

**SPRINGETTSBURY TOWNSHIP
JOINT FIRE SERVICES AD HOC COMMITTEE**

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2005
APPROVED**

Springettsbury Township and Spring Garden Township Joint Fire Services Committee convened at 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday, September 20, 2005 at the Springettsbury Township Office located at 1501 Mt. Zion Road, York, PA for the purpose of further joint fire services discussion.

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
John Holman, Springettsbury Township
Gregory Maust, Spring Garden Township
Andrew Stern, Springettsbury Township
Barry Emig, Spring Garden Township

**MEMBERS NOT
IN ATTENDANCE:** Don Bishop, Springettsbury Township
Todd Langheine, Spring Garden Township
David Meckley, Spring Garden Township

**ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:** Members of Springettsbury and Spring Garden FC
Keith Prowell, Spring Garden Township FD
Rich Mellon, Springettsbury Township FD
Jean Abreght, Stenographer

A. Call to Order

HUNT Chairman Hunt called the 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 reported that a Quorum was established with the following voting members: Mr. Countess, Mrs. Freireich, Chairman Hunt, Vice Chairman Schenck and Mr. Sjoberg. Mr. Mader attended as an alternate.

D. Approval of Meeting Minutes: August 16, 2005

JON COUNTESS MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 16, 2005 MEETING MINUTES. MRS. FREIREICH SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED.

E. Public Participation: Comments from the Public

There were no public comments.

F. Guest Presentation

1. Chief Gross, York Area Regional Police Department

HUNT Chairman Hunt introduced Chief Tom Gross of the York Area Regional Police Department, who was the leading professional person involved in its organization. Chairman Hunt stated that he was certain Chief Gross would provide some valuable insight in the regionalization of his department.

GROSS: Chief Gross reported that he currently serves as Chief of the York Area Regional Police Department, and prior to that was Chief of the York Township Police Department, as well as Acting Chief of York City Police Department. In addition he had been active and serves as President of the State Regional Police Chief's organization. A summary of his presentation follows:

Overview:

- York County – 5 regional police departments; 35 in Pennsylvania.
- York Area Regional PD initiated in January 2000
- Charter Agreement was key guiding document, enacted by York/Windsor Townships in December, 1999. Regional Commission met in January 2000; York Area Regional PD operational six months later. York and Windsor Township departments disbanded.
- Imperative to the quick establishment was through action and commitment by Township Managers and Commissioners to adopt Agreement, establish budget, elect officers.
- Charter Agreement bound two municipalities together for 10 year commitment. Provisions in place to opt out with one-year notice.
- Commission created deadline dates and stuck to them.
- Boroughs included were Felton, Windsor, Yoe, Jacobus and Dallastown.
- North Hopewell added in 2001.

Board of Commissioners as Oversight:

- Consists of one supervisor from Windsor, York, and a third as Citizen-At-Large
- Citizen-At-Large appointed alternatively by each township each year and must be voting resident within jurisdiction.
- Chairman voted every year; has alternated between townships. Additional officials are Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chairman, along with three alternates available.
- Seat 6 at the table, 3 voting members and 3 alternates during board meetings.

Civil Service Commission - Regional Force is Civil Service.

- Charter Agreement refers back to First Class Township Code and provides guidance with disciplinary matters, grievance situations, dismissals

School Resource Officer:

- Two grants awarded to Red Lion Junior High School and Dallastown.
- Provided a number of units of police service, very successful program.

Allocation of Unit Cost Measurement:

- Service is provided on units/hours of service.

- Police protection unit equals 10 hours of service per week.
- Smallest municipality gets 5 hours of service per week.
- Largest municipality gets 920 hours of service per week.
- Units determined by each municipality based on affordability and/or need.
- Each officer provides 40 hours a week available minus vacation, sick leave, training, supervisory duties.
- Each officer tracks daily time log sheet in 15-minute increments.
- Data computed weekly and adjustments can be made for future units.
- Training time attributed or spread over all municipalities.
- Administrative costs are on simple percentage basis.
- Process is similar to basic manufacturing process control system.
- Quick response time attributed to officers stationed around jurisdiction.
- At year-end if units are deficient or over-used, officers will continue to provide service, which will be assessed at the Board of Commissioner level.

Employees and Regional Police Contract:

- The officials involved were very sensitive to not harming or enhancing any employees' salary and benefits.
- Contract negotiations were held and the services of the solicitors were heavily used for those negotiations.
- The majority of employees wanted the regionalization to take place; however, not 100% of the employees were committed.
- Contracts were subrogated from each Township/Borough into Regional Police Commission.
- Officers brought in were requested to pass entry-level Civil Service requirements.
- Contract negotiations – 110 day process.
- Consolidated two bargaining agreements.
- York Area Regional Police Commission bargained with an association.
- Red Lion Borough joined as a contracted member for police services in 2003. Four of six Red Lion officers were hired and were required to meet minimum entry requirements at their existing salary with their pension time.

Officer Rank:

- State grant required a selective process for Chief's position.
- Individuals came in as patrol officer with no reduction in salary.

Consolidation of Two Types of Pension Plans:

- Plan issues were solved by providing signing bonuses paid to specific employees.
- Moving the money into the pension plan took nearly a year and a half.
- Everyone within the YARPD belongs to the same pension plan.
- Everyone came in with their years of service and retires under that single plan.
- A civilian pension plan was created for non-sworn employees.

Assets, Inventory and Assessment of Equipment:

- North Hopewell Township brought assets, which were assigned value and purchased if needed.
- Extensive inventory compiled.
- Difficult process to establish standardized value of the items.

- Auctioneer used to assist in establishing value.
- Suggest having experts in both departments provide that ahead of time.
- Fire service assets are a large issue with buildings and expensive trucks.
- Not all fire assets are Township owned; some are Volunteer Fire Co. assets.
- Each individual Township sold assets to the YARP Commission for \$1.00.
- Assets carried in the audits with initial value.
- It was a bookkeeping exercise, no money exchanged hands.

Facility Needs:

- Hired an architect and did some short-term remodeling.
- Leased three trailers for two years; kept them for 4-1/2.
- Department legally owns and insures properties by Authority of Inter-Governmental Act.

Uniforms:

- Solicited logo design on the cars, patches, badges; had to buy all new badges and cost that out.
- Received a large DCED Shared Municipal Services Grant which included prices of badges, uniforms, firearm standardization, radio equipment, etc.

Records:

- Consolidated and obtained new numbers for Police records, crime reports, FBI requirements.

Fiscal/Accounting:

- Created an entire new accounting/financial management system.
- Management done within the department, i.e., manage money, receive funds, do payroll, manage fringe benefits.
- Created new position as administrative assistant to Chief with non-sworn individual to handle paperwork.
- Townships each contributed to start up fund for legal expenses, equipment and software purchases.
- Utilized York Township for some administration of life insurances with expiration dates, etc., car maintenance, gasoline purchases, snow removal.
- Work done charged on an hourly basis and billed to YARPD.
- Funding received from townships bi-monthly; contracted municipalities are quarterly.

Accountability of Officers:

- To the citizens and to respective Township Boards.
- No need to attend every municipality's Board meetings unless requested.
- Keep Township Boards informed.
- Hold monthly meetings of the department and provide minutes to municipalities as well as on the website.
- Website includes entire complaint process, as well as annual report.

Budget Process:

- Official Preliminary Draft Budget Done in August
- Provides expected unit cost for 2006.

- Commission has opportunity to comment on issues or change numbers. Usually changes are made with a year's notice in advance.
- Commission submits estimated cost per unit, so municipalities are driving head count.
- Long term contracts.
- Incentive to keep costs down comes from Commission.
- Costs are expected to rise about 2-1/2% for 2006.
- Five Year Plan is provided to municipalities to provide for population growth, etc.

FREIREICH Mrs. Freireich noted that much of what Chief Gross went through was careful planning and moving very judiciously. She was fascinated that a Commission was created and six months later was up and running.

GROSS Chief Gross responded it was probably the most nervous six months of his life.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked Chief Gross what his job description was during the six months of formation of the department.

GROSS Chief Gross responded that he was York Township Chief. He had not been compensated nor assigned anything else other than York Township Chief. Although it was never written or articulated, there was no doubt in his mind that he was the lead person on the project. His administrative assistant had been a tremendous help. The push by the Commissioners to begin in January and be operational in July was the impetus to getting a quick start.

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck asked how long after the Commission was established did the work continue.

GROSS Chief Gross responded that it had been about 5 months. However, he added that there was 18 months of work previously done by Spring Garden Township and York Township. There was a Charter Agreement already written, which just needed to have some words changed and so forth.

HUNT There was also a functional regional police department 8 months away.

GROSS Chief Gross agreed that the short turnaround is not reflective of a normal situation because of the fact that it had been studied so much previous to that with Spring Garden Township. A lot of that groundwork was already accomplished, even the legal work.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked Chief Gross for his opinion/thoughts/insight as to how volunteers could be drawn in and involved in the process, providing them a seat of approval.

GROSS Chief Gross responded that they had tried to include all of the employees and keep them informed. He reiterated the unwritten rule that they had concerning not harming anyone as important and helpful.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that Chief Gross had provided a lot of good information, and the Committee appreciated his thoughts. He thanked him for his presentation

G. Correspondence and Other Communications

1. Draft Charter Agreement

HUNT Chairman Hunt introduced the Draft Charter Agreement and asked everyone on the Committee to thoroughly read through it and annotate it with their thoughts. A paper copy was provided in their packet; however, it will be distributed electronically. His goal for next month is to appoint a Chairperson of a subcommittee for each of the articles and the Chairperson will be a member of the Committee. He asked each Committee member to be thinking about their interests and personal skills to add to the subcommittees. This will be one of the first items for next month.

2. Preliminary Draft Grant Application

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that the preliminary draft application is exactly what it says. He requested more detail from the professionals who submitted it to break it down further to meet the draft requirements. The draft application was provided for the Committee to read through and advise him if they have any comments or concerns via email. He anticipated having it ready for submittal shortly.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked what the next step would be.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that it would be submitted through Spring Garden Township. It will be going through both Boards based upon this Committee's recommendation. He wanted to provide the draft for review. He would prefer not to provide the application electronically.

H. Staff Reports

1. Grant Application Status

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether this was the only pending grant.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that it was, at this particular time.

2. Updates from the Chiefs

EMIG Chief Emig reported that their assignment to provide the name, patch logo and so forth will be listed on the October Agenda.

I. Old Business

1. Draft Time-Line for Completion of Joint Fire Study Presenters, Commissioner Hunt & Supervisor Schenck

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that the Committee is still moving forward on the Draft Time-Line submitted last month.

2 Meeting with Legislators

MAUST Mr. Maust reported that during the August meeting, a discussion had been held concerning revisiting some of the legislators and providing an update. It had been over a year since the last discussion. They were successful in scheduling an appointment for October 11 with Senator Waugh. At the discretion of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the attendees would consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, two Managers. There is a need to do some planning so that a well developed presentation can be made as to the status, what has been learned, and where it would be advantageous to having support provided through the Senator's office.

COUNTESS Mr. Countess commented that he assumed the goal would be to gain support from each of the legislators.

MAUST Mr. Maust responded that the support was extended from the beginning, and DCED continued to provide that encouragement. He believed it to be a good point in time to provide a clear understanding of where this Committee is going.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that there are no specific questions to ask yet; however, it is important to keep them up to date.

MAUST Mr. Maust suggested that it would be beneficial, if those on the Committee have specific thoughts or concerns, to email them to Mr. Holman or him so that they can develop an agenda.

J. New Business:

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that the items listed under New Business would be held until the next meeting.

MADER Mr. Mader asked Chief Gross what would be done based on unit definition with mutual aid situations, like Spring Garden, York City as the fire department would be involved with it.

GROSS Chief Gross responded that it would be administrative time. The officers are involved in that and it essentially would be administrative time. Officers also participate as some of the departments do with things like the county and quick response teams or forensic teams.

Volunteer Fire Company Participants

SCHENCK Mr. Schenck asked whether the Volunteer Fire Companies were represented. Several members were acknowledged. Mr. Schenck thanked them for coming and added that their attendance was very much appreciated. He stated that they are a critical component and asked them to encourage others to attend. The Committee realizes that the volunteers bring a lot to the table and they are eager to have them here at the meetings. It involves career, volunteers and now is the time to express their opinions. The greatest impact will be now while the plan is being developed.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell stated that he reports back to his organization. He commented that it was obvious the plan is proceeding before a report is received back from Chief Hedden. It seemed that the intent is to form the governing body first and tackle the operational issues from that venue.

HUNT Chairman Hunt responded that there are several possibilities. The most likely possibility is this Committee will think it's a good idea and Chief Hedden will think it's a good idea and both will endorse the idea to the respective Boards. That's most likely but it is possible that Chief Hedden will come back and say don't do anything, and it's possible that this Committee will come back and say leave it the way it is as municipal fire services and any combination of those. Extending that forward, it's also possible that the Township Boards will move forward when everybody says it's not a good idea. Chairman Hunt added that he thought it would be time foolish for this Committee to sit and wait to see what Chief Hedden decides.

PROWELL Mr. Prowell stated that a conscious decision had been made to move forward.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that they had made a conscious decision to move in parallel accepting the risk that they may come to different conclusions. Chief Hedden is working on a slightly different set of questions than the Committee, and they are, for the most part, exclusive.

HOLMAN Chief Hedden has not commented on the governing body of this organization. What the committee is dealing with now is putting together the governing body of the organization, whether or not it goes together. The Commission would be ready to go at least by June. Chief Hedden is conducting his detailed review of facilities and will recommend whether or not a joint services does or does not make sense. This body needs to work on the Charter Agreement.

HUNT Chairman Hunt commented that the Committee is moving in parallel with Chief Hedden. It is possible that different conclusions may be reached – unlikely but possible.

J. Adjournment

HUNT Chairman Hunt thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Holman
Secretary

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