

**KULPMONT BOROUGH
SPECIAL MEETING FOR GENERAL PURPOSE
FEBRUARY 23, 2022
7:00 PM**

Opening Prayer by Councilman Robert Chesney
The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag by the body present,
Kulpmont Borough Council held the meeting for general purpose on
Wednesday February 23, 2022

Roll call was taken, and the following members were present: Mayor Slaby, Michael Balitchick, Stephen Bielskie, Wm. Mike Bradley, Robert Chesney, Joseph Dowkus, Stephen Motyka and Marlin Hodge

ABSENT: None

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT: Treasurer Paul Niglio, Secretary Rhonda Wilk and Code Officer Heather Owens.

OTHERS PRESENT: None

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON ANYTHING THAT IS ON THE AGENDA:

No one spoke

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Stephen Bielskie)

Mr. Bielskie stated we are meeting to discuss the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) funding available for the Regional Policing Assistance Program.

Mr. Dowkus stated we are together for a conversation and to get a possible vote on a grant for police regionalization grant. Mr. Motyka then stated there was some question on if this meeting was even necessary since we are currently going through the DCED survey.

Mr. Motyka stated this is a big step to go through the PCCD grant and that is how Mr. Skavery explained it and so talking with Mr. Dowkus he stated they feel this would be the way to go, to have an official vote to pursue something as big as it is. Mr. Motyka stated the program offers up to \$150,000.00 grant for the formation of a new regional police department.

Mr. Motyka stated Justin Skavery did a good job of outlining how the two of them differ and he also did a good job on outlining what is needed to proceed. Mr. Motyka stated he

knows how hard it is to pull a grant together and so he thought to give Justin Skavery several weeks to work with us rather than four weeks would be a big difference.

Mr. Motyka stated a letter of commitment is needed from both boroughs, and if Marion Heights Borough would want to be on board, then three letters. Mr. Motyka stated he has tried to contact the new Secretary several times and stated he does not know if anyone has a way to contact her to please let him know. Mr. Motyka stated he would want to know if they would be interested and talked with Mr. Miriello, the new councilman. Mr. Motyka stated a third Borough involved would look better for this grant as well.

Mr. Motyka stated the big difference is rather than a Mt. Carmel Twp. takeover it is a regional force where we will all have day in this where there will be a board and a police commission that we assign board members to and will make decisions.

Mr. Motyka stated he thought it was a good idea and stated we fought in the last six months to even get any applicants. He added this will give us 24/7 coverage and it will be a path forward and said we don't currently have a path forward.

Mr. Motyka stated we will need a letter of commitment; letter of support and the third thing would be local government bodies meeting minutes that brought up the subject and supporting.

Mr. Motyka stated we would have meeting minutes from the past when we agreed to participate in the regionalization survey and the meeting minutes from this meeting could also be used.

Mr. Motyka stated what he feels is the biggest thing of all to decide is who will be the applicant, Mt. Carmel Township, Kulpmont Borough or possibly Marion Heights. Mr. Motyka stated in setting up a police commission it may be 3 members from Mt. Carmel twp. and Kulpmont and members from Marion Heights based on population each municipality, this can all be decided later.

Mr. Motyka stated he would guess we need a vote if interested and stated he thinks the Kulpmont, Mt. Carmel Township applicant idea should be decided by our Police and Fire Committee and Mt. Carmel Supervisors to come up with a plan forward.

Mr. Bielskie asked about the time frame. Mr. Motyka stated this grant would be submitted in April and stated he does not know how quickly we will find out if we get it and stated the survey from DCED would probably be a good back pocket piece of information to have for this grant.

Mr. Chesney commented that our backs are to the wall, we have been trying for four or five years to find a solution and stated he feels we need to move forward because we are just spinning our wheels. Mr. Bradley stated he did some research and there is a shortage of police officers nationwide and this is not just a local issue and expects in the future to

see federal funding to help support regionalization. Council briefly discussed the situation.

Mr. Motyka stated the Township approached him and they are 100% on board. Mr. Bielskie stated last time we tried to do something like this it got down to the wire and they turned it down. Mr. Chesney stated a motion was made but it did not get a second and stated that is water under the bridge.

Mr. Motyka stated when we applied for the zoning grant it went by population and stated the cost for regionalization may not be based on population, possibly it would be based on mileage.

Mr. Niglio stated approximately 15 years ago with DCED for regionalization. Mr. Niglio continued on and said, when it was looked into the cost has nothing to do with mileage, our cost would have doubled at that point and time and that is why it never happened.

Mr. Motyka stated there are other regional forces, Mifflin County has a regional force, Lewistown Pennsylvania, Buffalo Township have considered this. Mr. Motyka stated we could reach out to other municipalities for information.

Mayor Slaby stated not long ago he was involved in looking into regionalizing Coal Township and Shamokin and stated they went down to York and there was a half dozen police departments down there and they were running like a Marine Corp. camp.

Mayor Slaby stated the borough of Kulpmont will need to pay their share however it is determined, this is not a cheap way out. Mayor Slaby stated you could either do it on your own or do what Mr. Motyka is recommending.

Mayor Slaby then stated he recommends it and stated he does not have a vote, but he does recommend it as the town Mayor. Mayor Slaby stated as Mayor he supports Council looking into regionalization and stated something needs to be done.

Mr. Motyka stated a letter of commitment, and a letter of support is needed and our meeting minutes relating to our interest are the three things we need. Mr. Motyka stated DCED is currently involved in the survey. Mr. Motyka stated the PCCD is federal money. Mr. Motyka stated we would need out Fire/ EMA and Police Committee to meet with Mt. Carmel Township Supervisors.

Mayor Slaby stated he would like to add something that was asked by the former Mayor when he was president, "Why does it never work?" Mayor Slaby stated the answer is you need to leave the politics on the other side of the door, it is never going to work if you put a political group of people together.

Mayor Slaby stated he is not saying to sell out to Marion Heights, or Mt Carmel Township he stated he is saying to stay firm on what is in the best interest of Kulpmont.

MOTION- Mr. Dowkus made the motion and was seconded by Mr. Bradley to move forward to pursue the Police Regionalization grant and the commitments we need to fulfill.

Mr. Bradley stated we are not committing to anything. Mayor Slaby asked that he be included to be invited to whatever meeting there are, which will not be a violation to the sunshine law.

ROLL CALL VOTE- BALITCHICK (yes), BIELSKIE (yes), BRADLEY (yes), CHESNEY (yes), DOWKUS (yes), MOTYKA (yes) HODGE (yes)
7 YEAS – 0 NAYS

Mr. Chesney stated a letter was distributed to all Council and the Housing Authority accepted Mr. Motyka's bid amount of \$8,000.00 total as the final payment back to the County. He stated we were to pay them back \$11,594.00; they are accepting the \$8,000.00.

Mr. Chesney stated he just wants Council to know that he abstained from the vote to accept Mr. Motyka offer as did Mr. Bielskie until we confirmed the amount, we needed to pay back to the County. Mr. Chesney stated what we wanted to do was to get those lots back on the tax rolls, that was the whole purpose of selling those lots to relieve the borough of the responsibility for maintenance and liability.

Mr. Chesney stated Steve Motyka now is basically talking about turning the lots back to the borough. Mr. Chesney stated and now we would be going backwards with that because we will be having the same responsibilities turned back on us.

Chesney stated the sidewalks need to be repaired, the grass needs to be maintained and if anything is going to be placed there will need to be maintained. Mr. Chesney stated if anything is going to be placed on the lots it must be ADA compliant and will take some work to do that. Mr. Chesney stated if it is going to be some type of park there must be some apparatus purchased in order to do that and so it seems this is blossoming into something else.

Mr. Chesney stated we must know all of the aspects of every motion made, just as we discussed the police regionalization. He stated we must know what we are going to do what the cost is all the aspects. Mr. Chesney stated all we need to do is discuss all of that and when we know all of the ins and outs, we then can make a logical, sensible and mature decision of what we do.

Mr. Chesney stated he would suggest once the sidewalks are fixed and is ADA approved and fencing is up and Mr. Motyka still wants to give it back to the borough, well then possibly we may accept it. Mr. Chesney state if we are going to accept it as is well then, all the repairs will have to be made by the borough and so it is not a gain for us and the County giving us a break.

Mr. Chesney stated when you are deciding you need to look at all the ramifications. Mr. Chesney stated we are here to talk logic and discuss and do things as we say in the opening prayer, for the betterment of the citizens. Mr. Chesney stated it was kind of Mr. Motyka to put that offer in and for him to say he is going to give it back but asked if that is betterment.

Mr. Chesney stated he would like to make that motion stating once the lot has those preparations done to it and he then wants to give it back we could consider. Solicitor Greco stated he understands what he is saying.....Mayor Slaby interjected and asked what the alternative s to let the lot sit there and grow grass. Solicitor Greco replied no, with respect to his motion he is just doing the deed and so it is not even in Mr. Motyka's hands and so it is just an idea, he could sell it tomorrow.

Solicitor Greco stated if Mr. Motyka follows through the Borough would need to vote to accept it. Solicitor Greco stated at that point you would have the opportunity to object or approve it. Mr. Chesney stated he just wants everyone to think about what we must look at and what possibly could happen. Mr. Chesney stated he will rescind his motion if this is not the proper time to do so. Mr. Chesney stated what we wanted to do is to put them back on the tax rolls. Mr. Dowkus replied, "they are."

Mr. Bielskie stated it is not on the agenda, but he just wants to inform council the Borough received two letters of interest for the vacant Council position, one was Russ Moroz and the other was Robert Fanella. Mr. Bradley questioned if today the deadline was. Mr. Dowkus responded saying yes it was at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Paul Niglio asked what constitutes a deadline, we just advertised we would like to receive applicants by this time. Solicitor Greco stated Council did put a deadline, but it does not stop them from appointing someone else and stated he thinks that is what Mr. Niglio is saying. Mr. Niglio stated just so Council knows there is no deadline, their hands are not tied, they did that, so they have time to contact and get some information so not to be in the situation as last time.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

**RHONDA WILK
SECRETARY**

Date of Approval March 9, 2022