

COUNCILMEETING
Minutes of July 12, 2006

CALL TO ORDER

President Stewart called to order the Meeting of Crafton Borough Council, in Council Chambers of the Community Center. Flag Salute was led by Mr. Cindric. Roll call, by Mrs. Tremblay, recorded eight (7) members of Council present, as follows: Mr. Byers, Mr. Cindric, Mr. Christman, Mr. Donovan, Ms. Koerbel, Mr. Ogden, and Mr. Stewart. Also present were Mayor O'Connell, Manager Sample, Engineer Wagner, Solicitor Ayoob (*Absent: Mrs. Sappie, Ms. Luxbacher/Ms. McNamara, Jr. Council*).

APPROVAL OF BILL LIST

MOTION: It was regularly moved by Mr. Byers, seconded by Mr. Christman, to approve the July 12, 2006 List of Bills. **COMMENTS:** Ms. Koerbel questioned the amount of \$533. payable to South Hills Movers. Mayor O'Connell indicated that this was the cost associated with the furniture given to the Borough by All State Insurance. Mr. Stewart questioned the cost for recodification of borough ordinances for \$1,177. - Mr. Sample advised that all ordinances and amendments from the beginning of the year had been inserted, the on-line codification updated, and supplements prepared for the codification books; the borough saved a copying fee and will make it's own copies of each supplement. He asked that Council turn in their books to have them updated with all supplements.

MOTION carried by Unanimous Roll Call Vote (7-0), with exception noted (*Ms. Koerbel, #409.50, Mr. Christman #409.50*).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 28, 2006 - Not Available/Tabled

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor O'Connell and Chief Rost announced the passing of a former Crafton Police Chief, Max Young; her retired in 1968.

Mayor O'Connell commented on the disturbing events at their recent Crime Watch Meeting; that due to misinformation and some divisive element, citizens were under the impression that it was a public meeting and were denied admittance. She added, if a police officer gives you an order, you obey. She commented on the creation of Crime Watch in Pennsylvania (1982) and in Crafton (1986); various levels of interest and participation over the years, monthly Crime Watch reports, area coordinators. A public meeting has been planned for August 2nd, at 7:00 p.m. and refreshments will be provided. She noted that Capt. Tolkacevic is working on several programs and also working on a program that will provide crime alerts and reports via e-mail.

Mayor O'Connell spoke about DANET. She noted that Council discussed and acted on terminating the agreement with DANET at the January 25, 2006 meeting of Council; which was decided by a 7-2 vote (Donovan and Koerbel voting no). She noted that DANET activities are a drain on our police officers, and with the retirement of Jim Bloom, the department is down one officer. It is the decision of Council.

Ms. Koerbel asked why it was necessary to deny citizen access to the crime watch meeting; what kind of message is that sending? Mayor O'Connell asked why those citizens were lead to believe it was a public meeting. Ms. Koerbel and Mr. Ogden indicated that two of the area coordinators were at the crime awareness meeting at Mr. Ogden's gym, and they announced the meeting date and time - so it was assumed to be a public meeting. Ms. O'Connell stated that whoever was telling everyone that it was a public meeting was trying to get people to react and she will not participate in these games. Ms. Koerbel questioned the contradiction of Mayor O'Connell's comments; on 6/14, 2006 stating that Crime Watch is a citizen's group and not run by the Police department or the borough, and yet you hold a meeting in the police department, include the Chief of Police, and then deny citizen's admittance. That these citizens have genuine concerns about crime in Crafton, and have repeatedly ask for a crime watch meeting, and then they are turned away. Mr. Ogden stated that the Mayor, the area coordinators, and all of Council was invited to attend the crime awareness meeting at his gym, but did not choose to attend;

that there was nothing negative done or said at the meeting, and it was very informative. It was the consensus of Council that they are please with the amount of interest and participation, and to move forward.

CITIZEN'S PRESENT TO ADDRESS COUNCIL

Jake Carrigan, 31 Walnut Street – Mr. Carrigan stated that he did attend the meeting at the gym on Saturday, and heard comments about DANET and Crime Watch. He stated that the area coordinators did announce the Crime Watch meeting, and there was nothing negative said. He believes it was simply a communication problem, and no one was trying to point anyone in the wrong direction. Although Council commented and acted on the DANET matter in January, he asked that it be addressed again for the benefit of their questions.

Mary Slusser, 14 Lawson Street – Ms. Slusser asked if Mr. Stewart if he had information for her concerning the municipalities that had pulled out of DANET? Mr. Stewart stated no. At a prior meeting, she asked to get involved in Crime Watch. Chief Rost took her information, but she has never heard from anyone.

Joan Kury, Lincoln Avenue – Ms. Kury commented on how she was treated when she attempted to attend the Crime Watch meeting. A notice was posted on the community center door that stated Crime Watch meeting moved to police department; when she attempted to gain admittance she was restrained and physically removed from the premises. She has contacted the A.C.L.U. regarding this incident, and did not appreciate being treated like the criminal element she is trying to keep out of Crafton. In the past, she had addressed the Mayor, Chief of Police and Council, of her desire to be involved in Crime Watch, and was told it is a citizen group, not a police or borough-run program, but when attempting to attend the meeting she was denied admittance and lied to by Chief Rost. She and her husband have decided to sell their home and move to a safer community. She asked that Council revisit the DANET issue.

Robin Koffler, 25 W. Crafton Avenue – Ms. Koffler also asked that Council reconsider participation in DANET.

Mike Crown, CVFD, 802 Clearview Avenue – Mr. Crown requested that Council explain their reasons for changing the wording in the fire ordinance pertaining to authority at a fire scene, without prior notice to anyone. (*Section 17-4. Powers of Fire Chief during Alarms*) It is his opinion, and Chief Hermes, that the language “supreme police officer” for the subject scene of a fire, is not the most desirable and maybe inflammatory – but perhaps change it to incident commander, or something on that order, but the Fire Chief should be the commander in charge of a fire scene. He asked why no one from the Fire Department was contacted by Council to discuss this matter. Mr. Stewart stated that he had addressed this particular matter at the time Council considered adoption of the Codification, about two and half years ago. He believes that the language may be in violation of the Borough Code, and had asked the Solicitor to look into it as well. Mr. Crown made several contacts with various EMS coordinators, state and county officials, and Crafton’s EMC, and also reviewed similar ordinances in other municipalities. That, in accordance with NIMS, which was adopted recently by the Borough, there needs to be a chain of command – a unified command, at a domestic incident (i.e., fire scene). The Fire Chief would be in charge of that scene, and that would include directing the activities of the police at the scene. Members of the fire department have no authority over motor vehicles, which requires the police, and in the event of suspected arson, etc. police may be needed to secure it as a crime scene, and in general, be present for the safety of the responders. Mr. Stewart discussed a scenario whereas the police are needed to respond to an emergency call, but are detained while they seek permission from the Fire Chief to leave the scene. Mr. Stewart stated that his goal is to have every department be “user friendly”. Chief Rost expressed concerns in locating the Fire Chief in the event they are needed to respond to another emergency. He commented on the current radio, municipal band, and Nextel communication problems. Mr. Crown stated that there is mutual aid available for other calls, and the Fire Chief is readily available by radio. The Chief would not unreasonably detain a police officer from responding to another

emergency. This has been past protocol without any serious problems, but having it written into the ordinance is being NIMS compliant. He referred to one recent incident when there were no police on the scene to direct traffic at a West Steuben Street fire, and Chief Hermes was slightly hit by a passing car. Mr. Crown closed by requesting that when, and if, this is being considered, to please include and meet with all emergency department heads (police, fire and medical).

Stephen Palchowski, 11 Bradford Avenue - Mr. Palchowski reported to Council that he, and his wife, Pam, have taken over the Sunday night Movies in Crafton Park; that Rob Webb has given all of the equipment to him. He will be posting the movie information on the park sign, and asked that there be some police presence during the movies. Mr. Palchowski reported that once school starts he may consider continuing the movies on Saturday nights, weather permitting.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Engineer Wagner had nothing to report.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Ayoob reported that he had reviewed the questions regarding command at a fire scene. Essentially, the Borough has the authority, within its discretion, to adopt local ordinances that govern fire scenes as long as those rules and regulations are within the parameters of NIMS. Mr. Stewart asked that the Solicitor attend a meeting to review this matter. Mr. Ayoob stated he would attend, and could review a final document, but it would be what Council and the Fire Department would ultimately decide.

OLD BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

SHACOG Police Testing - Mr. Stewart spoke to SHACOG, and they have a process whereas they would conduct the whole process. He, and Manager Sample, reviewed the schedule of the process. Ms. Koerbel indicated that this process is necessary to establish an eligibility list. Mr. Stewart re-iterated that there is a need for two members for the Civil Service Commission; it is not a paid position but it is not time consuming. Also, there are open positions on the Zoning Hearing Board.

Park Special Event Vendor Application – Review the proposed application, and security deposit requirement, etc. for consideration at the next meeting.

BUSINESS AGENDA

ADMINISTRATIVE

MOTION: It was regularly moved by Mr. Byers, seconded by Ms. Koerbel, to authorize the Borough of Crafton's participation in SHACOG's 2006 Joint Police Test for a fee of \$1,000.00. **COMMENTS:** Mr. Cindric asked what the proposed savings would be to the borough by using SHACOG's services. Mr. Sample advised that in the past the Borough's cost was approximately \$3,500-\$4,500 for the process. Mrs. Tremblay asked if the Borough would collect an application fee, as there was revenue budgeted for this process. Solicitor Ayoob advised that we should contact SHACOG, that they will probably be collecting any administrative fee not the borough.

MOTION carried by Unanimous Roll Call Vote (7-0).

MOTION: It was regularly moved by Mr. Cindric, seconded by Mr. Byers, to accept the resignation of Councilman Anthony Impavido, effective June 28, 2006. **COMMENTS:** Ms. Koerbel asked how accepting a resignation effects Council. Solicitor Ayoob advised that it has no effect; his seat was vacant effective on the date he resigned, on June 28th; that the date you accept a resignation has no effect on anything and isn't even necessary. He advised that Council would have to fill the seat within 30 days.

MOTION carried by Six (6) Yes, One (1) No (*Donovan*) Voice Vote (6-1).

PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION: It was regularly moved by Mr. Byers, seconded by Mr. Donovan, to authorize SHACOG to process payment for Estimate #3, in the amount of \$15,798.20 to Robinson Pipe Cleaning Company, for the Year Two CCTV inspections of the sanitary sewers performed in Crafton Borough, as recommended by Gateway Engineers.

MOTION carried by Unanimous Roll Call Vote (7-0)

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Stewart announced that he had a resume for a candidate to fill the empty Second Ward Council seat. He distributed a letter of interest from Susan Viola to Council. Mr. Stewart asked that Council act on it promptly, and asked for a motion to appoint Mrs. Viola to fill the vacant Council seat. Solicitor Ayoob read the section from the Borough Code concerning the requirements for filling a vacant Council seat. Ms. Koerbel stated that there is ample time to have other individuals be considered; in the past, when filling Ms. Amendola's vacant seat, interviews were desired. She asked that more candidates be considered and interviewed. Mr. Ogden stated that he knows of individuals who are interested, and Mr. Donovan stated that he, too, knew of one person who would like to be considered; but with the short notice, have not submitted a letter of interest yet. Mr. Stewart asked that Council be prepared to act on this matter at the next meeting, and to try to avoid the necessity of the vacancy board. Mr. Sample suggested that letters of interest/resumes be delivered to the Borough office by next Wednesday for distribution to Council.

COUNCIL COMMENTS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Donovan asked about problems with the community center building, such as roof leaks, etc. Mr. Sample said that these items will need to be discussed and repairs considered during the 2007 Budget review.

Ms. Koerbel stated that there was a crime awareness meeting held at Mr. Ogden's gym this past Saturday; not to be confused with a Crime Watch meeting. Many attended out of genuine concern for this Borough. She asked if someone would clarify what Capt. Sumpter's role was; that he was present and taking notes, but did not answer any questions, etc. She asked if Council could be provided with a copy of Capt. Sumpter's notes. Ms. Koerbel commented on the 7-2 vote previously mentioned by Mayor O'Connell. She stated that many of the 7 voted in favor of pulling out of DANET based on inaccurate information that was given to them. Information such as DANET court overtime was \$40,000 annually, when in actuality it was only \$4,200 or \$4,500; a \$36,000. difference. And when this amount was stated by Mr. Impavido, no one corrected his error; or that DANET would still come into Crafton whether we participate or not, or that our DANET officers weren't working in Crafton. This has caused mistrust in the borough. She asked Mr. Sample if he had the correct amounts that she had asked for. Mr. Sample reported that the DANET court overtime was \$4,265.79 for 2004, and \$4,429.97 for 2005. Ms. Koerbel and Mr. Sample introduced the LGA Intern to Council to speak on his project.

Dave Totten, LGA Intern, reported that he has questionnaires in the shopping center, and he will provide responses as a part of his strategic economic development draft report, which should be available for the August 23, 2006 meeting. Some tentative response numbers were commented on. Mr. Totten stated that this is not to be considered a scientific market study. Ms. Koerbel stated that he will discuss this further at the Crafton Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Ogden asked that Mr. & Mrs. Kury reconsider any action. He stated that there is a lot of passion here, and asked that everyone step back, think on it, and put Crafton first. Plan on attending the meeting on August 2nd, at 7:00 pm. He asked for people to get involved in the government; if anyone is interested in filling the vacant Council seat to see Manager Sample by next Wednesday. He asked that the residents give to the Fire Department; everyone pulled together to contribute to the Fireworks, and the Fire Department is more important and they need donations. He thanked Mr. Crown for speaking, and he agreed that the language "incident commander" should be considered as replacement language in the ordinance. He said that there was a breakdown in communication regarding the Crime Watch

meeting, but everyone wants to work together. There is room to disagree but you need to move forward.

Mr. Christman thanked everyone for the help and donations with the 4th of July Fireworks, including the Fire Department and Police Department. He will be looking for volunteers to meet in August to form a committee and begin plans for 2007. He was pleased that there are so many people who want to get involved in Crime Watch.

Mr. Byers thanked Tom and Angie Witt for soliciting donations throughout the park prior to the fireworks; they collected in excess of \$800. Mr. Byers asked the residents to get involved, and call 911 – not to be afraid to get involved, instead of depending on the Police or Danet to be everywhere, all of the time; get involved, call 911, get a license plate, write down the time and a description, don't be afraid to go out on to the porch and yell out. He is willing to revisit DANET; that it would be great, for every 4 hours we spend on court overtime, even if an officer is only there for 15 minutes, we must pay the officer for 4 hours, if we could get 1 hour of DANET. Residents must learn to help themselves, pick up the phone and call 911.

Mr. Cindric reported that he was at the crime awareness meeting at Mr. Ogden's gym. He heard what everyone had to say, but remarked that there is an increase in crime in every community. The police cannot be on every corner, 24 hours a day – awareness starts at home, and in the schools and churches, and continues thru crime awareness programs. He remarked that there were misstatements, such as there is crime and drug activity in our home values have fallen because we don't have a good inspection program, police or ordinance enforcement. He remarked that property values have actually increased over the years. He remarked that Council receives monthly police reports, and he compared the numbers from the year 2000 and the year 2006; whereas there was actually a drop in complaints in one particular month for the year 2006 – so it hasn't changed that much, perhaps it is someone's perception that has changed. That certain code words were used in describing the crime, with which he took offense. It was noted that those remarks were made from persons not from this community.

Mayor O'Connell thanked everyone for their comments and hoped to see everyone at the August 2nd meeting. Chief Rost commented that he is not against DANET, and wants to see their work done in Crafton. It is unfortunate that there are drugs in the city of Pittsburgh, or Clairton, but he wants DANET in Crafton; he is Chief in Crafton and not out to help the world. It is Councils' decision, but if DANET is brought back, it will be run differently.

Mr. Stewart said the officers are paid to be officers in this borough, and get paid a good wage. When an officer puts in 40+ hours a week, and then goes to work for DANET, makes phone calls on borough time for DANET purposes, there is a lot of time being spent on not taking care of the borough. When you work with the DEA, etc. anything recovered is retained by the borough, not spread out and a percentage split with other communities. He does not support DANET. There has not been one DANET arrest made in Crafton Borough. He reiterated Mr. Byers comments; self-reliance and calling 911. He stated that he, and others, were surprised to see a new Council member taking it upon himself to take over Crime Watch and have his own meeting, without first talking to anyone about it. We have to swallow our pride, work together and move forward.

ADDITIONAL CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Frank Lehner, resident – Mr. Lehner commented on Mr. Stewart's remarks, and stated that a couple of years ago he came to Council and asked that Council what their vision was for Crafton. That Mr. Stewart refused to comment; no one, except Ms. Koerbel and Mr. Crown, responded; that Mr. Stewart had said something to the effect that what he was asking was something similar to going to a communist re-education class. He, again, asked this Council, what is their vision for Crafton and its future. That these good citizens and Mr. Ogden have been ridiculed and attacked for their zeal and zest. They have done nothing to warrant the attack by Mayor O'Connell, as if there was some paranoiac plan going on. Mr. Stewart commented that when he was on the Port Authority, he attended a retreat, and some had comments but some folks just wanted to go golfing, etc. – and they paid good money for this service for nothing, and that is why he was reluctant to participate in the activity which Mr. Lehner was discussing; giving up his time and accomplishing nothing.

Mary Slusser, resident, commented that the person from DANET that spoke to them at the Crime Awareness meeting had nothing negative to say about Crafton or any Crafton officer, he was invited to

attend by a resident to explain the DANET program. She felt the property value comment was taken out of context, and what was meant was the value will decrease if something isn't done.

CITIZEN COMMENTS (cont')

Chief Hermes re-iterated comments made by Mr. Crown, asking why no one from the fire department or REMS weren't part of the discussion on changing the fire ordinance. Was it political? They could have contributed much to the discussion. Everyone has a job to do, and they don't want to go to the police for anything and don't want the police to come to them. He feels he was misquoted on his feelings about the ordinance. He said the only thing wrong with the ordinance was the language "supreme police commander"; that was what he didn't like about the ordinance. Firemen cannot direct traffic, this is the job of fire police or auxiliary police. They are not responsible for security at a fire; they come in and do their job, and the police contact the property owners and secure the scene. Mr. Stewart stated that he still does not agree that the police need to be released from the scene by the Fire Chief. Mr. Crown added, change some of the language in the ordinance, but compliant with NIMS and in the process of an "incident command system", while fighting a fire on Steuben Street at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the police can't just pick up and go, and leave the firefighters and responders lives at risk. Mr. Stewart asked that this discussion be continued at another time.

Joan Kury, resident – Commented on the police report comparisons provided by Mr. Cindric. She asked him if the nature of the crimes were the same in 2000 as they are in 2006; the recent crimes here involve armed robberies. She asked what is the curfew for youth in Crafton, 18 and under; that she sees young people out on the streets after 11:00 pm. She commented that the crime awareness meeting went very well, and was well attended because people are concerned; there was no secrecy and the Crime Watch area coordinators and Council were invited. For the past year, she has participated in distributing Crime Watch reports and is contacted regularly by a Police Captain with crime alerts; and she thought she was considered an area coordinator, yet she was not invited to the meeting. She was told it was not a meeting, yet she has the sign from the door that refers to it as a Crime Watch meeting being held in the police station.

Mr. Stewart announced that Council was going to an Executive Session after the meeting to discuss legal matters and a personnel matter but would not be taking any action.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: It was regularly moved by Mr. Donovan, seconded by Mrs. Koerbel, that this meeting be adjourned.

MOTION carried by a Unanimous Voice Vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Tremblay, Borough Secretary