

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

**JUNE 21, 2005
APPROVED**

Springettsbury Township and Spring Garden Township Joint Fire Services Committee convened at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 21, 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
Zane Sjoberg, Spring Garden Township
Don Bishop, Springettsbury Township
William Mader, Spring Garden Township
Ellen Freireich, Springettsbury Township
John Holman, Springettsbury Township
Gregory Maust, Spring Garden Township
Andrew Stern, Springettsbury Township
Barry Emig, Spring Garden Township

**MEMBERS NOT
IN ATTENDANCE:** Bill Schenck, Springettsbury Township
Todd Langheine, Springettsbury Township
Thomas Englerth, Spring Garden Township
David Meckley, Spring Garden Township
Jon Countess, Spring Garden Township

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:
Members of Springettsbury and Spring Garden Fire Companies
Tony Surtasky, Joe Barron, George Mount
Kristi Reese, Springettsbury Township
Jean Abreght, Stenographer

A. Call to Order:

HUNT Chairman Hunt called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

HUNT Chairman Hunt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Determination of Voting Quorum

HOLMAN Mr. Holman noted that a Quorum was present with the following voting members: Mr. Hunt, Mr. Bishop-Alternate for Mr. Schenck, Mr. Sjoberg, Mr. Mader- Alternate for Mr. Countess, and Mrs. Freireich.

D. Approval of Meeting Minutes: April 19, 2005

MRS. FREIREICH MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 19, 2005 AS AMENDED. MR. BISHOP WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

1. Motion to include May 17, 2005 informational session notes.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman suggested that the May 17th documentation be submitted as informational session notes to be placed on the website.

E. Public Participation: Comments from the Public

There were no public comments.

HUNT Chairman Hunt mentioned an email received containing the packet from the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, 195 pages, which could be read online.

F. Staff Presentations:

1. Service Board Options

HUNT Chairman Hunt reiterated the basic mission statement: To assess the feasibility of creating a regionalized fire service. He asked the Board members, based on what they had seen to date, whether it made sense to pursue the possibility of a regional fire effort.

MADER Mr. Mader responded that he thought it made absolute sense, so much could be gained especially related to providing the emergency service consistent with rescue and fire protection.

BISHOP Mr. Bishop stated that he had not seen anything that would lead him to believe any reason for it not to work.

SJOBERG Mr. Sjoberg echoed Mr. Bishop's comment. He thought, at this point, it made sense to him and there was no reason to not go further.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated his agreement to proceed ahead.

FREIREICH Ms. Freireich stated that, even though she had not attended other meetings, from what she had read, it was something that needed to be carefully pursued.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that a review would take place of a possible control structure of the actual entity and how that would be maintained. There are options which make sense for two municipalities and for other municipalities to join. Some options make sense but legislatively may be difficult to enact.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that during the previous meetings there had been presentations from the bargaining units, volunteers, captains, chiefs, and

site visits. Information had been distributed including the contracts and a sample of a joint service. Staff requested direction from the board in order to begin developing a draft proposal for a joint service.

MAUST Mr. Maust reported that Mr. Heddon is working on the technical aspects. Reports and updates will be received including his assessment of the collective resources, strengths and weaknesses. In the meantime, Mr. Maust indicated that the two municipalities will review organizational structures. Staff provided a PowerPoint presentation, the details of which were provided and will become a part of these minutes. Mr. Maust provided commentary on the four different options:

- Council of Governments
- Joint Service with a Lead Agency
- Authority
- Fire District.

He noted that to the best of his knowledge there is only one COG, which had provided Regional Fire Services with three townships in the State College area, Pennsylvania.

Discussion was held concerning a COG, Council of Governments with the following comments:

- Generally involves more than two entities.
- Employees – Could have employees or not as agreed upon.
- A Joint Purchasing COG provides resources for purchasing power
- Hellam Township used the UCC with third party resource for inspectors.
- COG entities are created, used as needed and exist until dismantled.
- COG signature authority is rotated yearly; costs shared.

MAUST Mr. Maust continued with the second option, a Joint Service with Lead Agency. This option would begin with two governments that would utilize an emergency services board and oversee the service on a day-to-day basis.

Some of the discussion points follow:

- More flexibility in allowing other structures.
- Utilize entity structure in place, share responsibilities and pull resources from both; no need to re-create or re-form the government structure.
- Appointed board is vested with authorities and responsibilities
- DCED indicates this to be the most efficient and allows for future growth.

MAUST Mr. Maust presented the Authority option, which DCED indicated operates under the municipal authorities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Some highlights of the discussion follow:

- Operate similarly to water or sewer authorities.
- Set up their own fee structures and do their own billing and collection.
- Some are leased back to local municipality.
- An inter-municipal fire service cost would continue to come back on the taxing authority.
- Expansion of this concept into emergency services has not been done to date.
- No legislative authority to assess a fee for emergency service; grants are an option.
- Fire authority would bill township and be assessed as a real estate tax.
- Fee schedule might be established for residential and commercial.

Further legal and legislative study needed.

MAUST Mr. Maust provided the fourth option, a Fire District, which is currently not an option in the Commonwealth or Pennsylvania. He asked Mr. Holman to elaborate as it was a concept relative to separate districts especially in New Jersey.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman explained that west of the Mississippi and in New Jersey the concept operated like a school district. There is a governing authority. The Fire Districts have different regional boundaries. It would in this case be Spring Garden and Springettsbury and a tax would be assessed separately from each municipality to collect, not to the municipalities, but to the property owners. On a potential tax bill there would be county, school, municipality, and fire district. It would require difficult legislative changes in Pennsylvania law but could be a viable option. He reported there are approximately 140 fire districts in New Jersey. It is called a Joint Meeting where a board is set up and that board operates like a Joint Service with a Lead Agency. The responsibility is shared and that board makes decisions on hiring, etc. The Joint Meeting has authority to hire people. The fire districts are usually combinations between volunteer and paid with the same volunteer problems. The rural districts have more volunteers. In the urban district it's more of the paid. It follows the same motion. New Jersey has the same number of municipalities percentage wise as Pennsylvania; however, it has a lot more school districts, fire districts, and trash districts. It is a different world as a state as opposed to Commonwealth.

MAUST Mr. Maust noted that this option basically breaks new ground for what is available to date in Pennsylvania.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman summarized that the four options had been presented. He asked for the Board's comments on the options.

HUNT Mr. Hunt summarized the four options. He noted that it appeared the Joint Service with Lead Agency might move all of the administrative functions, payroll, desks, lighting, etc to one existing municipality. Pluses would include use of existing space and existing letterhead, etc. The risk might be that one township would lose its identity.

Additional Discussion produced the following comments:

- Continue to apply for federal and state grant money opportunities.
- On-going dialog with DCED provides shared municipal approach recognition.
- If an Authority were created, there might not be a specific municipality fire service.
- Revenue stream must be carefully legislated.
- Mr. Heddon to provide information but ongoing financial review is taking place within each municipality.
- Neither group should lose identity or feel second place within the organization.
- Impact on the Volunteer Fire Company; more impact on paid firemen and financing.
- Searching for a better way to provide public safety with flexibility for growth.
- Each municipality could contract for certain services, i.e., payroll or purchasing, etc.
- Joint service approach with agreement for shared responsibilities using existing structure.
- Evaluate structure in six months; move on with location of firehouses, men, training, etc.
- Costs would become available within six months.
- Board will make recommendations on its authority setting up framework and goals.
- Board eventually puts itself out of business and turns responsibility over to new board.
- New board would have certain authorities as recommended. Each governing body would accept or not accept the recommendation.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that the staff was looking for direction.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that it appeared the Joint Service with Lead Agency was not quite right; Joint Meeting was not quite right, but the left-hand block (Interim Joint Service with Lead Agency) is the most scalable because most of the administrative infra-structure is utilizing existing municipal infra-structure. He suggested that the next best step is to challenge staff to begin developing a list of questions, a structure for the Joint Authority. He asked how the board felt about that.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that they would follow that model of the Joint Fire Service and begin setting up a structure and recommendations. They will provide various options for the board's review.

SJOBORG Mr. Sjoborg stated that it would be foolish not to listen to Mr. Holman's recommendation with his expertise and given all the hurdles with some of the other ones. No one knows how long legislation could take in Harrisburg. His personal opinion was that the Joint Fire organization idea was a good start.

MADER Mr. Mader definitely agreed as it did not seem to lean one way or the other. It seemed to be middle ground.

BISHOP Mr. Bishop did not disagree. He made one additional point with respect to the Council of Governments in that the presentation was a little bit inaccurate in stating that the Council of Governments by definition is a larger number of governments. In his experience there's absolutely no reason whatsoever not to be two governments in a Council of Governments. That is not to say that he thought that is the way to go but thought it was not the reason not to go that way. It would involve setting up more bureaucracy and more work to get it set up.

HUNT Chairman Hunt agreed that if the concept moved forward, five years from now it will be on the COG model.

MAUST Mr. Maust reiterated that at this point taking the only option that does not require the formation of a separate entity may be the most simplistic place to start.

HUNT Chairman Hunt asked whether there would be any perceived problems with the Joint Service with Lead Agency concept being able to enter into a labor contract with a newly formed association which would be a combination of Spring Garden and Springettsbury firefighters.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that all collective bargaining is a process that would take some time.

BISHOP Mr. Bishop was sure that the answer to the question is that there will be problems.

HUNT Chairman Hunt agreed that there would be problems with the numbers, but he did not want there to be problems dealing with the collective bargaining agreements.

BISHOP Mr. Bishop indicated that would be the next step. Staff should explore whether any of the options would be insurmountable.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman indicated it would be a simple issue of whether or not it is civil service. Mr. Fernsler indicated it should be civil service. Mr. Holman wanted to secure more information on how to proceed with two separate union contracts.

HUNT Chairman Hunt summarized his personal thoughts in terms of direction for the staff:

- Proceed with the left-hand block
- Design less of a tongue twister name
- Bring forward issues to hammer out.
- Accountability to residents; if dissatisfied what is their avenue for recourse.
- Who has authority to sign labor contracts, purchasing contracts
- Who holds ownership to capital assets
- Who has strategic authority.
- Make a list of potential pitfalls.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman responded that they would be working on that. They plan to take the PowerPoint presentation and expand on that at each meeting. This will provide an excellent tracking through the PowerPoint presentation and the minutes.

G. Correspondence and Other Communications:

1. Contact List

2. Shared Service Grant Information

HOLMAN Mr. Holman asked Ms. Reese to review the paperwork provided to the members prior to the meeting.

REESE Ms. Reese provided a review of the information given to the board including the meeting agenda, two sets of minutes from the past meetings, copy of the PowerPoint presentation, PowerPoint presentation notes, contact list, Resolution for review, Inter-governmental Cooperation Handbook for information from Mr. Fernsler.

H. Old Business:

1. Fire Station Tour

SJOBORG Mr. Sjoborg indicated the tour was very eye opening and very interesting to see the different fire houses and different locations.

MADER Mr. Mader was really impressed with the tour. He noted that there had been quite an evolution since he walked away from the fire department. It's not as much a "good old boy" type organization as it was back then and definitely a lot more professional. He mentioned the work out equipment. He noted that Springettsbury and Spring Garden have mutually developed a first response situation that in years past was a second due type situation on a lot of calls. He asked whether that had been done strictly under the auspices of the fire operation itself or had the municipalities been involved.

EMIG Chief Emig indicated that the fire company felt it was necessary and developed the program. They provided it to the municipalities, which shared in the evolution of it.

HUNT Chairman Hunt added that the effort had been almost simultaneous, and the timing was right. Andrew Stern, as Interim Fire Chief and Chief Emig have some off setting skills, which complimented each other, and they developed a very good working relationship. He added that he continued to be impressed with the professionalism of fire service personnel, which is what he sees in a firehouse tour.

BISHOP Mr. Bishop noted that he had not been aware of the physical characteristics of the Grantley station. He stated that there is a lot placed in the space, which really points out some of the geography of what has to be built.

HUNT Chairman Hunt added to Mr. Bishop's statement that the Grantley location made sense in 1928 when the location was the suburban fringe of York. Grantley is now a dated firehouse that is land locked and very difficult to maneuver the fire apparatus.

FREIREICH Mrs. Freireich noted that most of the facilities had not been brought along as rapidly as necessary. If the time comes in the future as the project moves forward, there will have to be some physical structural changes as to where these facilities are located and how they're built. That all will come out with money and the bottom line, but it may be a necessity.

HUNT Chairman Hunt agreed that the downside is that it's going to cost money. The upside is that a review of a larger region, versus just looking at Spring Garden Township, will reveal the best place to put a firehouse in the larger region, in addition to consideration of current traffic patterns.

FREIREICH Mrs. Freireich stated that the focus will identify the formation of the two for more efficiency and a better sense of community.

I. New Business:

1. Possible Endorsement for Additional Grant Funding for Administrative and Legal Costs

See Committee Resolutions.

2. Legislative Report on The Feasibility of Regionalizing Pennsylvania's Volunteer Fire Companies: <http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/>

This item was the 195 page report, which had been discussed earlier during the Agenda.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman noted that the website was provided for a review of the report.

J. Committee Resolutions:

1. Recommending Application for Funding Under the Shared Municipal Services Program

HUNT Chairman Hunt requested that Ms. Reese read the draft Resolution.

REESE Ms. Reese read Resolution 05-JFS-01 herewith made a part of these minutes.

HUNT Chairman Hunt stated that the Executive Summary advised the municipal boards of prior discussion, that this committee had reviewed it, and, in general, the board agreed to proceed. Specifically this is coaching each township board to, at our recommendation, apply for a grant from DCED to pay some of the costs.

HOLMAN Mr. Holman stated that the grant would, if awarded, pay a maximum of 50% of the costs for these services. Each township would then be assessed based on 25% of the share for these services. It's on the Agenda because the time frame for submitting this ties into the state budget. So the state budget is underway and by getting an application in there is a good chance to receive funds for this because this will require quite a bit of legal review documentation, special ordinances to create based on a recommendation supplied by this board, and by-laws need to be legislated and ordinances adopted.

HUNT Chairman Hunt indicated that if the board did not believe there should be continued work done on this project and did not want financial support

from the state to pursue this, the member would vote no; conversely would vote yes. He called for a Motion to adopt Resolution 05-JFS-01.

MR. SJOBERG MOVED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 05-JFS-01. MRS. FREIREICH WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

HUNT Chairman Hunt noted that there had been a few minor spelling errors, which will be corrected and an improved version will be forwarded to the municipal boards. Hopefully they will take the recommendation and pass a similar Resolution forwarding it to Harrisburg.

K. Adjournment:

MRS. FREIRICH MOVED FOR ADJOURNMENT. MR. SJOBERG WAS SECOND. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

HUNT Chairman Hunt adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Holman
Secretary

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