

Ross Township Board of Commissioners
Committee Meeting
1000 Ross Municipal Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
March 2, 2020
7:03 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Stephen Korbel, Jeremy Shaffer, Patrick Mullin, Jason Piring, Jack Betkowski, Sarah Poweska, Daniel L. DeMarco, Joseph Laslavic and William McKellar

SOLICITOR: P. J. Murray, Esq.

TOWNSHIP MANAGER: Ronald Borczyk (Absent)

RECORDING SECRETARY: Noreen A. Re

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BOARD
LIAISON:** Dominic J. Rickert

Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

(In the absence of Mr. Borczyk, Mr. Daniel Berty assisted.)

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Ms. Karla Maruca, 525 Woodland Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, inquired regarding glass recycling, since Waste Management is asking the contract to be adjusted. Commissioner Korbel responded that the Board will have to discuss the matter.

Ms. Joi Mrdjenovich, 210 Eaton Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, addressed the Board regarding her concerns and frustrations regarding the overpopulation of deer in the township. She was in favor of archery hunting of the deer.

Mr. John Mrdjenovich, 210 Eaton Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, also addressed the Board regarding controlling the deer population.

Mr. Jack Bishop, 109 Locust Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, addressed the Board regarding archery hunters having their information on their arrows so they can be held responsible for property damage.

Mr. Edward Veverka, 126 Country Lane, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, addressed the Board regarding his concern about the deer population.

Ms. Julie Yocoviello, 355 Goldsmith Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, addressed the Board regarding the deer issue. She suggested the township sponsor a qualification test for the archery hunters.

Ms. Peggy McDowell, 245 West View Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, addressed the Board and suggested placing urine around your border to keep the deer away.

Commissioner Korbel announced an Executive Session was held before the meeting to discuss potential litigation, personnel matters and emergency preparedness issues.

Commissioner Korbel also reappointed to the Deer Management Committee Commissioners DeMarco, Betkowski, Shaffer and himself.

ADDRESSING THE BOARD:

Presentation by Matthew Erb, Director of Urban Forestry – Tree Pittsburgh

Mr. Matthew Erb, Director of Urban Forestry with the nonprofit organization Tree Pittsburgh addressed the Board. He stated their goal is to protect and restore the tree canopy throughout the county. He went through different programs they have and their efforts throughout Allegheny County in detail. He discussed in detail loss of a percentage of the tree canopy in Ross. There will be a tree giveaway on April 18th at North Park Swimming Pool. There is online registration for the event.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Betkowski as to Mr. Erb's recommendations for Ross Township, Mr. Erb recommended looking at the ordinances and adopting an approved species tree list that it is known will work well for Ross Township.

Upon inquiry by Commissioner Shaffer, Mr. Erb stated in his experience engineers prefer meadow-designed projects because they are quick to come to fruition, as opposed to a wooded steep slope.

Also, upon inquiry by Commissioner Betkowski, Mr. Erb stated they have a tree tender course that they offer. He also stated Arbor Day is Friday, April 24th. The National Arbor Day Foundation has a program to become a Tree City USA. If you have a tree ordinance and spend a certain amount of funds on tree maintenance planting and you have an Arbor Day proclamation from the Board, you can be granted a Tree City USA plaque and flag for the community.

Ms. Peet stated April 7th will be a planting day at Evergreen Park with One Tree Per Child and Tree Pittsburgh. North Hills Middle School will be participating, and there will be 50 trees planted on the hillside by the house.

2019 4th Quarter Pension Fund Review from Frank Burnette - Morrison Fiduciary Advisors, Inc.

Mr. Frank Burnette went through a review of the 4th Quarter Pension Fund in detail. The fund return over the last three years has been 9.93 percent, including 2018, which was not a good year. He stated the economy is reacting to the Coronavirus. He stated he felt it was temporary and an interruption as opposed to a “change in economic dynamics that you can't survive from.”

Mr. Burnette stated the Vanguard funds are doing well. Mr. Jeff Davidek from C.S. McKee addressed the Board. He went through the portfolio in detail. He also went through the history of C.S. McKee and a recent ownership change in 2020. There will be no change in how the township's portfolio will be managed, but Mr. Davidek stated he will be retiring from C.S. McKee. Mr. Bob Rossi will be the new contact person.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Approval of Minutes – February 3, 2020

Bill List – March 2, 2020

**Motion to approve the Consent Agenda made by
Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner Purring.**

Motion passes unanimously

ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS AND POLICY:

Chair: Joe Laslavic; Members – Dan DeMarco and Pat Mullin

Township Manager Report:

Mr. Berty stated Mr. Borczyk attended the scoping meeting with PennDOT at their headquarters on February 20th. They reviewed the work proposed for the McKnight-Siebert Phase II MTF Project. The contract should be coming in the next two to three weeks.

Mr. Borczyk also wanted the Board to know that the MS-4 audit is going to take place on the 10th of March. The staff is working with DPW to update the files and document the activity.

Also, Mr. Borczyk attended a meeting at Northland Library with other communities at which they discussed revising the cost allocation formula. The options reflected maybe just a one percent change.

iCompass Implementation

Ms. Malsch stated this would be the last meeting that the Board would be receiving dual paper and digital packets. She stated if there were any concerns, just let her or Jessica Crawshaw know. If there are more than one or two requests, they would be happy to have a group sit-down before the next meeting to go over how to navigate the system.

Commissioner Laslavic thanked Ms. Malsch for her efforts in assisting the Board in going paperless. Upon inquiry from Commissioner Piring, Ms. Malsch stated the deadline for the packet for directors is the end of the day Wednesday with final approval pending from the president of the Board and committee chairs. Once approvals are received, it should be published by Thursday afternoon. Confidential items will remain confidential and not available to the public.

Ordinance to be Adopted – Athletic Advisory Board (AAB)

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 2442 creating an Athletic Advisory Board made by Commissioner Laslavic and seconded by Commissioner Piring.

Motion passes unanimously

Jordan Tax Service Billing

Commissioner Laslavic inquired if the manager had any information related to alternatives. Mr. Berty stated he was not aware of any changes. Commissioner Korbel stated Mr. Borczyk was looking at alternatives and the possibility of doing it in-house. Discussion ensued about some type of forgiveness for a late payment, due to whatever reason. Paying with a credit card was discussed. Commissioner Betkowski commented that he would like to see some data. Getting data from West View Water to Jordan Tax Service was discussed.

Commissioner Poweska commented that she worked with Jordan Tax when she was the tax collector, and she had no problems working with the members of the department that handled property tax.

Waste Management – Adjustment to current contract to remove glass recycling

Ms. Malsch stated she and the manager were setting up a meeting with Waste Management to discuss their glass recycling and communicating with residents as to what would be happening moving

forward. Senator Lindsay Williams is planning a glass recycling event. Following discussion, Commissioner Laslavic commented that the contract is not up until 2021. Commissioner Shaffer commented that the real issue, as seen in the news, is the economics of recycling has changed. He stated he would like more information as to why something that's been going on for many years has all of a sudden with improved technology that helps separate things even better is now a contamination issue.

Commissioner Betkowski commented that the contamination issue is a real concern due to the tightening of requirements for recycling. He also stated Waste Management was not offering anything in return or an alternative.

New Business - None

FINANCE, BUDGET AND PENSION:

Chair: Sarah Poweska ; Members – William McKellar and Jack Betkowski

Finance Director Report

Mr. Berty stated Maher Duessel has been in and doing the audit for 2019. There is a Liquid Fuels audit scheduled next week. He went through the January financial statements in detail. \$300,000 was transferred into the Capital Fund to pay bills in January. The Police Department has some higher expenditures in January, but the revenue was up 32 percent in January. Public Works was higher than the prior year due to the extra employee in 2020.

There was not much activity in the Sewer Fund. There were a couple transactions in the Capital Fund, including the transfer of \$300,000.

Bond Counsel

Commissioner Korbel stated Boenning & Scattergood requested the township to appoint bond counsel. They

recommended Attorney Patrick Healy. His rates were at or below market, and he has worked with the team before.

Motion to hire Attorney Patrick Healy as bond counsel made by Commissioner Betkowski and seconded by Commissioner Mullin.

No public comments for or against

Motion passes unanimously

Mr. Berty commented that he would be on a call with the solicitor and Boening & Scattergood and bond counsel at 11:45 a.m. tomorrow. He anticipated the conversation to be approximately 15 minutes, if anyone was interested in joining the conversation.

New Business – None

PUBLIC WORKS, SANITATION AND SEWERS:

Chair: Pat Mullin; Members – Jason Piring and Jeremy Shaffer

Public Works Director Report

Mr. Funk was not present this evening.

Awarding of the 2020 Ross Township Sewer Repair Contracts

Motion to award the 2020 Ross Township Sewer Repair Contract A bid to Soli Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$287,870.00 made by Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Commissioner Laslavic.

Motion passes unanimously

Motion to award the 2020 Ross Township Sewer Repair Contract B bid to Insight Pipe, Inc., in the amount of \$378,275.00 made by Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Commissioner DeMarco.

Commissioner Shaffer commented that these were the lowest responsible bids. He also commented that these contracts are just a piece of the puzzle as to why the sewer bills are so high.

Motion passes unanimously

Awarding of the 2020 Ross Township CCTV Inspections

Motion to award the 2020 Ross Township CCTV Inspections bid to State Pipe Services, Inc., in the amount of \$89,995.00 made by Commissioner Mullin and seconded by Commissioner Perring.

Motion passes unanimously

New Business - None

PLANNING, ZONING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Chair: Dan DeMarco; Members – Sarah Poweska and Jack Betkowski

Community Development Director Report

Mr. Rickert stated four ordinances will be coming up regarding parking dimensions, garbage can locations, types of fences in the front yard and looking at doggy daycare. He also stated a new blotter will arrive within the next two to three weeks.

SP-19-5 – KU Resources, Inc., on behalf of Northside Catholic Cemetery, is requesting a Site Plan Modification to Chapter 9-110.5.B. so as to increase land for future burial use.

SP-19-5 - KU Resources, Inc., on behalf of Northside Catholic Cemetery, is requesting Final Site Plan Approval.

Commissioner DeMarco commented that there are still outstanding issues relative to information that was requested or needed to be obtained from the township relative to the records. The deadline for the objectors to the matter to submit everything to the

township is this Thursday. Monday is the deadline for the applicant to respond.

Attorney Dwight Ferguson, representing the objectors, requested the applicant provide any document the township does not have. Commissioner DeMarco suggested Attorney Ferguson communicate with the applicant to make sure. Attorney Ferguson stated he did and that the solicitor was copied on the communication. Attorney Ferguson commented if there was a document requested that was not provided that the township did not have that the Board draw whatever inferences they feel is appropriate.

Attorney Margaret Sweeney responded that they are withholding nothing from the township. She stated anything that was submitted to the township is a public record and should be made available to any citizen who requests it. Mr. Murray commented as follows:

MR. MURRAY: "We think the record is complete today. If it's not, let's complete it by Thursday. And if you have a submission of further testimony on whatever documents you're missing, that's got to be by Thursday. Your response is Monday."

Motion to table made by Commissioner DeMarco and seconded by Commissioner Shaffer.

Motion passes unanimously

New Permitting Software

Commissioner DeMarco stated, based on research done by Mr. Rickert, Mr. Rickert is recommending to move forward with the purchase of iWork. It is in the budget. The matter will be placed on the next agenda.

Deer Management Policy

Commissioner DeMarco requested the Deer Management Committee have a meeting to discuss the issue. He stated the township has not made a decision on having an organized hunt in the

township parks. He is also keeping a log of private property owners who will allow hunting on their property. If there will be a controlled hunt, it will be archery only. There will be strict rules. Insurance will be a requirement. Archery season starts in the middle of September to the end of January with a two-week time period in December where it is prohibited.

The survey that was taken was discussed. Ms. Peet stated if anyone had any questions about the survey to call her. Commissioner Shaffer inquired if it is known how many deer are in the township and the optimum population. Commissioner DeMarco stated the game warden told him not to worry about how many deer you have. The cost to have a controlled hunt is minimal. Commissioner DeMarco suggested one requirement would be to have the first deer donated to the food bank. The goal is not to eradicate the deer, but to control the population.

New Business:

Mr. Rickert commented that the Environmental Advisory Committee sent an E-mail to get a meeting scheduled. Commissioner DeMarco stated he would be meeting with them when they have their meeting.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Chairs: William McKellar; Members – Jack Betkowski and Dan DeMarco

Police Chief Report:

Chief Ley stated there would a Distracted Driving Seminar held at the Municipal Center on Saturday, April 18th, at 10:00 a.m. There is also Coffee with a Cop scheduled for Saturday, April 25th, at Ross Park Mall from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. He thanked Ms. Lisa Earl, mall manager, for hosting the event.

The Ross Police Bike Rodeo will be on Sunday, April 26th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Block at Northway. He thanked Jamie Pavlot for hosting the event.

The Allegheny County Police Department is conducting their first citizen police academy at their North Park training facility for those 18 years of age and older. It is set to begin on April 1st. It is a ten-week course that will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Applications are available on the Allegheny County Police website. Chief Ley stated he was invited to speak on the first night as part of their chiefs' panel discussion.

Commissioner Laslavic inquired as to how the coffee event with McCandless turned out. Chief Ley stated it was a well-received event.

Pittsburgh Window Film

Commissioner Betkowski stated the window film discussion arose from a discussion about safety in public places. Chief Ley stated this is a film that goes on windows and doors. It is not bulletproof, but it will stop the bullet from penetrating. Upon inquiry by Commissioner Korbel, Chief Ley stated he did not know the level of tint. The Safety Committee will be looking closer at the matter. Commissioner Korbel suggested holding the matter until the April voting meeting.

New Business - None

PARKS AND RECREATION:

Chair: Jason Purring; Members – Joe Laslavic and Pat Mullin

Parks and Recreation Director Report:

Ms. Peet mentioned the planting of trees at Evergreen Park on April 7th at 11:00 a.m. Commissioner Shaffer stated he would like to attend. Ms. Peet stated the repair of the spillway at Evergreen Park will begin around the first week in April. Summer camp registration was opened yesterday. The Egg Hunt is already filled, and there is a waiting list. There will be an Egg Hunt at Denny Park the following week.

New Business - None

JUNIOR COMMISSIONER REPORT

Junior Commissioner Duerig gave an overview of things happening in the school district. Among the highlights she listed is the spring musical this year is “Catch Me if You Can.” Shows will be March 20th through the 22nd and March 26th through the 28th. Another highlight is North Hills had its first flexible instructions day two weeks ago with positive feedback. Also, this year's North Hills Town Hall in regard to the dangers of vaping will be held at the North Hills Middle School on Thursday, March 19th.

OTHER BOARDS/ENTITIES (COG, CONNECT, Intergovernmental) - None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Debbie Nolan, 237 West View Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15229, spoke in opposition to the request of Northside Catholic Cemetery. Based on Ms. Nolan's comments, Commissioner Korbel commented that the tabling of the matter not being listed on the agenda was an oversight; and he took responsibility for the oversight. He stated the attorney for the objectors requested the tabling.

Ms. Julie Yocoviello, 355 Goldsmith Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, addressed the comments regarding damage from an archer. She stated she had faith in the Board having qualified archers.

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

Motion passes unanimously

MEETING ADJOURNED TO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 9:11 P.M.

Manager/Secretary

**President,
Stephen Korbel
Ross Township Board of
Commissioners**

**Minutes transcribed by Noreen A. Re, Certified Realtime
Reporter**