

MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

SPECIAL MEETING: BUDGET

OCTOBER 7, 2019

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

H. Edward Black, President
Dean W. Villone, Vice President
Richard F. Schin
Carolyn Holtzman
Peddrick M. Young, Sr.

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Thomas G. Vernau, Jr., Township Manager
David Holl, Public Safety Director
Tina Thomas, Recording Secretary

President Black called the October 7, 2019 Special Budget Meeting to order at 6:02 pm. He announced that Proof of Publication was available for review.

The following members of the Ad Hoc Committee were present:

Terry Lenker, Dick Bonneville, Dick Hammon, Greg Thomas for Leon Crone, Tony Deaven, Frank Wirth, Frank Williamson, and Dave Murdoch.

PRESENTATION: PUBLIC SAFETY AD HOC COMMITTEE FINAL REPORT

Mr. Holl started the presentation by thanking the Board of Commissioners for providing him with a special meeting to go over the results of the Ad Hoc Committee. He also thanked the Ad Hoc Committee members who were in attendance. All members are listed in the final report. He stated that if the Board is in favor of the report, it will be posted on the website. President Black and Vice President Villone also thanked the Ad Hoc Committee members for their participation.

Mr. Holl provided a power point presentation as well as bound final reports for the Commissioners. He spoke about the previous Ad Hoc Committee which took place in 1997 and generated 25 fire centric resolutions. Mr. Lenker was the head of that committee. Many changes have taken place in the realm of Public Safety since that time such as increased costs, population growth, and a reduction in the number of volunteer fire personnel. The Ad Hoc Committee looked into levels of service and costs of providing an acceptable level of service.

Mr. Holl spoke about the usefulness of the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 201 to the Ad Hoc Committee Discussions. This guide, which was created by FEMA, provides five guidance questions in measuring risk factors and mitigating harm. Another important consideration is how much people are willing to pay for safety. The Committee found the C level of service to be acceptable and reasonable to achieve for all Public Safety disciplines.

POLICE

The C level of service for police means that *officers are usually able to respond to calls for service, though delays and stacked calls are more than occasional occurrences*. This would require a five member platoon

with three officer minimum on duty per shift by 2021. To achieve this, a police officer would need to be added in 2020 and in 2021. Mr. Holl stated that there will be an annual review of staffing to determine if a C level of service or greater is being maintained. This report will be provided to the Board of Commissioners.

Discussion re: Police

Vice President Villone asked if the Township is looking to increase the PSO program and if property maintenance will take much of their time in the future. Mr. Holl said this will be covered more in the fire section but the PSO's have been more involved with EMS due to staff shortage. The Police depend more on the CSO's but the PSO's still do some public safety.

Commissioner Schin spoke about the support provided to sworn officers by CSO's. He wondered if there were more responsibilities that could be taken on by the CSO's. Mr. Holl explained that CSO's can write parking tickets and respond to non-reportable accident scenes and animal complaints. They cannot write speeding tickets or arrest anyone. Lieutenant Thomas stated that there is a high turnover rate among CSO's because they often leave to go into the police academy to become sworn officers. Many also work at another full-time position in addition to being a CSO part-time.

Commissioner Young asked about the police goal of ensuring accountability through internal and external audits and who handles the external audits. Mr. Holl said that it is accomplished through accreditation process.

Vice President Villone asked if CSO's and PSO's could help sworn officers with tasks they do in their unobligated time. Lieutenant Thomas said that officers use their unobligated time to do speed details, look for crime occurring, and follow-up on cases such as fraud and tips.

Vice President Villone asked Mr. Holl what level of service the Police Department is currently at. Mr. Holl stated that with the two officers added this past July, it is a level C. He said that it will be difficult to maintain this level for long without additional officers.

Commissioner Young asked if there are officers that will be retiring in the near future. He was told that there are currently three officers eligible to retire.

EMS

Mr. Holl stated that Lower Allen Township EMS is currently at an E+ level of service. The goal is to reach a C level of service by 2024. This would mean ***Basic Life Support and Advanced Life Support services have resources to meet the demands during peak hours 80% of the time. A strong EMS system exists with Tier 1 (First Responders), Tier 2 (Basic Life Support), and Tier 3 (Advanced Life Support) services being provided with a high level of competency, flexibility, and adaptability.*** Mr. Holl said that EMS is not requesting any additional staff in 2020. In future years, additional staff will allow for increased hours of service and availability. He stated that increased flexibility could be achieved by using Intermediate Advanced Life Support (IALS) to free up paramedics when the call does not require an advanced level of care. He spoke about applying for grants to help establish a Community Paramedicine program where medics provide follow-up care for residents with enough staff. Mr. Holl said that the EMS program will support the implementation of the National EMS Vision 2050 of a people centered EMS, as well as work towards achieving accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services (CAAS). Mr. Holl stated that the EMS staffing plan would be reviewed annually to determine if a C level of service or greater is being maintained.

Discussion re: EMS

Commissioner Schin asked if proper planning could prevent the need for additional staff. Mr. Holl replied that EMS is already behind in staffing and will have to catch up. Staffing needs should then level out. Mr. Holl said that part of the reason this is a five year plan is so not to overwhelm the budget.

President Black asked about an additional vehicle being purchased to help with EMS needs. Mr. Holl said that having a paramedic in a separate vehicle from the EMT when responding to calls would be helpful. If an advanced level of support was not needed, the EMT could handle the call and the paramedic would go back to being available faster.

Commissioner Holtzman asked if paramedics get to the truck when the tones sound. Captain Deaven stated that all response times, called chute times, are tracked. They currently average one minute, 30 seconds; sometimes longer at night. Mr. Vernau asked if the medics are getting to the truck in a timely manner and Captain Deaven confirmed that they are. He said the organization is still adjusting to becoming an ALS service.

FIRE

Mr. Holl spoke about one of the toughest challenges facing Township fire departments being a decrease in the number of volunteers. This led to the creation of the PSO program. Lower Allen Fire Company depends on a three part response from Volunteers, Live-In Firefighters, and Public Safety Officers (PSO's). For Fire service, a C level includes *capability of an Offensive Fire Attack – interior and exterior firefighting operations for both residential and commercial structures, capability of a vehicle rescue and extrication, and operations level of HazMat response; fifteen personnel required to respond; NFPA compliant personal protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus for all personnel; ability to extinguish a fire to save life and property; arrival on the scene within nine minutes of dispatch, 90 percent of the time.* This is required to meet NFPA 1720 – Combination/Volunteer Fire Department.

Mr. Holl spoke about the importance of creating and supporting volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention. Increasing the number of Live-In Firefighters. Future needs also include replacing fire apparatus and re-evaluating location of resources based on Township population.

Discussion re: Fire

Commissioner Schin asked the number of volunteers needed for a piece of fire apparatus. Mr. Holl replied that for a career fire department, it would be three to four personnel per piece of apparatus available 24/7. Chief Murdoch said that the Township departments rely on PSO's and Live-In firefighters to make up the difference. Mr. Holl said they are committed to trying all the possibilities before going to the taxpayers for the money that would be needed to start a career department.

President Black asked if Live-In Firefighters are sent to an accredited training program and Mr. Holl said that they go to HACC.

Commissioner Schin spoke favorably about the cooperation he sees between the Lower Allen and Lisburn fire companies. He asked if both departments are on the same page with apparatus replacement and Mr. Holl said that they are.

Vice President Villone asked if the apparatus replacement will start to appear in the 2020 budget. Mr. Holl said it will be in the 2021 budget. Mr. Grove added that the current plan was to fund the ladder truck through

the Fire Fund. However, the pricing has changed and the plan won't provide the necessary funds. He said that the cheapest way for the tax payers is if the Township saves up for the purchase of the apparatus.

Commissioner Young asked if there are plans for a new fire station. Mr. Holl stated that the hope is that an outside consultant can be hired to complete a study and determine this early next year.

President Black asked if the fire apparatus replacement in 2021 would include an aerial truck for Arcona and Mr. Holl stated that it is currently the plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Holl said that there are currently three response locations for Fire and EMS in Lower Allen Township. These include Station 1 on Gettysburg Road, Station 2 on Rupp Avenue, and the Lisburn Fire Company on Main Street in Lisburn. He mentioned one possibility of using Station 2 for daylight EMS responses to help shorten response times to the western part of the Township where Bethany Village is located. A study from an outside consulting firm would help to determine if the current locations for Fire and EMS are adequate to meet the growing population in certain areas of the Township. Mr. Holl would then like to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee to review the findings of the study and make a report to the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Holl made a recommendation for an Ad Hoc Committee to be formed again in 2024 to develop a revised plan for 2025-2029. This will ensure that the residents continue to receive the best public safety services for their tax dollars.

Discussion re: Public Safety

President Black asked if an outside consulting firm would look at both Fire and EMS in the study and Mr. Holl said that they would.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Mr. Holl for his work on the report. Commissioner **SCHIN** moved to accept the Public Safety Ad Hoc Committee Final Report as well as thanking the Ad Hoc Committee. Commissioner **YOUNG** seconded the motion and it carried 5-0.

ANY BUSINESS PERTINENT TO THE TOWNSHIP:

There was no response.

ADJOURNMENT

The Special Budget Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.