

MINUTES

PUBLIC SAFETY AD HOC COMMITTEE

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

REGULAR MEETING

JUNE 18, 2019

The following Committee Members were in ATTENDANCE:

Dave Holl	Director of Department of Public Safety
Leon Crone	Police Captain
Frank Wirth	Fire Captain
Tony Deaven	EMS Captain
Thomas Vernau	Township Manager
William Yeagley	Fire Inspector
Dave Murdoch	Fire Chief - Lower Allen Fire Company
Frank Williamson	Fire Chief - Lisburn Comm Fire Company
John Ortenzio	Select Capital Commercial Properties
Dick Bonneville	Township Resident-Beacon Hill
Tom Kutz	Township Resident-Sheepford-left early
Terry Lenker	Township Resident-Sheepford
Ped Young	Township Resident-Beaver Road Area
Chris Pushart	Township Resident-Allendale
Julie Echterling	Recording Secretary

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr. Steven Overmiller, 281 Ewe Road Camp Hill and Mr. & Mrs. Diana & David Good, 965 S. 29th Street Camp Hill were in attendance.

WELCOME:

Director Holl called the June 18, 2019 meeting of the 2019 Public Safety Ad Hoc Committee to order at 6:02 pm in the Library of Cedar Cliff High School, Cedar Cliff Drive, Camp Hill. He stated he has heard from some who won't be able to make the meeting tonight. He noted the documents and presentation from tonight's meeting will be put on Township's website tomorrow.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chief Williamson made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 4, 2019 Public Safety Ad Hoc Committee meeting. Captain Crone seconded the motion. **Motion carried unanimously.**

QUESTIONS/FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS:

There were no comments offered at this time.

PRESENTATION: PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM :

Captain Wirth worked with both Chiefs from the fire companies to prepare the presentation tonight. He discussed the history of the Public Safety department which was created in 1998. He spoke about the development of the PSO (Public Safety Officer) and the program in 2005. He spoke about their training

which includes CSO, EMT with CPR/AED, Firefighter, Hazardous Materials Operations and obtaining their Commercial Driver's License. He discussed the increase in calls in the Township from 2011 to the present for Fire, EMS and Police. The PSOs were to assist the Police, EMS and Fire. Most recently they have added Codes enforcement to their duties.

He spoke about the addition of the **Fire Captain**. Below are the high levels of the job duties and responsibilities:

- Township Liaison with the Fire companies.
- Training Oversight
- Fire Services
- Fire Inspection Oversight
- Fire Prevention Administration
- Public Safety Officer Program
- Live-in Program
- Recruitment

He discussed the PSO program. He discussed several components of the program Below are the duties and responsibilities and some of the things they perform under each category:

Community Service Officer

- Assisting the Police with numerous duties
- Anything that doesn't include arrest authority
- Includes over 25 different tasks
- Vehicles (abandoned, lock outs), accidents and parking issues
- Animals
- Assist Police with delivering paperwork & Subpoenas
- School Crossing
- Child Car Seat Program

EMT

- Cover an EMT shift when needed
- Auto accidents
- Assist with lifts & provide care
- Drive ambulance to hospital

Fire Inspection/Code Enforcement

- Fire Inspection & Documentation
- Notice of Violations
- Property Maintenance Code Enforcement

Fire Services

- Fire Apparatus Driver
- Firefighter (as a volunteer)
- AED monthly checks
- Air Cascade – fill cylinders
- Daily Rig checks
- Weekly Rig checks
- Ladder/Hose/SCBA/Gas Meter Maintenance
- Gas Meter Checks - monthly
- Portable equipment -monthly checks
- Incident reports
- Equipment inventory management
- SCBA fit testing
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Public Relations

Property Maintenance Code

Mr. Bill Yeagley provided a presentation on the training of the CSO's and PSO's to help with code enforcement. He stated the goal was a collaborative approach to maintaining community integrity. He provided the background of the program including the Board of Commissioner's concerns. He spoke about the booming building going on in the Township and how there is a need for assistance. There were classes and training offered to assist the fire inspections and code enforcement with the PSO's. Fire inspections are up 57.7% since 2016 with this program. He stated all non-residential properties need to have an annual

fire inspection. He detailed the training involved for the PSO's for learning and being certified by Fall 2019. He spoke about implementing an Abandoned Property Registry, a quick ticket process, door hangers, and educating the public about issue including outreach.

He spoke about how important the fire inspections and codes enforcement to help with public safety. He spoke about being able to identify structure deficiencies, vacant properties, health hazards including rubbish and infestation, and quality of life issues with grass and trash. He detailed the process for a code's violation from a door hanger at the property to sending a notice of violation for non-life safety issues. He spoke about life safety issues which include personal contact and escalated action. He spoke about the increase of complaints since the program started including 22 complaints in April to 58 complaints to May. He spoke about the plans for 2019 with the program including adjusting the program, certified inspectors by October, updating the 2015 IPMC code and utilizing the Alpine software.

Mr. Terry Lenker asked about vehicles on properties. Mr. Yeagley stated the ordinance states the vehicle must be license, operational and registered to be on the property. Mr. Vernau spoke about what can and can't be done with vehicles and other code issues. He stated they can't walk on private property but if a neighbor provides documentation, they can take care of the issue. Mr. Dick Bonneville asked if this information could be put in the Newsletter. Mr. Yeagley stated they will be putting things in the fall newsletter.

Fire Service

Captain Wirth spoke about the strengths a PSO needs to have including flexibility, being multi-disciplined, and efficient in their use of time. He spoke about the high return on investment. He stated currently they are filling the volunteer role of firefighter during the daytime hours on the weekdays. He spoke about some of the program's weaknesses as being a crutch by some disciplines and not being able to respond to an emergency when they are in the role of Cross Guard.

He spoke about some of the threats and challenges of the program. Some of the PSOs transition to law enforcement or EMTs. He spoke about challenges with recruitment and retention as fulltime firefighters are paid higher salaries in the area. He provided a salary outline of local paid firefighters in the area compared to the pay of PSO. He noted the PSOs salary is on the low end of the scale. He spoke about their schedule and possibly having at least one PSO on duty 24/7. He said part of the solution for retention is raising salaries to a competitive level and explore the 24/7 option.

COMMITTEE QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Mr. Vernau asked if the salaries shown tonight were for unionized. Captain Wirth said yes and spoke about Manheim Fire who has now moved from volunteers to paid firefighters.

Mr. Pushart asked about the Wednesday training, if there is any push back about the PSOs taking jobs and about writing ticket and court appearances. Captain Wirth stated the training is for volunteers. He stated there are a lot of things the Police can't do and the PSOs help with them. Captain Crone spoke about the ticket process and how the Officers go to court not the PSOs.

Mr. Bonneville asked if there was maybe 10% in this year's budget where the PSOs salaries could be increased. Captain Wirth stated no. Mr. Vernau stated 70% of the Township's budget is for Public Safety.

If 10% was to be used, it would need to come from somewhere and where it comes from. He stated there is no fat in the budget to be able to do it this year. Director Holl spoke about these adhoc meetings and how they are running very lean.

Mr. Pushart noted that the way we are going, it looks like we may need to pay firefighters. It seems like the PSOs are doing so much. Captain Wirth spoke about the training they receive and concerns with them leaving. He stated there is a small pool of people who want to do more than just drive the truck to a fire. Director Holl spoke about the volunteer firefighters and how the numbers have diminished over the years. He stated Public Safety is an issue with less firefighters and as they are receiving less and less applicants for Police. He stated there is no easy fix for the problem. Captain Crone noted that as the PSOs do more Fire and less police, the Police Officers and CSOs pick up the slack. He noted as things change, we could be heading to paid firefighters.

Mr. Bonneville spoke about current situations in Public Safety and how some agencies are going with two officers in the car per shift for safety. He asked about the Constable program in the Township and how it could help with transports for court dates. Captain Crone spoke about the Constable in Lower Allen and how transports are not something the Constable does for them.

Mr. Vernau is concerned that there is enough time and meetings for discussions on the levels of service for this Committee. Mr. Pushart suggested breaking into groups to discuss ideas and report back. Mr. Vernau said that could work if there were more members from the public, however there are just as many Township Staff who would be on these making decisions. Director Holl spoke about figuring out what the levels of service are, what they should be, how much they cost and what are the trigger factors for them.

Mr. Vernau asked if we are past what the PSOs can do. He stated if we need to hire code enforcers or more EMTS then let's look at that as an option. Chief Murdoch believes the PSO is the ideal solution. He stated a full-time truck driver isn't needed based on the call volume. He believes this is the right program to help the situation. Mr. Bonneville spoke of an agency where Police were trained as firefighters and could go to a fire call while on duty. Captain Crone spoke of taking one of the three officers off the street, when they need four on the street. He spoke efforts of just keeping his officers trained and all their certs up to date without adding the fire requirements. Chief Williamson spoke about the Board of Commissioners choosing the PSOs as the middle option and wanting the best to respond to the call. Discussion ensued.

AUDIENCE/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mrs. Diana Good asked if we could tap into other organizations. Director Holl spoke about COG program and other options potentially in the future. He spoke about being creative now versus the days were there was an abundance of volunteers. He spoke about the Public Safety coordination meetings they hold with the Captains and Chiefs plus the daily interactions that occurs. She hears concerns about raising taxes with the elderly but there are certain realities that need to be accepted especially with Walmart. She thanked everyone.

Mr. David Good asked how much crime Walmart has added to the Township. Captain Crone spoke about Walmart and said we can't legislate who and what business can come into the Township. Mrs. Good asked if there would be less crime if Walmart wasn't open 24 hours a day. Captain Crone stated as there are issues overnight the majority of the shoplifting happens between 2 and 10pm. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Steve Overmiller understands the Township is cautious about raising taxes but believes they need to fund the level of service as costs increase. He noted the school district raises taxes every year. He spoke about the first responders and levels of service. Mr. Vernau noted that tax increases can hurt elected officials who want to stay on the Board. He spoke about raising salaries to keep good people on the Township Staff.

ADJOURNMENT:

Director Holl adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, July 1st at the Township's EOC room.