

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

**MARCH 21, 2006
APPROVED**

Springettsbury and Spring Garden Townships Joint Fire Services Committee convened on Tuesday, March 21, 2006 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
Jon Countess, Spring Garden Township
Holly Gumke, Spring Garden Township
John Holman, Springettsbury Township
Gregory Maust, Spring Garden Township
Barry Emig, Spring Garden Township
Andrew Stern, Springettsbury Township

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:** Members of Springettsbury and Spring Garden Fire Co.
Keith Prowell, Spring Garden Township FD
Scott Curtis, Spring Garden/Grantley FC
Joe Barron, Spring Garden/Victory FC
Rich Mellon, Springettsbury Township FC
Don Eckert, Springettsbury Township Volunteer FC
Bob Astor, Springettsbury Township Volunteer FC
Ken Widdall, Springettsbury Township Volunteer FC
Amanda Amspacher, Springettsbury Township
Jean Abreght, Stenographer

A. Call to Order

HUNT Chairman Austin Hunt called the March meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

HUNT Chairman Hunt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Determination of Voting Quorum

HOLMAN Mr. Holman indicated that a Quorum was present with Messrs. Countess, Hunt, Schenck, and Ms. Gumke constituting a four-member Quorum.

D. Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 17, 2006

HUNT Chairman Hunt reported that a comment had been forwarded to him by Mr. Maust from Zane Sjoberg. He would like his comment to be entered into the record.

MAUST Mr. Maust stated that Mr. Sjoberg's comment reflected on his decision to step down from the committee because of his pursuit of an MBA degree and

in his desire to have Mr. Hunt continue the service on the committee on such an important issue.

The change: "In his desire to have Mr. Hunt continue the service on the committee on such an important issue."

MR. COUNTESS MOVED FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES, AS AMENDED. MS. GUMKE WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

E. Public Participation

SURTASKY Mr. Tony Surtasky, Mt. Zion Road, stated that he had been a member of Station 70 for 35 or more years and serves as President. He encouraged the Committee to be sure to advertise as much as possible all public meetings concerning a potential merger. He added that there is a moral, as well as legal obligation to advise the public.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that the purpose of the committee is to collect data that will be forwarded to the final decision makers which will be the township boards. All the legal obligations for a public meeting have been met. He asked for suggestions on how to further communicate with the public.

SURTASKY Mr. Surtasky suggested additional information in the township newsletter, radio and television.

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated he would see what could be done to generate more public interest.

WIDDALL Mr. Ken Widdall mentioned that he had come to the meeting last month, which had been cancelled. He asked that some sort of notice be provided in advance when meetings are cancelled.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess indicated that a notice should be posted at the door.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that notices had been posted. He added that if a meeting is cancelled, they advise the newspapers. In that case, the meeting is not listed in the weekly edition of meetings to be held.

HUNT Chairman Hunt apologized for the inconvenience to those who might have come to the meeting. He added that the agenda is growing and he doubted that future meetings will be cancelled.

F. Correspondence and Other Communications

MAUST Mr. Maust reported that he had nothing for discussion.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman reported that he had nothing for discussion.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck reported that he met with the volunteers of the Springettsbury Fire Company. His assignment with the volunteers was to determine where they fit into the program. He indicated that there had been good dialog and the outcome was that Springettsbury Volunteer Fire Company had formed a committee to study what role they would play to support the organization if a merger were to occur of the professional departments. There were some serious concerns surrounding the structure, funding streams and certification of fire companies. Mr. Schenck indicated he was very encouraged that they decided to take action, and although it might be late in the process, it is not too late. The input of the volunteers is vital. There was additional discussion that at some point Springettsbury and Spring Garden volunteers should come together; however, there are enough of their own issues to resolve first.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether it would be appropriate to create several other similar company specific committees.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck commented that the volunteers are very interested. He advised the volunteers that a subcommittee should not wait for him to have their meetings; however, he would support their efforts.

ECKERT Mr. Don Eckert, President of Springettsbury Township Volunteer Fire Company stated that the committee which had been formed will address some of the issues that are unique to their Volunteer Fire Company. They made contact with the other two fire companies in Spring Garden to determine whether they want to participate in one joint committee of volunteers. However, Springettsbury wanted to hold at least two meetings to get some issues resolved before having a joint meeting.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck commented that the volunteer companies are structured very differently and Springettsbury needed to work through their issues. He suggested that perhaps Spring Garden could take a similar path.

MADER Mr. Mader stated that he had been involved in meetings with Grantley, Victory and the Spring Garden Relief Association regarding the inventory submission. He indicated that communication seemed to be a big problem. Mr. Mader did not think it should be so difficult because of the structures in place. He and Scott Curtis had attempted to clear up many of the communication issues. He indicated that a committee might be a step forward in the right direction.

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated that it would be ideal to have a volunteer structure to present to the townships in a draft charter agreement.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck asked whether the two Spring Garden companies should meet separately.

- MADER** Mr. Mader stated that Joe Barron and Scott Curtis could deal with that issue.
- BARRON** Mr. Barron responded that he would like to discuss it with Don Eckert to determine the direction and problems and attempt to go forward in a similar way.
- SCHENCK** Mr. Schenck commented that his understanding of the direction Springettsbury planned to take was to define a what-if scenario, i.e., a free-thinking exercise to determine the role of the STVFC and include the issues to be sure to address, as well as how the volunteers fit into the new organization.
- ECKERT** Mr. Eckert responded that he was correct but added another point which is unique to Springettsbury and ultimately will be unique to the individual two companies in Spring Garden is that five years ago Springetts Fire Company and Commonwealth were merged into one. The assets have changed to one fire company, and the ownership of buildings and equipment, with the exception of one piece, is owned by the volunteer company. There may be some confusion as to how that will work together with Metro. The volunteers manage and maintain the facilities, grounds, utilities and upkeep, and from a management and administrative end the equipment is their responsibility. In addition, the fire police and firefighters are provided through the volunteer organization.
- HUNT** Chairman Hunt agreed that it is a very complex matter, which must be viewed from a central, as well as from a detailed level and merging the two.
- WIDDALL** Mr. Widdall stated that he had been active on a number of committees in Springettsbury Township. He had obtained and read the entire draft charter and had developed a number of questions, comments and recommendations. He was not sure whether the draft he had read was the current draft.
- SCHENCK** Mr. Schenck noted that the draft charter agreement is a working document continuously being refined. Some of the studies had not been completed. Any of Mr. Widdall's questions or comments will be still relative to the draft, which is not a final document.
- WIDDALL** Mr. Widdall asked whether the volunteers will have an opportunity for review prior to any official action.
- HUNT** Chairman Hunt responded that would absolutely be the case. However, there had been no substantive changes since the version that Mr. Widdall had read. He indicated there would be refinements before the committee presents the draft charter to the township boards, which are the ultimate decision makers. It is possible that that township boards will make changes

or not accept it as is. The committee will present the best document possible.

WIDDALL Mr. Widdall stated that he looked forward to reviewing the next document.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that he would like to review Mr. Widdall's comments.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck stated that he has a copy of the comments and will provide them to the committee.

ECKERT Mr. Eckert added that Mr. Widdall is on the volunteer committee.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked Joe Barron and Scott Curtis for their further thoughts on the next step for the Spring Garden volunteer companies.

BARRON Mr. Barron responded that he had discussed it with the volunteers and asked for thoughts and ideas.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that now is the best time to get their thoughts into the charter agreement.

HUNT Manager Holman had to leave (6:30 p.m.) promptly for personal reasons.

MADER Mr. Mader reported that he had received a fairly accurate inventory effective 12/31/05 from both Spring Garden and Springettsbury. He planned to reformat the file into one which would allow the entire inventory to be mixed, merged and sorted as required. He commented that there are 1,473 line items. He indicated that it encompassed everything except Spring Garden's actual ownership of trucks and some equipment.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked how he visualized the information being used.

MADER Mr. Mader indicated that an audit will have to be done of the entire inventory, which had been compiled very extensively with descriptions, some with dates of purchase and age, ownership of equipment.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess noted that the compilation of that inventory was fantastic.

HUNT Chairman Hunt suggested that as soon as Mr. Mader was able to reformat his file to his satisfaction, he should forward it to the township managers. He asked whether it would be available before the next meeting for final review.

MADER Mr. Mader responded that he thought it could be done.

ASTOR Mr. Bob Astor reported that he had met with Mr. Mader on several of the inventory items. Some of the inventory belongs to the Relief Associations,

which he thought would encompass about 1,000 items. The Relief Associations' equipment and funds of those organizations is something that this committee has not even ventured into yet.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that Mr. Astor was correct. He asked how the items on Mr. Mader's current list and the Relief items could be separated.

MADER Mr. Mader stated that he has the items separated. He indicated that was part of what he was attempting to do because there are trucks owned by Spring Garden, and Springettsbury has one truck that is jointly owned, and the fire companies own the rest.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck added that the bulk of the items are owned by the Relief Association in Springettsbury. The township owns very few of those assets. One of the items that was discussed in the Springettsbury volunteer meeting was how to handle items like firefighting equipment, which is there to serve the public.

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated he would be very anxious to receive the report as soon as Mr. Mader could provide it.

SURTASKY Mr. Surtasky asked what the status is regarding to the fire police, which is a part of the fire company.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck responded that very early what the fire service is had been defined within the draft charter agreement.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess added that there was no agreement or decision; it was vague and intended to be left open for discussion and recommendations.

ECKERT Mr. Eckert stated that would be part of their committee to address.

HUNT Chairman Hunt thanked everyone for their comments and indicated that their opinions are important.

G. Staff Reports:

1. Grant Application Status

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked for an overview of the grant application status.

MAUST Mr. Maust reported that he had contacted Senator Waugh's office but was not able to get any further information. He expects an update at next week. The first application that was submitted is being process at DCED. Mr. Fernsler indicated that the application is on course. He added that there is good support from both Senators Waugh and Armstrong.

2. Update from Staff – Economic Review

MAUST Mr. Maust stated that, even though Mr. Holman had to leave, an economic overview had been prepared. He reported that within the past month he, Mr. Holman, Chief Emig and Andrew Stern had been preparing information from individual budgets, historical data, and the best assessment of what might transpire over the next few years. A lot of refinement is yet to be done; however, the attempt was made to compare apples-to-apples.

STERN Mr. Stern provided the PowerPoint presentation. He stated that, as Mr. Maust said, there were two assumptions. First, the comparison of apples-to-apples between Springettsbury and Spring Garden and second, the assumption was that the manpower would remain the same. Information was obtained directly from the township budget books. A summary of his presentation is listed:

- Reimbursement of volunteers – captured as an expense especially with utilities.
- Uniforms/turnout gear combined for each township
- Salaries – Springettsbury’s Contract in effect until 2009; Spring Garden Contract - 2006 to 2007.
- Total Budgeted Amounts for each year 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 indicate percentages for Total Amounts Spent in Springettsbury at 54% and in Spring Garden at 45%.
- Blue numbers on the chart indicated a total of both townships.
- Population-per capita cost: Springettsbury spends about \$77.54/resident; Spring Garden spends about \$129/resident.
- Percentage of total assessment value: Springettsbury, approximately .09%; Spring Garden, .17%.
- Percentage of municipal budget: Springettsbury 17.08%; Spring Garden 24.43%.
- Census data used was taken from 2000 population.
- Spring Garden has two paid volunteer chiefs; Springettsbury has no volunteer chiefs.
- Merged department budget for 2006 through 2009 indicated addition of one administrative person added to current staff.
- Training remained same; savings might be realized with supplies, communications, firehouse software contract services.
- Repair and maintenance need further review; some anticipated drop in maintenance due to replacement of old equipment and elimination of some reserved pieces.
- Pensions do not reflect any in-depth analysis from an actuarial standpoint; needs further adjustment.
- Workers Comp insurance needed more refinement on the numbers.
- Health insurances are similar with different brokers.
- Contractual items including pensions, etc. were assumed to remain consistent with current contracts.
- Union and management will begin meeting as a group for discussions.

- Labor attorney contacted for written opinion in order not to violate any contract issues.
- Capital items excluding fire stations; combined resources of apparatus
- Cost of apparatus assumed 4% increase in cost each year with 15-year replacement.
- Command vehicles realistic life was 10 years.
- Municipal budgets will have to contribute to apparatus purchases rather than rely upon volunteer organizations.
- Biggest savings will come in reassessing the capital equipment needs.
- Combined cost of replacement based on the model is nearly \$5.3 million.
- Consideration of call volume to be given for replacement engines; older units go into reserve.
- Purchase of equipment based on joint needs totals about \$1.6 million from now to 2019.

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that there is a \$120,000 a year savings each year with a 15-year cycle.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell noted that the savings could be greater simply because items will wear out more quickly.

HUNT Chairman Hunt noted that Mr. Stern was instructed to be conservative. The analysis does not include any trade-in value or outside grants, etc.

STERN Mr. Stern commented that by delaying replacement a year or two, the costs will be higher. Earlier replacement will result in lower costs.

WIDDALL Mr. Widdall noted his concern with the effectiveness of fire service, prevention, and so forth relative to this new hardware situation. He asked whether the level of effectiveness of the fire company will be improved, remain the same or suffer.

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that with the combined department, there is more opportunity to specialize for rescue vehicles and less need for duplicative large equipment such as aerials. One aerial can serve a relatively large geographic area. Money could be better spent on several smaller rescue vehicles to handle the large volume of automotive calls.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell noted that the effectiveness would increase because of the consolidation of services.

MAUST Mr. Maust stated that this is a work in progress. The facilities had not been touched and must be considered before any conclusions are reached.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess complimented Chief Emig and Chief Stern for their work that went into that information, a volume of work that took a lot of time.

Chairman Hunt noted that there had been a huge number of small decisions that they had to make to get to this point. It is a realistic picture of what could happen.

H. Old Business:

1. Dean Fernsler – Update of DCED Peer Consultant Study

HUNT Chairman Hunt introduced Dean Fernsler, DCED, to provide an update on the peer consultant study, referred to as the Hedden report.

FERNSLER Mr. Fernsler provided an update regarding the Hedden study. He reported that a draft had been prepared, and he expected a final report to be provided to the Committee for the April meeting. There are some refinements being made. It is hoped that the report will provide a platform for further discussion within the committee and provide some validation for some of the assumptions to date. It is a third-party review. There may be some elements that will be somewhat controversial by design. It was meant to be so primarily to generate more thinking with respect to certain positions to be taken by the committee and making recommendations to the various boards. Mr. Fernsler noted that there were some elements that could not be addressed in this particular report simply because of limited resources. DCED will provide additional support to give some finality, which will prove valuable to the committee as well. Mr. Fernsler stated that the importance of the service itself rises to the top, and the more time spent on the project, the more debate and very good generalized discussion with respect to those recommendations, the better.

GUMKE Ms. Gumke asked whether his office regularly review proposals of a similar nature.

FERNSLER Mr. Fernsler responded that DCED had done many similar projects; however, this one was very different because of the size, and because of the need to address the paid and the volunteer personnel. The combination department is complex by itself. Mr. Fernsler added that nothing like this had ever been done in Pennsylvania. It is a groundbreaking effort.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess asked whether he was aware of any other similar projects anywhere in the state today.

FERNSLER Mr. Fernsler responded that he could attest to other projects; however, they involve all-volunteer companies, which is a very different situation. Springettsbury and Spring Garden has a very active volunteer and critical component, which deserves not to be left out of the discussion. The Hedden Report does address that component, and it is hoped that the information can be useful to bring recommendations to the elected officials.

HUNT Chairman Hunt thanked him and indicated that they look forward to seeing the report. He requested the Managers to draft a letter of thanks to Chief Hedden for his efforts. There were some topics that Chief Hedden did not have personal experience to address. With Mr. Fernsler's help, the scope of services has been slightly restructured in another proposal to submit to DCED.

I. New Business

1. Grant Application under DCED Municipal Service Program for Economic Review of Joint Fire Service

MAUST Mr. Maust stated that the initial scope of services had been put together two years ago at which time Mr. Fernsler was asked for assistance. At that time, no one involved could have determined whether or not the full scope of services could have been accomplished. At the current time there is a component that requires a more detailed analysis. The economic review that was presented by Mr. Stern was the beginning of that analysis. DCED has offered to assist in getting the additional level of detail needed for the Committee to present to the municipal bodies. This additional detail would provide a projection of annual operating budgets and transitional costs, along with a further refinement of capital equipment, apparatus and facilities costs, GIS information as to where stations should be strategically located to best serve the merged area and keep the level of service. In addition, it should be broken down into short, medium and long-range costs. With DCED and Mr. Fernsler's assistance, there are firms which provide this type of expertise. A suggested range of cost could be from \$50,000 to \$60,000. An application could be submitted with the scope, and when it is determined what costs would be covered in full or shared, further endorsement would be needed. In addition, the grant application will be helpful, should it be received.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked what Mr. Maust needed from the Committee at this point.

MAUST Mr. Maust asked for a Committee action to grant the authority to proceed with the grant application.

MR. COUNTESS MOVED TO GRANT AUTHORITY TO PROCEED WITH THE GRANT APPLICATION. MS. GUMKE WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

WIDDALL Mr. Widdall asked for clarification that this would be a short-term, intermediate-term and long range proforma study.

MAUST Mr. Maust responded that he was correct and that the request would be that it be broken down into a plan including income, expenditures and capital on a short-term basis; one to three years.

- HUNT** Chairman Hunt stated that he was excited about the progress made.
- SCHENCK** Mr. Schenck commented that the action taken indicated that this study will take approximately six months. Our charter was to have the deliverable in June, and as a result, that will not be met.
- MAUST** Mr. Maust indicated that they will need some additional time.
- SCHENCK** Mr. Schenck noted that there may be some months where the Committee will be in a hold pattern. The summer months may end up being a nonmeeting event. He just wanted to be sure to recognize that the Committee signed up for more time.
- MAUST** Mr. Maust noted that one of the items in the scope will require monthly updates.
- HUNT** Chairman Hunt commented that Committee members may want an opportunity to graciously bow out at the end of their perceived commitment.
- COUNTESS** Mr. Countess questioned whether the Committee was appointed for a specific term.
- HUNT** Chairman Hunt added that the appointment may have been a specific task.
- MAUST** Mr. Maust indicated that he thought the action taken did not define a term.
- SURTASKY** Mr. Surtasky noted that during 1991 Springettsbury Township had a PEL study done. He asked whether any of the Committee members had referred to it.
- HUNT** Chairman Hunt responded that he knew of its existence; however, he had not read every word of it.
- SURTASKY** Mr. Surtasky encouraged the Committee members to review it because it includes interesting facts that might reduce some of the decisions.
- SCHENCK** Mr. Schenck commented for information that Springettsbury Township commissioned a study of the fire service back in '90, '91 timeframe through the Pennsylvania Economy League. The Township enacted a few of the recommendations, but not all of them.

J. Committee Resolutions

There were none for discussion.

K. Adjournment

HUNT Chairman Hunt adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Holman
Secretary

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