

**MINUTES
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

WORKSHOP MEETING

October 11, 2021

7:00 P.M.

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Chiurazzi called the workshop meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 7:05 P.M.

A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

B. ROLL CALL:

BOARD

Mary Ann Cupples – Present
Daniel Styche – Absent
Debra Zymroz – Present
Rick Ruffennach – Present
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq. – 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
Josh Werner, Parks Director – Absent
Kyle Thauvette, Twp. Manager – Present
Valerie Salla, Twp. Secretary – Present

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Was held prior to the meeting to discuss legal and personnel issues.

II. Board Discussion for Committees

A. Administrative/Public Affairs

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. *Rennerdale Mail Carrier Louis Vignone.* Commissioner Zymroz spoke about Mr. Vignone being gun downed on his route. She went to school with Mr. Vignone and he was a very nice man. She was very impressed with the Police Department, EMS and the Public Works Department on how well they handled this situation. Blue ribbons are being placed on mailboxes in honor of Lou. Rennerdale Church is also taking donations for Lou's family.
2. *CollierFest.* Was the best attended so far since we started having this event. Thanks to everyone that helped make it a success.
3. *Scotts Run Road.* Is reopened. The slide was repaired by LM&R Excavating. It will be added to the 2022 paving program because it is in very poor condition.
4. *2021 Paving Program.* Is completed and was done by Youngblood Paving. They did an excellent job.
5. *2022 Road Projects.* Are in the process of being put together.

There were no questions or comments.

B. Building/Codes

Commissioner Cupples stated there was no report.

C. COG

1. *Membership.*

Commissioner Ruffennach stated we will hold off on this until he gathers more information.

D. Finance

Commissioner Styche was absent. Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. *2022 Budget.* All of the Department heads have received their portion of the budget and the Board will need to meet with their Committee department heads to go over the budget. We are hoping to be around the 9 million dollar amount for a total budget. The schedule is to have the final draft of the budget ready to discuss at the October 25th meeting. Then at the November Workshop meeting we can have discussion on items that we can afford added to the budget and then at the November 22nd Public meeting, we will advertise the final budget for approval at the December Workshop meeting.

There were no questions or comments.

E. Parks & Recreation

No report was given.

F. Planning and Land Use Development

Commissioner Cupples reported the following:

1. *For Planning Commission:* Meet on October 21st to hear the following:
 - Grist House Preliminary Land Development. They are proposing a Brew/Pub at the former Charles E. Kelly Nike Site property adjacent to the radar tower.
 - *Steen Road Partners.* They are proposing a text amendment to allow a car wash and a financial Institution in the R4 Zoning District.
2. *For the Zoning Hearing Board.* Will meet on October 19th to hear the following:
 - 203 Redfield Drive is requesting a variance to construct a covered front porch that will encroach into the front yard set back by approximately 6 feet. This property is located in the R-1 Zoning District.
 - 372 Monteverdi Drive is requesting a variance to construct a covered front porch that will encroach into the front yard set back by approximately 2 feet. This property is located in the R-1 Zoning District.

There were no questions or comments.

G. Public Safety

Commissioner Ruffennach also thanked the Police Department, Fire/EMS Department and the Public Works Department for the way the Rennerdale situation was handled. He heard nothing but excellent things about all the departments.

Chief Wauthier of the Presto VFD was in attendance and informed the Board on the following:

1. There is a Township wide line Officers meeting at the Presto VFD at 7:30p.m.
2. On November 6th all three (3) fire departments will be going to the Allegheny County Fire Academy in North Park to do a flash over simulator. There will be outside fire departments covering Collier. Chief Wauthier explained what a flash over simulator was.
3. All three (3) fire departments are participating in regional grants through the Char West COG Fire Chiefs Committee. They are FEMA Grants and we are all going for personal protective equipment and communications equipment.
4. Thank you to Bob Palmosina for spear heading Allegheny County Council for funds. Each fire department in Allegheny County is getting \$25,000.00 through the Americans Rescue Plan. This is to replace monies the fire departments lost for not being able to fund raise during the COVID19 shut downs.

Mark Lewis of the Kirwan Heights VFD stated the by-laws are currently in the re-write stages and will then go to the Solicitor for approval.

There were no questions or comments.

H. Public Works

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. *Temporary Fence*. Was installed at Hilltop Park.
2. *CollierFest*. Set Up and tear down.
3. *Brush*. Removed 25 loads of brush from the stockyard.
4. *Discovery Trail*. Repairs due to heavy rains.
5. *Trucks*. Being prepped for winter.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned how the salt supply was for the winter.

Mr. Thauvette stated we have a full salt bin.

There were no other questions or comments.

I. Sewer Department

Commissioner Styche was absent and Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. Working on the 2022 Budget.

There were no questions or comments.

J. Township Manager / Township Business

Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. *Request for Bids*. This is for concrete and ADA ramp work at Kelly and Hilltop Parks. We are hoping to be able to award this at the November Workshop Meeting so the work can be done before the end of the season.
2. *GEDTF Grant Funding*. We are putting out 5 or 6 different projects and the Resolutions will be before the Board at the October Public meeting.
3. *Coffee Hour*. The Manager's Coffee hour will be on Monday, November 1st at the Community Center.

There were no questions or comments.

III. PRESENTATION: Collier EMS. Mark Lewis and Chief Troy Riddle

Mr. Mark Lewis of the Kirwan Heights Fire Department presented information to the Board on the following:

- Collier EMS has had 777 calls since January to date and they only had to turn 2 calls away to other EMS units.
- Collier EMS also helps out with calls in other communities which are Scott Township, Mt. Lebanon, North Fayette Township, Robinson Township, the Airport, Crafton, Carnegie and Heidelberg.
- Funding for Collier EMS is by doing non-emergency transports. This subsidizes the ambulances and the rent.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned if they get paid for doing the non-emergency transports.

Chief Riddle stated the Insurance Companies of the patient gets billed and we receive payment from them.

Mr. Lewis stated the emergency calls are where we struggle with getting paid. He feels a lot of people get a check from their insurance company and use the money for something other than paying for the ambulance services. This is why the law has to change. We bill them and only receive 1/3 of them back paid.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned how many employees they have.

Chief Riddle stated 45. There are 12 full time employees and the rest are part time employees.

- Equipment maintenance is a big investment and all of their equipment is pretty new.

Mr. Lewis stated with all everything added up the EMS service needs some help to keep it alive and moving.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned if the service is provided in other communities, do they go to the community and ask for monies. You are asking Collier Township taxpayers to pay you money for service you are providing in Scott Township, Mt. Lebanon, Heidelberg and other areas. This is unfair and may be a sticking point because a little over half your calls are in other communities. We have to answer to the tax payers.

Chief Riddle stated the Township is getting a service for Collier Township with their name on it.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated in fairness, Collier Township residents don't care that someone is getting service in another Township when the Collier resident paid for it.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated that by funding the EMS, we are guaranteeing our residents and ambulance whether it is Collier or not. There is a mutual aid agreement. When a Collier ambulance is busy on another call, a mutual aid ambulance will come.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned if Chief Riddle went to Scott Township and asked them for money.

Chief Riddle stated no because we cannot go to one of our service areas and ask for money. We are their mutual aid ambulance service. If their ambulance is out on another call, we go with our ambulance and give service to that person.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated there is going to be an equity argument unless you say the money Collier Township gives you is just to be used for Collier residents.

Chief Riddle stated they cannot refuse to help someone. It is the same as if the Police are going to another community to help. It is mutual aide.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the Police are not getting paid to help or asking for money to help. The EMS is a non-profit entity that charges people or their insurance company. You are getting paid per service.

Commissioner Zymroz stated that a person gets a check from their insurance company to pay for the ambulance service and that person doesn't always give the ambulance service the money. This is where the EMS is losing money.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated Collier is contracting Collier EMS to provide a service to the residents of Collier Township. If Collier EMS is busy, another community like Scott Township will back them up.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated let's say we funded the EMS and someone in Collier gets sick and an ambulance arrives and it is Scott Township because Collier doesn't have their ambulance there. They will be upset.

Chief Riddle stated the chances of them missing a call are slim. We have 8 ambulances.

Mr. Lewis stated if another ambulance comes into Collier and the person has a subscription to the ambulance service, they are going to help that person. It is mutual aide. If we transport a Scott Township resident who is a subscriber, we honor that and vice versa.

Chief Riddle stated there are other communities that bill their Township or Borough to have an ambulance service. In the fire study that was done, it said to have one ambulance service and that is what we did and it cost us money.

Mr. Lewis stated Collier Township can fund the whole EMS and it would cost around \$680,000.00 plus paying for the workers compensation and the employees' health insurance.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated this Board is not against getting you some money but we need Chief Riddle and Mr. Lewis to give us some numbers so this Board can see what we can do for you.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned if there was something that the Township could cover that would help. She feels that the residents would be more understanding if they understood what you are asking for. This is all volunteer and people do not understand that.

Mr. Lewis stated the Township could cover the Workers Compensation and the Health Insurance.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we do not want to loose our EMS or our volunteer fireman. Come to this Board with a plan.

Mr. Lewis stated that he can see that in the future, fire and EMS will be a paid service because there are not enough volunteers.

Commissioner Zymroz stated to bring a plan to the Board.

The Board thanked Mr. Lewis and Chief Riddle for the presentation.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:

Mr. Jim Santilli of 22 Lewis Road approached the Board regarding the Township taking over Lewis Road. It is a private road and it is getting bad. He has lived on this Lewis Road for 17 years.

Ms. LouAnn Keifner of 50 Lewis Road approached the Board stating she has lived on Lewis Road since 1993, 27 years. She feels that Lewis Road should have been taken over by the Township back when the Township was created. It used to be called Jordan Hill and back in 1950, it changed to Lewis Road because the property was owned by the Lewis Family.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Lewis Road is a paper road and the people that live on them have to maintain them. He asked why they felt the Township had the obligation to take the road over and they didn't and why should the Township now take it over. This may even be a legal issue.

Mr. Santilli stated the main issue is Lewis Road is a safety concern. The mailman will not deliver our mail anymore because of the safety concern. The mail carrier got stuck 3 times over the last 3 years.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the Board will have to look into this.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned how wide the road is.

Mr. Santilli stated 14 feet and it is a one lane road. He had work done to the road to try and widen it but the issue is at the bottom of the road. Because of the cliff you can only make a right turn out of it.

Ms. Keifner stated it is on the bad bend and cars are speeding down Thoms Run Road. She has to go into the Federal Firearms parking lot and turn around to head towards Presto again.

Mr. Thauvette stated when he met with Mr. Santilli; he gave him a copy of what the Township road specs are and what condition a road needs to be in for the Township to take over. Mr. Thauvette didn't know if Lewis Road has the ability to be a Township Road and the Board would have to make the decision if they want to go against the road spec put in place.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we do not like going against specs but we can try to figure out something because of the safety issue.

Mr. Santilli stated the Township plows and salts the road.

Mr. Thauvette stated we plow and salt only the bottom of the road.

Commissioner Zymroz questioned how those residents on Lewis Road get out in the winter.

Ms. Keifner stated her kids come and use the snow plow tractor to plow her out. Her late husband used to snow plow the road. When she bought the house, they have a letter from the Township stating it is a semi-private road that was Township maintained.

Mr. Santilli stated they also need a guiderail on the road where the cliff is.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned if Ms. Keifner has the letter.

Ms. Keifner stated she has looked through every important paper she has and she does not have it.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated to look some more and let Mr. Thauvette know if you find it.

Mr. Santilli questioned what about the mail.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated the Township does not control the mail service.

Mr. Thauvette stated he did make a phone call on behalf of the residents to the Oakdale post office and left a message for the post master and has not heard anything back yet. He will try again and let them know of the outcome.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Consider action to advertise for proposals for work related to the Kelly and Hilltop Parks sidewalk improvement plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cupples, seconded by Commissioner Chiurazzi, to advertise for proposals as stated above. By a unanimous vote, the motion passed.

VI. Account Transfer(s):

- Approval of the transfer of \$479,000.00 from the General Fund Account to the Capital Fund Checking Account.

Motion was made by Commissioner Zymroz, seconded by Commissioner Cupples, to approve the Account Transfer as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

VII. Approval of General Fund Operating Account items:

- Invoices paid and checks written September 28 to October 11, 2021 in the amount of \$264,228.07

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

VIII. Approval of Capital Investment Account items:

- Invoices paid and checks written from September 28 to October 11, 2021 in the amount of \$478,294.60.

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

IX. Approval of Sewer Account items:

- Invoices paid and checks written from September 28 to October 11, 2021 in the amount of \$10,135.98

Motion was made by Commissioner Ruffennach, seconded by Commissioner Cupples, to approve the Sewer Fund Account items as stated above. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Thauvette informed the Board there will be a follow up meeting this Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. regarding the extension of the road from west Noblestown Road onto Noblestown Road.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated this weekend is Night Walk on the trail on Saturday night. Halloween Parade at the Rennerdale VFD on October 30th.

Commissioner Zymroz stated if anyone is interested in the Friends of Collier is having a pasta dinner at the Alphine Club on October 20th. Dinner will be served at 7:00p.m. Tickets are \$25.00 and this includes soup, salad, vegetable, pasta and a dessert. It is all home cooked. The proceeds go to the Friends of Collier. She needs to know by October 17th so she can give the Alphine Club a head count.

Commissioner Cupples stated the Friends of Collier use the fund raising money to enhance the Parks in Collier Township. We gave \$10,000 to the Township to put towards the electronic sign at Collier Park. We made \$3,000 on our Mums plant sale.

Commissioner Zymroz stated the money we collect; we give back to the Township. It is for the Community.

Commissioner Zymroz also mentioned that the Panhandle Trial are still looking for donations of candy for the night walk. They fill 500 bags for kids 11years old and under.

Commissioner Zymroz also mentioned for the Rennerdale VFD Halloween parade. The parade will start at the fire department and walk towards Webb Park. Registration is at noon and the parade is at 1:00 p.m. The Chartiers Valley Band will be participating in the parade.

Motion was made by Commissioner Cupples; seconded by Commissioner Zymroz; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 8:10 p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

Wayne M. Chiurazzi, President
Board of Commissioners

Valerie A. Salla
Township Secretary