

The stated meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held on Wednesday, August 31, 2016 at the Township Administration Building, Abington, PA., with Commissioner Schreiber presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 7:08 p.m.

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

Township Manager LEFEVRE
Township Solicitor CLARKE
Fire Marshal CLARK
Chief of Police KELLY
Lt. MALLOY
Lt. WARNER
Traffic Safety Officer FREED
Traffic Safety Officer POSEY

Also Present: Commissioners LUKER, KLINE, MYERS, ZAPPONE, GILLESPIE, ROTHMAN

MINUTES: Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Bowman to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2016 Public Safety Committee Meeting.

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Willow Hill Physical Ed Teacher – Cindy Santee:

Commissioner Myers introduced Cindy Santee, who is the Physical Education at Willow Hill Elementary School and a community leader and an amazing volunteer, and she is here this evening to speak about a wonderful partnership between Willow Hill Elementary School and the Abington Police Department.

Ms. Santee said we had an event at the Willow Hill Elementary School called the “Willow Hill Bike Rodeo. She got the idea from seeing students not wearing helmets while riding their bikes and this event was to teach students about bike safety. After getting approval from the Principal, she contacted Officer Freed to help make this event work.

She applied for a \$500 CAPT grant in which she was awarded and the event was held on June 10, 2016 after school. It was an event designed to include parents and the bikes, students and parents who participated in the event were registered. Any student who did not have a helmet, one was supplied to them through the Police Department and PTO.

T-shirts and wrist bands were provided to the students and 120 students signed up. Officer Freed gave a speech on safety to all of the students and following that there were three safety courses set up on the blacktop playground.

The next part of the bike rodeo was that students rode through Willow Hill to St. John of the Cross and back just a little less than two miles. We encouraged parents to ride along with their students. Refreshments and raffles were part of the event and overall it was a success, and it would not have been possible without the Abington Police Department especially Officer Freed. She thanked Chief Kelly for the assistance of the Police Department and Officer Freed.

Photos of the event were shown during this presentation.

Commissioner Schreiber mentioned that today, August 31, 2016 is International Overdose Awareness Day and the website is www.overdoseday.com, which is about today's events. She invited Rich Garrett, of the Second Alarmers to speak to the Board.

Mr. Garrett said last Thursday night, there was a heroin overdose in Abington Township, and prior to the ambulance arriving, the police officer found the patient not breathing and administered Narcan that saved the person's life.

The following Friday night, at our 876 Jenkintown Road station, ambulance crew was eating dinner when someone pulled up to the ramp brought their girlfriend in who was not breathing also due to an overdose of heroin and Narcan was administered saving her life.

On Saturday night, there was an overdose, but not heroine. It was a different type of drug.

He thanked members of the Police Department for carrying Narcan and saving another life.

Police Department Report:

Chief Kelly reminded everyone that it was the great work by the Second Alarmers who put the department in the position to be able to carry Narcan before most municipalities in the area.

Also, the department received a complaint about telephone solicitations indicating some sort of association or endorsement from Abington Township Police Department and there are absolutely no phone solicitations that are in any way associated with or endorsed by the Abington Township Police Department. That information will be posted on our website as well as the Township's website.

Secondly, we have been receiving complaints about other types of phone solicitations, and while some may be representing legitimate organizations, there is no way we can insure that whoever receives the contributions or what percentage of the donation is received by the named charity. He does not recommend sending money to any telephone solicitors, but instead make donations to any reputable, local charities.

Also, there has been fraud occurring by telephone that bilked some of our citizens out of thousands of dollars, which has been noted in our police reports. There are calls from people who say they are from the IRS saying they are owed money or else and there has been a few people who actually sent money. There are also fraud telephone calls from people who are saying to the citizen that their family member is in trouble and they need to send money as soon as possible and there has been citizens who sent money.

He reminded citizens to be very reluctant to send money to anyone based on telephone calls unless they are certain who they are talking to, and if there is any concern about possible fraudulent criminal activity, please call the Abington Police Department or their local police department by dialing 9-1-1.

He announced that the Abington Police Department just completed the second year of our red light camera program with the great work done by Officers Posey and Freed and Lt. Warner and they put together some information to share with the Board.

Commander of Community Policing Division, Lt. Kelley Warner said this is the anniversary of our second year for the red light camera program. As a reminder, the cameras are located at Old York Road & Old Welsh Road, Old York Road & Susquehanna Road and Moreland Road & Fitzwatertown Road.

When the program began, the Township had four goals and they have been accomplished, which was to reduce the number of violations; the number of crashes; the number of crashes with injuries and the number of fatalities.

During the warning period, where there was a lot of press coverage about red light cameras being installed in Abington Township, and we counted over 6,000 violations at the combined three intersections. After the first year 4,873 violations, a reduction of -24% after the second year, there were 3,327 a reduction of -32% so violations have been reduced by almost 50% since the warning period. 79% of nonresidents are committing violations in Abington Township.

Pre-camera there were 44 crashes and after the first year there were 43 crashes and this is a little high and we blame it on PennDOT for the repaving of Old York Road project. After the second year, there were 31 crashes with a reduction of -30% overall.

Out of 44 crashes pre-camera, there were seven crashes with injuries, after the first year, there were 11 had injuries, and after the second year there were five, so a reduction of -29%.

There was one fatality pre-camera and after the first year there were none and after second year there were none so a 100% reduction.

The Police Department has been reimbursed for every single penny that we put out, which is \$123,041.00, so absolutely no cost to Abington Township. Income earned from red light camera violations is zero. Zero dollar income and zero dollar cost to Abington Township.

She thanked the Board on behalf of the red light camera team, and following next year, we will come before the Board to hopefully renew the red light camera program.

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Spiegelman commented that one of the benefits of a successful red light camera program was that it would put the police department in a position to be able to pilot other programs ahead of other departments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Has there been any word on other pilot programs that may be coming online for departments such as Abington Police Department?

Chief Kelly replied yes, he heard that radar has moved further recently and may even be a possibility this year.

Commissioner Kalinoski commended Chief Kelly and Lt. Warner and it is so nice to see that this program has not cost anything to Abington Township, which is something we can all be proud of.

Commissioner Kline asked for breakdown statistics of those intersections for side impact accidents and rear-end accidents for pre-camera, first year and second year.

Lt. Warner replied we have not found any statistics that showed rear-end crashes as a result to the red light cameras.

Commissioner Kline asked has there been incidents of rear-end accidents at those intersections?

Officer Posey replied pre-camera there were 44 crashes; 26 of them were rear-end crashes after the first year there were 43 total crashes and 24 of them were rear-end crashes and the second year there was 31 crashes and 18 were rear-end crashes. Pre-camera side impact crashes were 14, and after the first year 12 were side impact crashes, and after the second year, there were 13.

Commissioner Kline asked how much has been received from the ARLE (Automated Red Light Enforcement) grant program?

Manager LeFevre replied about \$90,000.00.

Commissioner Kline said of the qualified Pennsylvania municipalities who were able to implement red light cameras, has any since Abington's implementation of the red light cameras, done so in their municipality?

Chief Kelly replied no, they have not.

Traffic Safety Officer Freed announced that summer is almost over being the last day of August, which means the Traffic Safety Blitz will be in effect in September, and if anyone needs signs they can contact the Traffic Safety Division. School will begin next Wednesday and he reminded everyone to be careful driving. Penn State will also be in session, so we will focus on traffic enforcement there as well.

Ordinance No. 2125 – To Amend Chapter 156 “Vehicles and Traffic” Article II “Traffic Regulations” Section 14 “Stop Intersections and 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 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones”

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Spiegelman to adopt Ordinance No. 2125 amending Chapter 156 “Vehicles and Traffic” Article II “Traffic Regulations” Section 14 “Stop Intersections and 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 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones” at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioner on September 8, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Ordinance No. 2126 – To Amend Chapter 156 “Vehicles and Traffic” Article II “Traffic Regulations” Section 14 “Stop Intersections” and 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 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones”

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to advertise Ordinance No. 2126 amending Chapter 156 “Vehicles and Traffic” Article II “Traffic Regulations” Section 14 “Stop Intersections” and 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 28 “Special Purpose Parking Zones” for adoption at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners on October 13, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. Commissioner Schreiber asked for any comments from Commissioners or staff. There were none.

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

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

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

Sobriety Checkpoint Grant

Commissioner Schreiber made a MOTION, seconded by Commissioner Kalinoski to authorize Township officials to accept a grant award from the Bureau of Highway Safety and Traffic Engineering in the amount of \$55,000.00 with the Township’s matching portion approximately \$480.00.

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

Commissioner Schreiber asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, commented that she believes that the “sobriety checkpoints are an affront to our constitutional rights.”

MOTION was ADOPTED 5-0.

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

Commissioner Kalinoski commented that he has known Cindy Santee for many years as he was her first co-chair for the 24-Hour Relay. He commended Cindy for being a mentor and great teacher and still doing great things in Abington.

Miriam Einhorn, 1175 Timbergate Drive, expressed concern about fraudulent telephone calls made to her home using a caller ID name of a friend of hers and then saying they were from the Fraternal Order of Police asking for donations. There were also other fraudulent calls using her husband's name on the caller ID calling others.

Chief Kelly replied we will research the matter further and he will speak with Ms. Einhorn following this meeting to get more information.

Lora Lehmann, 1431 Bryant Lane, expressed concern that she feels "chemicals being used on State highways are toxic," and she asked the Board to follow up on it.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael LeFevre, Township Manager

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