

**TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HUNTINGDON, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2009, 7:00 P.M.
11279 Center Highway, North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Presiding Officer – David E. Herold, President, Board of Commissioners**

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Herold called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Commissioner Furlin	Present	Also Present:
Commissioner Patter	Present	John M. Shepherd
Commissioner Gray	Present	Chelsea Dice
Commissioner Martino	Present	Michael M. Turley
Commissioner Moffatt	Present	Chief Daugherty
Commissioner Austin	Present	Richard G. Albert
Commissioner Herold	Present	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CITIZENS' INPUT

Bob Shuster, 8958 Hill Drive: He is there about the Wal-Mart level of service waiver. Residential development in the Township has given them many things, such as a Police Department. They were also able to get a new Public Works Building, new road equipment, new schools and a new stadium. The population in the Township is less than it was 20 years ago and there are more retired people now. He doesn't want to see any tax increases going to the retired people. Traffic has increased along Route 30. Hempfield Township has done a lot of residential and commercial development and they are getting all those taxes. North Huntingdon needs to look at the future to see what money they can get. They could put a Wal-Mart at the top of the hill on the Hempfield and get all the traffic and no taxes. Some residents have approached him about a community building in the Township which he would oppose if there is a tax increase. He is looking for future tax revenues from commercial building to help pay for it. The Wal-Mart in Greensburg brings in \$221,406 per year. He would have to build five plans like Lincoln Hills to be equivalent to what one commercial development does. They need to go after commercial money. Commercial buildings put no burden on the schools. He has been approached for hotels in his small development. The Terra Group put in a commercial development where they were also supposed to do road improvements on Norwin Avenue and now it is a mess and will stay that way. DeBartolo has agreed to do many improvements for the Wal-Mart, but the bank may pull financing on him. If the financing is pulled, what will they do with a pad ready hill top? They need to help get it through to get commercial revenue in the Township. Wal-Mart is not asking for tax abatement either and there will be other new stores going in that development.

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- 1) Request of DeBartolo Development for level of service waiver for Route 30/Norwin Avenue intersection.

Mr. Shepherd said the item was added because of time constraints on DeBartolo. There are representatives here to discuss this.

Bill Sittig, DeBartolo Development: The development has already had a start and stop because of the relocation of the road. They need the level of service waiver to move forward. In 2002, they did a traffic study and it was approved. The study showed some impact on Norwin Avenue, but it was acceptable and didn't need any waivers. There isn't any traffic from the development on Norwin Avenue, but there will be more on Route 30. Since then, PennDOT changed all the regulations and told them to update the traffic study. Now that they are after the Terra Development, they have to look at the impacts. The Terra Development Traffic Engineer made recommendations to mitigate the impact but they weren't done. They aren't doing anything on Norwin Avenue but re-striping and signage. If those improvements had been made before, they wouldn't need a level of service waiver. PennDOT new regulations state that they can't change the overall level of service through traffic on Route 30. DeBartolo is doing in excess of 4 million dollars of road improvements and the most recent is on Arona Road where they will be doing a drop lane. Based on the improvements that DeBartolo is proposing and the new regulations, they have to get this closed. They have to tell the lender tomorrow if they have the level of service waiver. They have been delayed for five to six years and they need to put this together.

Ray Caruso, PBS & J, Traffic Consultants: They have been on the project for awhile and a traffic study was done and approved in 2003. The traffic study looks at seven intersections, six on Route 30 and one on Pennsylvania Avenue. It looks at delays at the intersections. Intersections are graded with levels of service A through F. A is good where the traffic goes right through and F is congested. For this project, the list of projects include widening Route 30 for two left turn lanes at Ronda Court and dual left turn lanes to go to Barnes Lake Road. Part of Barnes Lake Road will be relocated and re-aligned and new traffic lights will be installed. Signal lights on Route 30 at Arona Road, Thompson Lane and Norwin Avenue will be updated to LED. The new signals will be tied together by a master signal controller to coordinate the signals. The improvements are near 5 million dollars being paid by DeBartolo. PennDOT requests that the level of service not be more than 10 seconds before the development occurred. They were able to make the delays for the development acceptable but had to take time away from Norwin Avenue which will be beyond the 10 second delay. In looking at the delays before and after the development, before the development it is 159 seconds and with the development it is 206 seconds.

Mr. Gray said it was stated that the mitigation measures with possibly moving light poles was not a significant increase compared to the 5 million they were putting into traffic control. He asked what mitigation measures could be used at Norwin Avenue that the Township will have to pay for.

Mr. Caruso said there should be two left turns at Norwin Avenue to make it better. The signal poles would be affected and the approach would have to be widened. To relocate the poles and do the roadway could be about \$40,000 to \$50,000.

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Mr. Gray asked if there is a right-of-way available there or would the Township have to get into doing that.

Mr. Turley said the widening is at the intersection and shouldn't need additional right-of-way. The project being studied would make the intersection with a left turn, a second left that would also be a thru lane and right turn eastbound. Mr. Caruso is proposing two exclusive left turn lanes, a thru lane and a right turn lane. The Township has been looking at extending the dual left turn lanes to get more cars thru, but they are looking at making it exclusive left turns and have a separate thru lane which would require moving the traffic poles. The full mitigation with the four lanes does help. The Township was looking at stacking lane distance but this is not as efficient.

Mr. Gray asked what they would be looking at the full mitigation.

Mr. Turley said it hasn't been engineered but the project could be about \$200,000.

Mr. Gray said \$200,000 could kill the project if they assumed the full mitigation.

Mr. Turley said they wouldn't assume the full mitigation because they assumed ours was completed.

Mr. Caruso said their mitigation assumed that the lane assignment would change.

Mr. Turley said mitigation is feasible but will cost about \$100,000 to move the poles and their investors can't put any more money into it. They are saying there is degradation there but a lot was caused by the other development and they are already putting a lot of money into other improvements.

Mr. Caruso said even if all those improvements are made, it would not make the problem go away. It would still be a Level F service.

Mr. Sittig said the traffic study is based on peak hours on weekday evenings and Saturday and the maximum number of cars coming out of the development. Improvements to Arona Road make sense. They need to look at the area after the development to see if there isn't a balance of the signals that would work out better.

Mr. Turley said Mr. Sittig is saying these are traffic assumptions and he is talking about looking at the actual conditions down the road. This was also based on peak hour scenarios. They are not sure how it will work until after it is opened.

Mr. Moffatt said Norwin Avenue is the only intersection that they should be increasing the level of service on but they won't be able to. By granting the level of service, they will be getting a break of about \$100,000.

Mr. Caruso said there are additional costs for a new controller and signal head.

Mr. Turley said this just came up in the last few weeks when they re-submitted their analysis to PennDOT.

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Chief Daugherty asked if the Federal money they are getting would take care of the traffic heads.

Mr. Turley said those intersections were not included in the Sinc-Up Projects.

Mr. Sittig said when they first started this project, this was the first conditional use in the area and there had been 1.2 million dollars that was allocated for the project that went away last fall. Barnes Lake Road will be relocated and there will be traffic on it, so PennDOT will be looking at that. The development on Norwin will have an impact on a generator of other projects but little impact on traffic.

Mr. Gray said if they grant the level of service waiver tonight, when would the project go in. He is afraid this will drag on for another year.

Jay Adams, DeBartolo: Their partner is Prudential and their lender is PNC Bank and they have everything they need for the H.O.P. except the level of service waiver. They have spent almost 13 million dollars that they will have to walk away from if they don't get the waiver. They are prepared to start construction immediately and approached the Township to close Barnes Lake Road down and keep Mills Road as the alternate route. They have asked the Township to charge DeBartolo what it would cost to maintain that road. Once they get the H.O.P. they have 180 days to get the pad completed. If that is not done, it will cost them \$20,000 a day. They are committed to get the project done. Wal-Mart wants to get the store opened. They will be contributing to help fix Norwin Avenue.

Motion: Mr. Martino I'll make the motion to grant the level of service waiver to
Second: Mr. Furlin DeBartolo.

Motion Carried 7 – 0 – 0

Mr. Martino excused himself from the meeting.

- 2) Discussion of the 2010 Budget for North Huntingdon Township.
 - a) Overview of proposed 2010 Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said the budget is lean and the revenues are flat. It took some creativity to make the budget to work for 2010 without any tax increase. Staffing levels will remain the same other than a part time Emergency Management Coordinator for 15 hours a week. The Capital Reserve budget balances and there is equipment for all the departments. The biggest increase is the 20% for insurance. The budget is proposed to use \$200,000 from the General Fund Reserve to balance the budget. The revenues are straight forward.

- b) Administration Department Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said there is not much change in this budget. There is an additional line item for consulting services for some projects, the main one being an upgrade to the Township Web Page and also the Code Book.

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c) Planning and Zoning Department Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said this budget varies little from last year. There is \$15,000 for professional services line item to assist with building inspection and code enforcement to use as needed. He recommends doing an RFP to get proposals. There are some projects in the Capital Reserve mainly for furniture.

d) Public Works Department Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said the General Fund budget is similar to last year. One item not included was a request for an additional staff person to fill a vacant position. The Capital Projects include a dump truck for \$160,000 and a service truck.

Mr. Herold said the price of salt is down and how much are they paying this year.

Mr. Albert said it is \$49.00/Ton compared to the \$75.00/Ton last year.

Mr. Shepherd said there is also money in Liquid Fuels for the salt and the road paving comes out of there also and the General Fund.

Mr. Moffatt said the seasonal employee pay of \$8.00/hour is fine and they shouldn't have to give them a \$0.50 raise.

Mr. Albert said \$8.50 is not a lot. The proposal is in line with State employees that get \$10.00/hour. They can go to a fast food restaurant and make the same money.

Mr. Moffatt said work study at college is minimum wage.

Mr. Albert said if they pay them minimum wage, they should reduce the age to be able to work for the Township.

Mr. Moffatt said there are some people who would do it for the minimum wage of \$7.25/hour.

Mr. Herold said PennDOT pays \$12.00/hour.

Mr. Moffatt feels that \$8.50/hour is too high.

Mr. Patter asked if this was increased last year.

Mr. Albert said it was \$7.50 the first year and if it was the second year or more, it was \$8.00/hour.

Mr. Turley said it was increased two years ago.

Mr. Shepherd said he cut the program back to 12 weeks to make it work for the budget.

Mr. Moffatt said they are over \$200,000 over budget this year.

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Mr. Shepherd said they are using \$200,000 in the reserve to make the budget work.

Mr. Furlin feels \$8.50 is not enough as he has time to visit the projects and the summer employees give good work. He would like to give help to the students who are trying to work their way through school.

Mr. Moffatt feels \$8.50 an hour is too much.

Mr. Gray said there was never any trouble filling the positions and they should go with a lower rate if they are hiring 14 people.

Mr. Shepherd said the Board can make that decision and they will do a Salary and Wage Resolution later in the year.

Mr. Albert said they have paid the summer help \$8.00 the previous year and now they want to go less this year.

Mr. Shepherd said the difference between the \$7.50 and \$8.50 an hour for 14 employees for the summer is approximately \$7,000.

Mr. Moffatt said after you add on Social Security and F.I.C.A. it is close to \$10,000 difference.

Mr. Gray feels they should not increase it this year, but not decrease it.

Mr. Patter said there seems to be an increase over the last three years and they don't want to continue in that pattern.

Mr. Albert said the last increase was two years ago.

Mr. Shepherd said he will check on it and bring it back to the Board.

Mr. Patter asked about the \$2,000 increase in miscellaneous supplies.

Mr. Albert said that is for last minute supplies at Busy Beaver or other places. With his budget for the department, they don't know what they will be getting into such as the unusual weather they had last summer. It is hard for him to put a number on it.

e) Parks and Recreation Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said there are some capital equipment purchases in the Capital Reserve Fund and some projects in the Fee-in-Lieu fund. Some items have been reduced and Mr. Miller will be at the meeting next week for any questions.

f) Emergency Management Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said this is a small budget. He made a recommendation to put on a part-time paid coordinator for a certain number of hours per week.

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Gene Komondor, Emergency Management Coordinator: He brought to Mr. Shepherd's attention the position because of the volume of work and some of the work is not getting done. He is not campaigning for the position. If this is a paid position, they can advertise and get a qualified person. He can go over the task list that they are trying to get done, but are behind on.

Mr. Herold said there are a lot of government rules and regulations to follow up on.

Mr. Komondor said it is getting things done on an ongoing basis. It is time to review and update the Township Emergency plan which can't be done without doing a hazard vulnerability analysis first. In order to have a comprehensive emergency plan they are required to have a part of the plan that deals with special needs population. He doesn't know where all those people are. He met with the Norwin Ministerial to ask their help to look for those people. That information is not compiled and they don't have the time to do it. They have to review the emergency plan of every daycare facility, personal facility and adult daycare facility in the Township. It is very extensive.

Mr. Moffatt asked who Mr. Komondor would report to.

Mr. Shepherd said it would be to him unless the Board wants him to report to them.

Mr. Komondor said the compensation doesn't take into account the hours involved in responding to an emergency. If the position is established for 15 hours a week and the hours are done by Wednesday and a storm hits on Thursday, would you be there as an employee or volunteer.

Mr. Gray said they had talked about having an intern do some of those projects.

Mr. Komondor said there was an intern several years ago in the summer to do data input into the computer, but they didn't get a return on their investment for that position. An intern should have some knowledge for this position.

Mr. Gray asked about a list of duties or a job description.

Mr. Komondor said this should be constructed as a position and should put together a job description.

Mr. Gray said before it is budgeted, this should all be up front with the job description and rate of pay.

Mr. Komondor said they wanted to get it out for comment and if there is no objection, they could get a job description done.

Mr. Furlin asked how many hours a week he would be needed.

Mr. Shepherd said it is budgeted for 15 hours a week, but it may vary every week.

Mr. Furlin said Mr. Komondor is the most qualified person and has been doing a good job.

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Mr. Komondor said he appreciates that but there are procedures to follow.

Mr. Gray said he was concerned how it was presented. If they move forward to hire, he doesn't know enough about it to make a decision.

Mr. Herold asked if there was any funding available to help with that.

Mr. Komondor said not for paid positions, but for assets and resources.

Mr. Furlin asked how that would affect the budget.

Mr. Komondor said it would be about \$18,000 with no benefits or retirement pension plan.

Mr. Patter asked Mr. Komondor if he would do the job description and duties.

Mr. Komondor said he would work with Mr. Shepherd to get it done for the Board. He has talked to the emergency staff about the paid position and they were all okay with it.

Mr. Turley said they really relied on Mr. Komondor in June after the storms as there were a lot of demands on the Township.

Mr. Herold said all the members did a good job.

Mr. Shepherd said the radio repeater system is a \$43,000 budget item split between the Capital Reserve Fund and the Fire Service Fund.

Mr. Komondor said that was in correlation with the June storms and they conducted meetings after with the Chiefs. They are concerned because the communication with the County was overstressed. They came up with enhancing the system that is in place with a hardware upgrade. The proposal is from the Fire Chiefs. There is a transmitter on the Township tower.

Lt. Mahinske said with the system, they are modeling the old Police Department hi-band frequency. The Road Department has a hi-band frequency and they want to put that system into a repeater system. This will give them a back-up system if the 800 system gets backlogged.

Mr. Gray asked if that was brought to the attention of the County and will they add capacity.

Lt. Mahinske said they would have to increase channel capability and the cost is high. A repeater system would enhance the Turner Valley area and the only time it would be used would be in an emergency.

Mr. Gray asked if the system was operational.

Lt. Mahinske said it is working and this is only a hardware upgrade to their system. They are proposing through the Fire Departments to put them on the repeater system and the Fire Departments and Emergency Management could use it in case the 800 system fails.

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Mr. Moffatt asked how much the total cost is and what do they get for it.

Mr. Shepherd said it is around \$43,000 which is split between the Capital Reserve and Fire Service Funds.

Lt. Mahinske said when there is a radio transmission, a signal goes out and picks the strongest signal and rebroadcasts it out. All three sites are running all the time and the system votes on the strongest signal.

Mr. Komondor said the repeater system identifies the transmission and votes on the strongest signal and the 800 system only recognizes 11 people using it at the same time. The 12th person has to wait. That is okay for local events but not for emergencies. This repeater system will give them the ability to communicate within the Township.

Mr. Shepherd said this is not radios, just the hardware.

Mr. Moffatt asked how many people had those radios.

Lt. Mahinske said every truck has a hi-band radio and 800 MHz and portables.

Mr. Gray said he doesn't feel that the 800 system will put in multiple requests, but it can be overwhelmed. For the June storms, shouldn't they have switched to the Simplex?

Lt. Mahinske said the Police couldn't communicate county wide.

Mr. Gray said he thought the system had a built-in back up system that if it was switched to Simplex you could talk to each radio.

Mr. Komondor said the Chiefs did have some success with the talk around.

Mr. Gray said they have two channels now and this frequency would be for the Public Works Department and they would be picking up one channel for the \$43,000.

Mr. Komondor said the only ones on that channel will be the seven Fire Departments, Public Works and Emergency Management. This would enhance the Sewage Authority also. He has spoken to some of the Fire Departments and there is no objection about using \$3,000 per department for the system.

g) Police Department Budget.

Mr. Shepherd said there is an addition to the Capital Reserve Fund for the Police that reduced the budget amount by \$15,000. It does include a copier for \$10,500.

Mr. Moffatt said for the two new motorcycles, they had entered a program several years ago with Harley Davidson that the motorcycles were free after so many years.

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Chief Daugherty said it was a program with Spirit Motorcycles, but they went under. They do what they can and usually get \$4,000 on a trade-in. The cost of the transfer is cheap but the cost of the Harley Motorcycles has gone up very high. They budgeted two this year and weren't able to get the second motorcycle. Originally, they had Kawasaki's and three were purchased from Penn Township and they lasted about two years. They switched to the Harley because it is more durable and better quality.

Mr. Moffatt said they had switched to the Harley mainly because of the program.

Chief Daugherty said the dealership closed down and they don't make the Kawasaki in a Police package anymore.

Mr. Herold asked if the repair of the vehicles is due to normal maintenance or aging vehicles.

Chief Daugherty said it normal maintenance on a yearly basis. They just sold five vehicles that were sitting at the Public Works Department. He has been down vehicle for six months which has hurt the department.

Mr. Herold asked about the cost of a new car.

Chief Daugherty said the two Chevrolets they are putting in for this year are about \$22,000 each. They go through the Westmoreland County C.O.G. who qualifies under State Purchasing. They deal with Day Chevrolet who gets the best prices.

Mr. Herold asked if they should purchase another new vehicle or would that cut the maintenance budget too close.

Chief Daugherty said the only new vehicle needed is the 4-wheel drive but he cut that out because it is not a pursuit vehicle. That was taken out to keep under budget. If vehicle maintenance is too high, he will take it out of commission.

Mr. Moffatt asked if they could go through the C.O.G. for motorcycles.

Chief Daugherty said the dealers can't supply the motorcycles so they don't want to get involved. They were out of motorcycles in June this year.

Mr. Gray asked how much the budget changed from last year.

Chief Daugherty said it went down 3% with the capital improvements.

Mr. Gray said usually the budget is done in a spread sheet showing the line item and this is the first time for this format. He felt it was difficult to read.

Mr. Shepherd said it is the computing system for the Accounting Department and it could be put in any format the Board wants.

Mr. Moffatt asked if they could get a projection where the reserve will be at the end of this year.

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Mr. Shepherd said it is between 4.5 and 4.7 million dollars in the General Fund Reserve which is a nice reserve.

Mr. Moffatt said the capital purchases are out of the General Fund.

Mr. Shepherd said they are all out of the Capital Reserve Fund. There is carry over money from this year and the one mill that funds the Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Moffatt said \$200,000 is going towards operating. He asked how much they would be over or under for this year.

Mr. Shepherd said he only has the year end projection. The storm threw them off, but there are expenditures that weren't done in other departments that help. Some revenues are lower and some are higher.

Mr. Gray said under Governing Bodies, it is included to give each Board member a lap top computer and cell phone, but he doesn't see the need for either.

Mr. Shepherd said it is \$10,000 in the equipment line item. The proposal was to fund that through a grant.

Mr. Moffatt said he doesn't see the need for it either, but they could still go for a grant.

Mr. Gray said the grant covers the initial costs, but not the ongoing costs.

Mr. Moffatt said they should still try to get a grant to apply to something else.

Mr. Gray said the grants are specific when you apply for them and he doesn't want a grant to go for computers or cell phones for the Board.

Mr. Patter said there will be additional fees for cell phones every month.

Mr. Moffatt said you would need wireless access for the laptop. He feels they should go for a grant for the summer help.

Mr. Turley said at the end we were eligible and then we were told we weren't. He will look back at what happened. They said the people could be hired as there was an income requirement. He feels they ran out of money.

Mr. Gray submitted a petition signed by residents of Coulterville Road and Clyde Drive asking for a street light to Mr. Shepherd.

Mr. Herold asked about the Citizens Police Academy.

Chief Daugherty said it was taken out when they cut the budget. It is a good program but they did not receive the \$10,000 funding from the State. He did a study on the program and the costs were \$43,000 for the one week program.

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Mr. Gray said there should have been room for cuts because the budget went up 24% last year.

Chief Daugherty said he has been trying to hold everything down and he made cuts to compensate for the health insurance increase.

Mr. Moffatt asked if the academy could be run as a day camp.

Lt. Mahinske said when you go to a shorter version, you have to cut things out of the program. They get 50% new kids every year and they had 63 kids last year. They have never had a problem filling the camp.

Mr. Moffatt said the summer camps in the parks limit the number also.

Chief Daugherty said the principal behind the program is that the kids acquire rank. They do competitions and crime scenes. It is a worthwhile program.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mr. Gray So move.
Second: Mr. Furlin

Motion Carried 6 – 0 – 0

- Work Session Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2009 were approved by the Board of Commissioners on _____.

David E. Herold, President

John M. Shepherd, Township Secretary

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