

West Hazleton Borough Council to look at MCOG offers again during meeting

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West Hazleton Borough Council will re-entertain two separate votes on offers from the Mountain Council of Governments (MCOG) during its Thursday night meeting.

In March, council tabled a vote on the MCOG multi-municipality abandoned vehicle ordinance and did not entertain a vote on the use of a multi-municipality owned sewer camera.

Several council members had questions about both offers and requested a meeting with an MCOG representative.

That meeting took place when Dan Guydish of MCOG attended last Thursday's work session.

Guydish said the resolution for

the abandoned vehicle ordinance was designed to curtail abandoned vehicles, which he said "is a problem in every municipality."

He said Hazleton and Hazle Township have anywhere from 200 to 300 abandoned vehicles per year.

The only municipalities yet to sign on to the agreement are West Hazleton and Conyngham Borough.

The abandoned vehicle resolution states that any vehicle tagged by another municipality as abandoned would be considered such in any participating municipality.

All municipalities would consider a vehicle tagged on the day it was tagged in the originating municipality with no additional time granted.

A vehicle tagged and then towed cannot be released by the salvor

until all fines, towing and storage fees are paid.

The resolution states that the participating municipalities will agree upon a central salvor.

In March, one of the questions dealt with how the borough would enforce the agreement and another dealt with there being one central salvor.

Guydish said that the ordinance will be enforced by local authorities and the central salvor will be Kress' since the business has the adequate space and security to house the vehicles.

Mayor Mark Rockovich questioned if other salvors were contacted.

Guydish said other businesses were contacted but none could offer

the amount of space and security that Kress' could. He also said that Kress' was in a good location.

He said that once vehicles are tagged, they will be entered onto a multi-municipality list.

The police officer who tickets abandoned vehicles will have to check that list to see if the vehicle in question was tagged in a neighboring municipality and steps will be taken from there to have the vehicle removed.

Guydish said each municipality can use whatever towing company or companies it wants.

He said the initial municipality the vehicle was tagged in will reap any money left over after fee and fine money is recouped from the vehicle's owner.

Guydish also talked about the sewer camera.

He said Hazleton City has offered to store the device and equip a van to transport it. Guydish said that will be Hazleton's contribution to the camera.

Other municipalities that will share the equipment will contribute about \$7,150 over the course of three years, which will pay for insurance and maintenance.

If West Hazleton were to join, the cost would be about \$5,750 for each municipality over three years.

Guydish said most municipalities are putting in \$4,000 right away to defray interest fees.

He said the training for the equipment is free and any municipality not involved in the venture can rent the equipment for a cost.