

The stated meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Chairperson Commissioner Schreiber presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 8:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SCHREIBER, DiPLACIDO, ROTHMAN, THOMPSON, VAHEY

Township Manager MANFREDI
Assistant Township Manager WEHMEYER
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Chief of Police MOLLOY
Police Lieutenant PORTER
Traffic Safety Officer FREED

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, ZAPPONE, BOWMAN, BRODSKY, GILLESPIE, SPIEGELMAN, MYERS, CARSWELL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2018 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

PRESENTATION: None.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Chief Molloy said over the last few months there have been incidents where “hate” literature has been distributed in various sections of the Township causing concern by residents and we have told them to discard it. Our police department and community strongly condemn this hateful rhetoric and our officers have been proactive in trying to collect it from the streets beforehand. If there is anything on that literature that crosses the line such as any type of ethnic intimidation or if our officers catch these individuals on someone’s property, then we can do something about it.

After speaking with other law enforcement agencies, he was informed that other municipalities have tried to pass an ordinance against this type of littering, but had no success.

Also, there was an incident where a vehicle with two males approached juveniles walking home from school and while trying to verify intent and those involved, he feels now would be a good time for parents to speak with their children about safety measures while walking home from school and being approached by strangers.

Commissioner Rothman suggested a flyer from the police department about “stranger danger” to be inserted in our newsletters as well as it should be posted on Facebook.

Commissioner Schreiber clarified that other communities in this area have received “hate” literature and it is not just Abington locals. Is that correct?

Chief Molloy replied that is correct. It also occurred in Upper Moreland and Hatboro.

Commissioner Vahey asked about the Police Department’s “Blue Holiday” contest.

Lt. Porter replied when a member of the community “likes” or “follows” the police department’s social media posts, they would then be entered into a drawing that during the holidays a police officer would stop by the family home and introduce themselves such as on Christmas day as a way to thank them for following us on social media and supporting our officers as well as keeping informed about what is going on in the community.

Commissioner Thompson said there has been a lot of publicity about traffic running “Stop” signs around school buses, and he asked about enforcement.

Chief Molloy replied we will put out a social media public service announcement video to raise awareness.

Commissioner Spiegelman said recent enforcement of multiple perpetrators at the Tyson Trotter/Easton area was much appreciated. Regarding “hate” literature where it was targeted to specific areas and homes; when does it cross the line of ethnic intimidation?

Chief Molloy replied the nature of how the literature is dropped on the property; what’s on it and if we can prove that the individual knew ahead of time exactly what they were doing along with threats, then we may have an ethnic intimidation case, but that is easier said than done because we are constrained by First Amendment protections.

Vice President Kline said he has experienced this three times in his ward and all different types of people have received it. Racism and anti-Semitism is clearly on the rise as a result of the reprehensible speech from the highest levels of governmental offices, and it is imperative upon all of us to condemn that type of rhetoric because that is what is causing the free-flow of racism and anti-Semitism, and it is disgusting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Item PS-01-121318:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to adopt Ordinance No. 2163 amending Chapter 156 – (Vehicles and Traffic) Article II (Traffic Regulations) Section 14 (Stop Intersections) and Article III (Parking Regulations) Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner).

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff. There were none.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

Item PS-02-121318:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to promote Sergeant Thomas Scott to the rank of Probationary Lieutenant effective December 14, 2018 providing he successfully completes the remaining portions of the promotional process.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff. There were none.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Item PS-03-121318:

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to accept a grant award from the Bureau of Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering in the amount of \$120,000.00 for Sobriety Checkpoints and roving patrols with the Township's matching portion not-to-exceed \$1,200.00.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff.

Commissioner Vahey clarified that the Board just approved a grant award for sobriety checkpoints. Is that correct?

Chief Molloy replied yes. There are grants for sobriety checkpoints that are multi-jurisdictional administration involving a number of police officers in various locations and this grant is just for our Township involving roving patrols usually on days prior to holidays where there is a higher number of incidents.

Commissioner Thompson asked for further explanation of roving patrols.

Chief Molloy replied it is officers patrolling in unmarked police vehicles during the late hours of the evening such as when the bars close.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any general comments relating to Public Safety.

Cakky Evans, Lindsay Lane, commented that she is thankful for how the police are handling the issue of “hate” literature and she questioned whether there is any type of training on how to deal with it. On behalf of the EAC, she thanked the Board for passing the 100% renewable energy contract.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard J. Manfredi, Township Manager/Secretary

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