

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES
DECEMBER 6, 2022**

I. OPENING PROCEDURES

- A. Call to Order by President Smith at 7:05 p.m.
- B. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Robert John Smith, President of Council; Cassandra R. Eccles, Vice President of Council; Richard S. Hughes, First Ward; George H. Stewart, Second Ward; Michael F. Hammill, Third Ward; Olivia T. Payne, Fourth Ward

Absent: John R. Denny, Jr., At-Large

Also Present: Greg Caprara, Township Treasurer; Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager; Dan Garfinkel, Township Solicitor; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E., Township Engineer; Christopher Komora, Code Enforcement / Storm Water Coordinator; J. Todd Giammatteo, Public Service Superintendent; Jay Davis, Police Superintendent; Scott Chermak, PCS, Building Inspector; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

II. VISITORS

- A. Worthington Energy – Green Energy Options

Manager Jakubec introduced Mr. Rob Schuler of Worthington Energy. She noted Mr. Schuler handles the Township energy contract and was in attendance via zoom.com to explain green energy options available to the Township.

Mr. Schuler noted the Township is in competition for electric suppliers. Currently the Township is purchasing electric from Engi. Engi has minimum size requirements for green energy, which the Township does not qualify.

Mr. Schuler explained the two ways a customer can obtain green energy; purchase renewable energy certificates or carbon offsets. For each megawatt-hour, there is a renewable energy credit that the Township has the option to buy. The supplier is registered on the North American registry. In order to get attributes, you need the number from the certificate.

Mr. Stewart questioned where the energy is coming from; noting what the Township is getting is not necessarily green energy.

Mr. Hughes indicated that is not true and that Mr. Schuler was proposing buying carbon offsets.

Mr. Schuler explained carbon offsets can be derived from a number of sources and effectively is additionality; you're creating a new opportunity for renewable generation sources. Carbon offsets offset your greenhouse gas and try to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon offsets are purchased prior to emission reduction.

Mr. Hughes stated you're not consuming greener energy; you're buying energy produced. Mr. Schuler stated with renewable energy certificates, yes; for carbon offsets there is no energy created.

Ms. Payne questioned the actual benefit of purchasing a certificate; is it a financial incentive or recognition incentive. Mr. Schuler explained governments are not required to have carbon offsets or renewable energy certificates.

Mr. Hammill questioned how it would save taxpayers' money; what is the objective. Mr. Hughes stated it doesn't save the taxpayers' money; that's not the objective. As he understood from Mr. Caprara, it is along the same thinking that if you buy an electric vehicle, where do you charge it or get the electricity for it. He questioned if there is a way to get the electricity for it through a sustainable source, which makes the impact of buying an electric vehicle more positive. It is not necessarily a savings for taxpayers. Mr. Hughes questioned if there are not any green energy producers within this market. For example, within the Duquesne Light system there are multiple providers of energy at different rates. He questioned if none of them are more positive than what the Township currently has.

Mr. Schuler stated if the Township wants locally sourced energy, it can be acquired in Pennsylvania but would be more expensive. There would also be additional costs if it all goes through the grid. There are two ways to deliver green energy; on site, produced by solar or wind, or buy from the grid.

Manager Jakubec asked if the Township was to go out to marketplace, would the cost to go to a green energy supplier be larger than either the credits or carbon offsets. Mr. Schuler stated the cost of a renewable certificate would be higher but the renewable certificate is separated from the power source when it is retired.

Manager Jakubec questioned the cost if the Township was to switch to a new supplier. Mr. Schuler explained if the Township tried to switch to a green supplier the cost would be astronomically higher. The Manager clarified it would be a 'feel good' thing. Mr. Schuler stated Renewable Portfolio Standards ("RPS") require 18% from a renewable source.

Mr. Hughes questioned if it is in the interest of the Township to spend the money to buy carbon offsets. Manager Jakubec questioned if it would be better to stay with Engi, which provides 18% green energy.

Vice President Eccles noted wind turbines in Somerset, Pennsylvania and questioned who owns the turbines. Mr. Hughes stated production companies own the turbines and are selling it. He noted typically those rates are higher.

Manager Jakubec stated the community center is going to explore solar energy. The municipal building is in a valley which makes solar energy difficult.

B. Scott Chermak – Amended Fees

Manager Jakubec recalled asking Scott Chermak to review the fees resolution. Scott performed a deep analysis and is in attendance to explain.

Mr. Chermak indicated the fees have really not been updated in 17 years. He referenced a chart of what the building permits are based on. The current system is confusing for residents and contractors to calculate the fee. Fees would no longer be based on construction types, but rather the number of estimated trips for inspections to cover costs. Some fees were raised because they were too low. The electrical permit fees were not covering the cost of inspection. Contractors seldom provide an accurate cost for HVAC or Fire Suppression work. The revised fees will cover plan review, the number of trips for inspections, gas, administrative and secretarial support.

Mr. Stewart commented if the new fees are implemented staff will know in a year if the fees are adequate. Mr. Chermak stated in 2022, 343 permits were issued. The new fees will cover the actual costs. Manager Jakubec noted staff did not want to create sticker-shock. Mr. Chermak indicated he would review the new fees a few months into 2023.

Mr. Chermak was excused from the remainder of the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

III. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No comments.

IV. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

A. Recommending Awarding a Bid and Authorizing Execution of Contract for Waste and Recyclables Collection

Manager Jakubec recalled the North Hills Council of Governments (“NHCOC”) requested bids for trash and recycling collection services on behalf of its members. One bid was received from Waste Management, the current hauler. The contract includes several changes to collection methods. The first year of the contract reflects an increase of approximately 33% and 9% for each year thereafter. The cost per household for 2023 is \$29.51; \$32.26 for 2024; \$35.25 for the year 2025; and \$38.51 in 2026. An optional year is also provided for the year 2027, with a cost of \$42.07. The costs noted above include a deduction of \$1.00 for direct billing to the municipality. Staff requested Council’s consideration of awarding the bid this evening.

Motion by Mr. Stewart to approve resolution Bill No. B-85-2022 was seconded by Mr. Hammill.

Manager Jakubec explained additional information obtained regarding the new waste and recycling collection contract. Residents would be provided one 96-gallon trash can. If a resident feels the trash can is too big they can switch to a 64-gallon can. All trash must go into the can. Residents can purchase up to two additional trash cans. The next Township Newsletter will include detailed changes to trash collection. If anyone wants the contract as it was in the past, it will cost an additional \$1,500,000 just for 2023. The automated collection will begin in March or April. Waste Management will be sending information and a survey to the residents.

Ms. Payne inquired about disposing the old trash cans. Manager Jakubec indicated the old trash can should be marked for Waste Management to take. She also noted backdoor service with a Doctor's note would continue. She clarified Waste Management owns the trash cans. The Manager anticipated retirement communities and lower Kittanning Pike residents would not want the 96-gallon trash can. The Township will swap the large trash cans for a smaller can and notify Waste Management of the newly assigned trash can number.

Mr. Hughes noted for reference the recycling can is 64-gallons.

The Manager stated only one free bulk item would be collected a month. Mr. Stewart questioned what residents should do if they have more than one large item. Manager Jakubec stated the resident would have to call Waste Management and make arrangements. She also recommended keeping the glass recycling bin in the municipal parking lot.

On roll call the motion carried unanimously.

B. Proposed Amendment to the Township Civil Service Commission Rules and Regulations

The Manager recalled the Civil Service Commission was recently informed of State mandated changes to the Rules and Regulations. The Commission has been working on updating the Rules and Regulations with the Township's Civil Service Solicitor, Neva Stotler of N. Stotler Law. She noted many of the changes to the rules and regulations are statutory. A polygraph is added as part of the hiring process.

Police Superintendent Davis stated he feels the Township has an obligation to hire the best person. He recalled a large turnover of Police Officers at Peters Township. An alarming number of applicants were disqualified by the polygraph. The polygraph detected deception and upon a full background investigation a lot of illegal drug use, criminal activity, or road rage was revealed.

Vice President Eccles questioned who would perform the polygraph. Police Superintendent Davis indicated there are a number of independent polygraphers that are very skilled.

The Manager noted the number of required hours of experience for advanced positions was mirrored from new hires. She stated Ms. Stotler was also updating the application package to comply with the new laws and changes to the rules and regulations. She stated Ms. Stotler was highly recommended by Buchanan Ingersoll Rooney, P.C.

The consensus of Council was to include the proposed ordinance for consideration on the December 13th regular meeting agenda.

C. Requesting Authorization to Sell Used Equipment

Manager Jakubec noted staff is requesting authorization to sell one 2010 Bobcat Walk-Behind Mini Skid Steer Model No. MT52, including a bucket, broom and platform wheel, through Municibid, an online auction company where the Township gets money for equipment no longer used and other municipalities and individuals have an opportunity to purchase needed equipment at a price they can afford. Auctioning equipment through Municibid has been quite lucrative.

It was noted the accessory tools would be included with the bobcat because the tools are proprietary and could not be used with other brands.

The consensus of Council was to include a motion authorizing the auctioning of used equipment on the December 13th regular meeting agenda for consideration.

D. Employee Recognition

The Manager stated Public Service Department employee, Dan Lazaro, has been employed with the Township since November of 2002. Council has established the tradition of recognizing employees with twenty (20) or more years of service. If acceptable, a letter, to be signed by Council President, will be prepared to recognize Dan's dedication in serving the public.

The consensus was agreeable to President Smith signing a letter recognizing Dan Lazaro.

E. Continued Review and Discussion of Proposed Township Year 2023 Budget

Manager Jakubec noted updates to the proposed 2023 Budget which reflect an increase of \$17,000 for Emergency Medical Services, \$35,000 to pay Penn D.O.T. for the Kittanning Pike sinkhole project, \$69,916 for the ambulance chassis, and \$23,321 for additional Vermeer tools. Funds that moved back to 2022 include \$37,058 for the Vermeer walk behind, and \$43,940 for the Parks truck that was finally delivered. She stated Parkview EMS did not provide the information requested, but she is aware that the EMTs are very under-paid. She recommended not giving all of the additional funding until the documentation is provided.

The Manager recalled receiving a phone call from the Oakmont Borough Manager about Lower Valley EMS being in bad financial shape. She noted if Lower Valley EMS goes belly-up, Parkview EMS will have to assist through mutual aid.

With all the changes to the proposed 2023 budget, the fund balance rolling into 2024 is 21.33%. For the record, Manager Jakubec stated the 2023 Budget is \$15,732,032.

The Manager addressed concerns of the Social Worker taking money from the Police Department, noting Jalen Byrd, the Social Services Coordinator is the department head of the Department of Human Services, with a budget of \$118,638. The Police Department budget was increased 4.46% from 2022. Funds for training increased from \$8,000 to \$16,000.

F. Solicitor's November 9, 2022 Invoice

Manager Jakubec explained notations on the invoice were for the benefit of the new Bookkeeper.

The Manager indicated she had sent an email to Jill McConnell, of Cooper Siegel Library, noting funding was retained in the budget as a placeholder and Council would continue discussion in 2023. The cost to keep the Sharpsburg library branch open on Friday is approximately \$8,500.

G. Proposed December 13, 2022 Regular Meeting Agenda

Changes to the proposed agenda were noted.

V. CONCERNS OF COUNCIL

Vice President Eccles noted O'Hara Elementary School installed a new air conditioning unit last summer. Residents have commented that the unit is very loud. She questioned if staff was able to determine how loud the air conditioning unit is. Manager Jakubec stated staff has a decibel meter and would have the building inspector check the plans. The unit may need a buffer.

Mr. Stewart inquired about the status of the 'stinky' house. Mr. Komora recalled the windows were wide open to air it out. He informed the owner that kids could get in the house. The owner closed the windows and boarded up the windows that would not shut. Mr. Stewart questioned if staff could estimate whether or not the house could be rebuilt. Manager Jakubec indicated staff could assess the structure. If there is nothing structurally wrong with the house, there is nothing the Township could do.

President Smith noted the Codified Ordinances are not on the website yet. Manager Jakubec explained she had just received notification today that the last changes have been updated. Joyce would attend training and determine how to provide hyperlinks.

VI. CONCERNS OF STAFF

Manager Jakubec informed Council that Police Sergeant Ben Wolfson received the Top Gun Drug Recognition Expert ("DRE") award and suggested recognizing his achievement in January.

The Manager indicated the food and toy drives were quite successful for the holidays.

Manager Jakubec recalled the movie at the community center attracted 19 people. The movie night was in competition with a movie at O'Hara Elementary School the same night. Staff may coordinate another movie night in February at the community center. The Police will do Cookies and Coco with Cops. Other events will be planned to get the Police into the community and public eye.

The Manager requested Council to remain after the workshop for an Executive Session to discuss a labor matter.

Ms. Payne commended Police Superintendent Davis for what he is doing to make our Police Force the best they can be and setting an example for all the surrounding communities. She asked if he would elaborate at some point on the training he is bringing in so the community knows what is happening. Police Superintendent Davis indicated he could at some point in time. A lot of the training he is sending the Officers to involve creating a department that can do a lot of internal training. He has talked with other Police Departments and may bring them in to discuss citizen training and certifications. Police Superintendent Davis stated he is also in the process of getting a second fire arms instructor in place. He has been sending officers to Defensive Tactics Training. Currently two Officers are well-versed and he plans to bring that training internally. Manager Jakubec added that the Community Liaison Officer would be rolled out again in the spring; meet with senior citizen groups, homeowners associations to go over safety. Staff will have ALICE Training, which addresses an active shooter, with Officer Harajda. Officer Harajda has been teaching local businesses and the community center.


Vice President Eccles asked if the Police Superintendent had talked with the school district about what to do in an active shooter situation. Police Superintendent Davis stated he attended a breakfast meeting this morning with all the first responders from the area and all the school administrators, and they have started working with the North Hills SR (Special Response) Team to bring in active shooters to the school. He requested Ross Township make sure O'Hara Police Officers are invited to those trainings, and he would send Officers to that training. If the Officers can get range time in the spring, he wants to reach out to the school after the beginning of the year and do some static type training, active shooter response so our officers are more familiar with the actual response and how they handle the internal response and then move toward active shooter type of training with live fire arms and things of that nature. Police Superintendent Davis came from an organization that was very big into training and wants to bring it here so our Officers, if they would ever have to respond to that type of situation, they're not thinking about what they are doing, they are acting on what they are doing because those few seconds could mean the difference in saving lives.

Manager Jakubec noted items on hand, such as a 500-gallon diesel tank with fuel stabilizer, two portable tanks with diesel, so the Township has 712 gallons of diesel fuel on site, and all diesel equipment fuel tanks are filled, though not used much during the winter. Another 116-gallon portable tank arrived today and will be filled with unleaded fuel with stabilizer. The Township has enough critical parts, oil, grease, salt and aggregate in anticipation of potential shortages. Mr. Giammatteo indicated there is nearly 3,000 tons of salt.

Mr. Stewart questioned if the tanks are specially engineered to mitigate fire hazards. Mr. Giammatteo stated the 500-gallon diesel tank has a double steel wall with an interstitial space and a gauge on it so if something ruptures, we'll know.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 and Council entered into Executive Session.


Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment: Attendance Sheet