

Township of Crescent
Board of Commissioners
Workshop Meeting
March 6, 2012

On March 6, 2012 the Workshop Meeting of the Crescent Township Board of Commissioners was called to order at 8:30 a.m. in the Crescent Township Municipal Building. 225 Spring Run Road, Crescent, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

ROLL CALL

Those Present: Commissioners: President William Cook, Vice President Karen Patton and Commissioner Jerry Keller.

Secretary/Manager: Patience Eckhardt

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

PUBLIC SAFETY

Interim Chief Zimmel started the discussion with asking several items be taken care of in the Police Department. His first item of business was asking the rug be replaced in the department. Commissioner Cook said he would look into it. Commissioner Patton stated it could be purchased after tax dollars came in. Chief Zimmel asked if the rug in his office could be cleaned by the Township Cleaning person. Commissioner Cook stated he might be able to help out with the cleaning of the rug with a machine he has with his business. Chief Zimmel asked if the Public Works Department could repair and paint the drywall in the interview room from a suspect kicking the wall. He stated the suspect had recently paid a \$200.00 restitution in the case. Chief Zimmel also asked, once the weather breaks, if the Township could add 4 to 5 inches of limestone base to the carport to raise it so it has a slope that would prevent the water and the police car doors from hitting the bottom of the car port. Secretary/ Manager Patience Eckhardt stated that this would be a good project to complete before the election for when the parking lot would be redone. Commissioner Patton wanted to know when the drywall repair would be done and Secretary/Manager Eckhardt stated that this project is saved for a rainy day. She stated it would most likely completed in the next 2 weeks. Commissioner Cook wanted to add that the grievance from the Police Department was settled. The Township is expecting a letter from Carl Baily in the next week or so regarding the settlement. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt asked if she should make arrangements for the cleaning of the carpet in Chief Zimmel's office and Commissioner Cook asked if Mike Setzer would try to clean it and if not Commissioner Cook would look into another option.

PUBLIC WORKS

Commissioner Cook started with how fortunate the Township has been with this mild winter. He stated we have an excess amount of salt that we have to purchase still because of the agreement we have with the salt company. He talked to another Municipality about buying some of the salt. He did not want to end up stock piling a large amount of salt. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt stated with a large stockpile it would affect the estimate for salt next year. She stated if we store the extra tonnage the Township will subtract that amount from the next years estimate.

Commissioner Cook stated we are making agreements in the Agility Program with the State. The Township would be responsible for the assistance in the cleaning of the various catch basins along with providing traffic control. Commissioner Cook stated that Public Works Laborer Nick would have to get training in traffic control and that Laborer James Price had already been trained. He stated multiple stop signs and cones would have to be purchased. The state will still sweep the Township streets which they have done in the past. He added if the program needed adjusted that it would be done depending on the time.

Commissioner Cook addressed that the slide on McCutcheon way is still active and not a lot of change is happening dealing with the slide. He spoke to Robert Johnson from the Governor's office, he was supposed to meet with PEMA and he has not heard from him yet, but stated it could take a week to 10 days. Commissioner Cook asked Chief Zimmel if the gate on the railroad tracks had been installed yet. Chief Zimmel responded that it had not been as of yet. Commissioner Cook stated that Chief Zimmel was made aware the Township would have access to the gate along with a key but the Township would have to sign off on an agreement assuming the Township would accept the liability.

Commissioner Cook stated that the Public Works Department has been doing standard maintenance for the Township. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt responded that the Department is almost finished with the Sign Management Plan. Commissioner Cook added that this is mandated by the state and the Township is responsible for replacing the signs over a period of time. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt stated that this plan has been extended to 2018 instead of 2012. She said with the extension came a couple new requirements. The township is almost complete with 2 roads at this time.

Commissioner Cook stated that nothing has been done as of right now with the 2012 Road Program. He said he is debating on whether or not to call Kevin Brett to do a road tour. The Township has been waiting on them since they usually contact us. With as mild as the weather has been this is something Commissioner Cook would have wanted done by now. He is unaware of how much repair could be done this year because of what is budgeted and it's all driven by fuel costs. He said with fuel costs on the rise it will depend on the work that could be done. If possible he would like to see Huntsridge or Sautter be finished. Secretary/Manger Eckhardt asked if she should schedule a road tour and Commissioner Cook responded that he would like the Township to look at the two roads specified and possibly bid the projects out. The board would discuss further action with this topic and use a motion when the time comes.

Secretary/Manager Patience Eckhart wanted to add that the retention pond located on Crescent Blvd Ext. is going to be cleaned out in the near future. She hopes that tomorrow the work can start pending on the weather. Commissioner Cook asked Secretary/Manager Eckhardt to look into the property and see who is responsible for the pond. He asked if there was any developer's agreement, to which she responded that she was unaware of any agreement and there is no homeowners association in the plan. Commissioner Cook did not want to make a habit in cleaning these if it turned out to not be the Township's responsibility. He wanted to be careful where the Township goes with it. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt replied that in previous investigations she found no one else to have been made responsible, so therefore the Township had responsibility but she would look into this matter. She stated that cost wise it should not cost much other than fencing, it's more the labor involved in the cleaning.

FINANCE

Commissioner Patton reported that the finances for the Township are looking really good. She said as of last week in our general fund the Township had \$93,769.74 after payroll and invoices due in estimate of \$6,000.00 were paid. She stated the Township is sitting about \$23,000.00 higher in the end of February 2012 than the Township was in 2011, which she said is very good. Commissioner Cook added that with the absence of a Public Works Supervisor and the mild winter, our finances have been positively.

Commissioner Cook stated that he wants to push for a Public Works Supervisor. Only having 2 laborers working and the possibility of someone getting hurt it would become a one man department. He stated with the situation of not knowing when the Township was going to be getting the taxes in, he held back on it. He mentioned we could consider a third person but would rather push for Public Works Supervisor. Commissioner Patton stated that it has been a godsend with the mild winter, that the Township's wages, fuel, and supplies have been down and it has helped the Township with keeping the expenditures low.

Commissioner Patton stated that right now the Township revenue is at 26% and the expenditures are at 12.83%. Last year for 2011 the Township was at 19.88% for revenues and 13.69% for expenditures. She said the Township is doing much better. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt added that we also received \$100,000.00 extra in our Tan Loan, so that's why our revenue has seen such an increase. Commissioner Patton said the Police Department is even down, and as of right now they are at 14.1%. Which is \$6,234.89 less compared to 2011. She also mentioned that we do have one less employee that we are paying for now so that does play a factor.

Commissioner Patton wanted to bring attention to the Portnoff Law bill that was paid last week regarding lien properties. She wanted to make people aware that when they do not pay their garbage bills that the Township is still responsible for those bills getting paid. When residents do not pay their garbage bills the Township pays to have their properties lien. This year it cost the Township \$4,515.00 on top of every month the township pays the garbage bill. She said that if the resident eventually pays it the Township does get their money back, but in the meantime the bill did have to be paid.

Commissioner Cook added that some of the properties are vacant and he feels we might be wasting our time and money by placing a lien on some of these properties. He said he would like to look at the list when it comes out and go over the properties to see which ones could be

removed to save the Township some money. He said that if the property is occupied that it would not be removed. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt added that the office does review the list on a yearly basis, and unless it's a property that pops that the office knows of, we are not in the common practice of removing fees. Commissioner Cook stated that this is something that the board would have to address. Commissioner Keller added that he feels the Township is wasting money placing liens on properties that are vacant and there could be another solution. He mentioned maybe looking into another garbage company. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt stated that the Township contracts with the provider, and they bill us per unit in the Township whether the property is vacant or occupied. She said the Township does not have the choice to say do not pick up a certain house. Commissioner Cook added that when the negotiations happen at the end of this current contract he would like to bring up vacant properties. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt added that there is a policy that if a house is vacant the Township requires something in writing stating the house is not occupied and the garbage fee is removed, but in turn the Township still has to pay for the bill. Commissioner Cook asked if maybe the Public Works Department could verify some of the units in the Township for a rainy day project. He said until the next contract negotiations we cannot change anything, but he hopes to be able to one day not have to pay for units that a lien has been placed on unoccupied properties.

Commissioner Patton wanted to make everyone aware that the 2012 garbage bills have been sent out and she hopes this will help with the revenue coming in. She said that the County has finished the 2012 reassessment and we received confirmation that the tax bills should have went out this week, and this should make the Township see some revenue with the real-estate taxes coming in.

Commissioner Cook opened discussion for implementing a policy that would provide for some type of educational reimbursement to full time employees. Some specifics were given. It was ultimately suggested that the Secretary/Managers office draft a policy for Solicitor Start to review that could be later approved and implemented by the Board of Commissioners.

A motion was made to reimburse Secretary/Manager Eckhardt for the class she already completed in the interim of this policy's adoption. This motion was made by Commissioner Keller and seconded by Commissioner Cook. A roll call vote was taken and found all Commissioners in favor of the motion.

PARKS AND RECREATION

None

SECRETARY/MANGER'S OFFICE

Secretary/Manager Patience Eckhardt addressed that the tax bills are being mailed out this week as Commissioner Patton had mentioned earlier. She brought up with the traffic on 51 due to the Aliquippa/Ambridge Bridge being closed, Waste Management had approached her saying they were interested in doing McGovern Blvd earlier than normal. Commissioner Cook raised some concern regarding residents and complaints. He asked interim Chief Zimmel if he thought the Police Department thought this was a good idea. Chief Zimmel said the first day traffic patterns could be related to all the ice on Stoops Ferry and that it should not be much more of a problem. Secretary/Manager Eckhardt added if the traffic does not keep up Waste Management will not commit to it. Commissioner Cook asked if Waste Management could leave it the way it is for 2 weeks and see how it goes. The board wanted to avoid the aggravation of the residents. Commissioner Patton was concerned about having to alert residents about an earlier pick up with some residents not putting their garbage out until they leave for work in the morning. With no traffic happening this morning, the Secretary/Managers Office is asking Waste Management to hold off and continue with normal routes and times for garbage pickup.

Assistant Secretary Casie Shepard stated she would like the push for a Public Works Supervisor with Secretary/Manager Eckhardt's maternity leave approaching.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Keller told the board that he was informed by the congressman's office, that the Colonel had a meeting in Washington with the congressman's office over their budget. The Colonel told the congressman that he didn't feel like they could provide or redirect any money in their budget to help to maintain McCutcheon Way or provide any repairs because of the Township having an additional \$100,000.00 in their budget this year. Commissioner Cook replied that the extra \$100,000.00 is money borrowed. Commissioner Keller stated that he told the congressman's office that the Colonel was most likely referring to the jump from \$250,000.00 to \$350,000.00 from last year. Commissioner Patton replied that the money was taken out because of precaution dealing with the County's Reassessments this year. Commissioner Keller told the board that this was the thought process of the Colonel but he did inform the congressman of where the money had been placed. Commissioner Keller wanted to make the board aware in case something was to be brought up about an extra amount of money in the Township's possession. Commissioner Cook stated that the Colonel could be thinking about the \$100,000.00 that was in the Townships Capital Reserve Fund.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Patton and Seconded by Commissioner Keller. A voice vote was taken and all Commissioners were in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Certified as a true and correct copy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patience Eckhardt

Secretary/Manager

(Seal)