

**MINUTES
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP VIRTUAL MEETING

August 10, 2020

7:00 P.M.

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Williams-Zabicki called the workshop meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 7:02 P.M. This was a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 regulations.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL:

BOARD

Dan Styche – Present
Debra Zymroz –Present
Rick Ruffennach – Present
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq.– Present
Dawn Williams-Zabicki – Present

STAFF

Chuck Means, Solicitor - Absent
Kevin Brett, Engineer - Absent
Craig Campbell, Police Chief – Absent
Bob Caun, Planning Director – Absent
Jeff Hinds, Finance Director – Absent
Tom Plietz – Bldg/Fire Codes – Absent
Bob Palmosina, PW Director – Absent
Rochelle Barry, Parks Director – Absent
Kyle Thauvette, Twp. Manager - Present
Valerie Salla, Twp. Secretary – Absent

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Was not held.

II. Board Discussion for Committees

A. Administrative/Public Affairs

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. *Grant Applications.* Two (2) Grants were applied for through GTRP (Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program). One grant is for the installation of a waterline from the Panhandle Trail head to near the Dog Park to allow for water and restroom facilities. The Friends of Collier Parks and the Friends of the Panhandle Trail are in support of this project. The other grant is for a mulched walking trail around the perimeter of the municipal complex property. The GTRP match for the grants is 15% and will not get paid until the next budget year.
2. *Dog Park.* The grand opening was a great success. Thank you to all those that were able to make the ribbon cutting at the new Molly's Park possible. There were many projects the residents worked on to make the park possible. A special thanks to Mr. Gene Czambel, the Dog Park Committee, Parks and Recreation Board, the Friends of Collier Parks, the Friends of the Panhandle Trail and the Public Works Department. We are still waiting for benches to arrive that will be an asset to the dog park.

3. *The Everesting*. This past weekend, Collier resident, Justin Frambes rode his bike up and down Nike Site Road 105 times till he reached the elevation of Mt. Everest (29,029 ft.). He collected over \$3,000 dollars and lots of canned goods for the local food bank in Bridgeville, PA. Commissioner Zymroz thanked Chief Campbell and the Officers from helping with this.

B. Building/Codes

See Planning and Land Use Development.

C. COG

Commissioner Ruffennach reported the following:

1. The COG is off for the summer and hope to go back in September.
2. The Vactor Truck has some available dates towards the end of August and the beginning of September if we are interested in booking it.

D. Finance

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki reported the following:

1. *Refinancing Bond*. All the paperwork has been signed for refinancing the bond and will save the Township about \$260,000.00.

Commissioner Styche questioned if the Township has been able to meet the demands since COVID19.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated last month we were under 6% on expenses and under 3% on revenues. We will take another look for this month to see where we are at.

E. Parks & Recreation

Commissioner Styche reported the following:

1. *Dog Park*. The opening was held and it was a nice event. The four (4) benches that have been ordered should arrive shortly. Once the benches are installed, we plan to have a bigger event at a later date and invite the residents that made donations through the Friends of Collier Parks.
2. *Pickle Ball*. Commissioner Styche, Kyle Thauvette and Rochelle Barry (Parks Director), Friends of Collier Parks and some Pickle ball players had a meeting to discuss additional pickle ball courts. We came to a short term agreement and are going to use Webb Park tennis courts and do some patching and put lines on there so it can be used this year and next year we will try to do some resurfacing if the budget will allow. Pickle Ball is big in the Township now. The cost for three (3) additional nets will be \$500.00. Commissioner Styche is going to suggest that the Friends of Collier Parks and Recreation pay for half of it.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned if there is room in the Parks and Recreation budget for this.

Mr. Thauvette stated there is a little wiggle room in the Parks and Recreation budget due to not having expenses with programs and Collierfest. We can improve some of the amenities at Webb Park.

Commissioner Zymroz informed the Board that last week, Ms. Barry put together a mini prom for the few Seniors that work at the Community Center since they did not have a prom. Ms. Barry used her own money and had a few donations. She decorated the whole place, had food, had music, had favors (little gift bags) for the Seniors. There was a backdrop for pictures to be taken and she took the pictures. Commissioner Zymroz felt this was a great thing Ms. Barry did for the Seniors. The girls wore their prom dresses. Unfortunately, we could not do this for all the Seniors. It was just for the employees of the Community Center.

F. Planning and Land Use Development

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki reported the following:

1. *Chartiers Valley Shopping Center.* She and Bob Caun met with Representatives from Kossman Development which shared the analysis they have been doing about the market and types of businesses that will actually get people to come in to shop. They are trying to fill the empty space where Kmart was and to maybe add on to the building.
2. *Sheetz.* Has started digging again.

G. Public Safety

Commissioner Ruffennach reported the following:

1. *Fire Meeting.* Each fire department has their own individual bylaws and he is waiting on two (2) fire departments to get a member for the bylaw committee. He is hoping to have the names on the bylaws committee by the next meeting.

Commissioner Styche informed the Board that Allegheny County will be giving each fire department \$25,000.00 and the ambulance service may get an additional \$25,000.00 but the County is not sure yet being they are two (2) separate entities. The fire and EMS will be getting letters from the County regarding this.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated the discussion for the September Workshop meeting will be about the fire study and fire departments.

H. Public Works

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. *Catch Basins and Pipe.* Public Works installed new catch basins and 60ft. of pipe on Mayer Street.
2. *Dog Park.* Concrete slabs were poured for the benches.
3. *Wood Waste.* Approximately 30 truck loads of wood waste were removed from the stock yard.
4. *Pine Trees.* Several pine trees were removed from the Township lot.
5. *Baseball Association.* The President of the Athletic Association is very please with the baseball fields.
6. *Upcoming Projects.* Webb Park tennis courts are getting a face lift.
7. *Ridge Road.* Repaired pipe along road.
8. *Baldwin Road* – Installed new catch basins and pipe.

Commissioner Zymroz stated she has gotten a couple complaints about Webb Park from a family that lives across the street. There are people older than 14 years of age going onto the ballfield and hitting baseballs that are going over to one of the resident's yard. The family is very concerned because there are cars parked over there also. The family was told to call the police when this happens. She has taken pictures of them and has video taped them. Mr. Palmosina and Ms. Barry did go speak with the family. Mr. Palmosina made arrangements to get signs made. They are also looking into extending the fence and possibly rearranging the field to make home plate in a different area.

Commissioner Styche stated the field they are using is not designed for older kids and that is what the problem is. The field is designed for younger kids.

Commissioner Zymroz stated the balls are being hit over the fence and sometimes there are over 7 balls in the yard at one time. They have been to the Township before for this problem.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated we will take the first step by putting up signs to see if that helps.

I. Sewer Department

Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. *Training.* Lennon, Smith, Souleret has a colleague that trains people to go into sanitary sewers. Mr. Palmosina will be selecting four (4) of the Public Works employees to be trained in going into confined spaces, gases, etc. Part of the program certifies the employee and we will also receive the equipment to go into the sanitary manholes. We are in the process of signing the employees up for the training.
2. *Dollar Bank.* We have finalized the paperwork needed for the sewer payments to be processed. The residents have paid through the company called Diversified and Dollar Bank excepts the image file that these funds are transferred through. We will be transferring the sewer payments from Dollar Bank to Brentwood Bank to make the payment to Alcosan.

J. Township Manager / Township Business

Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. *Grading Ordinance.* There has been some confusion with the residents that have been doing work in their yards and developers. We have asked Lennon, Smith, Souleret (LSSE) to simplify the ordinance and they have put together a memo which is on the agenda for discussion.
2. *Allegheny County Letter.* The Allegheny County Department of Parks and Recreation is attempting to acquire a piece of property that has been tax delinquent for several years. This property is located at the intersections of Pinkerton Run Rd., Baldwin Rd., and Noblestown Road. This is a gravel parking lot that sits across from Baldwin and sits off to the left of Pinkerton Run Rd. The County has been trying for close to 10 years to acquire this property. It is the connecting piece that goes to the Botanical Gardens and the Panhandle Trail.

Currently there is about \$13,000.00 of unpaid Township taxes and even more owed for school taxes. The County is willing to settle on an amount with property owners but can only do so if the Township and School District are willing to waive those delinquent tax collections. This is a Board's decision.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned why they waited so long and take 10 years.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned why the taxes were not paid and if there was some financial hardship.

Mr. Thauvette did not want to get into any personal details because he did not know the details. The County Parks Director mentioned the property was transferred to the heirs of the property owner. The previous property owner was not interested in selling or giving his property to the County. The heirs are more interested.

Commissioner Styche questioned if a price was mentioned.

Mr. Thauvette stated no.

Commissioner Styche felt if we are not getting the taxes now and the County is able to take it over to improve our trail system, he had no problem waiving the taxes.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated he had a problem with it because if it were him, they would be coming after him for the taxes. If the County wants this property, the County should pay us like any parcel that gets sold. Pay what you owe to the Township and to the School District. He would be surprised if the School District waives the taxes. We should sue the property owners, take the property and then sell the property to the County. There are a lot of parcels in this Township that owe taxes and if we did this, we would have to do it for everyone else.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated Commissioner Chiurazzi raises a good point and asked Commissioner Chiurazzi to explain how this would work and is it likely the Township would get the unpaid taxes.

Commissioner Chiurazzi informed the Board and questioned if the County agreed to waive the taxes.

Mr. Thauvette stated yes.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated if the property is an asset to the County then the County should pay us and questioned if taxes can even be waived.

Commissioner Styche stated there are residents of this Township that have gotten parcels of land and had the taxes waived by the County, Township and School.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the family chose not to pay the taxes and the heirs are the record owners. They could have made a deal with our Attorney and do it on contingency basis.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned if we can make a decision based on this fact. If the family is under financial distress, can we give them the benefit of the doubt and waive the taxes or is that making an unfair judgement?

Mr. Thauvette stated Commissioner Chiurazzi is right and this parcel has a captive audience. A lot of time, delinquent parcels are because there are no heirs, or the heirs do not live in this State and they do not care, or we cannot find an owner. Those types of properties become in disrepair and are not worth anything to anyone. This parcel has a low assessed evaluation because it is a parking lot but because there are interested parties, Commissioner Chiurazzi has a very good point in terms of if the Township could acquire the property instead of the County.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the Township needs to be careful on doing something like this because others will want this too.

Commissioner Zymroz stated to check with the school board to see what they are going to do.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding this parcel. We will see what the School District will do first.

3. *GTRP (Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program) Grants*. The waterline extension and the bathroom along the Panhandle Trail. The County owns the property along the Panhandle Trail and are very much in favor of any type of facilities we are able to put onto the trail. The total estimated cost is about \$108,000.00 and the Township would be responsible for about \$19,000.00. For the second project of the mulched walking trail around the Township's property border will be a total cost of \$24,000.00 and the Township would be responsible for 15% (a few thousand dollars). If we are awarded the grants, the projects would not be paid until the 2021 budget and beyond. As developments occur in the Township there is a fee in lieu of that the Township receives to put towards parks. There will be monies coming in from developments that we can pay for these amenities without taxing our residents.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki asked if there were any other questions or comments for Mr. Thauvette.

Commissioner Ruffennach questioned if we heard from Youngblood Paving.

Mr. Thauvette stated no and he did ask LSSE if they knew of a start date and has not gotten back to him yet but thought it would be the end of August. There will be lines put on Steen Road.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated he thought they were in Crafton right now.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we need them to do Cluxton Road. It is a very bad road. Part of it is County. The County could widen part of that road. The guiderail on Dorrington needs repaired also.

Mr. Thauvette stated he would send a letter to the County.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Private Developments in the Township.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki commented there are a couple of private developments in the Township. These developments have had variances on roads and services which leads to the Homeowner's Association paying for garbage services, snow removal, etc. Residents that buy into a private development become frustrated because they are paying taxes, yet they still have to pay for garbage removal, snow removal and streetlights. The developer gets a break because they do not have to meet the road standards, etc. The residents are not getting a value and are getting frustrated. Should the Township prohibit these private residential developments?

Commissioner Styche questioned if this was legal to do.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this Board can have an Ordinance that we do not permit private developments but, private developments happen everywhere.

Mr. Thauvette stated if an Ordinance is passed for private developments, the developer can always ask for a variance and suggested this could be something for the Comprehensive Plan update.

A lengthy discussion took place on private developments and setting policies for the developers.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki suggested Republic Services be contacted to see if they can pick up in private developments.

2. Truth in Advertising Ordinance.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated this is an Ordinance that would state when you have and do business in Collier Township, we want in the businesses advertising to say they are located in Collier Township. She spoke to the Codes office about the Ordinance and enforcing it.

A discussion took place regarding the Ordinance. The Board agreed for businesses to say they are located in Collier Township. Incentive programs for businesses were discussed.

3. Grading Ordinance Update.

Mr. Thauvette highlighted the following:

1. Require a Geotechnical report be provided for all earth moving activities that impact a previously constructed engineered slope.
2. Clarify construction process with regards to inspections and observation work.

The Board felt the updates should be as clear as possible and would like to look over the updates and discuss it at another meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

Mr. Thauvette informed the Board there were no public comments.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

V. Account Transfer(s):

- Approval of the transfer of \$70,000.00 from the General Fund Account to the Capital Fund Checking Account.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, seconded by Commissioner Styche to approve the Account Transfer(s) as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

VI. Approval of General Fund Operating Account items:

- Invoices paid and checks written from July 28, 2020 to August 9, 2020 in the amount of \$219,535.38.
- Bills requested for payment for August 10, 2020 in the amount of \$96,555.06.

Motion was made by Commissioner Styche, seconded by Commissioner Zymroz, to approve the General Fund Operating Account items as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

VII. Approval of Capital Investment Account items:

- Invoices paid and checks written from July 28, 2020 to August 9, 2020 in the amount of \$66,698.54.
- Bills requested for payment for August 10, 2020 in the amount of \$2,879.59.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zymroz, seconded by Commissioner Ruffennach, to approve the Capital Investment Account items as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion was made by Commissioner Styche; seconded by Commissioner Chiurazzi; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 8:22 p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

Dawn Williams-Zabicki, President
Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Salla
Township Secretary