

**MINUTES  
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**WORKSHOP MEETING**

**November 11, 2019**

**7:00 P.M.**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Macino called the workshop meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 7:00 P.M.

**A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**B. ROLL CALL:**

**BOARD**

Wilson Durisko – Absent  
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq. - Present  
Dawn Williams-Zabicki – Present  
Rick Ruffennach – Present  
George Macino – Present

**STAFF**

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

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive session was held prior to the meeting.

Commissioner Macino thanked the Commissioners to be Debra Zymroz and Dan Styche.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:**

There was no public comment.

**III. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Consider action to set a public hearing date of Monday, December 9, 2019 at 6:15pm for the proposed PEDD Residential Overlay District zoning amendment.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, second by Commissioner Williams-Zabicki to set a public hearing for December 9, 2019 as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

2. Consider action to accept the resignation of Commissioner Wilson Durisko from the Collier Township Board of Commissioners

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, second by Commissioner Ruffennach to accept the resignation of Wilson Durisko as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

Commissioner Macino added on the agenda the Board will be discussing and voting on to fill two (2) positions in the Township. The hiring process we went through to select those individuals was extremely thorough. We advertised for those positions. We have secured resumes. We evaluated each of the individuals and as they come up for a vote, we will discuss them. Everyone will have a chance to voice their opinion on both candidates.

Solicitor Means added that compared to the process he has seen in other municipalities, it is a good process Collier Township has and it has proven itself in the past, have advertised and do a thorough review to assess skills and those are the foundation of a good process.

3. Consider action to appoint Tom Plietz as Building and Fire Code Official at a rate of \$80,000 effective November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Commissioner Macino asked for comments from the Board.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated no comment.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated she was in that interview and when we looked at Code Inspector, Building Inspector, it really encompasses three (3) specific areas. Building inspection, code enforcement and fire inspection. They are three (3) broad rules brought into one. Mr. Plietz is certified and skilled in all those areas and has years of experience in this space. We also did behavioral based interviewing to assess his character and gave him examples of how he would respond to various events. Behavioral interview is based on what they have done in the past because that predicts how they are going to perform in the future. Even if they failed in the past and have indicated that they learned from the past and will do it differently in the future, that is a good sign. We had several behavioral based interviews and felt Mr. Plietz was the top candidate.

Commissioner Macino stated he was also in that interview and felt that one of the things that Mr. Plietz brings to the position is he has thorough knowledge of the Township and his skills around building inspection is exceptional in the community. Mr. Plietz's experience can potentially pick up Fire Marshall and he is an excellent candidate for the job and looks forward to bringing this to a vote.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated he has been here six (6) years and we have had a lot of good hires and in not any particular order from the best to the worst, we have had a great manager, a great Chief and other positions. The worst loss we had was Tom Plietz when he left here and Commissioner Chiurazzi was so

excited to see that he would be back and we went through the process. The standard here is what is best for Collier and Mr. Plietz has made this Township better and we have with his hiring. Collier is blessed to have Mr. Plietz, he is that good.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Williams- Zabicki, second by Commissioner Ruffennach to hire Tom Plietz as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

4. Consider action to appoint Wilson Durisko as Code Enforcement Officer at a rate of \$50,000 effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated she was in every one of the interviews again this year and last year when the Township was interviewing for this position. It is no secret she was concerned with perception on a fair interview to Wilson. It was a very grueling interview. We evaluated his skill set and he doesn't have the same experience as Tom Plietz. He has already studied and passed his first certification exam and that does show motivation. We were all very thorough on the behavior-based questions and was surprised to find a candidate that she was impressed with and that is why she recommended Wilson to be hired. Of all the candidates that we interviewed both last year and this year, he was the second most qualified and best candidate for this position. At first, she was not comfortable with the idea, but she has been satisfied with the answers to the questions and just like Tom Plietz, Wilson is going to be a phenomenal candidate in this role on code enforcement. Wilson knows the code; he knows the Township and he has a mentor in Tom to teach him. It is a great thing for the Township.

Commissioner Ruffennach agreed with Commissioner William-Zabicki. Wilson is eager to learn the job and he has already taken it upon himself to start getting the certifications. It is great that Wilson lives in Collier. He knows Collier and knows the area. Working with Tom Plietz is going to be great and he can't wait to meet Tom. He has heard a lot about Tom even when he worked here. He feels it is going to be a great combination between Wilson and Tom.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated because we are still a growing community and have heard from the past the people in this position that it is just too much for one person. We are a growing community. We have significant problems that we here about at every meeting. Compliances to ordinances, grading, property maintenance, etc. She mentioned at a prior meeting that it is time the Township put their money where their mouth is. If we are going to solve some of these big issues in our Township, managing the growth and managing residual issues still around code and violation of code and to put two (2) people focused in finding the solutions to these problems is the right thing to do for the Township.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated for the Commissioners elect, Codes is brutal to get someone. So, whenever Wilson put his hat in the ring, he could not have been happier because his standards are what is best for Collier. Wilson will be good and if anyone has any trepidation about Wilson, he and himself battled as

Commissioners and are from the same party. He will be a great addition for us and if he isn't, we will take care of it, but he is going to be great. We trust in the process and please trust in us. He is going to be really good. He is going to work with Developers and work with the Commissioners and answer to him and Tom Plietz. The Commissioners elect will see and when we talk to you about it you will see why we did what we did and at the end of the day Wilson was the best candidate. We went through the behavioral test and had the same feelings that Commissioner Williams-Zabicki had, yet he knows Wilson and from a Codes standpoint, "I could never do it". We better Collier by Wilson's hire as well.

Commissioner Macino stated he agreed with what has been said so far and feels the Township will be much stronger in the positions of Building Inspector and Code Enforcement with these two (2) individuals. The growth that the Township is experiencing on both the Commercial side and the Residential side, really does require two (2) positions, two (2) individuals to fill those roles. It is clearly, clearly in his opinion that the two (2) best candidates that we interviewed secured the positions.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, second by Commissioner Ruffennach to hire Wilson Durisko as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

5. Consider action to advertise enacting an ordinance levying ad valorem real estate taxes and fixing the exact millage rates for the fiscal year 2020.

Commissioner stated this just means to advertise the budget.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated it is the same motion every year.

Commissioner Macino questioned if anyone had any questions regarding the Budget. We have been working on this for several months and have a proposal that demonstrates a balanced budget. There was about an \$18,000.00 surplus this year which is a little unusual.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki had the following questions for the Finance Director, Jeff Hinds.

1. On Row 93, Revenue, Emergency Services. Explain what that is.

Mr. Hinds stated the Emergency Services Fee is an additional real estate value-based revenue. It is segregated that it can only be spent on public safety, fire and those kinds of things.

2. Expenditures. The largest part of our budget (21%) is spent for Police Service and only 4% is given to fire and emergency management. A decision was made by a Board prior to us that a portion of the emergency management services fee go towards police. Would it make sense to give all the fee to fire and EMS and would like to discuss this?

Commissioner Macino stated we have a lot of work to do on fire departments and feels a lot of that work will be generated from the fire study that was done.

In 2020, the re-configuration, the growth, the decline of the individual departments is when that kind of decision should be made. The decisions could be made tonight but didn't feel the Board was in the position yet and have not been through a lot of the details of the fire study. This is still in process and when it started it was a 6 to 9-month project and suspects around the middle of 2020 is when the Board can talk about this more for the budget in 2021.

3. It was encouraged with the Fire Chiefs that they put in some kind of money for recruiting and this is not in their budgets and the Township has not budgeted for it. Commissioner Williams-Zabicki was thinking if this was something, we want to plan for in 2020, or deal with it in 2020 for the 2021 budget.

Commissioner Macino stated to wait.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Mr. Thauvette is the manager and should come to this Board to say if that is right or not. Commissioner Chiurazzi is not going to piece meal who gets what, that is not this Board's roll.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated she thought this was a Board decision and that is her mistake.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated it is not a mistake. She is right. The fire and the police come to us and say therefore we need it and we make those decisions. Relative to the distribution they need to come to us and we make those decisions. He doesn't want to micromanagement that money. The money is theirs and we agreed to split it between public safety.

Mr. Thauvette stated something to consider is when you look at the Police, 21% of the total budget is made up of police protection which you will find this in most municipalities. If you take out salaries of all our police officers, we would be right back in line with what the fire departments get. All three (3) departments are volunteer groups which make it very difficult and that is why they come and ask for more funding. For recruiting, the study showed there is a lot of grant money that is available for this and the Township is willing to partner with them. As our tax base continues to grow, why doesn't our pot grow with the tax base. He has encountered this question when he has spoken to the Chiefs.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated there is more expenses.

Mr. Thauvette stated from the emergency services fee, the Board needs to decide moving forward possibly for 2021, do we want to see a larger portion as we continue to grow, go towards the fire departments.

Commissioner Chiurazzi suggested the Commissioner Williams-Zabicki and the new Commissioner Styche form a committee to look at this and then come back to the rest of the Board to see whatever is in the best interest of Collier is the standard. He would love to give each department the whole thing, but we are stuck on this.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated for 2020 we will make this one of the top ten (10) goals to put together a strategy.

4. Why are we not hiring more people for the department of public works?  
Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated when she went through the budget, she did not see a request to hire anyone else. Since there was not a request, there must not be a need. If you want new employees than you make your case during the budget process and she didn't see anyone asking for more employees for Public Works, so she is going to assume there isn't a need for them. Who is the Commissioner that reviews the Public Works budget? It is Wilson and he is no longer a Commissioner and time is up. If there was a need, they know to put it in the budget.

Mr. Thauvette stated that was correct.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated if there is an emergency and they come to us; he feels the Township could find funding somewhere if we need to. We would be glad to do that.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated she wanted to make it clear that don't complain to her that we don't have enough Public Works when it was not requested for in the budget.

Mr. Thauvette questioned if Mr. Hinds knows if that request was made in the first draft of the budget.

Mr. Hinds stated Mr. Palmosina has a standard comment that he puts in there every year that Mr. Hinds has been here that is in the first draft that we could go for more employees and then when push comes to shove and ask what he really wants, it always gets pulled away.

5. Row 429, 444, Contingency. What is that?

Mr. Hinds explained this is a wild card. The one thing that always comes out of is, the Police and Public Works salaries are determined by contract and those raises are already incorporated into this budget. The Directors and Administration employees are the same salaries as last year. At a future meeting, the Board will decide what raises are to be for 2020 and comes out of contingency and gets reclassified into it. A portion of the contingency is already used, we just must determine what that is yet.

Mr. Thauvette stated the entire contingency is not set aside just for raises.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated the department heads she met with did a great job balancing their budgets.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated this is the 6<sup>th</sup> budget he has been through and \$18,000.00 in the black. How?

Mr. Hinds stated that is because we bit the bullet in the prior years so we could have a road program. In the past it always came down to do we raise taxes, or do we have a road program and for several years it came down to not having a road program. Earned Income taxes was about a 5% or 6% raise.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated usually we are searching for 2 or 3 hundred grand and for the Commissioners elect you need to think about that, there were times we had to find a half a million dollars and then we had to make a decision on raising taxes or not. He is pleased we are in the black with \$18,000.00.

Mr. Thauvette thanked Jeff Hinds for his forecasting abilities and understanding of the entire budget is just really good work and deserves all the thanks for this.

Mr. Hinds stated the Directors did put a lot of time and effort in coming up with numbers needed. The Manager also guided the Directors.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated if we approve this budget tonight, this is Kyle and all the Directors saying this is what they need to operate effectively in 2020. If emergencies come up, we will deal with them and we shouldn't hear from the Directors they don't have enough money to buy the equipment they need unless an anomaly comes up. Do we think our Directors are satisfied with what is being allocated to them in their departments?

Mr. Thauvette stated he feels it is very fair. It is not everything the Directors have requested. He and Mr. Hinds talked about items that could stay and what we felt should go. We can't give everyone the world. There is give and take on both sides and no one got everything they wanted. There will always be a comment if they had this, they could get this.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Williams-Zabicki, second by Commissioner Ruffennach to advertise the 2020 Budget. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

Commissioner Macino thanked Mr. Hinds and Mr. Thauvette for working on the Budget.

#### **IV. Approval of General Fund Operating Account items:**

- Invoices paid and checks written from October 28, 2019 to November 10, 2019 in the amount of \$212,241.69.
- Bills requested for payment for November 11, 2019 in the amount of \$12,309.98.

Commissioner Chiurazzi advised Mr. Thauvette to call the Fireworks company and tell them about the bill for a cancellation fee. We are not happy with that and will not use them in the future.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, second by Commissioner Williams-Zabicki, to approve the General Fund Operating Account as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

**V. Approval of Capital Investment Account items:**

- Invoices paid and checks written from October 28, 2019 to November 10, 2019 in the amount of \$110.65.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, second by Commissioner Williams-Zabicki to approve the Capital Investment Account as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

**VI. DISCUSSION:** Commissioner Macino stated there will not be any Committee discussion due to dedicating this meeting to the Budget.

- A. Administrative Committee/Public Affairs**
- B. COG Committee**
- C. Finance Committee**
- D. Parks and Recreation**
- E. Planning and Zoning**
- F. Public Safety Committee**
- G. Public Works Committee**
- H. Township Manager / Township Business:**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi; seconded by Commissioner Ruffennach; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 7:40 p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

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George E. Macino – President  
Board of Commissioners

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Valerie A. Salla  
Township Secretary