

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
August 2, 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, August 2, 2012.

PRESIDING: Chairman Douglas Morrow, Sr.

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Member S. Allen Pikus

City Manager Richard Carmean, Police Chief Keith Hudson and
City Clerk/Recorder Terri Hudson

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chairman Morrow.

COPS Hiring Grant

Mr. Morrow recalled at the previous meeting, Chief Hudson had asked that the committee provide him with a response in relation to the approval of one police officer through US Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grant. No formal action has been taken on the matter.

Since the meeting, Mr. Pikus met with Finance Director Jeff Portmann who provided him with the city matching cost of approximately \$155,000 over the three-year period. Mr. Portmann asked Mr. Pikus where he wanted to get the money from; Mr. Pikus responded by saying he cannot answer that. As a result, his response to Chief Hudson's request is there is no money for an additional officer and the position was included in the budget. Mr. Carmean pointed out that the city would have needed an additional \$52,000 a year over the next three years to fund another officer.

Mr. Carmean said he also spoke with Mr. Portmann about this issue before he went on leave. He emphasized that the city does not have the matching money.

Mr. Morrow directed Chief Hudson to decline the offer because the city does not have the needed funding.

Chief Hudson thanked the committee for making a formal decision noting there was nothing on record when it was removed from the budget. He asked the record reflect that a rumor was maliciously started last year at the police department that city council wanted him to hire additional officers and that he (Chief Hudson) was fighting against it. He reported that the rumor had created a number of problems within the police department.

Mr. Pikus said he had not heard that. City Manager Carmean said he also heard it and specifically that city council was pushing him to hire more officers but Chief Hudson was telling council they did not need more officers. Mr. Pikus said that did not happen and can easily be clarified by any council member. He stressed that the decision to turn down this grant is one that is made by council.

The city manager then stated that the finance director believes he is blamed for not wanting the department to have more officers. His response to Mr. Carmean was that he does not have a problem with additional officers but he needs a revenue source to pay for them. Mr. Portmann also had stated that when the budget was being discussed, Mr. Morrow had stated that no more cops would be hired until the new building plan was worked out. Then it was back on the table a month later.

Mr. Morrow explained that Chief Hudson needed an official decision before he declined the grant.

USDA Facility Loan

Chief Hudson then reported that Lisa Fitzgerald, who works for the local office of the USDA, has worked diligently with the city on the police facility loan and is prepared to move forward. Several things need to be done and he is uncomfortable

proceeding particularly because a final site had not been determined. In addition, Mr. Portmann has indicated he is able to obtain a loan with a lower interest rate.

Mr. Morrow agrees we are not ready to proceed with this at this point. The major hurdle we are facing right now is that we do not have the site. In addition, we are not prepared for a referendum at this time and he and the chief agree that a number of things must be in place before that can be considered.

Mr. Pikus asked if the owners of the proposed parcel have talked with the city manager. Mr. Carmean said he left the matter in Councilman Grier's hands. Mr. Morrow had spoken with Mr. Grier who stated he has had no contact with them.

Mr. Morrow directed Chief Hudson to inform Ms. Fitzgerald that at this point, we are unprepared to move forward. Once we acquire the property, we will contact her and proceed.

He did confirm that reserve funding can be used to purchase the land for the department; Mr. Carmean agreed.

Mr. Morrow explained that we were so anxious to get started because initially the land was in place. However, we then decided to go back to our original plan and attempt to purchase the property in the downtown area.

Chief Hudson explained that the USDA's budget is coming to an end which is the reason Ms. Fitzgerald needs a decision. He agrees we need to postpone further action until their next funding cycle.

Mr. Pikus has continued to contact local legislators and state and federal officials in hopes of acquiring funding for next year.

When asked the major holdup, Mr. Carmean said the contact has never gotten back to Mr. Grier. He advised that Mr. Grier approached him at a recent function and the contact indicated they have been busy and have not had time to meet with the city.

Mr. Morrow asked if this can be approached in a more official capacity by putting the request in writing on city letterhead. Mr. Carmean said he was willing to write the letter. Mr. Morrow also recommended that he be invited to an upcoming committee meeting.

Mr. Carmean said we should call him and ask him that he bring his representatives to a luncheon with Chief Hudson and a couple members of the police committee.

Mr. Pikus said we have talked about a new police station for a long time. We need to get the land in place so we can proceed.

Mr. Carmean recalled that Senator Gary Simpson did not want the police station moved to the business park. In addition, some people had mentioned they preferred it remain downtown. He feels acquiring the land will satisfy all those people.

Mr. Morrow emphasized that if the proposed site falls through, we have no choice but to go back to our business park. Mr. Carmean agrees noting there is enough property there to accommodate their needs.

Police Enhancement Fund/Public Safety Impact Fee

Mr. Morrow discussed the concept of adding a fee to the building permits for the police as was done for Carlisle Fire Company. Mr. Carmean recommends a higher percentage than what is in place for the fire department.

Mr. Morrow directed the city manager to have it on the agenda no later than September. This will provide a funding source for the new police facility, additional officers or new equipment. This is particularly important because our transfer tax is no longer what it was in the past.

Mr. Carmean said he and Mr. Portmann have discussed the money being transferred for the four police officers will eventually run out. Mr. Pikus asked how much is in that fund. Mr. Carmean said we had a better year this fiscal year as a

result of the sale of a property on Route 1 that brought in a substantial amount. He said if nothing else comes in, there is more than \$300,000 in the fund which will cover that transfer for three to four more years.

The city manager feels that some type of police impact fee on new buildings is needed especially on apartments or condos. He agrees that multi-family units typically require more police attention.

Mr. Carmean suggests a percentage of the building permit be considered and may be the easiest way to handle it. The cost of an average home would need to be determined and the percentage would need to come out to around \$500.

Ms. Hudson verified the fire company receives .25% of the construction costs of each building permit.

With no further business, Mr. Pikus moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Morrow. Motion carried.

The Police Committee meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Terri K. Hudson".

Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk/Recorder