

TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022, 7:00 P.M.
11279 Center Highway, North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Presiding Officer – Zachary Haigis, President, Board of Commissioners

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Haigis called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Stump Present
Commissioner Atwood Present
Commissioner Gray Present
Commissioner Zona Present
Commissioner Wengrzyn Present
Commissioner Gass Present
Commissioner Haigis Present

Also Present:
Mike Turley
Solicitor Dice
Ryan Fonzi
Chief Rizzo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZENS INPUT

None.

Work Sessions Discussion Topics

1) Waste Management Extra Recycling Carts - discussion.

Mike Turley states when specifications were put out for bid the garbage collection and recycling were bid as one item. When going to the automated collection, there was a price for an extra garbage cart at six dollars per month, but there was no provision for an extra recycling cart. He states we are now seeing some interest in getting a second recycling cart and seems to have to do with having more cardboard. The easiest solution and what he would suggest is offering the extra recycling cart for six dollars per month or the option of taking cardboard to the recycling locations in the Township. Commissioner Gray asks if it is still an option taking recycling to the Norwin High School because he used to do that but then saw signs stating not for public use. Mike Turley states he will check and should be recycling containers at the Middle School, Strawpump and Larimer vfd's. Commissioner Atwood asks if the six dollar extra fee is for the cost of hauling the extra material not for the actual cart. Mike Turley states that includes the extra cart and taking the recycling. Commissioner Stump asks if Waste Management has to pay to get rid of the recycling or is that something they are making money on. Mike Turley states the practice is their bid price considers the value of the recyclables. Commissioner Stump asks should the fee be six dollars for both extra carts. Commissioner Haigis states he is ok with it but if they can get an extra ninety six gallon trash cart for six dollars, the recycling carts should be less at four dollars. Mike Turley

February 10, 2022

states an addendum would have to be done and there are not that many accounts requesting the extra recycling cart. The Board agrees to move forward.

2) Phone System Evaluations

Mike Turley states this is related to the move upstairs. Jonathan and the police department looked at various upgrade options but there are a couple of keys to this. One is to recognize the old copper lines are going away. The vendors talked with recommend a voice over IP systems and finally there are security standards related to police communications. There is fifteen thousand dollars in infrastructure costs regardless of which system we use. In the memo sent to the Board, it is recommended for Third Generation of PA, a company that met our needs and have experience with police departments, and was the lowest cost at a yearly cost of thirteen hundred dollars and the monthly cost will be below our current cost. Jonathan Beskid gives a briefing of the phone system also. Commissioner Stump asks if more than one bid was received. Mike Turley states there were three bids and Third Generation was the least expensive and was liked the most.

3) Resolution for Budget Amendment – discussion.

Mike Turley states this is a budget amendment that included the Shannon Street box culvert replacement at an estimated cost of one hundred seventy five thousand dollars, but were increasingly aware of a drainage problem on Mickanin Road at several locations and determined that the culvert problem on Shannon Street would be delayed with Mickanin Road being a bigger priority that needs to be addressed. The cost estimate is roughly the same.

4) Attorney General Agreement

Mike Turley states this was requested to be publicly discussed and a copy of the agreement has been provided to the Board. Commissioner Gray states there are two issues with it in his opinion, one being the way the agreement was enacted behind closed doors and secondly that he has a problem with the agreement itself because North Huntingdon has agreed to give personnel to the AG's office and yet the Township pays them along with right now having a shortage of officers. He states Mike Turley was originally opposed to it and there is no benefit for North Huntingdon. The cost liability and other matters fall on us and the AG's office get the benefits. Commissioner Gray states he understands the idea of sharing information and working together but why doesn't the AG's office hire someone themselves and assign them to North Huntingdon. He states Chief Rizzo's memo states that this was forwarded to Bruce Dice for review and he approved the content however the matter and contract was never publicly discussed.

Commissioner Zona states he would be more than happy to vote on it in public, but to say the AG's office benefits from this is not true and they really get nothing out of this. In speaking with someone in charge of the task force, right now they have approximately two hundred local officers just in Westmoreland County on this task force on a part time basis. He feels in this agreement, the Township pays the officers salary but the Attorney General pays for the overtime and if the Board votes no to this agreement, officers will continue to make the arrests and big cases and the Township would be responsible for both the salary and paying overtime. Commissioner Zona

February 10, 2022

states this is a usual agreement in law enforcement and he has seen so many officers work with Homeland Security, FBI Task Force, the ATF Task Force and the DEA and this is nothing unusual.

Chief Rizzo states this was discussed in executive session because of personnel matter and the Sunshine Act has exemptions for reasons but also a Term and Condition of Employment. This agreement between North Huntingdon and the Attorney General would be considered a Term and Condition of Employment. Chief Rizzo explains the Task Force is working every day and is composed of local officers throughout the County working in conjunction with fulltime agents with the AG's office to make an impact not only in our community but others as well. The officers that go out and work Task Force, the Township gets reimbursed for their hours worked on a monthly basis. He states they all meet every month at the chief's meeting and coordinate efforts as there are no boundaries or border for narcotics. Chief Rizzo acknowledges the staffing issues right now in the police department and states the AG's office is willing to wait for our officers until the department is stabilized in staffing. The position in general is called a LOFT position which means Local Officer Full Time and there are eight positions across the Commonwealth and basically will be at work every day and wouldn't be sent away. The benefits of that is having the ability to open the borders as Commissioner Zona said, and Chief Rizzo states that Commissioner Zona has more experience in the narcotics field that he ever will and that is where he spent his career. Chief Rizzo sees this opportunity as a win – win as does the department and he asks the Board to trust to give it a try and also have the option to pull out at any time, thirty days. Commissioner Zona adds the Task Force that is run out of North Huntingdon only has three full time AG's on the force, the rest are local officers and he adds that it is an honor for the AG's office to select North Huntingdon Police. Commissioner Gray states that it sounds from Chief Rizzo's description that the program is working fine as it is and what do we gain by this and also lose somebody on the road. Chief Rizzo states that is incorrect as this is a detective position and not losing a road officer. Commissioner Haigis states he had some concerns with the financial and liability but after Chief Rizzo and Commissioner Zona explained it further found that it is a standard agreement. Also, he now understands that officers are not being taken off of the roads for this and it is in fact an honor for our officers being a part of this organization.

5) COVID-19 Policy – discussion

Commissioner Zona asks what are we currently doing with COVID regarding employees. Mike Turley states we are referring them to the CDC Guidelines which were changed a month or so ago as far as isolation and quarantine. He states it currently is five days if exposed or have symptoms but there are recommendations that if you are having symptoms to wait to get a negative test before returning, but basically using the five days from when symptoms onset. Commissioner Zona asks if an employee states they were near or exposed to somebody that was sick we make them take five days off. Mike Turley states that is what the guidelines are but also up to the employee to determine and report. Commissioner Zona clarifies that a negative test is not required to return to work. Mike Turley states no because there is no record of who is vaccinated, so if somebody is exposed and vaccinated you don't have to quarantine. Commissioner Zona states it is different for people who are vaccinated or not, however his opinion is never forcing someone to take time off because of being near somebody that was sick. Commissioner Wengrzyn agrees especially if they are not feeling sick. Mike Turley states he does not recall anybody being at home just because they were exposed. Commissioner Wengrzyn adds that something that was discussed previously

