

Ross Township Commissioners Committee Meeting
1000 Ross Municipal Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
February 4, 2019
6:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Stephen Korbel, Daniel L. DeMarco, Jeremy Shaffer, Patrick Mullin, Jack Betkowski, Jason Purring, Joseph Laslavic, Grace Stanko, Richard Avon and Junior Commissioner Lira Murtezi

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

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY - None

SWEARING IN OF NEW POLICE OFFICERS:

District Judge Richard G. Opiela swore in the following new officers: Nathan S. Roy, Christopher Shortley, Troy Modrak, Kevin Novak and Jason Gilotty.

PRESENTATION OF PLAQUES:

**Anthony Marzullo, owner of Anthony's Barber Shop –
Celebrating 60 years of business**

Commissioner DeMarco presented a plaque to Mr. Anthony Marzullo, owner of Anthony's Barber Shop, in honor of Mr. Marzullo celebrating 60 years of business in the same location in McKnight-Siebert Shopping Center. Mr. Marzullo thanked his friend John, who was with him for 32 years, and his current staff.

Ms. Melva Deitt – Celebrating her 100th birthday

Ms. Deitt was unable to attend, but Commissioner Mullin stated he would deliver the plaque to her at her home. Commissioner Korbelt indicated she is welcome to come back when she is available.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Commissioner Korbelt announced the Board will hold an executive session following the meeting to discuss personnel matters and potential litigation regarding the property on Fairley Road. He also announced the next meeting will be held on February 11th instead of February 18th. The Board will be considering two development plans, the redevelopment of the Perry Shops and redevelopment of the Sears property at Ross Park Mall.

Commissioner Korbelt also stated the township received on Friday from Harrisburg a \$2.2 million multimodal grant from PennDOT, which will result in significant improvements to the McKnight-Siebert intersection for vehicles and pedestrians. He thanked all the local politicians who supported the township in obtaining the grant. He also thanked Avanti Consulting for their efforts. He described the improvements that will be made, which include building a sidewalk leading to Woodland Road from McKnight and adding a second lane up the hill towards the fire department and an additional left turn lane on southbound McKnight.

Commissioner Korbelt, Mr. Sample, Mr. Bertly and Mr. Murray met with representatives from the school district to discuss TurnKey Taxes and the Business Privilege/Mercantile Tax, as well as the tax assessment issue that the Board has discussed in the past.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – January 7th and January 21, 2019
Bill List – February 4, 2019

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

Motion passes unanimously

PUBLIC WORKS, SANITATION AND SEWERS:

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

Public Works Director Report

Mr. Funk addressed the procedure Public Works goes through in the case of snow and the process by which trucks are called out. He indicated the recent criticism was unwarranted. There were 20 trucks out early in the morning. With traffic conditions, some trucks were caught in traffic. Mr. Funk indicated the township is committed to buying 8,000 tons of salt. They have only used 3,000 tons to date. They do have storage space for the salt.

The four new employees have started. The Brookview project is finished. The road is paved, and they are ready for the bridge demolition and construction.

Commissioner Shaffer inquired about tracking the salt trucks with GPS transponders that are on the vehicles. Mr. Funk indicated it lets you know the time and speed of where the trucks were. That is when they noticed the vehicles were stuck in traffic. Mr. Funk stated that GPS information is only available internally and not something that could be put on the website. He indicated there were 11 complaints made to his office and 4 or 5 on social media. As he was driving through neighboring townships, he noted the roads were not as well-maintained as Ross Township's.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Purring, Mr. Funk described the strategy used in conjunction with the school district in tailoring the

snow removal routes to the bus routes. He is in close contact with the superintendent during snow situations. Commissioner Korbel inquired if something could be put on the website to inform the public about the strategy used. Mr. Funk indicated the school district could possibly come out with a letter for the public.

ALCOSAN Municipal Transfer Agreement

Mr. Sample stated in the packets was a draft agreement for ALCOSAN taking over the trunk lines. Since the draft agreement was from Commissioner Korbel's law firm, he will not be participating in the decision.

New Business - None

PARKS AND RECREATION:

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

Parks and Recreation Director Report

Ms. Peet stated the magazine is finished and will be mailed around the beginning of March. There will be a Special Needs Dance on February 23rd from 12 noon until 2:00 p.m. The Easter Egg Hunt will be April 13th. The Pennsylvania Resource Council will be holding a rain barrel class on April 28th from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. They received a 50 percent donation from Patagonia towards the class, so the cost will be \$40 instead of \$80. Participants will receive a rain barrel.

Ms. Peet indicated on Friday, May 3rd, there will be another tree planting at Sangree Park done by the Sixth Grade from Ross Elementary. Summer camp registration starts March 1st.

New Business: None

PLANNING, ZONING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

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

Community Development Director Report - None

Commissioner DeMarco stated he wants his committee to get together to look at the tree ordinance and to discuss a Marcellus shale ordinance. Regarding the tree ordinance, Commissioner Korbel commented once the Board is comfortable with a draft, the Pending Ordinance Doctrine can be used to make it effective immediately without having to wait for the county to review, etcetera. With respect to the Marcellus shale ordinance, similar to the ALCOSAN issue, Commissioner Korbel indicated he had a business conflict due to the fact his law firm represents every major oil and gas driller and would not be participating in any vote in that regard. Commissioner DeMarco stated he would have something ready for the second meeting in March.

Prohibiting Signs in Right-of-Way Ordinance

Mr. Sample stated this would basically eliminate any sign in the right-of-way, including political signs. Upon inquiry by Commissioner DeMarco as to who is responsible for taking the signs down in violation of the ordinance, Mr. Sample indicated it was him and Mr. Funk who took the political signs down. Mr. Sample stated Public Works would assume the responsibility for anything from the telephone pole to the roadway.

Commissioner Betkowski commented that the curb appeal of the business district is appreciated by the business community. He also suggested there be a penalty associated with failure to comply with the ordinance. Since this is an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Commissioner Korbel stated there is already a penalty provision that applies. Having a specific penalty was discussed.

Mr. Sample commented that they are wrapping up the plans for the two developments that the Board will be looking at. Any questions should be directed to Mr. Rickert.

Commissioner Korbel asked Mr. Sample to put some information in the packets for the first meeting in March about an Environmental Advisory Council so the Board can discuss whether they want to adopt that.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

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

Police Chief Report

Chief Ley indicated the first Coffee with a Cop (and a dog) will be held on Tuesday, March 12th, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Ross Park Mall. The K-9 and Traffic Division will be there to answer any questions. There will be another town hall night/opioid forum held in conjunction with West View and the North Hills School District on Monday, March 18th, at the North Hills Middle School.

Commissioner Mullin inquired as to the process for awarding veterans their ten-point preference. Chief Ley indicated it is handled according to the Pennsylvania State Civil Service Rules. He indicated it was the solicitor's opinion that it is to be given at the end of the process after the written and oral exams.

Civil Service Commission – Creation of New Hiring List

Chief Ley commented, with the last group of hiring, the entire eligibility list was used. There are four potential retirements expected this year. Chief Ley stated he thought it would be good to create a new eligibility list moving forward.

No-Parking Ordinance for 5th Way

Mr. Sample stated this would be introduced at the next meeting for a vote.

New Business: None

ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS AND POLICY:

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

Township Manager Report - None

JUNIOR COMMISSIONER REPORT:

Junior Commissioner Murtezi reported that Curriculum Night will be held on February 7th from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sophomore Hannah Sciulli advanced to the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science. The Jazz Band Mardi Gras is February 16th at 6:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center. Students have off on February 18th for Presidents' Day. March 1st is the Cabaret Night at the North Hills cafeteria.

Travel Request for PELRAS Conference

Mr. Sample stated this is the Labor and Employment Conference in Penn State. Scheduled to go are Commissioner DeMarco, Chief Ley, Director Berty, Director Funk and Mr. Sample. It will be approved at the next meeting.

Travel Request for ALOM Conference

Scheduled to go to the ALOM Conference are Commissioners Betkowski, Stanko and Laslavic. Mr. Sample stated if anyone else would like to go to please E-mail him with how many nights and so forth. It will be on the next agenda for approval.

Vacant Property Application – Jackson Avenue – 611-N-168

Mr. Sample stated the application meets the criteria, as well as the Comprehensive Plan. There are no code violations on the applicant's property. There will be a resolution presented at the next meeting.

New Business:

Commissioner Purring mentioned improving communication through the website. He also inquired about the status of goals that were set last year in January. Mr. Sample stated he would have them in the next packet. Commissioner Purring also mentioned the delivery of the packets by the Police Department. He stated it would give the commissioners more time to review the information if it could be sent paperless. Mr. Sample stated it would have to be all

commissioners in agreement to go paperless. If there would be any document that a commissioner would want printed, that could be done. Mr. Sample will look into the matter and report back to the Board.

FINANCE, BUDGET AND PENSION:

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

Finance Director Report

Mr. Berty stated there was a 2017 Liquid Fuels audit recently, and there were no findings. There was a benefits fare held for employees, which was well-attended. One of the K-9 trucks was sold on Friday on Municibid for approximately \$7,000. It will be on the next agenda for approval.

Mr. Berty went through the 2018 financial statements in detail. The operating account ended up a little higher than where it started in January. Overall for 2018 the township finished up slightly higher than where it started. The PLGIT account earned \$40,000 in interest.

The real estate tax number was right on budget. In 2018 the Real Estate Transfer Tax was higher by \$150,000. The Earned Income Tax exceeded the budget by approximately \$420,000. The General Fund interest finished at just less than \$100,000. Last year it was budgeted to use \$1.9 million in fund balance. Nothing additional was taken. Mr. Berty went over the budgets of each department in detail. Legal services went over by approximately \$10,000. Most departments came in at 95 percent or less. Revenues came in a little bit higher than expected, and expenditures came in lower.

Mr. Berty went through the Capital Fund in detail. Due to some fees and payments, the actual amount received from the TIF was \$651,000. \$200,000 was budgeted for the Recreation Park Grant, but only \$121,000 was received, which was less than budgeted for. The Police Department was right on budget. The road program was over budget by \$200,000. Some of the cost for the bridge repairs was offset by some Liquid Fuels money. Overall, revenues exceeded

expenditures by \$300,000. Once the final payment for slope stabilization is received, the number will be down closer to \$50,000 in revenues over expenditures.

For 2019, there will be higher expenditures, but the revenues are not budgeted as high for 2019. The TIF payment was a one-time payment for the revenue side. The road program for 2019 is budgeted at \$2 million. Mr. Berty is proposing to transfer some money from the General Fund to the Capital Fund to cover that.

Commissioner Korbel commented that a school board member stated the township was five years behind in paving, which is not true.

New Business - None

OTHER BOARDS/ENTITIES (COG, CONNECT, Intergovernmental):

Commissioner Betkowski stated he included the agenda and handouts from the CONNECT Health Working Group meeting he attended. He applauded the chief's efforts in working with West View to educate the public on the opioid epidemic. He learned at the meeting that Ross/West View EMS was awarded a mini grant for public education and leave-behind kits. He suggested inviting Ms. JoEllen Marsh from the Allegheny County Health Department to come and give an update on what the Health Department is doing regarding the opioid crisis and information about the surveys they have conducted.

Commissioner DeMarco stated his term on the Library Board has expired, but he has agreed to continue. He also stated he has recently been voted vice-president of the Library Board.

Mr. Sample commented that there are two spots on the EMS Board that expire at the end of January that will need to be filled.

Commissioner DeMarco also stated the Gala for the library is coming up on Saturday, April 13th.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

**MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT
8:02 P.M.**

Manager/Secretary

**President,
Stephen Korbel
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners**