

PALMER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING
APRIL 12, 2010

A general business meeting of the Palmer Township Board of Supervisors was held on Monday, April 12, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Palmer Library with four Supervisors in attendance: David Colver, Robert Lammi, Michael Mitchell and Robert Smith. Ann-Marie Panella was absent. Also in attendance were the Township Manager, Public Services Director, Police Chief and Township Solicitor. Chairman Colver convened the meeting and led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS APRIL 12, 2010

INFORMATION

The report will be provided at the meeting.

DISCUSSION

On motion by Mitchell, seconded by Smith, and agreed by all, the Board approved the disbursement of funds for April 12, 2010.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 5, 2010

DISCUSSION

On motion by Lammi, seconded by Smith, and agreed by all, the Board approved the minutes of April 5, 2010.

4. CHARLES CHRIN COMMUNITY CENTER UPDATE

INFORMATION

The community center director will be providing an update to the Board.

DISCUSSION

Community Center Director Dan McKinney distributed a handout to the Board. McKinney said we are \$10,000 to the plus side after the first quarter. McKinney said the zumba classes have had 3,500 attendees in the first quarter alone. McKinney said this is because we have some great instructors. Our birthday parties have grown and are held on weekends. We have 41 campers scheduled for summer camp for 250 total camper weeks at \$120 per week. McKinney said we are already at \$35,000 income and we budgeted for \$36,000, so we should be over on that budgeted line item. Colver asked about the bus for the camp program. McKinney said we have 15 drivers interested in driving but the bus still isn't a done deal. McKinney said the school district is telling me they can finalize the bus purchase in early May. Smith asked if we looked into advertising on the bus. McKinney said he's waiting until we have ownership of the bus. McKinney said there are five people that have made a deposit for the after school program in the fall so we will be close to the maximum amount of 20 participants. Smith asked

if we want to grow that program. McKinney said at this time I'm reluctant to let it get too big too fast. McKinney said he's a firm believer to make sure the program is perfected before expanding, plus it will require additional staff, etc. McKinney said right now we are confined to Palmer School students only. McKinney said we have some very talented staff at the center that are great at what they do and we are lucky to have them. Smith asked McKinney to generate some numbers for him demonstrating the amount of revenue the center could make if they could rent out the wrestling room that the Athletic Association uses during prime season. Smith said it may help determine whether a wrestling room at the field house would be worthwhile looking into. McKinney said he doesn't think that room would be a significant revenue generator. If it was a gym it would be totally different, we could rent out five gyms during that time of year. Colver said the BIP project from their golf outing this year is looking to build a pavilion on the old Campbell site at the center. McKinney said that will be great.

5. WASTE CONTRACT DISCUSSION

INFORMATION

The Board needs to review options and decide how they want to proceed regarding the next hauling contract.

DISCUSSION

Colver said he would suggest exercising the one-year extension of the existing contract. The Board agreed. Lammi said the one thing we need to talk about in the near future is what we want to do when we go out for our next contract. The big issue last time was the toter versus non-toter option. Lammi said if we decide to go with a toter program we need time to educate the residents. Lammi said South Whitehall Township uses the toter program and they are about the same size we are with the same amount of pickups – so we can compare ourselves to them. Colver said the one-year extension will take us out to 2013. Anckaitis said early next year you will need to give guidance to the Environmental Steering Committee about what you want to do with the next contract. Colver suggested the Board table a motion on this item so the solicitor can review the wording in the contract regarding requesting the one-year extension.

6. POLICE PENSION COST OF LIVING INCREASE

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the proposed 1% COLA increase for 2010.

DISCUSSION

Anckaitis said this was discussed earlier this year and it was suggested to consider a 1% cola increase pending an actuarial study to the police retirees for 2010. The study indicated a 1% increase would cost the plan \$32,650 and it would all be incurred in the year 2013. Anckaitis said since we have now received the cost impact through the actuarial study the Board needs to determine if they want to approve the 1% cola increase based on the impact to the plan. Anckaitis said the 1% a year increase amounts to \$282.86 but when you compound it over the years it will cost \$32,650. Mitchell said it used to be paid over a 10-year period. Anckaitis said

that is correct but the law change now makes us incur the impact in just one year. Lammi said the newspaper this morning talked about the school district pension issues. Lammi said people receiving pensions typically don't get any increases except to their social security and this year social security didn't give any increases. Lammi said he has a hard time justifying the increase this year. Colver asked if it will continue to come up every year. Anckaitis said when he first started with the township the Pension Board was recommending 3% cola increases every other year and then it was determined to give a 1.5% cola increase every year. Mitchell said as we add more retirees, it drives up the costs. Chief Fretz said to keep in mind that these retirees do not receive social security. Colver said this number is way above what we were anticipating. Lammi said in today's economy, I don't think we can justify this.

On motion by Mitchell, seconded by Lammi, and agreed by all, the Board denied the 1% cola increase for police retirees in 2010 based on the unfavorable actuarial study that noted a cost of \$32,650 for the increase.

7. CITY OF EASTON EASEMENT AGREEMENT

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the easement agreement.

DISCUSSION

Anckaitis said the City of Easton applied for a grant to clean up South 10th Street where dumping had been going on for many years. The trash ends up at the bottom of the hill on township property by the railroad path. Easton administered everything related to the grant but they need us to sign off to allow the contractor to go on our property to clean it up. Anckaitis said he forwarded the agreement to our solicitor for review.

On motion by Lammi, seconded by Mitchell, and agreed by all, the Board approved the City of Easton easement agreement.

8. CITY OF BETHLEHEM BEARCAT AGREEMENT

INFORMATION

The Board needs to approve/disapprove the Bearcat Indemnity Agreement and Emergency Services Vehicle Lease with the City of Bethlehem.

DISCUSSION

Bruno said he has worked with the City of Bethlehem for some time to get this agreement in a form to sign. The Bearcat is an emergency services vehicle that Palmer Township doesn't have. Fretz said it is a tactical vehicle. Fretz said another vehicle is being purchased by the Northeastern Regional Task Force. Fretz said the taskforce cannot own the vehicles. The vehicles were assigned to the City of Bethlehem and Scranton. Fretz said two of our officers have been trained on how to drive it. Fretz said in the last year we would have used the vehicle maybe two or three times. Colver asked if we have the necessary insurance coverage and if not

what the additional cost will be. Colver asked the Township Manager to confirm the insurance coverage and get back to the Board. Action was tabled until the insurance information can be verified.

9. BURROWES STREET SANITARY SEWER EXTENSION

INFORMATION

The Board needs to inform the PTMSA of any possible concerns related to the scheduled project.

DISCUSSION

Director of Public Utilities, Paul Hosking, introduced Attorney Goudsouzian as the new solicitor for the Palmer Township Municipal Sewer Authority (PTMSA). Hosking said Attorney Smith has retired. Chairman of the PTMSA, William Smolow asked if the township knew when Charles Smith started as attorney to the authority. Hosking said the authority seal says 1964 and he thought Attorney Smith was on-board then. Hosking said the sewer authority has authorized Gannett Fleming to do a feasibility study on the Burrowes Street project. We have a good idea it will have to be a pump type system; however it is a little premature to know for sure. Smolow said property owners on Burrowes have had problems and have requested the hookup. Smolow said it will serve eight properties. Colver asked what is involved in mandating all eight people hook up. Hosking said according to the township code they are required to hookup. Smolow said we believe the township could make exceptions to the hookup requirement if necessary. Lammi asked if it would cost \$30,000 per hookup. Smolow said we determine a fair market cost for the residents. Smolow said we have never charged the full cost to a property owner. Smolow said the last project they did the sewer authority charged the homeowner approximately \$4,000 and the residents are given five-years to pay it. Colver said the \$4,000 fee is for the connection and then the residents have to pay a contractor to make the connection. Colver asked how many residents are affected on the Haymont Drive project. Hosking said another 16 or 18. Smolow said since developers have added to the lines over the years it makes this project feasible for us to do now. Years ago that was not the case. Colver said he thinks in both instances it is worth seeing what the study reveals. Hosking said there is nothing that says we have to go ahead with the project after we see the studies. No formal action needs to be taken by the Board tonight.

10. HAYMONT DRIVE SANITARY SEWER EXTENSION

INFORMATION

The Board needs to inform the PTMSA of any possible concerns related to the scheduled project.

DISCUSSION

Colver said this is pretty much the same as the last item. Colver said in both instances he would say charge on and get the engineering work done. Then we can see what the costs will be associated with both projects. No formal action needs to be taken by the Board tonight.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Easton High School student Brianna M. Barbiero was in attendance for a school project and said she recently received a proclamation from the Board on attaining her Girl Scout Gold Award. Barbiero thanked the Board for the proclamation.

12. REPORTSSolicitor

- Bruno had three litigation items for executive session.

Manager

- Anckaitis had two personnel items for executive session.
- Anckaitis said the Superintendent of Public Services and Utilities would like to purchase a \$135,000 dump truck with liquid fuels funds. He's starting to get into some major repair problems and feels this would be a good year to purchase the truck. Anckaitis said it was not a budgeted item this year. On motion by Lammi, seconded by Smith, and agreed by all, the Board approved the purchase of the dump truck using liquid fuels funds.
- Anckaitis said we received a letter from Northampton County stating they received an allocation from the federal government of \$6,929,000 in Recovery Zone Economic Development Bonds. Projects include public facilities and our public works building would fall into that category. Anckaitis said the deadline to notify the County if we are interested is April 15th. Anckaitis said the difference between this and a bond is 45% of the interest would be reimbursed by the government. Anckaitis said he spoke to the township Financial Advisor, Gary Pulcini, and he said there are so many catches to these and there is no guarantee the federal government will continue the 45% interest for the life of the bond. There are a lot of questions Pulcini suggests we ask the County before a final decision is made. Pulcini said his guess is for one to one and a half million dollars and it may not be worth the risk because the savings may not be that great. Pulcini suggested we tell the county we are interested and he will get us the proper questions that we want to ask them before making a final decision. The Board agreed to notify the county of our interest.
- Anckaitis said the tree vitalization project at the Chrin Community Center went very well on Saturday. Anckaitis commended Tom Adams who put in an awful lot of work to get the project done. Tom did a great job getting us that grant. Lammi said when he was there in the morning there were about 100 people that planted 79 trees with our public works and parks departments. Colver asked about the trees remaining in the parking lot area of the center. Adams informed the Board where the remaining trees will be placed in the township.

Public Services Director

- Adams said the contractor wants to start the fence at the Fox Run development by the soccer fields. Adams said the cost will be \$16,500. Adams said he wanted to know if we should put the fence up now or save the money since we are not sure what type of facility we want in that area. Smith said he recommended we hold off until we know for sure what we will use the fields for. The Board agreed.
- Adams said everyone involved in the tree vitalization program did a great job.

Police Chief

- Fretz said our officers working the midnight shift have done a great job arresting individuals that were breaking into vehicles and stealing items. Fretz said it solved crimes in our municipality as well as others.

On motion by Mitchell, seconded by Smith, and agreed by all, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m. with three litigation and two personnel items for executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert G. Anckaitis
Township Manager