

Ross Township Commissioners Committee Meeting
1000 Ross Municipal Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
January 7, 2019
6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Stephen Korbel, Daniel L. DeMarco, Jeremy Shaffer, Patrick Mullin, Jack Betkowski, Jason Pirring, Joseph Laslavic and Richard Avon

ABSENT: Grace Stanko

SOLICITOR: P. J. Murray, Esq.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER: Douglas Sample

RECORDING SECRETARY: Noreen A. Re

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BOARD LIAISON: Dominic J. Rickert (Absent)

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

Commissioner Korbel stated the Board held an executive session on December 26th to discuss potential litigation related to the Fairley Road property. The Board will also have an executive session following the meeting to discuss that same item, as well as two personnel issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY:

Ms. Tara Howey, 106 Timberlane Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, spoke in support of Mr. Paul Trilli for appointment to the Zoning Hearing Board.

PRESENTATION OF RETIREES' PLAQUES:

Sergeant Samuel Comport, Officer Michael J. Thomas, Officer Barry Clifford and Lieutenant Albert Hribik



Chief Ley presented plaques to Sergeant Comport, Officer Thomas, Officer Clifford and Lieutenant Hribik in recognition of their years of service on the Ross Township Police Department.

PRESENTATION OF POLICE OFFICER ENTRY CANDIDATES:

Attorney Henry Miller, on behalf of the Civil Service Commission, presented the following candidates to the Board for consideration. Before doing so, he outlined the procedures followed in the selection process.

HIRING OF POLICE OFFICERS

- Position No. 1 – Candidates are:
 1. Nathan S. Roy (veteran)
 2. Christopher Shortley
 3. Troy Modrak

Motion to hire Nathan S. Roy for the position of Patrolman with the Ross Township Police Department upon the successful completion of a medical and psychological examination made by Commissioner Shaffer and seconded by Commissioner Laslavic.

Commissioner Korbek thanked Mr. Miller and the other Civil Service Commission members for their efforts in this process.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

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- Position No. 2 – Candidates are:
 1. Christopher Shortley
 2. Troy Modrak
 3. Kevin Novak

Motion to hire Christopher Shortley for the position of Patrolman with the Ross Township Police Department upon the successful completion of a medical and psychological examination made by Commissioner Betkowski and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

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Position No. 3 – Candidates are:

- 1. Troy Modrak
- 2. Kevin Novak
- 3. Jason Gilotty

Motion to hire Troy Modrak for the position of Patrolman with the Ross Township Police Department upon the successful completion of a medical and psychological examination made by Commissioner Betkowski and seconded by Commissioner Avon.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Position No. 4 – Candidates are:

- 1. Kevin Novak
- 2. Jason Gilotty

Motion to hire Kevin Novak for the position of Patrolman with the Ross Township Police Department upon the successful completion of a medical and psychological examination made by Commissioner Betkowski and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Position No. 5 – Candidate:

- 1. Jason Gilotty

Motion to hire Jason Gilotty for the position of Patrolman with the Ross Township Police Department upon the successful completion of a medical and psychological examination made by Commissioner Betkowski and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

Mr. Miller commented on Mr. Nathan Roy’s presentation of his resume. He indicated it was the most impressive resume he had seen.

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INTERVIEWS FOR BOARD AND COMMISSION OPENINGS:

Before the interviews began, Commissioner Korbel stated all applicants would be required to complete a free criminal background check before being considered. The background check must be returned by Friday, January 13th. Commissioner Korbel requested potential candidates to introduce themselves and state their qualifications and why they want to serve on the respective board they are applying for.

The following candidates were present, as indicated, and addressed the Board.

ZONING HEARING BOARD:

- 1 Vacancy – 5-year term
 - 6:30 p.m. – Ippolito Trilli
 - 6:35 p.m. – Timothy Hughes
 - *Ronald Zangaro

BUILDING APPEALS BOARD:

- 1 Vacancy and 1 Alternate – 3-year term
(See Multiple Board Applicants)

FIRE APPEALS:

- 1 Vacancy – 3-year term
 - 6:45 p.m. – John Sponcer
 - 6:50 p.m. – Wesley Semple
 - 6:55 p.m. William Linkenheimer

PLANNING COMMISSION:

- 3 Vacancies – 4-year term
 - 7:05 – Carl Eisenbeis
 - 7:10 – John Sample
 - 7:15 – Bridget Watson O'Brien
 - 7:20 – James Wigal

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VACANCY BOARD:

- 1 Vacancy – 1-year term
 - 7:25 – John Cooley
 - 7:30 – Walter Salachup
 - 7:35 – Edward Dougherty (Not present)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY BOARD

- 1 Vacancy – 1-year term
- 1 Vacancy – 2-year term
- 1 Vacancy – 3-year term
- 1 Vacancy – 4-year term
- 1 Vacancy – 5-year term
 - 7:40 – Melissa Fann
 - 7:45 – Deanna Philpott
 - 7:50 – Tobias Venar
 - 7:55 – Deb Olbert
 - 8:00 – Joshua Allenberg

TRAFFIC ADVISORY BOARD:

- 1 Vacancy – 4-year term
 - 8:05 – Joshua Clark (Not present)
 - 8:10 – Lisa Kaylor (Not present)
 - *David Tye

MULTIPLE BOARD APPLICANTS:

- 8:15 - Frank Caloiero (Planning & Vacancy)
- 8:20 - Jacob Roberts (All Boards)
- 8:25 - *Ronald Zangaro (Changed to ZHB only)
- 8:30 - John Motz (ZHB & Planning)
- 8:35 - William Pfrommer (TAB & Planning)
- 8:40 - *David Tye (Changed to TAB only)
- 8:45 - John Sucha (Equal Opportunity)

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – November 19th and December 3, 2018

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Bill List – January 7, 2019

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

FINANCE, BUDGET AND PENSION:

Chair: Jason Purring; Members – Joe Laslavic and Dan DeMarco

Ordinances to be Introduced:

Amending Ordinance No. 2422 – 2019 Sewer User Fees

To be adopted on January 21, 2019

Commissioner DeMarco commented that monthly billing will commence in January.

Collection of Current and Delinquent Mercantile and Business Privilege Taxes

Commissioner Korbel stated there is a meeting scheduled with the school district next week to talk about the turnKey Tax issue and the assessment appeal issue. The turnKey Tax issue is related to Business Privilege and Mercantile Tax collection. Currently the school district is the township's tax collector. Commissioner Korbel stated he and Commissioner Laslavic met with members of the school district to discuss turnKey Tax, et cetera. The response back from the district was they weren't interested, because there was a \$300 per month fee, which was incorrect. Mr. Schuster from turnKey had agreed to waive the monthly fee for one year and just take a percentage of the taxes collected.

Commissioner Korbel stated he was hoping to clear that up with the district when they meet next week and see if he can get them on board. If not, this Board has discussed taking that tax collection work back into the township and then subbing it out to Jordan Tax, which

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would actually collect it at a lower rate than the district currently collects it.

Finance Director Report

Mr. Berty was not in attendance. Mr. Sample stated they are in the process of reconciling the year-end statements. The auditors have begun the preliminary audit and will finish in February.

Assessment Appeals

With respect to the tax assessment appeal issue, which was also discussed with the district several months ago, it was discussed to take a more evenhanded approach to make things more fair for the residents and to look at filing tax assessment appeals in conjunction with the district on commercial and residential properties, but only looking at properties that have recently sold, which is the best indicator of current market value.

Commissioner Korbelt stated they were discussing what dollar amount to use. If a \$50,000 number was used between the assessed value and the sale value, with 100 homes being sold in that range between January of 2017 and February of 2018, that would result in a \$40,000 annual tax revenue improvement to the township and a \$271,000 annual tax revenue improvement to the school district. Also discussed was sharing the burden of these appeals and sharing the cost.

Commissioner Shaffer inquired about a legal issue where there are two identical houses where one house has recently sold and the one assessment was raised significantly higher. In response, Commissioner Korbelt stated "If you have a facially neutral policy that applies to commercial and residential, it typically passes muster." Commissioner Korbelt stated the school district solicitor agreed with the strategy at the original meeting.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Avon, Commissioner Korbelt stated if the township appealed an assessment, it would change for all the taxing entities. For this reason, in his view it is important for the township and the school district to work together.

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Following further discussion, Commissioner Korbel stated the township has to be evenhanded with commercial and residential for it to be constitutionally sound.

Sale of 2012 Police Ford Escape

Motion to ratify the sale of the 2012 Police Ford Escape to Kirk Rettger for the high bid of \$5,221.00 made by Commissioner Piring and seconded by Commissioner Laslavic.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Co-Chairs: Jack Betkowski and Dan DeMarco; Member – Pat Mullin

Police Chief Report:

Chief Ley acknowledged the efforts of the Civil Service Commission for their work in presenting the candidates for police officer. He also acknowledged the Vested Interest for K9s and Pink Biscuit K9s for their assistance in getting a bulletproof and stab-resistant vest for K9 Jimmy. The vest is in production, and they hope to receive it in the next 30 days.

New Business - None

PUBLIC WORKS, SANITATION AND SEWERS:

Chair: Pat Mullin; Members – Jack Betkowski and Rick Avon

Public Works Director Report

Mr. Funk was absent this evening. Mr. Sample stated the new hires for Public Works are up and running. Bids were opened for the Brookview Bridge Project. Construction will begin in the beginning of March. The church has granted a construction easement for a temporary road to McKnight. Mr. Sample stated he was in contact with the school district on whether they want to use a small bus to

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service off that temporary road or have the kids come down to Brookview, which will then be Camp Bow-Wow, to utilize some of their property.

ALCOSAN Municipal Transfer Agreement

Mr. Sample stated this has to do with the transfer of some large diameter sewers of ALCOSAN. He indicated he will be attending an informational meeting in Shaler on Tuesday morning, January 29th. There will also be an evening session at the Avalon Municipal Building on Tuesday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Commissioners Korb and DeMarco stated they would like to attend the evening session.

2019 Paving Program

Mr. Sample stated a company called Robotics was brought in to reanalyze the roads. Their analysis actually matched up almost perfectly with what the township workers in the field have done. There is no change to the five-year paving program, which is online. \$2 million worth of paving is proposed. He indicated he would like the authorization to put the Paving Program out for bid on January 21st. Due to the work of Robotics, the township now has pictures of all the streets. With the slide at Crider Hill, the images were very valuable, because it showed the condition of the road and the bend, which helped in getting West View Water to pay their fair share of the repair.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Perring, Mr. Sample stated the list is based on which roads are in most need of repair and not chosen strictly by ward. Commissioner Betkowski thanked Mr. Funk and Mr. Sample for their efforts in getting the paving bid out early last year. Mr. Sample stated the cost for Robotics was \$8,000, but it is invaluable, as it keeps a constant flow of information and data coming into the paving program. Commissioner Korb suggested having Robotics come in the summer and do a presentation.

Motion to authorize the Paving Program made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Perring.

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Motion passes – 8 to 0

New Business:

Commissioner Betkowski inquired if all the landslides have been repaired, and Mr. Sample responded in the affirmative. Mr. Sample stated they were able to use some Liquid Fuels money to help fund the projects.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

Chair: Pat Mullin; Members – Jason Piring and Joe Laslavic

Parks and Recreation Director Report

Ms. Peet was not present, but on her behalf Commissioner Mullin thanked everyone involved in the Christmas Party. Commissioner Laslavic commented that he hoped Ms. Lisa Dapprich and her therapeutic ponies would be a part of future events. The magazine deadline is this Friday.

2019 PRPS Conference

Mr. Sample stated Ms. Peet and Mr. Derry are both scheduled to attend this conference, which was budgeted. It will be placed on the January 21st agenda for a vote.

New Business:

Commissioner Piring invited everyone to look at the new paint job being done by Public Works in the gym.

PLANNING, ZONING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Chair: Dan DeMarco; Members – Jack Betkowski and Grace Stanko

Community Development Director Report

Mr. Rickert was not present to give a report.

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Deer Management Survey

Commissioner DeMarco stated out of 1500 surveys mailed out, there were 575 returned, which is an extremely good rate of return. The results did indicate that there is a deer problem in the township. He indicated he wanted to discuss the results with the game warden. He suggested a committee be formed to look at the problem areas and possible solutions. Commissioner Betkowski inquired if there was a way to survey the actual deer population. He also suggested having residents on the committee as well. Commissioner Shaffer suggested having the next survey ask what options residents would be willing to entertain to control the deer population. It was decided Commissioner DeMarco would chair the committee along with Commissioners Korbel, Betkowski and Shaffer.

New Business - None

turnKey Taxes

Mr. Mark Schuster of turnKey Taxes addressed the Board regarding what his company could do for the township. He stated by his company fixing the data, the dollars take care of themselves. He indicated he is currently working with Jordan Tax in other communities. Mr. Schuster stated through the use of his software he is a "data miner." The fee for the software is \$300 a month. 25 percent of the revenue collected would be his fee.

Mr. Schuster stated what he is proposing is the township use Jordan as its current collector and delinquent collector, because their rate is lower. He would work with them so data is not replicated. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Korbel, Mr. Schuster stated he would waive the \$300 a month fee for one year. His percentage fee is performance based.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Perring, Mr. Schuster stated he is not working with school districts directly, but works with local governments. He also offered to provide contact information for current clients. He discussed in detail the data he would be collecting. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Korbel, Mr. Schuster

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stated he would be willing to work with the school district in this endeavor.

ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS AND POLICY:

Chair: Joe Laslavic; Members – Dan DeMarco and Pat Mullin

Township Manager Report

Mr. Sample stated the township’s insurance carrier is funding a “Weight Loss Challenge” as part of their wellness program. There is a free exercise class offered to employees as part of the wellness program.

Travel Request for Civic Plus (website) Training Summit

Mr. Sample stated this will be a travel request for Ms. Katie Malsch to travel to Kansas City. The matter will be voted on at the January 21st meeting.

Distinguished Community Service Award

Commissioner Korbelt stated there was a memo in the packets from the manager outlining who would be eligible and some of the potential criteria. He indicated his thought would be perhaps at the next meeting there could be a vote to create the award and then begin to consider applicants at the end of the year. Commissioner Betkowski suggested having a nominee sign off before being considered for the award. He mentioned Delta Township has an extensive list of awards they present, which he felt could also be considered.

Commissioner Korbelt felt having the nominee sign off was too much of a self-promotion thing, such as a person running for an elected office would not be eligible. He suggested the nominees would be discussed by the Board and only the winner announced. Commissioner Betkowski suggested creating a new board with citizens. Commissioner DeMarco suggested having a commissioner on the board as well. Ms. Dee Spade from the school board was in attendance and described how the school district does their

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Distinguished Alumni Awards. Commissioner Korbel suggested having the matter placed on the next agenda to create the award.

**Prohibiting Smoking in Parks and Township Facilities
(buildings, property, vehicles, equipment, etc.)**

Commissioner Piring suggested having the ban apply to all township buildings. Commissioner Korbel suggested bringing the matter to the unions for discussion. Commissioner Piring felt strongly about having no smoking in the parks. Commissioner Betkowski suggested starting with no smoking in the parks and deal with the unions in Phase 2.

New Business - None

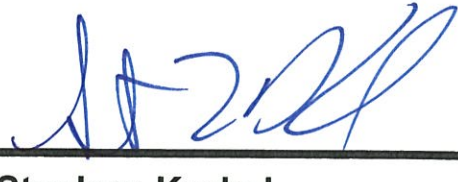
**OTHER BOARDS/ENTITIES (COG, CONNECT,
Intergovernmental) - None**

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:18 P.M.



**Douglas Sample
Manager/Secretary**

By: 

**Stephen Korbel
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners**

Minutes transcribed by *Noreen A. Re*, Certified Realtime Reporter