

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
July 12, 2012

A Meeting of the Police Committee of Milford City Council was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers of Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware on Thursday, July 12, 2012.

PRESIDING: Chairman Douglas Morrow, Sr.

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Members S. Allen Pikus and Katrina Wilson

Police Chief Keith Hudson and City Clerk/Recorder Terri Hudson

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Morrow.

COPS Hiring Grant

Chief Hudson recalled that he was directed to proceed with the submission of the 2012 COPS Hiring Grant application and if accepted, council would make a decision on whether to accept or deny it.

Mr. Morrow reported that the city was awarded the grant and we have 90 days to make a determination. He feels it is worth revisiting to consider any possible way of finding the funding. He also noted previous discussions about an enhancement funding program similar to the Carlisle Fire Company's program established in 2004.

The city clerk then referenced the following explanation from our current code book:

The Carlisle Fire Company Enhancement Funding Program grants shall be funded by means of, and there is hereby imposed, a surcharge of .25% of the construction costs shown in the applications for building permits issued by the City Manager. Said surcharge shall be paid to and collected by the City of Milford as are all other building permit fees.

Mr. Morrow asked Mr. Pikus to ascertain the amount of money that Carlisle Fire Company has received under this program. Ms. Hudson noted the amount varies depending on the number of building permits issued and is similar in sustainability to transfer tax fees.

It was agreed that the enhancement funding program may be a good way to recoup some of the costs created by growth which has a substantial impact on the police department in addition to the fire department.

Mr. Morrow said he already discussed this with the city manager; Mr. Carmean did not want it discussed during the budget hearings and preferred Mr. Morrow wait until after the tax increase was in place.

Chief Hudson then provided the committee with the estimated costs to add the one officer approved by the DOJ's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office. The 2012 grant requires newly hires to be military veterans and provides up to 75% of the salary and fringe benefits costs with a funding cap of \$125,000 per officer over the three-year period.

The salary and benefit costs of the officer are estimated at \$280,389.95 over the three years. Of that, the city is responsible for 25% or \$70,097.50 and \$85,292.50 (above the \$125,000 funding cap) for a total of \$155,390.00.

He explained that the first year's costs will be slightly higher and are estimated to be approximately \$60,026.05 because of an added \$8,229.38 for uniforms, equipment, hiring fees, etc.

Mr. Morrow asked Mr. Pikus to sit down with Mr. Portmann to determine funding possibilities. Mr. Pikus said after he meets with Mr. Portmann, he will bring the information to a joint police and finance committee meeting. They will proceed according to the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Pikus said if the city can afford it, he has no problem with hiring another officer. However, money is tight and finding the funding will be difficult.

Mr. Morrow said the facts need to be presented before it is denied. He prefers the vote be on record versus having the finance department remove it from the budget without it being noted. If funding is not possible, Chief Hudson needs to be informed so he can advise the federal government immediately.

Mr. Pikus will follow up with the finance director to discuss any possible funding sources. Mr. Morrow also asked him to obtain the figures related to the Carlisle Fire Company Enhancement Fund.

Ms. Wilson arrived at 5:41 p.m.

USDA Facility Loan

Chief Hudson then asked for guidance on the USDA loan. The grant was submitted and is currently being processed. His impression is it is in the final stages of approval on their end.

Mr. Pikus advised that letters were recently sent to our federal legislators reiterating our need for funding for a new police facility.

Chief Hudson reported that City Manager Carmean has informed him on numerous occasions that Finance Director Jeff Portmann is able to acquire a loan with a lower interest than the USDA is offering.

The chief advised that Lisa Fitzgerald, Programs Specialist at USDA Rural Development has spent a great deal of time on this loan on behalf of the city. Currently, we are waiting for the historical preservation review and clearing house meeting scheduled in August. The completed application was sent to the Dover office and has been returned for Ms. Fitzgerald's final processing. He said she is also asking for a referendum date. He feels that asking residents to consider a second tax increase will have negative impact on any referendum results.

Chief Hudson was then directed by the committee to meet Mr. Portmann the following morning to verify he was able to obtain a lower interest loan than is being offered by the USDA. The chief confirmed that USDA's variable interest rate is 3.85%.

Chief Hudson then reported the police department was struck again by lightning on June 22nd. As a result, they have lost a number of items including telephones, computers, radios and other electronic equipment. They are still finding equipment that was damaged in one way or another. Fortunately, some of the items are up and operating again. Several contractors, in addition to the State of Delaware's Division of Communications, are continuing to work to get the equipment restored.

He recommends a Lightning Eliminator Consultant be hired to test their grounding situation to prevent further lightning strikes. At this point, they have no idea if the lightning is coming through the phone lines, antenna, or other areas. Regardless, this is occurring on a regular basis though many of the damaged items were supposed to have been grounded.

The chief then read from a list describing several items that were impacted. Unfortunately a lot of the equipment is obsolete or because it is specialized, carries a substantial price tag (\$250 an hour) just to be checked. The minimum fee for this type service is approximately \$710. He emphasized that what can be repaired is being addressed.

The claim has not been filed yet because each day, it is determined another item has been affected in some way so the bottom line continues to escalate.

He explained that as an example, serial ports on several computers were damaged. Initially, they felt it would be an easy fix. Because of Windows XP, it could not be done. There are also problems with the security cameras for downtown as a result.

He noted the city has a deductible of \$5,000; they will be filing the claim as soon as possible.

With no further business, the Police Committee was adjourned by Mr. Morrow.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terri K. Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial "T".

Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk/Recorder