

Public Safety Committee

January 22, 2008

6:00 PM

Chairperson:

Council Chambers

Minutes

In Attendance:

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

Mike Bookser, Police Chief
Jennifer Fleming, Acting DAS
Mike Lutz, CEO
Jeff Wissner, Fire Department Employee

Mayor George Doscher was excused.

Jerry Walter called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Citizens:

- ❖ Anna Web from 240 Dakota Avenue stated to the Committee that she would like to address a concern that she has about illegal dumping on Dakota Avenue.
 - She stated that individuals are dumping behind her house and subsequently it is falling into her yard.
 - She suggested for the Committee to look into purchasing lights to illuminate the area in hopes that the illegal dumping and suspicious behavior will stop.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that she and Mr. Barbarino have discussed the illegal dumping situation and have proposed in to install a 10 foot fence on the Borough side of Dakota Avenue as well as lighting to discourage the dumping.
 - She notated that this will not be able to be completed until the 2008 budget is passed.
 - She stated that she will contact Ross Township to request to do the same.
 - Mrs. Fleming notated to the Committee that she has given Mrs. Webb the Ross Township manager's contact information.
 - There was further discussion about the various issues of illegal dumping and suspicious behavior on Dakota Avenue.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about how to eliminate the dumping and suspicious behavior.
 - Mr. Walter suggested for Mrs. & Mr. Webb to contact the Borough when they see the suspicious behavior with license plate numbers to help the Borough hold those responsible accountable.

Mayor:

- ❖ Mr. Walter notated that on the agenda there is to be discussion pertaining to the hiring of a new Police Clerk.
 - Chief Bookser stated that hiring of a Police Clerk has been discussed in the past and not resolved.
 - He stated that since the situation was first brought to the Committee's attention another Police Clerk that was Full-Time now has changed her status to Part-time.
 - There was discussion about whether or not the position can be filled since the budget cannot be passed.
 - Mrs. Fleming notated to the Committee that they had made a motion in the Public Works Committee to hire for a Department of Public Works Laborer.
 - There was discussion about whether or not there is a need to replace the Police Clerk employee that had left.

- Chief Bookser stated that if the employees are not replaced then services will have to be cut.
- Mrs. Fleming stated that if those positions in the Police Department are not filled there should be a contingency plan in place to accommodate for the additional workload on the other employees.
- Mr. Walter stated that he is aware of this and that those discussions have not happened yet due to not knowing what will happen with the budget.
- Mr. Walter stated that since this is a topic of discussion in the budget he is hesitant to make a motion to hire someone until the budget is finalized.
- ❖ There was discussion about merging various departments' services with other municipalities.
- ❖ There was discussion about what Police services will be reduced since the 2008 Police budget was cut by 10%.

Fire Department:

- ❖ Mr. Pritchard explained to the Committee that both he and Jeff Mack are the relief drivers for the Fire Department but he would like to replace Jeff Mack with Steven Ference.
- ❖ There was discussion as to whether relief drivers and the volunteer Fire Department are required to have a CDL license to drive the trucks.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that a CDL is not required for a volunteer to drive the fire trucks.
 - Mr. Pritchard stated that even though a CDL license is not required for a volunteer for the Fire Department there still a section in the driving code which enables the Fire Chief to establish requirements for who is allowed to drive the equipment.
 - There was discussion about whether there should be a CDL requirement if Volunteers are to drive the vehicles.
 - Chief Pritchard stated that even if it was a requirement for the Volunteers to have a CDL license it would not decrease the Borough or Volunteer Fire Departments liability.
 - There was discussion about whether having a CDL would decrease the insurance.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that our insurance is based upon how many vehicles, not how many drivers there are.
 - Mrs. Braunlich questioned how many volunteers have their CDL licenses.
 - Chief Pritchard stated that three have a CDL license.
 - Chief Bookser stated a CDL license is not required by the state.
 - There was discussion about whether it would be beneficial to have the volunteers get their CDL licenses.
 - Mr. Wissner stated that the Volunteers are required to get their EVOC requirement which is similar to a CDL license.
 - Mrs. Braunlich clarified if the relief drivers have their CDL license.
 - Chief Pritchard and Mrs. Fleming stated that is correct.
 - Mrs. Braunlich seconded by Mr. Walter made a motion to have a resolution drawn up to replace Jeff Mack with Steven Ference as a relief driver.
- ❖ Mrs. Fleming notated that there was not a great number of applicants that responded to the Advertisement that was placed for the open Firefighter position.
 - She stated that in the advertisement it stated they are to have their CDL license prior to hiring and a Firefighter module one certification.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that the Civil Service Commission used an old advertisement that was incorrect and did not reflect the hiring stipulations that are in written into the contract.
 - Mrs. Braunlich stated that the Personnel Code should have been updated to reflect what the contract states.

- Mrs. Fleming agreed and stated that regardless the position should be re-advertised due to the discrepancy between what the advertised required and what the contract requires.
- There was discussion was whether the Personnel Code needs to be changed before the advertisement for the Fire Department employee can be re-advertised.
- Mrs. Fleming stated that the advertisement needs to just reflect what is in the negotiated contract.
- There was further discussion.
- ❖ There was discussion about what a Fire Fighter Module One is.
 - Mr. Wissner stated that it is called a Firefighter One Certification not a Firefighter Module One.
 - There was further discussion about whether the CDL license should be required by the Borough before hiring.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that one advertisement reflects that it is required before hiring and the application states it is required at time of applying.
 - There was discussion about whether the CDL license requirement is in the Personnel Code.
 - There was discussion by the Committee.
 - Mr. Walter stated that legally are we required to re-advertise this since some of the public did not understand the original advertisement.
 - The Committee established that will re-advertise for this position.
 - There was discussion about having the Personnel Code changed.
 - There was discussion about whether or not to change the Personnel Code to increase the initial experience of a new hire to an officer as proposed in the past.

Police Department:

- ❖ Chief Bookser notated that there are two requests for Handicap Parking requests.
 - He notated that the first was from Mr. Joseph Jennings who resides at 149 Watkins Avenue.
 - He stated that he recommends denying the request since the resident has off street parking.
- ❖ Chief Bookser stated that his second request is from Ms. Elaine Francolino who resides at 633 Roosevelt Avenue. He stated that he recommends denying the request as well.
 - There was discussion by the Committee.
 - The Committee established to deny both requests.

Code Enforcement:

- ❖ Mr. Kutschbach questioned the CEO if there is progress with the residential dye testing
- ❖ The CEO stated that the Code Enforcement Office is making progress but there are approximately 600 people that have not responded to us.
- ❖ Mrs. Fleming stated that the Borough will not be penalized due to those residents not responding since the Borough is trying to contact them.

Administration:

- ❖ Mrs. Fleming presented to the Committee a Rental Inspection Ordinance from another municipality that has been legally up held.
 - She stated that this is for their information.

Council Members:

- ❖ Nothing at this time.

Old Business:

- ❖ Mrs. Fleming notated to the Committee that there needs to be a decision made in regards to the Nuisance Tenant Ordinance.
 - She presented to the Committee the Solicitors opinion.

- There was discussion about whether the Nuisance Tenant Ordinance should be worded to include that there must be three convictions not three citations.
- There was discussion by the Committee.
- Chief Bookser stated that the Borough can cite individuals and they can pay the fine but that does not constitute a conviction, it constitutes being found guilty of an offense.
- He explained that a conviction is being found guilty of a crime.
- There was discussion about whether a resident would have the power to call the Police to their neighbor's residence.
- There was discussion about how the Police Officers constitute whether a complaint is valid.
- There was further discussion about whether to include convictions or citations in the wording of the ordinance.
- Chief Bookser explained that what the Solicitor's opinion is that the resident needs to be cited three times before this ordinance can be utilized.
- There was further discussion by the Committee.
- There was discussion about how the warnings will be kept track of if citations will not be written.
- Chief Bookser stated that they will issue written warnings.
- Mrs. Braunlich proposed that the ordinance could read three written warnings rather than a citation.
- Mr. Walter questioned that if the written warning will be handled as citations.
- Chief Bookser stated that the warnings will not be treated as a citation.
- There was discussion about how many warnings will have to be issued before the Borough would approach the owner of the property.
- Mr. Walter stated that the intention of this ordinance is to help deal with issues of absentee landlords as well as the offending residents.
- There was discussion by the Committee about the reason of why a citation would not achieve the desired result of the Ordinance.
- Chief Bookser explained to the committee the purpose of this ordinance. He explained where he had researched disruptive behavior at a few properties.
- He stated that Mrs. Woshner owns 15 properties and over the past year there were three calls to any of her properties for disruptive behavior.
- He stated that at 35 S. Howard Avenue there were 50 calls within the last year.
- He stated that the properties with significant issues are the properties that the Borough is trying to handle.
- Mr. Walter stated that is why the Borough needs to trust their Police Department.
- There was discussion about how many citations and convictions there were from that exemplified disruptive property.
- Chief Bookser stated that there were approximately 40 citations and a couple arrests.
- There was further discussion about what the ordinance is intended in doing.
- Mr. Walter stated that he agrees with the Solicitors opinion to remove the conviction requirement out of the Ordinance.
- Mr. Kutschbach stated that he also agrees with the Solicitor.
- Mr. Walter stated that he is willing to enact the Ordinance to see the effectiveness of the language and if there is a problem to bring it up to be addressed and possibly amended.
- Mr. Walter seconded by Mr. Kutschbach made a motion to agree with the Solicitor's opinion pursuant to his letter dated December 6, 2007.

New Business:

- ❖ Mrs. Braunlich stated that the Tri-Borough would like to attend the March Public Safety meeting and they would like to have as many Council Members present.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that she suggests having this presentation at a Council meeting or at the Pre-Council meeting.
 - Mrs. Braunlich stated that she will notify them to come at a Council or Pre-Council meeting.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about what the Tri-Borough will be discussing.
- ❖ There was discussion by the Committee about the various Public Safety issues.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned Chief Bookser about a Police presence on Lincoln Avenue.
 - Chief Bookser stated that there were Police Officers walking on Lincoln Avenue for 1600 hours in the evenings during the 2007 year.
- ❖ There was discussion as to why there are no computers in the Police cars.
 - Chief Bookser stated that it will cost \$1,800 a year to have the access to do this as well as the hardware would need to be purchased.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about whether it would be better to do the reports in the vehicle rather than the station.
 - Mr. Walter stated to look into to see if there could be grants obtained in order to get them.
 - Chief Bookser stated that can be done.
- ❖ Mr. Walter stated that there are speeding problems in certain areas of the Borough and wanted to see if they can be addressed.
 - There was discussion about whether speed traps can be placed in locations around the Borough.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned whether there is a way to change the meter time from 2 hours to 3 hours on Lincoln Avenue.
 - There was discussion by the Committee.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned if there is an ordinance that can be written where the business owner cannot park on Lincoln Avenue.
 - There was discussion by the Committee.
 - Chief Bookser stated that the meter attendants do ticket the habitual offenders but if the offenders pay the tickets there is really nothing further that can be done.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned if there is an ordinance in place that restricts residents from placing their leaves on the streets after the yearly leaf pick up is done.
 - There was discussion about which department would be enforcing this ordinance.
 - The Committee established to contact the Solicitor to see if an ordinance has been established and if it has not then to see if one can be written and what department would be enforcing this.
 - Chief Bookser stated that he can cite residents if they throw snow on the street due to a state law that is in place.
 - Mrs. Fleming and Chief Bookser stated that they will look into it.
- ❖ There was discussion about doing a peer study to look at merging the Police Departments.
 - Chief Bookser stated in order to do the peer study both Bellevue and what other municipality wants to merge would have to agree to do this as well as a letter would then have to be sent to DCED for the study to be completed.
 - He stated that the DCED are not willing to come out and spend money unless the Borough is serious.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned if there was grant money to be obtained to purchase shotguns and tasers. Chief Bookser stated that the Borough has shotguns and that there is no money to obtain for taser purchases.

- Mr. Walter stated that he had learned that any state road through our Borough could receive money from the State for the patrolling of that road.
- ❖ Chief Bookser explained that the state will only give money to municipalities that have a limited access highway through it and they are not able to patrol it themselves.
 - Mr. Walter questioned if this is an option for the Borough.
 - Chief Bookser stated that they will not give us funds because route 65 is not a limited access state road.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned how the 911 process works when a resident calls in.
 - Chief Bookser stated that it is answered by a 911 operator that deals and is knowledgeable with this area.
 - He stated that after all information is submitted then it is given to a dispatcher that only deals with this area at which time a service is dispatched.
 - He stated that there has been problems with this due to the time delay.
 - He stated that when it was handled internally the services were dispatched within minutes.
 - Chief Bookser gave examples of situations where the services were delayed because of the 911 system.
 - Mr. Walter questioned if the time delays are documented.
 - Chief Bookser stated that it is, but it is a matter of getting the county to recognize the problem.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee about how to rectify the issue.
- ❖ Mr. Walter stated that a grievance was filed by the Police Association about the floor downstairs.
 - He stated that no one was notified of the situation.
 - Mr. Walter stated that they should have come to the Department of Public Works Committee and it would have been promptly addressed.
 - There was discussion by the Committee of how to best fix the floor.
 - Mr. Walter questioned Chief Bookser if he will be willing to work with the DPW in order to get it fixed.
 - Chief Bookser stated that that was fine.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee of how to fix the Police Department floor.
- ❖ Chief Pritchard gave to the Committee the pros and cons of merging Fire Department services with other northern municipalities.
 - He stated that the cons are unlike other municipalities are our equipment is well maintained.
 - He stated that the pros is the purchasing power.
 - Mr. Walter stated that the pros for the Borough would be cost savings.
 - There was further discussion by the Committee about the positives for merging with other municipalities.
 - There was discussion about how many active volunteers are in the Volunteer Fire Department.
 - Chief Pritchard stated there are approximately 25 to 30 active volunteers.
 - There was discussion by the Committee about the Fire Departments equipment needs.
 - There was further discussion about pros and cons for merging the Fire Departments.
- ❖ There was discussion by the Committee about the bond and what it was spent on.
 - There was discussion about what the intentions are to pay the bond back.
- ❖ Mr. Walter stated that a recycling ordinance needs to be established so that the Borough can obtain the recycling grant.

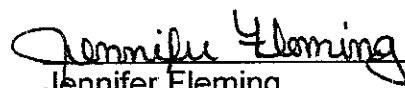
- Mr. Walter proposed to get an ordinance from another borough so it does not need to be written.
- Mrs. Fleming stated that she could look into this.
- ❖ Mr. Walter stated that he would like an ordinance established to require commercial property owners to place window treatments on vacant store windows rather than painting the windows when the business is vacant.
 - Mr. Walter questioned if the current Code Enforcement Ordinance that establishes maintenance of trees can include restrictions of trees encroaching on the streets.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that she has spoken with Mr. Jim Delcroix, the assistant CEO and he would be able to get a list of the trees that would be able to be planted in the grass without encroaching on the streets.
 - Mr. Walter stated that the current ordinance states that trees cannot encroach on sidewalks and he wants to add they cannot also encroach on streets.
- ❖ Mr. Walter questioned what the status is on the Zoning Ordinance amendment to include the Overlay District.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that currently the Zoning Ordinance with the Overlay District is passed.
 - She explained that the budget needs to be passed to have the amendments incorporated at which time it will be passed on to the county and then 45 days later the Public Hearing can be scheduled.
- ❖ Mr. Walter stated that he would like to see if an aggressive dog ordinance can be established.
 - There was discussion about whether this ordinance is already established.
 - Mrs. Fleming stated that she will look for the state law.
 - The CEO explained to the Committee the process of how he currently cites property owners for aggressive dogs.

Citizens:

- ❖ A resident expressed to the Committee of how she received a parking ticket in Lot three, which she felt was unjust.
 - She stated that she had looked for signs saying that metered parking on Saturdays but did not see it.
 - Chief Bookser stated that the meters say that money is needed from 9 am to 9 pm regardless of the day of the week.
 - There was discussion.
 - Chief Bookser gave the woman his number and he stated that he will take verify whether there are signs on the meters.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted



Jennifer Fleming
Acting Secretary

Motions to be made.

- 1. Motion to agree with the Solicitor's opinion of the language in the Nuisance Tenant Ordinance pursuant to his letter dated December 6, 2007..**