

Ross Township Commissioners Meeting
1000 Ross Municipal Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
July 5, 2016
7:30 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Jeremy Shaffer, Daniel L. DeMarco (via telephone), Patrick Mullin, Grace Stanko, David J. Mikec, Lana Mazur, Stephen Korbel (via telephone), Richard Avon and Jack Betkowski

SOLICITOR: John Stranahan, Esq.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER: Douglas Sample

RECORDING SECRETARY: Noreen A. Re

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

Moment of silence in honor of James Cillo and Maryanne Parrish

Mr. Cillo was a constable for 38 years. Ms. Parrish ran the Ross/West View EMS and trained many people when it was a volunteer organization.

PRESENTATION OF CHECK TO THE NORTH HILLS FOOD BANK

A check was presented to Mr. Al Schmidt for the North Hills Food Bank. 75 pounds of canned goods were collected at the Municipal Center for the Food Bank. Mr. Schmidt thanked the Board, and he stated he would pick up the food donations. Commissioner Mazur also mentioned to Mr. Schmidt that produce from the Community Garden would be donated to the Food Bank. Ms. Peet stated the students in the summer camp are collecting cans during the summer with a goal of collecting 500 cans by the end of camp.

Commissioner Mikec had a printed thank-you that he requested be posted to thank the different departments in the township that participated in the collection.

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PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

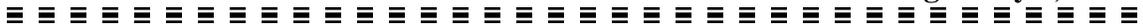
Mr. Joe Zawoysky, 123 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, commented on the change order listed under the Public Works Committee Report. Commissioner Mikec stated the gas company could not provide the adequate pressure at the location that was designed and bid on. Mr. Zawoysky gave the opinion that the gas company should be responsible for the cost.

PETITIONS AND COMPLAINTS:

Mr. John Mator of Laser Storm, 7751 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, spoke in reference to the Amusement Tax. He stated if the Amusement Tax is repealed, he will not get a tax advantage. He will still be responsible for the Mercantile Tax.

Mr. Eric Lloyd of IQ Escape Room, 4700 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, also spoke in reference to the Amusement Tax. He stated he felt they did their due diligence in looking to see if there was an Amusement Tax in Ross. He indicated they did not find any. He stated if they knew the tax existed, they might not have located in Ross. Mr. Lloyd also indicated they are community oriented. They are willing to open their doors to a “good nonprofit charitable event” and donate 100 percent of the proceeds. They also are donating a \$2,500 scholarship to North Hills High School.

Commissioner Shaffer referred to the tax as the Admissions Tax, which is the same thing. He stated he spoke with the president of the School Board and some of its members regarding the tax. He indicated they were in favor of doing away with the tax. Commissioner Shaffer stated it would be up to the School Board to repeal the tax. The School Board would be meeting in August. He encouraged everyone to attend the meeting to speak about the tax. Commissioner Korbelt concurred with Commissioner Shaffer. He stated he had similar conversations with School Board members with a positive move to appeal the tax. Commissioner Korbelt stated he was waiting for an opinion by the solicitor on the matter. Commissioner Shaffer indicated he had not seen anything in writing and that perhaps Ms. Brimmeier could coordinate with Mr. Witherel, solicitor for the School District.



Regarding the chicken issue, Commissioner Korbel stated the Board has not been presented with any recommendation or draft ordinance at this point.

Mr. Louis Sander, 153 Mayer Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, spoke in reference to the chicken issue. He indicated there should be control over animals in the township, and it should be done keeping all concerned in mind.

Ms. Irene Power, 188 Baker Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, stated she would like to have chickens at some point in the future and was in favor of residents having chickens.

Mr. Joe Zawoysky, 123 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, commented on the number of animals on a property and the location of his shed on his property.

Ms. Sharyn Morrow, 90 Transvaal Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15212, addressed the Board regarding a home at 345 Bascom Avenue owned by Resources for Human Development which has turned into a nuisance home. She indicated it is a home for people with severe mental and physical disabilities. Ms. Morrow stated the caretakers are not skilled enough to take care of the residents. There has been screaming and fighting in the street. Mr. Sample indicated he just became aware of the situation. He has spoken with the chief, and he stated he will get back to Ms. Morrow. Ms. Morrow was advised to call the police if there is a violation or a problem.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE ADOPTED - None

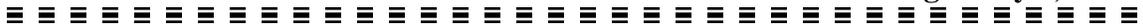
ORDINANCES TO BE INTRODUCED - None

ORDINANCE TO BE ENACTED - None

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2016

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mikec and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.



Motion passes unanimously

PAYMENT OF BILLS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mikec.

**Motion passes – 8 to 0 with 1 abstention
Commissioner Mazur abstaining**

PLANNING COMMISSION - None

**PLANNING/ZONING REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT -
None**

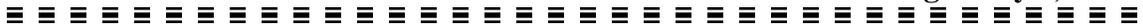
SOLICITOR’S REPORT - None

RECREATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Mazur stated Community Day and the parade were a success. This is the first year that the Perrysville Volunteer Fire Department ran out of food for the event. She thanked John Schalcosky and Eric O’Brien for being the announcers. She thanked Alyssa DeFilippo for singing the National Anthem. She also thanked the following for their efforts: Cliff Bright, Lisa Herbert, Andrew Penley, Gary and Lee Mazur, Perrysville Volunteer Fire Department, Ross Township Fire Police, neighboring Fire Police, Public Works, Mike Funk, Gary Knox, the Masonic, John Reubi and Eloise Peet.

Commissioner Mazur thanked the following for their donations: Mertz Plumbing, Wholesale Mulch and Gravel, Masonic, North Hills Teachers Association, Attorney Bonnie Brimmeier, First National Bank and Laurel Gardens Tires. She also thanked all the volunteers as well as Mandy and Billy Jones, Pam Hurt, Mark Snyder and the Police Department.

The Fishing Tournament will be held on July 15th and 16th. You can sign up on the website or at the Municipal Center. Lunch will be provided. She also received a letter from a gentleman that has participated in the fishing tournament in the past and who also sent a



\$20 donation for the event. Mr. Josh Miller, member of the USA Fly fishing team, will be giving free fly fishing lessons at Evergreen Park in the future. Commissioner Shaffer thanked Commissioner Mazur for all her efforts for township events.

ADMINISTRATION/LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Board motion to approve the Employee Training/Travel policy

Commissioner Shaffer noted for the record that the word "approved" was added under Item No. 2 and a "30-day time frame" added to Item No. 4.

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mikec.

Motion passes unanimously

Board motion to approve the Township’s Donation policy

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Stanko.

Motion passes unanimously

Board motion to approve the Commissioners’ Banquet/Dinner policy

Commissioner Shaffer stated Option A is the township will pay for the commissioner and a guest. Option B is the township will pay for the commissioner only.

Motion to approve Option A made by Commissioner Stanko and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Commissioner Mikec stated he could afford to pay for his spouse, but he was thinking of future Board members. Commissioner Avon concurred with Commissioner Mikec. Commissioner Betkowski suggested a hardship exception policy.

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Commissioner Stanko stated someone might feel uncomfortable asking for a hardship exception.

Commissioner Korbel commented that the taxpayers are funding the expenses. He also stated in his experience payment for a spouse or guest or children that attend a banquet or conference is highly unusual. He was in support of the township paying for the commissioner only.

Option A roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – Yes
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbel – No
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – No
- Commissioner Betkowski – No
- Commissioner DeMarco – No
- Commissioner Shaffer – No

Motion fails– 5 to 4

Option B roll Call:

- Commissioner Stanko – No
- Commissioner Mikec – No
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbel – Yes
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – Yes
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Motion passes – 7 to 2

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Board motion to approve the Commissioners’ Conference and Training Budget policy

Commissioner Shaffer stated with Option A the township will budget a set amount that all commissioners shall utilize for conferences, training banquets and dinners. With Option B the township will provide each commissioner with a set allotment that they are to use for conferences, training banquets and dinners.

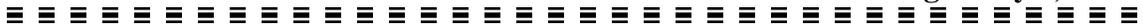
Motion to approve Option A made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Following inquiry by Commissioner Mikec, Mr. Sample stated the budget amount is set at \$15,000. Commissioner Korbelt commented that he brought this up in committee and thought it made good fiscal sense to set a certain amount for each commissioner each year to be budgeted. Commissioner Mazur commented that training is important for the commissioners. She stated she also benefited from other commissioners attending training and bringing back information. Commissioner Betkowski stressed again the need to be transparent with where money is being spent.

Commissioner Mazur stated that anyone who would like to know how money in a line item is spent is entitled to receive that information from the township. Commissioner Avon commented that he didn’t see the difference in the two options or where the transparency comes in. He felt it dealt primarily with how the money is allotted.

Option A roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – Yes
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbelt – No
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – No
- Commissioner Betkowski – No
- Commissioner DeMarco – No
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes



Motion passes – 5 to 4

Board motion to approve the Commissioners’ Training/Travel policy

Option A, the township will reimburse the commissioner for travel expenses. The township will also reimburse for lunch associated with the training if it is not provided at the training. Option B, the township will not pay for travel expenses for commissioners who attend local training sessions.

Motion to approve Option A made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Stanko.

Local travel is defined as within two hours travel. Commissioner Mikec stated the restrictions would discourage commissioners from attending training.

Commissioner Betkowski commented if this has never once occurred, then maybe it is really not too controversial of an issue. Commissioner Korbelt commented that future Boards could change the policy by majority vote. He reiterated his position that he is not standing against educational opportunities or networking events, but simply trying to put a set of rules and procedures around these issues for which there have been none.

Option 1-A roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – Yes
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbelt – No
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – No
- Commissioner Betkowski – No
- Commissioner DeMarco – No
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Motion passes – 5 to 4



Motion that any Ross Township commissioner who wants to attend an overnight training session needs to have approval from the Board of Commissioners made by Commissioner Mikec and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Commissioner Betkowski commented that this would be the same policy that will be followed by other township employees, and he was in agreement. Commissioner Shaffer commented that if it does pass, it was his hope that it would be not used in a punitive way against any commissioner.

Roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – No
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbelt – Yes
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – Yes
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Motion passes – 8 to 1

Regarding attending conferences, with Option A the township will pay for the commissioner and a guest to attend the training session. Option B, the township will only pay for the commissioner to attend the training session.

Commissioner Mikec commented that a lot of the conferences have gone to a one-price structure. He also indicated most of the conferences have a spousal program. He inquired if there would have to be a bill itemization to account for the cost of the spouse. Commissioner Betkowski commented if a conference has one price, that would be it. He indicated he was thinking if the conference had a separate charge for a spouse or guest. Commissioner Korbelt commented that he believed that was discussed in committee; if there was a separate cost for a spouse, the township would not pick up the cost.



Option A roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – Yes
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – No
- Commissioner Korbelt – No
- Commissioner Avon – No
- Commissioner Mullin – No
- Commissioner Betkowski – No
- Commissioner DeMarco – No
- Commissioner Shaffer – No

Motion fails– 7 to 2

Option B roll call:

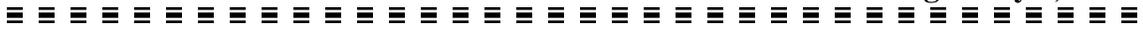
- Commissioner Stanko – No
- Commissioner Mikec – No
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbelt – Yes
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – Yes
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Motion passes – 7 to 2

Regarding reimbursement for travel expenses, with Option A the township will reimburse the commissioner for travel expenses. The township will also pay to reimburse for meals associated with the training session if they are not provided at the training. Option B is the township will not pay for travel expenses for commissioners who attend overnight training sessions.

Motion to approve Option A made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Following discussion, Mr. Sample stated if it's a multiple-day conference, over an hour drive, that's considered overnight.



Commissioner Korbel stated Seven Springs would be considered an overnight conference.

Option A roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – Yes
- Commissioner Mikec – Yes
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbel – Yes
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – Yes
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Motion passes unanimously

Discussion ensued regarding the definition of local and overnight training. It was decided local training is within a two-hour driving distance, a one-day session. Overnight training is training that is over a two-hour drive from the township building or a multi-day training that is over a one-hour drive.

Motion to approve the policy in total made by Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Roll call:

- Commissioner Stanko – No
- Commissioner Mikec – No
- Commissioner Mazur – Yes
- Commissioner Korbel – No
- Commissioner Avon – Yes
- Commissioner Mullin – Yes
- Commissioner Betkowski – Yes
- Commissioner DeMarco – Yes
- Commissioner Shaffer – Yes

Commissioner Korbel indicated he voted no due to the fact the local travel expenses are less than two hours.



Motion passes – 6 to 3

The policy is not retroactive. Commissioner Shaffer stated the policy will only become effective after the vote tonight. The solicitor concurred.

Commissioner Korbel excused himself from the meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORT:

Board motion to approve Change Order for GC-3, Gurtner Construction, in the amount of \$60,806.00, for the Public Works Building Gas Line Extension

Motion to approve made by Commissioner Mikec and seconded by Commissioner Avon.

As part of Commissioner Mikec’s motion, he asked the solicitor to review the position of possibly seeking reimbursement from the gas company. Mr. Sample stated the work has already been done to keep the entire project moving. The seconder agreed to the additional comment.

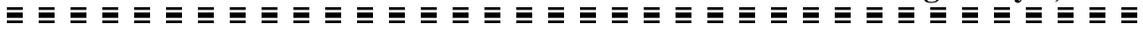
**Motion passes – 7 to 1
Commissioner Mullin voting in the negative**

Mr. Sample requested a Board motion to waive the hours of working for the paving project on Peebles Road and Babcock Boulevard heading into Shaler and Millvale. The contractor, who is A. Folino, requested to do the work at night from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Following discussion, Mr. Sample stated he would monitor the work in case there are too many resident complaints.

Motion passes – 8 to 1

PUBLIC SAFETY/POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Commissioner Avon stated the Ross Township Police Department now has training-certified officers available for child safety seat inspections and installations. Currently the services are



offered by appointment only. There will special events dedicated to this in the future. An appointment can be scheduled by calling the Police Department.

PUBLIC SAFETY/FIRE/FIRE POLICE/EMS COMMITTEE REPORT - None

MANAGER’S REPORT:

Mr. Sample stated the deadline for articles for the magazine is July 15th. Waste Management will be at the meeting on July 18th at the 6:30 p.m. committee meeting to answer questions.

Commissioner Shaffer requested a motion that the policy directives adopted on July 5, 2016, apply to all new requests submitted by commissioners or employees on or after 7-6-16 and any request for attendance that have already been submitted prior to this directive will be honored under the previous policy.

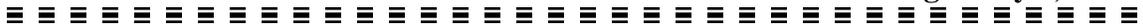
Motion made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Mazur.

Motion passes – 8 to 0

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS:

Commissioner Stanko thanked Commissioner Mazur, Ms. Peet and all those who contributed to the success of Community Day and the parade.

Commissioner Mikec also commented on the success of Community Day and the parade. He also thanked everyone who donated food or a check to the Food Bank drive. He also thanked all the township employees who donated. Commissioner Mikec also expressed regret at not being at this year’s fishing tournament. His wife scheduled a cruise to celebrate their wedding anniversary at the same time. He also suggested everyone remind people in their wards that the township has a drug drop-off at the police station. Commissioner Mikec also mentioned difficulties with recycling pickup from Waste Management.



Commissioner Mazur stated Girty’s Run Watershed is having a photo contest. For details you can contact Sustainable Millvale at gmail.com or go to NAECWPA.org. She also thanked everyone again for their efforts on Community Day and the parade and stated she looked forward to seeing everyone at the Fishing Tournament.

Commissioner Avon thanked Commissioner Mazur for her guidance of his participation in the parade. He thanked Chief Ley for allowing him to ride with the police.

Commissioner Mullin thanked Commissioner Mazur and Ms. Peet and everyone involved in Community Day and the parade.

Commissioner Betkowski commended Commissioner Mazur for her efforts on Community Day and the parade.

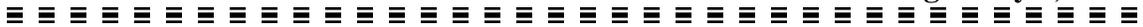
Commissioner DeMarco stated he was sorry he missed the event, but he saw pictures on social media. Commissioner DeMarco stated he received a message from Mr. Roy Mazzoleni regarding some suggestions for mitigating the flooding on Babcock Boulevard. He indicated he received a photograph that he would forward to Mr. Sample. Commissioner Mazur indicated she had a copy of the photograph that she could provide to Mr. Sample. Following his comments, Commissioner DeMarco excused himself from the meeting.

Commissioner Shaffer commented that the parade attendance was more than past years and that Community Day was wonderful. He also felt the trucks were abused by the children. Children climbing on the trucks should be given some thought for next year. He also commented on issues with Waste Management. Commissioner Shaffer also mentioned thinking about some options that would make the position of commissioner more attractive so people feel it is worth their time. He stated maybe there could be some new creative benefits or some other way to make that happen.



CITIZENS’ COMMENTS:

Mr. Joe Zawoysky, 123 5th Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, addressed the Board regarding the travel policy and cost of dinners



as well as township vehicles being used for travel, government contracts, picking up hazardous waste, prescription drop-off, permit parking and an issue on Sixth Avenue. He inquired if a permit was required to sell fireworks or flowers. Mr. Sample responded in the affirmative and stated a copy of the permit was to be on site. In regard to a yard sale, Mr. Sample indicated a permit was not needed. Mr. Zawoysky also mentioned correspondence that he sent to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Dennis F. Stanko, 310 Cedar Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237 commented as follows: “Jeremy, you commented about what can the Board do to attract a diverse group of people, what kind of perks can be offered, so forth and so on. Someone mentioned a company car. Great. But two or three of the votes that were taken tonight just took perks away. So it's contradictory. Unless I misheard something, I don't know. But two-three-four perks were just taken away, and you're looking for perks to offer people who might be coming on in the future. It's an oxymoron. That's all I have to say. Thank you.”

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Mazur and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

Motion passes – 7 to 0

**MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:44 P.M.
NO ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

**Douglas Sample
Manager/Secretary**

**By: _____
Jeremy Shaffer, President
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners**

Minutes transcribed by *Noreen A. Re, Court Reporter*