

The stated meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Schreiber presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:36 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SCHREIBER, DiPLACIDO, KALINOSKI, BOWMAN

Excused: FARREN

Township Manager LEFEVRE

Township Solicitor CLARKE

Fire Marshal CLARK

Chief of Police KELLY

Deputy Chief LIVINGOOD

Traffic Safety Officer FREED

Community Director STROTHER

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, ZAPPONE, SANCHEZ, MYERS, GILLESPIE, JONES, SPIEGELMAN

MINUTES: Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner DiPlacido to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2015 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Police Department Report:

Chief Kelly called on Traffic Safety Officer Freed.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed reminded everyone that the September Traffic Safety Blitz ended September 30th and data on that will be sent out in the Board's packets. Also, please take down the signs until the June Traffic Safety Blitz.

Deputy Chief Livingood reported that about a week ago, the Department participated in the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in a drug take-back program. The goal was to get unused prescription drugs off of the street before falling into the wrong hands. The District Attorney's Office has partnered with a number of police departments including Abington's throughout the County and we split the cost of a drug take-back box. The box sits in a secure part of our lobby and drop-offs can be made 24-hours a day.

This has been an extremely successful program and the drugs are taken to a pharmaceutical company where they are incinerated, which is where DEA disposes of their unused drugs.

Chief Kelly thanked the Commissioners who attended the PAL Food Festival. It was a great community party that raised a lot of money for our kids and for programs without using taxpayers' dollars.

In a few weeks, CALEA will be coming to the department for our international re-accreditation process and we are working towards a new level called the, "Gold Standard," where the department needs to meet certain standards to be eligible to try to achieve that level. It is the highest level of accreditation internationally and we will report back on it.

Commissioner Schreiber commented that Commissioner Sanchez requested that a report on overdoses and the use of Narcan be provided at next month's Public Safety Committee meeting.

Chief Kelly agreed. There are a handful of departments in Montgomery County that are using Narcan as it saves lives.

Commissioner Schreiber acknowledged Jon Klenk of the Second Alarmers, who was present to answer any questions by the Board, and she asked for the Second Alarmers to also provide information on the use of Narcan at the next meeting.

Ordinance No. 2101 – To Amend Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article II – (Traffic Regulations), Section 14 (Stop Intersection), Article III (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing) and Section 27 (Parking Time Limited)

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to adopt Ordinance No. 2101 amending Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article II – (Traffic Regulations), Section 14 (Stop Intersection), Article III (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing) and Section 27 (Parking Time Limited) for adoption at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on November 12, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Ordinance No. 2103 – To Amend Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing)

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to advertise Ordinance No. 2103 amending Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing) for adoption at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Myers commented that the list of parking regulations is getting longer each month and there is an expectation of enforcement. Are there enough personnel to cover it all?

Chief Kelly replied as often as it adds to the problems, it also adds to the solution. The officers working the beats want to clean up those problem areas and provide enforcement as part of their patrol. So in many cases we are in support of those requests because it solves problems that should have been done long ago.

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Ordinance No. 2104 – Capital Project – County Radio Purchase

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bowman to advertise Ordinance No. 2104 for adoption at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 PM.

Commissioner Schreiber called on Township Manager LeFevre.

Manager LeFevre explained that this will replace all police radios throughout the county and the county has agreed to obtain financing on behalf of the local municipalities to cover any interest associated with the radios. The municipalities are responsible for the principal and a payback period of five years. The Township began funding for this expense several years ago and projected cost is \$363,000 and the Township currently has two thirds of that money in the Permanent Improvement Fund. The ordinance allows the Township to participate in the program and all radios will be replaced by the year 2016.

Commissioner Schreiber asked about radios for the fire department and Second Alarmers.

Manager LeFevre replied the Abington Fire Department and Second Alarmers requested that the Township place the order for radios on their behalf, but they understand that all payments related to their individual purchases will be their sole responsibility for repayment.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Gillespie asked about a discount for the radios.

Manager LeFevre replied because it is joint purchase and the amount of radios that will be purchased, the County is getting a substantial discount and it will be a substantial savings for the Township.

Commissioner Myers asked will all departments be able to communicate on the same channel using the new radios?

Chief Kelly replied not on their primary channels, but on other channels. The reason for the new radios is that the County is implementing all new infrastructure throughout the County in which they are paying for and that includes computers, antennas and receivers.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, asked were funds for the radios budgeted?

Manager LeFevre replied the Township's contribution was budgeted in the capital fund and deposited into the Permanent Improvement Fund as part of the budget process.

MOTION was ADOPTED 4-0.

Portable Electronic Speed Signs

Commissioner Jones commented that he has seen this device in other communities and it is about the same size as a speed limit sign, but it's portable. Ward 3 has narrow streets and it is difficult to place the larger trailer-based speed device on them and also the larger devices cannot be used during the wintertime when there is snow and ice. This sign could be deployed year-round and has the ability to operate in the stealth-mode. It is a more efficient device and would provide another tool for officers to enforce speeding, which is a Township-wide issue.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed added that we have looked into this device for the past few years. There are many narrow streets with parking issues where it is difficult to use the larger speed cart because it can block driveway access and vision. These signs would help that situation as they attach to a pole using a bracket such as radar survey boxes. Features include collecting data, but it only collects data in one direction.

It can be set in two different modes; one mode displays the speed and then there is the stealth-mode where it shuts the speed limit off, but still collects data. There is also a setting for strobe-light to flash alerting the driver that they are exceeding the speed limit. Cost is \$3,000 each, which includes data collection, mounts and straps to place them on a pole.

Commissioner Schreiber asked was a study done showing that these devices reduce speeding?

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied drivers do slow down for a portion of time.

Commissioner Schreiber asked how would it be decided where they will be placed and how long will they be in one location?

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied we will develop a list and we will follow the list in the order that the request is made. For a comparison, the device would need to stay in one place for a two-week period.

Commissioner DiPlacido said he would like to see information about the effectiveness of these devices from other communities that use them. Also, how many of the devices would be obtained?

Traffic Safety Officer replied he will get that information and we will begin with two devices.

Commissioner Spiegelman clarified that no data displayed or collected by the sign can be used for enforcement purposes, which falls under the same restriction as local use of radar. Is that correct?

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied that is correct. It would be for survey purposes only.

Commissioner Kline questioned whether this would qualify under the State's ARLE (Automated Red Light Enforcement) grants.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied he will look into it.

Commissioner Jones commented that he would like to see this implemented sooner rather than later as speeding is such an issue.

Manager LeFevre commented that if the committee is in favor, he would like to continue discussion at our next budget meeting to see if this expense could be incorporated into the Permanent Improvement Fund as part of the budget for 2016.

Commissioner Schreiber asked how long does it take to get the signs?

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied possibly a few weeks.

Commissioner Myers commented that the \$3,000 could be taken from Contingency Fund because the number one complaint that she gets from residents is about speeding on their streets. Every year, we promise to look for traffic-calming methods, and this is one at a reasonable cost that every ward could use. She would like to see this purchased as soon as possible.

Commissioner DiPlacido agreed with Commissioner Myers; however, he would like to see data on whether they work from the municipalities that use it.

Commissioner Schreiber commented that there should be a procedure in place on what ward will use it first.

Commissioner Spiegelman questioned whether these units are available for rental.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied he will look into it.

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

Expanded Use of Cameras

Commissioner Bowman commented that we have all seen the use of cameras in public places and he was thinking about Roslyn Park as there are bike and phone thefts that occur there. Constituents have complained about graffiti in the park as well and he feels they are a valuable tool, so he would support it as well as the expenditure of funds for it.

Commissioner Schreiber noted there are cameras at the skate park.

Mr. Wendell agreed there are two cameras at the skate park and they have been useful at times when incidents occur and prevented those incidents from becoming worse.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for the cost of the cameras.

Mr. Wendell replied technology is advanced and ranges from a few hundred to thousands. There are uplinks to satellites, which is a monthly fee or we can go through high-speed internet connection and that is approximately \$98 a month besides the cost of the camera.

Commissioner Kline questioned whether the camera stores a certain amount of information.

Mr. Wendell replied the DVR can store approximately a month's worth of video and the video only operates in segments, so that it only operates when something is in front of the camera.

Commissioner Kline said this sounds like a good idea, but he would like to know how many cameras would be needed and what the costs are.

Chief Kelly commented that they are a wise investment as they would assist in solving problems quickly. He suggested researching how mobile the cameras are so they can be moved to wherever they are needed.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, expressed concern that she feels the "information could be used against good people," and she asked for a list of the locations that would be under surveillance and how much it would cost the taxpayers.

Trial Extension of Yellow Lights

Traffic Safety Officer Freed said at the Board's request, he submitted three intersections to PennDOT for extension of the timing of yellow lights and they are evaluating that request. The intersections submitted were the intersections of Easton and Jenkintown Roads; Easton and Old Welsh Roads; and Susquehanna and Edge Hill Roads.

Chief Kelly added that the recommendation was to try this at intersections where no red light cameras are installed to see what the impact will be, and from that data, discuss where to go from there.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked if these three intersections are not approved by PennDOT, will other intersections be submitted to PennDOT.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied PennDOT indicated that the yellow light times already exceed the minimum requirements and they will take that under advisement for extending the current timing. When extending the yellow light time in one direction they have to take that time from another direction to even out the flow of traffic especially at peak hours.

Commissioner DiPlacido questioned whether the extended yellow light timings were applied for previously or installed that way?

Traffic Safety Officer Freed replied when permits are submitted for traffic signals, PennDOT times the yellows lights based on the makeup and speed of the roadway.

Commissioner Kline requested that prior to changing the timing of the yellow lights he would like to see crash data for the past three years on those intersections.

Chief Kelly replied we already have crash data for that time period for those intersections, and we will provide that to the Board.

Commissioner Jones questioned how the process works with PennDOT in making requests such as this.

Chief Kelly replied PennDOT follows engineering standards and there is very little discretion on their part.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed added that PennDOT's criteria are based on Federal motor vehicle laws, so what they do on a State level is dictated by the Federal government.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she does not understand why this is being done at non-red light camera intersections and she feels the experiment needs to be at red light camera intersections.

Chief Kelly replied the recommendation was to not do that experiment at red light camera intersections at this time because we do not have enough data. We are trying to figure out what will work in our community.

Commissioner Bowman commented that nothing will change his mind about supporting red light cameras.

Commissioner Myers commented that the red light cameras were installed not just for speeding issues, but also these are the highest accident intersections. Every accident will be recorded and reported, so the data is the accidents.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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