COVID cases rise.

B. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended the Board of Commissioners adopt a Resolution honoring Officer Joseph Morrissey upon his retirement after more than 29 years of dedicated service to Cheltenham Township Police Department at the September 29, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting.

C. Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously approved a purchase order for Penn Vet in the amount of \$6,680 for the recurring annual costs to provide veterinary care for four (4) Police K9 units.

D. Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously approved a purchase order for Cellebrite UFED (Universal Forensic Extraction Device) in the amount of \$4,300 for the annual software license to operate and obtain periodic updates to Cellebrite.
Chief Frye noted that this is used to retrieve information from cell phones during investigations.

E. **Recommendation to the Board of Commissioners:** Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Board of Commissioners authorize advertisement of its intention to consider the adoption of an Ordinance amending Chapter 285, Vehicles and Traffic, Section 285-43, Street and Parking Regulations, of the Cheltenham Township Code to add a new Section 285-41 entitled "Unregistered All-Terrain Vehicles, and Mini-bikes prohibited on streets and sidewalks within the Township and certain other areas owned by the Township," pending review by the solicitor prior to next week's meeting.

Chief Frye said ATVs are not permitted on highways and streets, with the following exceptions: during an emergency; during special, limited, permitted special events; or to cross from one area to another where they are permitted. ATVs are required to be registered with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources unless they are only operated on your property. The proposed Ordinance provides the Police Department with another enforcement tool. Other municipalities have passed similar Ordinances.

Mr. Pransky asked if it would be appropriate to have the School District adopt similar restrictions. Mr. Holland asked whether dirt bikes are permitted on public roads if they are registered and whether the proposed Ordinance mirrors similar laws in Philadelphia. Chief Frye said he will get back to the Board with a response. Mr. Zienkowski said he believes both the dirt bike and operator must be licensed.

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

2. **Report of the Fire Marshal**

Fire report for the month of June 2021 and the minutes of the Fire Board Meeting from July 1, 2021.

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**

Mr. Hellendall presented the EMS reports for the month of June 2021.

A. Mr. Hellendall updated the Committee on EMS staffing. He said EMS has two people out as a result of an on-duty accident and another member out due to an off-duty injury. In addition, they have had one retirement and a resignation. EMS is in desperate need of new, healthy paramedics, but needs to wait for review of the seven or eight people they interviewed by the Civil Service Commission. Staff members are stepping up to fill in the holes for now.

Ms. Rappoport noted that Mr. Hellendall's report said the staff reduction will have a direct effect on income because calls will be covered by mutual aid and asked if there are best management practices for covering a population similar in size to Cheltenham and whether more or less ambulances are necessary. She also asked how mutual aid responses compare to Township EMS coverage. Mr. Hellendall said studies were done in the past and a second ambulance at night is not required. If a mutual aid company responds, they do not have access to response times. Mr. Hellendall will provide more details.

B. Ambulance Update – Mr. Hellendall noted that EMS is down an ambulance due to an accident. This ambulance was scheduled for replacement in 2022. Depending on the estimate for repairs, he may recommend replacing this one this year and keeping the ambulance scheduled for replacement this year an additional year.

C. Mental Health Treatment Update – Mr. Hellendall noted that the Township is participating with a group of Police and Ambulance Chiefs who will hold training for after Labor Day with a mental health professional. The person they are working with is excellent and is helping them work through issues being experienced currently.

Upon motion of Mr. Brockington, 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 June 2021.

Mr. Hellendall reported that the Township received a grant for \$134,930.96 to cover all of the Police overtime for the civil unrest in 2020. Ms. Kirschner, who put the grant application together, was told not to expect more than the \$30,000.

Mr. Hellendall noted that this week's heat wave will be life threatening and has posted information on the EMA Facebook page.

Mr. Hellendall reported that the number of COVID cases is on the rise in the area. As a result, the Township updated its masking policy for all personnel in public areas and all members of the public to follow CDC guidelines. Vaccination mandates are not being required for staff at this time. Mr. Hellendall said that staff has been talking about the possibility of requiring vaccination.

Mr. Pransky said that certain municipalities are not asking for proof of vaccination, but those people who are not vaccinated will be required to double mask. Mr. Hellendall said staff is looking into policies with respect to masking and vaccination.

Mr. Norris asked what would hold the Township back from mandating vaccines. Mr. Hellendall said if the Township mandates vaccination, people can still choose not to, but will need to wear an N95 and test each week.

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

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

- A. Mr. Zienkowski recognized and thanked staff who worked through the last round of COVID, especially EMS, Police, Public Works, and Code Enforcement, and extended his thanks for their continued efforts as the number of cases continue to rise.

Mr. Zienkowski recommended all Commissioner meetings move to Zoom between now and the end of the year to protect the health, safety and welfare of staff, elected officials and the public, noting that Zoom has helped maximize public participation in the community. He will provide the Township Solicitor's opinion prior to next week's meeting.

- B. Mr. Zienkowski said he is working with the Police Chief and Township Solicitor on an amendment to the Township's noise Ordinance and anticipates presenting a draft in September.

6. **Old Business:** None.

7. **New Business:**

- A. Mr. Norris asked the Commissioners to consider requiring all employees be vaccinated to protect the health, safety and welfare of other employees and the public. Mr. Hellendall asked the Board to wait until the next Public Safety meeting, which will allow for the analysis of more data on the delta variant and whether or not it will clear quickly, which evidence from other countries suggests it will. It will also provide more time for staff to do its research.

Mr. Zienkowski said it will also give staff an opportunity to reach out to unions for their input.

Mr. Areman said there may be other ways to incentivize vaccination of employees prior to discussing mandatory vaccination.

- B. Mr. Pransky asked about the current status of Montgomery County in terms of COVID spread. Mr. Hellendall said the County is under the "advanced" status. Mr. Pransky suggested that if that status is raised to "substantial" before next week's meeting it is within the Township's right to call for a full Zoom meeting for public health and safety.

Mr. Norris asked that next week's Commissioner's meeting be Zoom only and discuss the status of future meetings at that meeting. It was a consensus of the Committee to hold a fully Zoom meeting next week. Ms. Rappoport suggested that next week's meeting be considered an emergency meeting, similar to last month's meeting.

8. **Citizens' Forum:**

Rhonda Isser, Cheltenham Lateral Solutions, thanked Cheltenham EMS for their kindness, masking and vaccination status when they helped her. She was transported by a non-vaccinated person when she was transported by another ambulance service to another facility and she has researched and determined that the Township can mandate people coming into the Township to be vaccinated. She also noted that the COVID numbers are not good.

Dan George, 1413 Juniper Avenue, asked if the Township has data on how many employees are vaccinated without violating confidentiality rules. Mr. Hellendall said as of the end of May, including the Fire Companies, 78% have been vaccinated. The number could be higher, because several unvaccinated employees have left and others have been vaccinated. Mr. George asked if he knew how many employees would fall under the generally-recognized medical exemption qualification. Mr. Hellendall said the question was not asked to avoid issues with HIPAA.

9. There being no further business, upon motion of Mr. Brockington, and unanimously approved by the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.



Robert Zienkowski
Township Manager

per Alyson Elliott, Assistant Township Manager