

Public Safety Committee

February 20, 2008

6:00 PM

Chairperson:

Council Chambers

Revised Minutes

In Attendance:

Jerry Walter, Chairperson
Michael Kutschbach, Member
Jane Braunlich, Member
Glen Pritchard, Fire Chief
Mayor George Doscher

Mike Bookser, Police Chief
Connie Flasher, DAS
Mike Lutz, CEO
Linda Woshner, President

Jerry Walter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Citizens:

- ❖ Cathy Tyler from 91 Staunton Avenue spoke to the Committee about a house that resides around her house that has burned down that has yet to be addressed by the Borough.
 - She further stated that she believes a health and safety issue and questioned the Committee what their plans are for this structure.
 - She explained to the Committee the reason of why she feels that it should be demolished.
 - Mr. Walter stated that the Borough is planning on addressing all condemned properties.
 - The Committee stated that they will discuss information specifically about this property in the Code Enforcement Department issue.
- ❖ Brandon Gillingham, a resident spoke to the Committee about the 4 k race that he wanted to coordinate.
 - He stated that he is here to see if there are any questions that the Committee can address.
 - He presented a map that outlines the course to the Police Chief and explained to the Committee the projected course direction.
 - The DAS questioned how long this race would take.
 - Mr. Gillingham stated that it would take approximately one hour and he would need S. Starr to be closed approximately from 8:30a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
 - There was further discussion about how long the whole race from set up to clean up would take.
 - Mr. Gillingham stated that all together it should take no longer than two and a half hours.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee
 - Chief Bookser stated that he feels that there a few problems with the projected course if they are using Lincoln Avenue as part of the course.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee about what course direction would be better to accommodate traffic control.
 - Mayor Doscher questioned how many people Mr. Gillingham project attending this race.
 - Mr. Gillingham stated that approximately 200 to 300 individuals.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee about the logistical issues with holding the race in Bellevue.
 - Chief Bookser stated that it would it would be more difficult in using Lincoln Avenue as the primary course than to have the runners run on side streets and cross Lincoln Avenue.

- Mr. Walter stated that Mr. Gillingham will have to find some type of course that does not interfere with the busses and obstructing traffic.
- The Committee suggested for Mr. Gillingham to prepare a few course alternatives as well as examples from other municipalities of how they were able to do this type of event and present this information to the Committee before it will be approved.

Mayor:

- ❖ Mayor Doscher presented to the Committee an advertisement for the Chief of Police position.
 - He stated that after research was completed he has found that the best place to advertise for this position is on the Chief of Police Pennsylvania Web page at a cost of \$400.00 for an unlimited time frame.
 - He stated that he would like to advertise this position on that web site and in the local newspaper.
 - Mr. Walter questioned if formal written correspondence was received by the Borough from Chief Bookser giving his exact retirement date
 - He further questioned if it would be better to wait until the formal retirement date is given before the advertisement is posted.
 - Chief Bookser stated that his retirement date will be May 23, 2008 and it would behoove them to be as proactive as possible in looking for another Police Chief.
 - There was discussion about whether hiring a Police Chief is necessary.
 - Chief Bookser explained that if an Acting Police Chief is put in the position for more than 60 days then it is required that they are paid the Police Chief wages, regardless if they are in the position for the rest of their professional life.
 - Chief Bookser further explained why it would be beneficial for the Borough to look for a new Police Chief.
 - The Mayor stated that he would like to have the new Police Chief spend a week with Chief Bookser to acclimate himself to the duties.
 - There was discussion about whether or not the Committee would like Chief Bookser to give them a formal letter specifying his retirement date.
 - Chief Bookser stated that he will be able to give a letter of resignation by the next day.
 - The Committee stated that they would authorize the advertisement in the Chief of Police Pennsylvania Web page at a cost of \$400.00 for an unlimited time frame contingent on the letter of resignation from Chief Bookser.
 - The Mayor notated that he will be working with the DAS to compile the finalized advertisement and he will be convening an interviewing panel that will consist of himself, Paul Cusick, Chief Micklos and also a Marita Bartholomew who is a citizen in the Borough.
 - He stated that they will be advising and giving their feedback to him about the applicants.
 - Mr. Walter seconded by Mrs. Braunlich made a motion to advertise for the Chief of Police position pending on Mr. Bookser's letter of resignation, not to exceed \$400.00.
- ❖ Mayor Doscher explained to the Committee that he was also contacted by Municipal Publications to do a pamphlet for the Borough.
 - He presented another municipality's pamphlet to the Committee.
 - He stated that there are no costs to the Borough, but he just needs a map from the Borough Engineer to have this pamphlet produced.
 - He explained that every resident will get this mailed to them once it is completed.
 - He stated that he will be working with them in order to get this done.
- ❖ He stated that this Committee was looking to get a Rental Inspection Ordinance enacted and he would like to see the Committee start on working this.

- Mr. Walter stated that he has been talking to the Code Enforcement Officer about this and there was discussion by the Committee further about this ordinance.
- The DAS stated that in other municipalities they required for all rental properties to have a health and safety inspection every time there is a new tenant.
- She questioned if there is a list of all landlords for the rental properties in the Borough.
- The CEO stated that they don't have one, but the census enumerator should have that information.
- There was further discussion by the Committee.
- The CEO questioned hypothetically if the inspection is completed and the file is opened there is no Occupancy permit for the whole building what would be done.
- The DAS stated that there is the residential code that they are in violation of and they would be in trouble.

Fire Department:

- ❖ Fire Chief Pritchard requested to purchase foam for fire trucks at a cost of \$2,300.00 from budgeted funds.
 - Mr. Kutschbach seconded by Mr. Walter made a motion to purchase foam for fire trucks at a cost of \$2,300.00 from budgeted funds.

Police Department:

- ❖ Chief Bookser requested to purchase ammo for the year at the cost not to exceed \$1,000.00 as budgeted.
 - Mr. Kutschbach seconded by Mr. Walter made a motion to purchase ammo for the year at the cost not to exceed \$1,000.00 as budgeted.
- ❖ Chief Bookser requested to purchase law updates per Police contract at a cost not to exceed \$500.00 as budgeted.
 - Mr. Kutschbach seconded by Mr. Walter made a motion purchase law updates per Police contract at a cost not to exceed \$500.00 as budgeted.
- ❖ Chief Bookser requested from the Committee guidance on what cuts to the Police Department since the overtime budget was reduced.
 - He explained that the Police Department has gone through 16% of the budget already.
 - He notated that the budgeted payroll was to compensate the Police Officers for court time, magistrates hearing pay, training pay as well as coverage while the officers attend these events.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about what was cut out of the budget in the Police Department.
 - There was discussion about what were the budgeted requests that were reduced in the Police Department budget.
 - Chief Bookser explained the reason of why he had requested money in the certain line items.
 - There was discussion by the Committee of how to reduce employee costs such as reducing number of Police Officers scheduled on one shift.
 - Chief Bookser stated that he schedules 28 days in advance to accommodate for sickness, vacations, personal time, etc. and if the Committee would want to have the schedule less than 28 days then they will have to talk to the union because it is specified in their contract.

- There was discussion about eliminating the Police Dispatch position to help in decreasing the Police Budget expenditures.
 - There was discussion about how many citations were issued by the Police Department.
 - There was discussion about what type of work the Police Department does.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about how they can cut the budget without reducing services.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee about the reason why there were cuts to the Police Department budget.
 - There was discussion about why Council had decided to increase the budgeted amount for the infrastructure of the Borough and decrease the Police Departments budget.
 - Mrs. Woshner stated that the Borough has financial difficulties and they need the cooperation of the Borough employees to keep the Borough running successfully.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee.
- ❖ Chief Bookser requested from the Committee to hire a full-time Police Clerk to replace an individual that has left.
- Chief Bookser noted that he is requesting this due to there only being three full-time employees and he explained when there is a call off those employees have to cover the shifts.
 - He stated that there are three employees covering four shifts.
 - There was discussion about who the three employees are and what happened with the part-time employees that were hired.
 - There was discussion about whether they will hire another dispatcher employee.
 - There was no decision made and the Committee decided that further discussion is needed.
- Code Enforcement:**
- ❖ The CEO explained to the Committee the status of the property located on Staunton Avenue that the Mrs. Tyler was inquiring about.
- The CEO explained to the Committee the history that revolves around this property and why there was an issue in the past with the property being demolished.
 - He explained to the Committee that the property was broken into and the gentleman that was held accountable for the break in was directed by the Magistrate to tear down the house as retribution.
 - He further notated that this will be seen in front of the Magistrate again tomorrow and the Borough should know further after that point what can be done.
 - The Committee stated that due to the pending court hearing they are not able to take action until it is resolved.
 - There was discussion about what the Borough can legally do to help assist this situation.
 - There was discussion about how the CEO will assist the tearing down the property such as overseeing the demolition.
 - Mr. Walter reiterated to Mrs. Tyler that the Borough will have this situation taken care of.
- ❖ Mrs. Braunlich requested from the CEO to take pictures of the abandoned properties on his list.
- The CEO questioned the reason for the need for the pictures.

- Mrs. Braunlich stated in order to prioritize the properties that are to be demolished.
- The CEO stated that for the past seven years he has tried to get the Committee and Council to take action against these and they have neglected to.
- There was discussion by the Committee.
- The CEO noted that in 2007 it was discussed by the Committee to get the costs from the Solicitor to obtain ownership of the abandoned properties in order to demolish them.
- He stated that after discussing the situation with the Administrative Office to confirm if the Solicitor was notified it was established that he may not have been.
- The CEO further stated that he had contacted the Solicitor and he said that he will not pay for the costs to that are required to be paid to obtain those properties and this is something that the Borough will have to pay.
- The Committee stated that only \$5,000.00 was budgeted to demolish, which only would cover the costs to demolish one property.
- The CEO stated that by taking pictures of the property it will not help demolish these buildings and the Borough has to decide whether or not to pay the costs associated in advance.
- There was discussion about whether pictures of the abandoned properties will help in Council making a decision of what properties to demolish.
- The CEO stated that he would be able to go to the abandoned properties and take pictures of them for Council.
- ❖ The Zoning Ordinance and a letter to Allegheny County that was generated was presented to the Committee.
 - The CEO explained that the Borough is required to submit the Zoning Ordinance to the County and once they review they will contact us to make any suggestions to delete or add to it.
 - He explained that once this is completed the Borough is required to have a Public Hearing and the County needs to receive the Ordinance at least 45 days before a Public Hearing is held.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about the status of the Zoning Ordinance.
 - The DAS stated that she will talk to Mrs. Fleming about whether the Zoning Ordinance that she received is the only copy or there are others that can be forwarded to the County and if so to send the letter that was drafted and the copy so that the County can review it.

Administration:

- ❖ There was discussion by the Committee about re-advertising of the Fire Fighter position due to confusion about the language in the advertisement.
 - Chief Pritchard stated that the Fire Department and the Union agreed that the wording in the advertisement should not affect anything negatively during the hiring process.
 - There was discussion about what the actual requirements are for a Fire Department applications.
 - The Committee stated that the advertisement was more vague than what is expected in the contract therefore it is not necessary to re-advertise.
 - There was discussion about possibly investigating this and discussing this further in the future.

Executive Session:

- ❖ An Executive Session was held in order to discuss a Fire Department personnel issue.
 - As a result of the discussion during the Executive Session the Committee made a motion to notify Mr. Ed Werner that his services are no longer needed.
 - The DAS stated that she will write a letter notifying him of such.

Council Members:

- ❖ Mrs. Braunlich stated that she would like to look into getting a phone service that automatically picks up to inform the residents to call 911 and a timing door that will lock automatically after certain times.
 - She stated that this is to reduce the need for the Dispatch position.
 - She explained to the Committee that she feels in order to reduce the Police Department Budget there could be part-time Dispatchers rather than the current full-time.
 - She explained to the Committee the proposed scheduled shifts that she would suggest.
 - She stated that she would like to approach Council about a phone system.
 - There was a discussion by the Committee.
 - Chief Bookser notated that there would services that the Dispatcher position handles which would not be covered if the position was reduced from full-time to part-time that would have to be picked up by other Departments or by the Police Officers themselves.
 - Chief Bookser explained to the Committee the services that will not be provided if the Dispatcher position is dissolved.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee.
 - Mayor Doscher stated for Mrs. Braunlich to have an entire plan compiled to be able to bring to Council for them to make a decision.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about how to research how much the phone system will cost.
 - The DAS stated that she will discuss this further with Mrs. Braunlich in order to understand what will need to be researched.
- ❖ There was further discussion by the Committee about the merging of Police services.

Old Business:

- ❖ There was discussion by the Committee about how to incorporate tree violations into an existing Ordinance to stop tree encroachment on streets.
 - Mr. Walter stated that there already is an ordinance that states that trees cannot encroach on sidewalks and questioned why it cannot be reworded to include that no tree is to encroach on streets.
 - The DAS stated that she will read the Ordinance and see if this can be done.
- ❖ The Committee discussed the proposed aggressive Dog ordinance.
 - Information regarding sample Aggressive Dog Ordinances from other states that was compiled by the Acting DAS was presented to the Committee.
 - The new DAS stated that she would like to review these Ordinances and see if there are any others available that could also be used as reference.
 - Mayor Doscher asked what the reason is for this ordinance.
 - Mr. Walter stated to make the elderly feel safer on Lincoln Avenue
 - Mrs. Braunlich stated that she wants to have dogs not allowed to walk on Lincoln Avenue.
 - The DAS stated that it would be very difficult to enforce if there is discrimination against specific breeds of dogs.
 - There was discussion if it could designate areas where dogs cannot be walked.
 - There was discussion about what specifications can be in the ordinance so that it can be enforced.

New Business:

- ❖ Chief Bookser stated that he has handicap parking location requests.

February 20, 2008

-7-

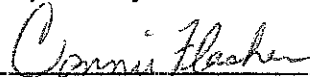
- He stated they are for 210 Gilliland Place and 430 Forest Avenue.
- He stated that he recommends denying both of these requests.
- There was discussion by the Committee.
- The Committee agreed to deny both of these requests.
- Chief Bookser stated that he will coordinate with the DAS about who will notify the residents about the denial of the requests.
- ❖ There was discussion by the Committee about whether newspaper stands have to pay the Municipality to use the sidewalks areas for their vending machines
 - Mrs. Braunlich stated that the one in front of Citizens bank is rusted and broken and she would like to see it removed if at all possible.
 - There was discussion about if a municipality can govern a way the vending machines looks.
 - The DAS stated that if there is contact information we could contact them and tell them that if they don't remove them due to their appearance then we would throw it away.
 - There was discussion about whether or not there is an ordinance established to require newspaper stands pay a fee to use the sidewalk as a location.
 - The CEO and DAS stated that they will research to see if one has been established.

Citizens:

- ❖ Mrs. Mary Woodward from 56 Florence Avenue spoke to the Committee about her as well as other resident's concerns with the safety of Borough and the status of the Police Department.
 - She stated that she would rather a Police Department than roads that are in better conditions. She stated that this town needs cleaned up and would like to see more of a Police presence.
 - Mr. Walter stated that the Committee appreciates her input and explained the reason why the Police department budget was reduced.
 - Mr. Walter explained the process that was went through to come to a balanced budget.
 - He stated that his goal is find a balance to have decent roads, descent Police Dept., Fire Dept. etc.
 - There was further discussion about what the budget consists of and what the projected improvements in the Borough.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Connie Flasher
Secretary

Motions to be made.

- 1. Motion to advertise for the Chief of Police position pending Chief Bookser's letter of resignation is received not to exceed \$400.00.**
- 2. Motion to purchase foam for fire trucks at a cost of \$2,300.00 from budgeted funds.**
- 3. Motion to purchase ammo for the year at the cost not to exceed \$1,000.00 as budgeted.**

4. Motion purchase law updates per Police contract at a cost not to exceed \$500.00 as budgeted.