

**MINUTES  
COLLIER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**WORKSHOP MEETING**

**February 10, 2020**

**7:00 P.M.**

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Commissioner Williams-Zabicki called the workshop meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 7:00 P.M.

**A. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**B. ROLL CALL:**

**BOARD**

Dan Styche – Present  
Debra Zymroz –Present  
Rick Ruffennach – Present  
Wayne Chiurazzi, Esq.– Present  
Dawn Williams-Zabicki – Present

**STAFF**

Chuck Means, Solicitor - Absent  
Kevin Brett, Engineer - Absent  
Craig Campbell, Police Chief – Absent  
Robert Caun, Planning Director – Absent  
Jeff Hinds, Finance Director – Absent  
Tom Plietz – Bldg/Fire Codes – Absent  
Bob Palmosina, PW Director – Absent  
Rochelle Barry, Parks Director – Absent  
Kyle Thauvette, Twp. Manager - Present  
Valerie Salla, Twp. Secretary – Present

- C. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Executive session was held prior to the meeting to discuss legal and employment issues.

**II. Board Discussion for Committees**

**A. Administrative/Public Affairs**

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. New phone system will be installed in the administration and will be able to connect to the other buildings.
2. Collier Township received the Banner Community award for 2020.
3. Keep Collier Beautiful will be on April 25, 2020 from 9:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. at the Community Center.

Commissioner Chiurazzi added that anyone can do road clean up. The Township will supply the garbage bags. A family can adopt a road to be cleaned up.

4. Manager’s Coffee Hour will be on March 2, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. at the Community Center.

## **B. Building/Codes**

Mr. Thauvette reported he is working with Tom Plietz and Wilson Durisko putting together a vision and admission statement for the department as well as goal settings.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated we would like to have things like this to say to the public and would like it gotten to him before the meeting. He asked how Mr. Durisko has been doing in his new role. He asked for a meeting to be set up with him, Mr. Plietz and Mr. Durisko.

Mr. Thauvette stated he is doing well and he will get a meeting set up.

## **C. COG**

Commissioner Ruffennach reported the next meeting is on February 20<sup>th</sup> in Crafton.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned if the Board wants to stay with this COG (Char West Council of Governments). Does the Township get anything out of this COG and is there a value to stay in this COG?

A discussion took place regarding staying or leaving this COG.

Commissioner Ruffennach and Mr. Thauvette will work on a list of benefits for this COG and others for the next meeting. A decision may be made at the next meeting.

## **D. Finance**

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki reported the following:

1. PA Auditor General's Office will have an Auditor here on February 11, 2020 to audit the pension plans. This covers both the Police and Non-Uniform Pension Plans from January 2016 through December 2018.
2. PA Department of Transportation will have an Auditor here on February 27, 2020 to audit the Liquid Fuels receipts and disbursements for the year ending December 31, 2019.
3. In January, the Township noticed another increase in interest rates for our accounts held at Brentwood Bank.

## **E. Parks & Recreation**

Commissioner Styche reported the following:

1. The Parks and Recreation Board has new members and there will be an election of Officers at the next meeting.
2. The Parks and Recreation Board are looking to change their meeting dates since the Commissioner's meetings have changed and they would like to have the Parks and Recreation meeting before the Commissioners meeting.
3. The Friends of Collier Parks and Recreation will be having a spaghetti dinner on March 28<sup>th</sup> for a fund raiser.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated he was at the dog park and noticed the double gate to get into the dog park for maintenance is too small. Public Works will not be able to get in there with a tractor to cut grass or a skid steer to do what they need done. We need to address this and get it straightened out. Also, the smooth park of the fence should be in towards the property and the support bars should be on the outside of the property. Our fence is reversed and doesn't feel this is right.

Commissioner Styche stated this is normally how a fence is done. The supports are on the inside of your property and the smooth side of the fence is on the outside of the property. He asked if Public Works mentioned anything about this.

Mr. Thauvette stated Public Works did not mention this, but he went down and measured it. The entry way is about 71 inches wide which is a little shy of getting a bobcat in there.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated mower decks are 72 inches.

Mr. Thauvette stated we can get a push mower, the Suzuki and the 6 x 6 in there.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated with his history and what he deals with and Carnegie's dog park is gravel because grass will not last long.

4. Park Tour. Commissioner Styche, Commissioner Williams-Zabicki, Mr. Thauvette and the Parks Director, Rochelle Barry will be looking at each park.

## **F. Planning and Land Use Development**

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki reported the following:

1. The Planning Commission will meet on Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. The discussion will be on Chase Bank going in at the Great Southern Shopping Center. Our ordinance has a requirement for eight (8) trees. The property owner feels the eight trees will block the view of Fresh Thyme and LA Fitness and is asking for the trees to be separated out to have four (4) at one location and the other four (4) and at different location on the lot.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki asked the Board members for their opinions on the trees and what they thought about a shrub line instead of the trees.

A discussion took place on the trees blocking the view as they get bigger and setting a direction for the Township.

Commissioner Chiurazzi mentioned that Peace, Love and Little Donuts is closed and the van is sitting in the lot and somewhat of an eyesore.

Mr. Thauvette will have the Codes Officer look into it.

### **G. Public Safety**

Commissioner Ruffennach reported that Dave Brown, Chief of Rennerdale VFD has resigned. The Assistant Chief Evyn Ray has stepped up and is now the current Fire Chief of Rennerdale VFD.

Commissioner Ruffennach would like to meet with all three (3) departments in March to discuss some things.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated at the May Workshop meeting, the Board will be discussing the fire departments and Commissioner Ruffennach will be able to bring that discussion to the Board.

### **H. Public Works**

Commissioner Zymroz reported the following:

1. On Thursday evening February 6<sup>th</sup> in Friday morning February 7<sup>th</sup>, Public Works got called out around 4:00 a.m. to salt and plow. There were three (3) different shifts and everything worked out well.

Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned if they went with shifts because of the roads being bad two (2) snows ago. The issue was when the Public Works got called out. Hopefully this can get resolved. Bob Palmosina should be the one called to make the decision.

Mr. Thauvette stated the police call the County 911 to have Public Works called out and then the County calls Bob Palmosina and Bob will call the crew out.

A discussion took place on the possibility of eliminating the County 911 dispatch and just have the Police call Bob Palmosina directly to call the Public Works out. This will eliminate the delay.

Mr. Thauvette stated he will talk to Chief Campbell to see if he is comfortable of any changes.

### **I. Township Manager / Township Business**

Mr. Thauvette reported the following:

1. Amendments to the Parks Ordinance to prohibit dogs from certain parks. The Dog Park Ordinance will be before the Board for the next meeting.
2. Jason Stanton of Lennon, Smith, Souleret was in the audience and he can answer any questions the Board may have with items under old business.

### **III. Old Business: CTMA**

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki would like each Commissioners to take three (3) minutes and say what they would like to see done with the CTMA. Under new business there is an action for the Board just to advertise to dissolve the CTMA in the future or not.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated the CTMA was formed in 1947 to manage and operate the sewers in the Township. There is a subset of sewers that the Township is responsible for and we were getting ready to move that subset to the CTMA and with conversation, there was a new consideration as to whether or not a Board outside of the governing body should be managing a critical infrastructure. This discussion is to consider moving the small subset of Township sewers over to the CTMA or to dissolve the CTMA and take over all the sewers in the Township will be under the governance of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Styche stated he spoke with Mr. Thauvette and Mr. Palmosina and feels the Commissioners should vote on taking over the CTMA. It is better for the Township; the residents and the Commissioners would set the rates. If the residents didn't like what the Commissioners did, we could be voted out. There currently is a CTMA Board that has no oversight from the residents. Our Public Works Department can grow over time and understands now that the Township does not have the capacity to do some of the sewer work. The CTMA doesn't do any of the work now. It is subbed out and the Township could do this until the Public Works is able to do the work. There is a cross over in funding for the sewer system and public works with joint equipment. It is a win for both the Township and the residents.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated the Township should not take over the sewer system. It is not that the personnel we have can not handle it. We would still have to subcontract a lot of the work out until Public Works gets up to speed on it. We still must pay Engineering and Solicitor costs. He suggested an Advisory Board. Right now there are very knowledgeable people in place that know everything about the sewers. Currently there are two (2) million in projects that are waiting to get done that he knows the Township employees can handle but these are projects that are already in place. There are pump stations throughout the Township that can be eliminated. Some residents will have to put in grinder pumps that are not cheap and a cost to the resident. He can not see getting rid of something that works just fine. Taking over just to have the money and being in control and the Township has not been in control of the money for over 60 years. If the CTMA hadn't come after the Township to take the 5% of sewers the Township has, none of this would have been brought up. He feels this is nothing except money.

Commissioner Styche stated he has no thoughts of doing this because of money. It has nothing to do with taking over money or grabbing money. His thought is the Township and making it work best for the Township.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated he did not point his finger at him. Overall, it is about the money and getting the money and there has been comments a couple of times to get the money. It would be great to see that money in the budget and would make the Township look fantastic.

Commissioner Styche stated it is not about the money.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned what if the CTMA were in debt. Would the Commissioners feel the responsibility of or an obligation to correct the situation for the residents?

Commissioner Styche he felt it would be more so to take over the CTMA.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated what is best for Collier Township is to take over the CTMA. We do not need an Authority. Ask the Engineer and Solicitor. The key is we can guide development as a Board and follow the Comprehensive Plan. The CTMA hasn't done that. Look at the CTMA budget for the last 10 years and see that the Township will be less expensive in the rates and benefits the residents. Commissioner Chiurazzi questioned Mr. Thauvette if the Township could handle taking over the CTMA and who would run it?

Mr. Thauvette stated he felt we could do it and the Board of Commissioners would run it.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated there was talk of having an Advisory Board to run it and that doesn't make any sense. The Commissioners are the Board and we would run it. Our people here can do it. The CTMA subbed out 100% of work. If we did this, we would still be better off as a Township having control of our sewers. It is not about money and why would they want to keep it. It is costing our taxpayers money.

Commissioner Zymroz stated she just wants what is best for Collier and if it is the Township doing the sewers and Mr. Thauvette thinks we can do it; she wants what is best for Collier.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki added the following points:

1. If the CTMA was dissolved, it would be an increase in responsibilities for this Board and this meeting could go on longer.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated someone on this Board would be appointed to the sewers just like we do with the other departments.

2. The CTMA Board has knowledgeable people on it now. There have been some difficult times getting people to fill Board positions. If those knowledgeable people walk away, the Township could be in a bad position. She feels with this critical piece of infrastructure, it should be managed under the Township because there can be succession planning. We need to have a smooth transition, someone focused on this and have a back up person that we will be always learning and building that expertise and that the sewer systems will become a part of this Township management office verses a Board that can change and not have a succession planned.
3. Aligning with the Township's strategic plan. Having a long-term critical infrastructure asset not managed within the Township management structure was troubling for her.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated he brought up about having an advisory board. We have advisory boards for each department. Bob Palmosina for Public Works, Tom Plietz for Codes and we have one for Public Safety. Why can't we have one for the CTMA? We still would make the decisions. They would come to us with suggestions. Why can't the CTMA have their own department and have their own Board to oversee projects that are agreed by the Commissioners. The Township would handle the money

the same way it does for all the other departments. Since the CTMA Board are knowledgeable people, let them teach the Commissioners how to go about completing the sewer projects, what it takes to do these projects and getting projects that need grinder pumps. He learned about them and has been in the sewer business a long time.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned if it was the whole CTMA Board that has the expertise or Dan Oberleitner.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated if you go by expertise, Mr. Oberleitner is number one. Mr. Kuppelweiser is second. Himself is number three because he works for public works in Carnegie Borough and runs the vactor truck. He has learned both the legal and engineering ends. Dan Fotovich has been on the Board a very long time and his history is excavating and installing sewers. He has been this type of work for other communities. Gerhardt Egri has been on the Board a long time and reads everything in his packet.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki stated she doesn't doubt their experience and appreciates it but if you streamline the operations, it is NIRA Engineering, Dan Oberleitner for what goes on downstairs and Mr. Ruffennach. This team of three (3) and one from the Township could be all we need and not to say the others are not important and not appreciated but to streamline an operation in efficiencies and finances, this can be folded into a Township operation. She asked Commissioner Ruffennach if he saw any value in this.

Commissioner Ruffennach stated yes, he does.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Commissioner brought up department heads. It was not boards. He is not against a Board but for this important function, we are the elected officials and an advisory board. We are the ones where the money stops. The Commissioners need to make the decisions and guide the Township.

Commissioner Styche stated he felt if they rely on Mr. Thauvette to run this Township on a day to day basis, he is the one to give us the advice and if he said we can run this and we take his guidance, we can take the CTMA over. We trust Mr. Thauvette to run the day to day operations of this Township so we should trust him to run the CTMA.

Commissioner Chiurazzi stated Commissioner Ruffennach would be perfect to be chairman of the sewer committee. He would meet with the CTMA and give a report at the Commissioner meetings.

Commissioner Williams-Zabicki questioned if any of the Board members had anything else to say regarding the CTMA.

No other questions or comments were made.

## **II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:**

There were no public comments.

## **III. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Consider action to advertise Ordinance #711; An Ordinance directing the Collier Township Municipal Authority to convey its entire sanitary sewer system collection project to the Township of Collier and to dissolve after doing so.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Chiurazzi, seconded by Commissioner Styche to advertise Ordinance 711 as stated above. Commissioner Ruffennach was opposed. By a 4 to 1 vote the motion carried.*

2. Consider action to advertise the Parks and Recreation Board meeting change from the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Ruffennach, seconded by Commissioner Styche to advertise the Parks and Recreation meeting change as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

## **IV. Account Transfers:**

- Approval of the transfer of \$10,000.00 from the General Fund Account to the Capital Fund Checking Account.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Styche, seconded by Commissioner Zymroz to approve the Account Transfer(s) as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

## **V. Approval of General Fund Operating Account items:**

- Invoices paid and checks written from January 28, 2020 to February 9, 2020 in the amount of \$154,271.71.
- Bills requested for payment for February 10, 2020 in the amount of \$157,107.64.

## **VI. Approval of Capital Investment Account items:**

- Invoices paid and checks written from January 28, 2020 to February 9, 2020 in the amount of \$160.77.
- Bills requested for payment for February 10, 2020 in the amount of \$8,046.50.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Styche, seconded by Commissioner Zymroz to approve the General Fund Operating Account items and the Capital Investment Account items as stated above. By unanimous vote the motion carried.*

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion was made by Commissioner Ruffennach; seconded by Commissioner Chiurazzi; to adjourn the workshop meeting at 8:00 p.m. By unanimous vote of the Board the motion passed.

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Dawn Williams-Zabicki, President  
Board of Commissioners

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Valerie A. Salla  
Township Secretary