

**Turtle Creek Valley COG  
Director's Report**

TCVCOG Board Meeting  
September 23, 2021

**Upcoming Meetings**

10/19: Regular Police Chief Meeting

10/20: Regular Manager Meeting

10/28: TCVCOG Board Meeting

**Election of TCVCOG Officers**

The positions of Vice Chair and Treasurer are up this year. We typically form a nominating committee, with board elections at our December meeting. Is this how you would like to proceed?

**Feedback on Annual Dinner**

With COVID infection rates unfortunately on the rise, please let me know how you feel about an Annual Dinner in February 2022.

**Vactor**

The Vactor will be available through the Fall as weather permits. Please remember to budget for Vactor service in 2022!

Opt in towns with remaining days that need to be scheduled are as follows:

Braddock – 1 day

Churchill – 3 days

North Braddock – 5 days

Turtle Creek – 5 days

We have availability after October 6<sup>th</sup>. Please call or email me to schedule.

**Application for 501(c)(3)**

Attorney Salisbury has reported that our application is currently under review by the IRS.

**Police Training Program**

Fall training dates are slated for October 11-12; and October 13 – 14. Registration is now open, so please register your officers now.

Examples of meetings attended by staff throughout the summer:

July 14, 2021 –PA State Association of Borough's Webinar –Code Enforcement. Chris Gulotta gave a presentation on Prevention, Remediation, and Redevelopment through ticketing and notices of violation.

June 17, 2021 – Land Care meeting with URA Rep.

June 23, 2021 – Heritage Trail Expansion Meeting

July 20, 2021 – NexTransit Stakeholder Meeting

July 22, 2021 – Presented on TCVCOG at Monroeville Rotary

Aug 5, 2021- Georgetown / Waldo meeting– Open Discussion around software and collaboration.

Aug 19, 2021 – CDFI Monthly Conference call US Dept of Treasury- discussed some of the guidelines surrounding CDFI's and starting the application process.

Aug 24, 2021 – Darnell Mosses gave an informative introduction into CDFI's.

Sept 8<sup>th</sup> - EDA ARPA Webinar for Local Government and Municipalities – discussed regional grants available.

Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> – Annual MACC meeting with Rich Fitzgerald.

Sept. 14 & 15<sup>th</sup> – Muni Link Utility Billing software – annual conference – multiple sessions on a variety of topics to maximize the use of the software.

Upcoming Lead Safe Allegheny – Sept 27 and Oct.1 2021

**Manager's Meeting: September 15, 2021 at 10am – Monroeville Community Park**

Attendance: Greg Bachy, Swissvale; Rebecca Vargo, Wilkins; Connie Rosenbayger, East McKeesport; Seth Abrams, East Pittsburgh; Tim Little, Monroeville

Seth Abrams asked the group if they would be interested in further investigating the possibility of creating a revolving loan fund that would provide low interest loans to residents for home improvements. It could be potentially be managed by an organization like MVI or TCVCOG. Some preliminary thoughts were discussed, and everyone in attendance was in favor of getting more information. Amanda brought up the Allegheny Home Improvement Loan Program that currently exists and is run by RAAC. Whereas the RAAC program requires funds to be allocated toward the correction of code violations, the group preferred to more pro-active approach to thereby avoid potential future violations.

Amanda agreed to research the current program, and the possibility of receiving HOME funds for this purpose.

## **Police Testing**

The TCVCOG conducted a joint police test on Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> with Amanda filling the role of Bill Gamble. There were 11 original applicants. Ten tested, Nine passed the physical agility. The test results have been received and forwarded to each participating Chief and Manager.

## **Land Care**

Unkempt lots are unsightly, lower property values, and harbor unwanted wildlife & garbage. Recognizing that maintenance is time consuming, the TCVCOG is attempting to piloting a multi-municipal grass maintenance program next Spring. The theory is that high volume grass cutting will maximize volume "buying" while freeing up public works time to accomplish higher level tasks. TCVCOG intends to provide experienced and fully insured contractor(s) to offer a code-compliant cutting service to vacant lots and vacant properties( with structures). It is important to note that cuts will be code compliant, but NOT manicured. Cut grass removal, if desired, will invoke a debris removal fee.

The TCVCOG is offering this program in an attempt to solve a problem shared across municipal boundaries. It is recommended that you break out the total actual hourly cost of your DPW workforce: wages, benefits, equipment operation/repair, etc. , and multiply that number by DPW hours spent cutting. When evaluating value, you may also want to consider DPW tasks that aren't being accomplished due to time spent grass cutting. If you determine it's valuable to proceed, we ask your town to submit a parcel map with the sites marked, and a list of property addresses, corresponding lot & block numbers, and the frequency of cuts that you would want. We will then get quotes to determine pricing before asking you to commit.

Goals of the program:

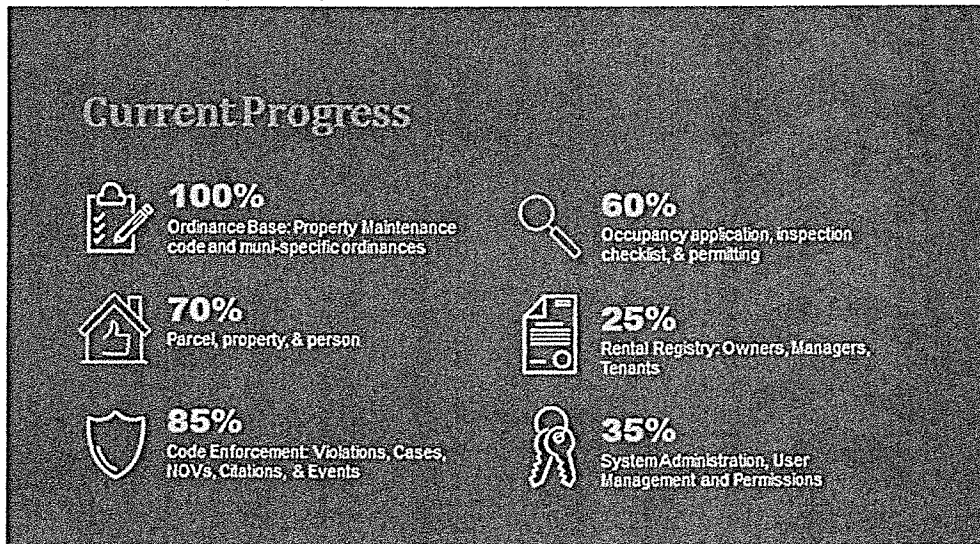
- Free up DPW time to complete other important tasks
- Eliminate equipment repair and maintenance costs for all contracted grass cutting
- Ensure code compliance of Vacant Lots, and reduce complaints from neighbors regarding harborage of unwanted wildlife.

Contractors will provide the TCVCOG with a Certificate of Insurance (COI) listing the municipality as additional insured. The contractors will provide all equipment, material, fuel, and, as needed, proper disposal of any debris.

The TCVCOG will be responsible for administration of the contract and quality control to ensure code-compliant cuts:

- The TCVCOG will issue GPS work orders to the contractor.
- The contractor will be required to supply the TCVCOG with before pictures (4 ea) and after pictures (4 ea) prior to any payments being released.

## CodeNforce Progress Update



We continue to have regular ongoing weekly meetings as the development of this software progresses. As you consider your budgets for 2022, please remember that we will be launching next summer!

In addition, the TCVCOG hosted its first Code Enforcement Officer meeting today. Agenda items include the successful implementation of Act 90, future meeting topics, and an overview of codeNforce. Please reach out if you would like your officer to participate in future meetings and I will add him/her to the distribution list.

### Other

Over the summer our new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone system was installed. Our office number is 412.858.5115. Since we no longer have phone lines, please delete any other phone numbers you may have associated with our office. They will not work.

I have been attending meetings with the Tri-COG Land Bank, Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh, and City of Bridges Land Trust to discuss a more comprehensive approach to blight mitigation. A collaborative approach ensures that a diverse set of interventions is available and that services can be easily tailored to each local community context, without losing sight of broader regional trends that cross municipal boundaries. I will keep you posted as we explore the feasibility of this approach.

Pitcairn Borough has requested a salary survey for Police Chiefs. Therefore, I've sent an email to our chiefs asking for this information, and salary for other police positions as well, if they would like to share. Please let me know if this information would be of value, and if so, please encourage your Chief to respond.

**Police Chief Meeting: September 16, 2021 at 2:00pm - Monroeville Council Chambers**

In attendance: John McCaul, Turtle Creek; Russ Stroschein, East McKeesport; James Matrazzo, North Versailles; Robert Payne, Edgewood; Chuck Williams, Forest Hills; Randy Lamb, Wilkins Twp.; Scott Farally, Pitcairn; Robert Renk, Monroeville; Lanny Conly, Plum; Howard Burton, Penn Hills; Ryan Wooten, Rankin; Ellis Watson, Swissvale; Ron Akerly, Churchill; Wesley McClellan; County/Wilmerding

County Superintendent Chris Kearns, along with Asst. Superintendent Vic Joseph, and County Homicide Detectives Nando Costa and Tom ? gave a presentation on their policy of what can be expected from the County when there's a critical incident involving police. It was emphasized that the County conducts