

**SPRINGETTSBURY/SPRING GARDEN TOWNSHIPS
JOINT FIRE SERVICES AD HOC COMMITTEE**

**NOVEMBER 15, 2005
APPROVED**

Springettsbury Township and Spring Garden Township Joint Fire Services Committee convened at 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday, November 15, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. at the Township Offices located at 1501 Mt. Zion Road, York, PA.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Austin Hunt, Spring Garden Township
Bill Schenck, Springettsbury Township
William Mader, Spring Garden Township
Ellen Freireich, Springettsbury Township
Jon Countess, Spring Garden Township
Zane Sjoberg, Spring Garden Township
Todd Langheine, Spring Garden Township
John Holman, Springettsbury Township (present until 6:50 p.m.)
Gregory Maust, Spring Garden Township
Andrew Stern, Springettsbury Township

**MEMBERS NOT
IN ATTENDANCE:** Don Bishop, Springettsbury Township
Barry Emig, Spring Garden Township
Dave Meckley, Spring Garden Township

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:** Members of Springettsbury and Spring Garden FC
Keith Prowell, Spring Garden Township FD
Joe Barron, Spring Garden/Victory FC
Rich Mellon, Springettsbury Township FC
Don Eckert, Springettsbury Township Volunteer FC
Bob Astor, Springettsbury Township Volunteer FC
Jean Abreght, Stenographer

A. Call To Order:

HUNT Chairman Hunt called the November meeting of the Joint Fire Services Committee to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance:

HUNT Chairman Hunt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Determination of Voting Quorum:

HOLMAN Mr. Holman reported that a Quorum was present. Voting members were Jon Countess, Ellen Freireich, Austin Hunt, William Schenck, and Zane Sjoberg with William Mader as the alternate.

D. Approval of Meeting Minutes: October 18, 2005

MS. FRIEREICH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 18, 2005 AS PRESENTED. MR. COUNTESS WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

HUNT Chairman Hunt opened the floor for public comment.

E. Public Participation: Comments from the Public

PROWELL Keith Prowell, Spring Garden Township, asked whether the invitation to participate in the subcommittee assignments had been sent in a timely fashion. He stated that he had not received the document until November 9th after he requested it.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that the fact that he had not been notified in a timely manner was a problem.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that he had waited for final approval from the board members to send the emails.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell commented that they will be ready to respond within a week. They do want to participate.

F. Correspondence and Other Communications

- 1. Grant letter to Senator Waugh**
- 2. Copy of Grant Presentation Booklet to Senator Waugh**

HUNT Chairman Hunt noted that copies of the grant letter sent out over Mr. Maust's signature providing an outline and the cover letter for the presentation to Senators Waugh and Armstrong had been provided for the Committee members.

G. Staff Reports

- 1. Grant Application Status**

MAUST Mr. Maust provided an overview of the grant application process. He reported that a letter, which he had authored following the meeting with Senator Waugh, provided a progress report on the fire study. Some guidance had been obtained as to how to proceed with the request for further grant assistance. Closely following that was a second joint meeting with both Senator Waugh and Senator Armstrong, as reflected in the packet of information provided. He indicated that there is a high level of excitement to see the process continue. No formal documentation had been received to date; however, full support is expected.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked about upcoming meetings with local representatives.

MAUST Mr. Maust responded that there are no confirmed meeting dates at this time. However, they plan to contact Representatives Stetler and Gillespie to update them of the progress.

2. Update from Chief Emig and Interim Chief Stern

HUNT Chairman Hunt requested an update on contact with the volunteers concerning the name and patch.

STERN Mr. Stern responded that a special meeting was held with Springettsbury Township Volunteer Fire Company to discuss bylaw changes. During that meeting the patch was discussed. Mr. Stern had not received any negative feedback with respect to the volunteers wanting to be involved in the process.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck echoed Mr. Stern's report and stated that there hadn't been any big criticism or reaction.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked for a report from the Spring Garden companies.

BARRON Joe Barron responded that meetings had been held with both Grantley and Victory where the patch had been presented. They had reviewed the survey from Bob Hedden and responses had been returned to Mr. Hedden.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck asked about the Springettsbury survey response.

STERN Mr. Stern responded that two handwritten surveys had been returned to him and were then forwarded to Mr. Hedden.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether any feedback had been received from Chief Hedden.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that by November 1st Chief Hedden was to begin writing the report with or without input from the volunteers. Mr. Holman stated a follow up will be done through Mr. Fernsler.

H. Old Business:

1. Meeting with the Legislators

This item had been covered earlier during the meeting.

I. New Business:

1. Charter Agreement Subcommittee Reports

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated that he had received some feedback from several of the Committee members. He suggested going through the headings one by one.

Preamble – Mr. Hunt had cleaned up references to firefighters and inserted the term Metro York Fire Rescue where appropriate.

Article I – Definitions; Article II – Purpose; and Article IV – Fire District Boundaries were proofread to be submitted for later review.

Article III – Jurisdiction and Authority – In Mr. Bishop’s absence there was no report.

Article 3-1/2 – Volunteer Fire Companies – Mr. Schenck reported no action with his committee. Mr. Schenck recruited Ms. Freireich, Bob Astor, Joe Barron, Scott Curtis and Don Eckert for assistance.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that trying to define how the volunteer people, assets and spirit fit into the agreement is a daunting task, and he was glad to see it moving forward.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman asked that, as each Chairman puts their committee together, they would provide the list of names, which could then be included into a full list of who will be assisting the chair person.

HUNT Chairman Hunt suggested that he would almost rather send out errant material sooner than accurate material later.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that if errant material is sent out, errant material will come back. He always attempted to make sure material is as accurate as possible.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that he preferred timeliness over accuracy, especially coming into the holiday season.

Article IV – Fire District Boundaries – Mr. Hunt stated this was a political definition of the geographic boundaries of the participating municipalities. Other than some minor typographical errors, he felt it was satisfactory as drafted.

Article V – Regional Fire Commission – Don Bishop – No report.

Article VI – Meetings – Don Bishop – No report.

Article VII – Apportionment Formula – Mr. Hunt reported that he was not sure how to begin with this subject. He had some broad ideas and is working with a formula that would have a rolling average of calls based on municipal locations. The formula would be based on the natural usage

of calls in an area, as opposed to police services where patrol units could be allocated. The concept looked good; however, the details presented problems.

Article IX – Capitalization – Bill Mader reported that on November 8th the representatives from the three fire companies and he met for a lengthy discussion about equipment. One of the facts discussed was that much of the equipment is actually owned by relief associations as well as the fire companies. He believed that state law required that an itemized list of equipment be maintained. He requested that the individuals involved begin to generate an inventory list of the equipment, land, trucks, etc. An update meeting will be held on December 15th with a target completion date during the first week in January. He noted that Scott Curtis had been added as Grantley’s alternate representative. He asked whether the Committee members were clear on the requirements, regulations, controls, etc. of relief associations as it related to this process or would it need a thorough evaluation.

MELLON Rich Mellon stated that, as past treasurer of the relief association for Springettsbury Township Association, he recommended it definitely should be reviewed. There is a lot of equipment that’s owned by both departments and owned by the relief association. The relief association gets its money from the state fire tax, fire maintenance tax. That money is distributed each year to fire departments, covered by a very precise list for its use.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether there is an equally precise list of what had been purchased in the past along with a current inventory.

MELLON Rich Mellon responded that there should be but he was not sure of its location.

MADER Mr. Mader commented that he thought it was audited every three years by the state.

STERN Mr. Stern commented that audits are done sometimes twice in a year. He had provided some information in the Committee’s packets concerning dissolution and mergers. It was his understanding that the relief association should not have much of an effect on a merger other than documentation in each municipality. It is strongly encouraged that the relief associations in each municipality be included to discuss specifics of the merger of the relief associations.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck suggested that there could be some crossover with the Capitalization subcommittee. One of the items Mr. Schenck voiced concern about was the role of the volunteer fire companies. The capitalized items need to stay with the volunteer companies. He stated that the Springettsbury Fire Company members are very well aware of how the relief association works.

An extensive discussion took place regarding the relief associations. A summary of that discussion follows:

- Separate entity, separate boards, not part of the volunteer companies or municipalities; supports the volunteers.
- Governed by state law, the Auditor General and staff.
- Potential model for Metro York Relief Association; or a separate geographic municipal base relief association.
- Need exists for relief associations to be addressed based on past history problems.
- Calculations are derived by the state based on population and real estate market value.
- For a merged fire service, market values and populations would be considered for both municipalities.
- Contact to be made with Spring Township to determine how they handled the issue.
- Not a cut and dry issue based on state regulations.
- State Representatives a good source of help for this issue.

MAUST Mr. Maust stated that he would contact the Spring Township representative.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked that he forward any comments to Mr. Schenck with copies to the Committee.

CURTIS Steve Curtis commented that he would be attending the Spring Garden Township relief meeting and would be able to ask questions.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that if he could ascertain a good working understanding of how the relief association works and whether those responsible would see any problem or limitation with diverting it to a single multi-municipality relief association it would be very helpful.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck noted that he viewed it as a very integral component of where the volunteer fire company is put together ultimately. He would not want to point the relief issue in any direction when it is unsure about the volunteer company's thoughts. If the volunteers want to stay fully independent, nonintegrated, then they will probably want the relief associations to stay separate. He stated that it was a good dialog, but he was not ready to set a direction.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman called attention to a notation of the dissolution of relief association deals with the issue of merger. It doesn't deal with the issue of where additional funds come in but rather what occurs with the equipment should the relief associations merge.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck commented that it would assume again that the volunteer fire companies will cooperate with a merger.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell stated that at one time there had been three volunteer fire companies in Spring Garden Township. He did not know whether there had been three relief associations at that time, but there is one at this time. Researching how that took place could point to a direction.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck commented that two had been merged in Springettsbury. There had been one serving two volunteer fire companies in Springettsbury.

FREIREICH Mrs. Freireich noted that, as a volunteer, she understood what happened to volunteer organizations. She encouraged a complete review to determine what might be necessary to do that would benefit everyone.

HUNT Chairman Hunt summarized the gist of the discussion with two basic parallel paths: legally can it be done, and is everyone involved agreeable to do so.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess added to at least explore the possibility.

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that it referred back to the issues discussed concerning keeping identity but working as a cohesive whole.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman excused himself to attend a meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Committee.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked Mr. Mader whether there was anything additional he wanted to report.

MADER Mr. Mader responded that he wondered whether there should be a definition on Spring Garden and Springettsbury Fire Company relief associations related to capitalization. He added the importance of the subject of legality of the situation and how to make a merger related to relief and the legality happen.

HUNT **Article X – Pensions** - Attorney Countess provided a written report which had been provided to all Committee members and Messrs. Maust and Holman.

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated that Mr. Holman had discussed the subject with the actuary and had provided a written report as well.

Article XI - Fire Department Headquarters – Mr. Sjoberg reported that he had sent an email soliciting feedback. He had a response from Chief Emig, who provided most of what he needed. He was anticipating additional responses/suggestions.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether he had found evidence that there would be a need to define a headquarters.

SJOBERG Mr. Sjoberg responded that, in his opinion, there would be a need for one centrally located place with sufficient office space, storage, computers, etc. He added that Chief Emig suggested that it might be wise to be vague in the charter agreement, as it might make it more difficult later if a centrally located station were to be built.

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that it could be defined as to what it is and not necessarily where it is.

Article XII – Fire Department Record System – Mr. Sjoberg reported that records need to be kept for personnel issues, medical training, payroll, disciplinary files, etc. The main focus would be to have adequate space for storage of such records.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess added that it will be necessary to have an area for public meetings as there will be some public participation.

HUNT **Article XIII – Immunity and Claims** – Chairman Hunt reported that he had reviewed the item. He had reworded some of the text and noted a specific item that immunity should cover the department, as well as the participating municipalities.

Article XIV - Joinder of Additional Municipalities – Chairman Hunt stated that he had not worked on the issue to date.

Article XVII - - Effect of Regionalization on Existing Fire Departments - Mr. Schenck had no report.

XVIII – Amendment and Execution – Chairman Hunt noted that the subject related to signature blocks to be filled in as appropriate.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell reiterated his discouragement that there had been committee meetings and reports written and they had not received timely notice. They recognize capitalization as one of the more important chapters in the matter, and they had no opportunity to participate.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that he was open to any suggestions on how to improve the process.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell stated that he had been instructed to advise the Committee that they won't be "going away."

An additional lengthy discussion was held in an effort to streamline the information flow. A summary of that discussion follows:

- Specific suggestions were solicited.
- Committee meeting notices needed to be emailed to everyone.

- Written reports should be provided.
- Capitalization of a multi-municipal fire department is more than a volunteer situation.
- Firefighters Association is ready and willing to offer assistance to subcommittees.
- Two email lists should be combined.
- Appropriate public information is to be disseminated to the entire email list.
- All subcommittee meetings should be advised to the Township Managers for release to the email list.
- There is no intention to keep anything secret; open dialogue is necessary.
- Anyone who has something to offer should come forward.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess reported that there would not be any actuarial study until the grant is approved, because the funds are not available to pay for that. The actuary submitted a proposal to both townships to do so if and when that happened.

MAUST Mr. Maust added that any services of that nature would need to be brought back to this committee for approval before proceeding.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that, having reviewed all the subcommittees, he intended to use that format each month.

ECKERT Mr. Eckert mentioned an additional element, which was the fire police. There are many things to be considered to make that work as well.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck responded that his intention was that would fall under the role of the volunteers.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess noted that Mr. Eckert had a good point that needed to be addressed as a separate provision.

HUNT Chairman Hunt noted that many times the fire police are requested by the police departments, which is an additional management difficulty.

ECKERT Mr. Eckert indicated that the fire police answer to the police/state police at an accident scene.

HUNT Chairman Hunt noted that during Spring Garden's budget discussions, a stipend was budgeted from the police budget because a trained fire policeman is actually allowing a uniformed police officer to go to another assignment instead of replacing a firefighter. It's an interest subset, but he indicated Mr. Eckert's comments are timely and Mr. Schenck will incorporate that into his subject.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess asked whether they are called to duty by the paid career firefighters, or by the police department.

ECKERT Mr. Eckert responded that County Control dispatches the fire police and they respond to the fire scene. They answer to the captain and the chain of command at the scene. Additionally they go to 35 to 40 active calls where they respond to the police whether state or local. He noted that it will be a pretty large area and there could be simultaneous incidents. They must follow chain of command and so there are a lot of things involved in fire police service, the police department and the fire chain of command.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated he believed the number of participants in Spring Garden's fire police roster is at least as large as the volunteer firefighter roster. He added that Mr. Eckert's points were well taken.

2. Adoption of 2006 Joint Fire Meeting Schedule

HUNT Chairman Hunt called for a motion to adopt the 2006 meeting schedule, in consideration of the fact that there may not be any need to meet following the June/July months in anticipation of a completed project.

MR. COUNTESS MOVED TO ADVERTISE THE 2006 MEETING SCHEDULE FOR ADOPTION. MRS. FREIREICH WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

J. Committee Resolutions

There were none for action.

K. Adjournment

HUNT Chairman Hunt adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Holman
Secretary

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