

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 7, 2024

The Penn Township Public Safety Committee convened on Monday, October 7, 2024, at 7 p.m. Present were Vice-Chairman Elksnis, Commissioners Baile, Berlingo, and Brown. Also present were Police Chief Merwede, Fire Chief Clousher, Township Engineer Bortner, Zoning Officer LeFevre, and Township Manager Sweeney. Chairman Heiland was absent with notice. The following items were discussed:

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Commissioner Elksnis announced that an executive session took place on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, following the Finance Committee Meeting, to discuss personnel matters. Additionally, there will be a shredding event this Saturday, October 12, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Recycling Center. There will be an executive session held this evening following the Public Works Committee meeting to discuss personnel matters.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: The minutes of the September 3, 2024, Public Safety Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: Mr. Lenny Rice, 125 Hirtland Avenue, inquired about the events that occurred at South Western High School over the past weekend. Commissioner Elksnis advised Mr. Rice that he may want to address his concerns with the School Board. Police Chief Merwede addressed his concerns.

2025 KLUGH ANIMAL CONTROL CONTRACT: Manager Sweeney reported the receipt of the 2025 Klugh Animal Control Agreement, noting that it maintains the same level of service as before with about a ten percent increase in pricing. There was an increase of two hundred percent in cost for calls on Wednesday's due to reduced staffing. The committee recommended approving the agreement.

REPLACEMENT OFFICER FOR RETIRED CHIEF HETTINGER: Police Chief Merwede reported the consortium test was given on September 28, 2024. Twenty-four candidates passed both the written and oral tests. Two have been eliminated and one withdrawal. His Detectives are prepared to conduct oral interviews, with the goal of a hire to start the academy this January. The committee unanimously recommended moving forward with interviews.

2025 POLICE BUDGET: Police Chief Merwede highlighted a few items on the budget. He added the cost of the academy and travel into the training budget. Public utilities increased significantly. He reviewed the costs of Body-worn cameras, car computers and annual maintenance fee, the additional security on the government cloud. The Committee thanked Chief Merwede.

REVIEW OF THE FIRE COMMISSION MEETING: Fire Chief Clousher provided an overview of the recent Fire Commission meeting. He reported that, in accordance with the by-laws, the Fire

Commission's budget must be submitted to the municipalities by October 1st. Due to the hiring of a Deputy Fire Chief, an EMS Supervisor, and ongoing contract negotiations, he hopes to present the budget at the November meeting. He initially projected a worst-case scenario, incorporating a 28% budget increase. However, following a review by the Commission's Finance Committee and the identification of a \$508,000 carryover, the proposed budget increase has been reduced to 4.98%. Chief Clouser also anticipates a 6% rise in workers' compensation insurance. Planned capital expenditures include the purchase of two cardiac monitors and a new ambulance.

He reported that an offer has been made to a candidate for the EMS Supervisor position, with hopes of announcing the appointment in the near future. His next priority is to focus on hiring for the Deputy Chief role.

Additionally, Chief Clouser provided an update on the efforts to fill the 16th firefighter position and is aiming to introduce the successful candidate at the October Board of Commissioners meeting.

EMA UPDATE: Emergency Management Coordinator Waltman presented his report for September. Mr. Waltman reported that the YMCA held its annual Snacktown Run Fest on Saturday with support from Flagger Force, which provided 35 personnel and supervisors. There was only one minor incident, EMS responded quickly, and the runner was able to continue the race without injury. A severe storm on September 21st caused temporary flooding on Boundary Avenue and a few other locations, but overall, the summer storms have caused minimal damage. Hurricane Milton, currently in Florida, is projected to move into the Atlantic and is unlikely to head north. Preparations are also underway for the upcoming Halloween parade, an emergency plan is under revision, and inspector maps are being prepared for the marshals.

FIRE MMO: Manager Sweeney reported that the Minimum Municipal Obligations (MMOs) for the township's pension plans were adopted at last month's meeting. However, it was later discovered that the Firefighter's Collective Bargaining Agreement, amended in 2023, now includes longevity in the pension calculations. As a result, the Fire MMO must be revised to reflect a new total of \$196,046.79. The Committee recommended approval of the revision.

OTHER MATTERS: There were none.

CITIZEN'S QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE REGARDING DISCUSSION ITEMS: There were none.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna M. Sweeney,
Township Secretary