

The stated meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Schreiber presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:24 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners SCHREIBER, DiPLACIDO, KALINOSKI, BOWMAN, FARREN

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Chief of Police KELLY
Deputy Chief LIVINGOOD
Assistant Fire Marshal ROHRER

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, SPIEGELMAN, ZAPPONE, HECKER, SANCHEZ, MARKMAN, MYERS, JONES, GILLESPIE

MINUTES: Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2015 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Police Department Report:

Chief Kelly said in regards to recent tragic incidents that occurred in Paris, France where the police are receiving criticism for not entering the theater sooner than they did and people were killed during that intervening time period; he wants to reassure the Board and the public that his officers have been thoroughly trained on “immediate deployment.” If an officer is on-scene and finds there is violence on innocent people, they should not wait for backup, but go in and address the target to stop the violence.

On another matter, the department just completed onsite evaluation for (CALEA), the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. There are 1,117 law enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania and about 100 of them are State accredited and Abington Township’s Police Department was the first to become accredited and continues to be State-accredited. Out of all of those law enforcement agencies, there are about six municipal police departments who have been internationally accredited through CALEA, and Abington Police Department is one of them.

Because of the outstanding job Abington Police Department did with previous accreditations, we were invited to participate in a new level of accreditation called, the "Gold Standard." So we were accepted to participate in the highest level of international accreditation process and the department just completed it, and we will not know the final results for awhile yet.

He recognized and thanked Lt. Kelley Warner, who was our Chief Accreditation Officer, and who was instrumental in the accreditation process and she did an outstanding job. He also recognized and thanked Deputy Chief Livingood, who is always at the heart of all of the good things going on in the department, and who also played an instrumental part in the accreditation process.

Over the last two to three years, our officers and Second Alarmers have been seeing an increase in Opioid addiction, overdose and deaths in our Township. This matter was brought to Josh Shapiro, County Commissioner, who then put together a Countywide Task Force that he and Commissioner Schreiber are co-Chairs of. Also, a lot of work has been done in Abington Township, and a presentation will be made about it tonight.

Deputy Chief Livingood said there has been a tremendous increase in drug overdoses as well as drug overdoses that result in death.

Late in 2014, we realized this trend was increasing and that was when we began our program to have a drug that would combat these cases on-scene, which is called, Narcan.

Lt. Warner demonstrated what Narcan looks like and how it is administered to the patient.

Deputy Chief Livingood continued that we could not have done this without the support of the Second Alarmers in which they obtained \$25,000 worth of this product free of charge to the citizens of Abington Township, but they have to pay \$55 per dose of the product that they need to administer on-scene. In addition, they provide all of the training for the officers.

There have been 12 deaths this year in the Township from drug overdoses and that is a large number for Abington. There were 10 cases where Abington Police administered rescue breathing and worked in concert and administered Narcan contributing to life-saving measures. This is an important service to our citizens and we are the first department to administer this drug and five other departments have now joined us in this effort.

Jon Klenk, Chief of Second Alarmers Rescue Squad, reported that year-to-date, the Second Alarmers responded to 84 overdose calls in Abington Township. This represents approximately 1.66% of the calls in the Township; however, the calls categorized as overdose also include alcohol or prescription medication.

Year-to-date for 2015, 39 doses of Narcan was administered to 28 separate patient encounters; we responded to 5,055 calls for service in Abington Township and Narcan was administered to 0.5% of those calls.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Sanchez questioned whether every police officer is carrying Narcan.

Deputy Chief Livingood replied not every officer, but there are a sufficient number of officers in each platoon trained in the use of Narcan and it is in close proximity to all areas of the Township.

Commissioner Sanchez clarified that those areas include the mall and schools. Is that correct?

Deputy Chief Livingood replied yes.

Commissioner DiPlacido asked about the supply of Narcan.

Deputy Chief Livingood replied expiration on current supply is April, 2016 and the Second Alarmers is working on getting additional supply from the manufacturer for the officers.

Commissioner DiPlacido suggested having discussions on prevention.

Commissioner Schreiber replied prevention will be the focus at the County-level.

Commissioner Spiegelman asked for the shelf-life for new doses of Narcan.

Mr. Klenk replied generally, one year.

Ordinance No. 2103 – To Amend Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing)

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to adopt Ordinance No. 2103 amending Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing) at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Myers commented that in regards to “No Parking” on the west side of Coolidge Avenue from Rubicam Avenue to Phipps Avenue; this is the side of Coolidge where Willow Hill School is located and it is because of school that this is included in the motion. There has been a real problem because parking on both sides of the street does not allow two-way traffic and there have been some minor accidents.

This will affect parents who pick up their children at Willow Hill and we are working with the School District for a drop-off and pickup area.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Ordinance No. 2104 – Capital Project – County Radio Purchase

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to adopt Ordinance No. 2104 at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on December 10, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners. There were none.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments. There were none.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Ordinance No. 2106 – To Amend Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing), Section 27 “Parking Time Limited” and Section 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones”

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Farren to advertise Ordinance No. 2106 amending Chapter 156 (Vehicles and Traffic), Article III – (Parking Regulations), Section 25 (Parking Prohibited At All Times; No Parking Between Signs; No Parking Here To Corner; Parking Prohibited Except Certain Hours; No Stopping Or Standing), Section 27 “Parking Time Limited” and Section 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones” for adoption at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on January 14, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Farren commented that parking in general is an issue for Abington Township, and there have been parking issues going on for years in the Keswick area. He presented photos of the parking issue on Wharton Road to the Committee where residents come home from work and cannot find a parking space, and in some cases, for a half mile to one mile from their homes, which is during the daytime hours. It is exacerbated when shows are being held at the theater at night and people are parking everywhere in this area, so the residents are in favor of this ordinance.

Commissioner Hecker thanked Traffic Safety Officer Freed for his assistance with his portion of this ordinance as he went above and beyond to address a challenging situation.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments.

Joe Poliwoda, 2237 Wharton Road, commented that he has lived here since 1996, and he and the other residents are excited about the redevelopment of Keswick, but parking is quite an issue. Vehicles are parked in front of our homes for weeks at a time and it is completely out of control. The residents are requesting seven-days a week permit parking between the hours of 8 a.m. – 6 p.m., so we can park in front of our homes.

Mary Kurek, 2233 Wharton Road, commented that she has lived here her entire life and it has never been like this. She thanked Mr. Joe Poliwoda and Commissioner Farren for their assistance with this issue that affects all the neighbors on the block.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that in the “zoning rewrite there is a lot of shared-parking, and this kind of thing will happen again when it is passed.”

Commissioner Myers said the basis of this problem has occurred in other areas and State law says, “If the vehicle is registered and inspected, it can be parked on the public street until one of those two expires.” Would the Township be permitted to pass an ordinance that would set a limit of time for how long a vehicle can be parked on the street and not moved?

Solicitor Clarke replied the general rule is that if parking is permitted on a particular street that has no meters and the vehicle is registered, inspected and visibly operable, the Township cannot do anything about how long it is parked there, and it will be difficult getting passed the vehicle code. However, there are exceptions for emergency situations.

Commissioner Myers said on two occasions there were cars parked on residential streets. One was owned by someone in jail that sat there for a long time and the other car was there so long that it was snowplowed in. Is this something that can be looked at?

Solicitor Clarke replied permit parking can be created on certain residential streets for those who live there, but for their guests, it can be a problem, and for cars parked on the street during a snow emergency, they can be towed.

Chief Kelly commented that he will look into it as there are municipalities that deal with that situation as well and he will report back on it.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any general comments relating to Public Safety.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, thanked Lt. Warner for the demonstration.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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