

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

March 9, 2011

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 9, 2011 7 pm
Municipal Complex, Conference Room A
400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm, with Ms. Shabnam Salih reading the Open Public Meetings Act Statement:

The following is an accurate statement concerning the providing of notice of this meeting and said statement shall be entered in the minutes of this meeting.

Notice of this meeting as required by sections 4a, 3d, 13 and 14 of the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided to the public in the form of the written notice attached hereto.

On March 8, 2011 at 2:00 p.m., said notice was posted in the official bulletin board, transmitted to the Princeton Packet, the Trenton Times, the Town Topics, filed with the Township Clerk and posted on the Princeton Borough and Princeton Township websites.

2. Roll Call

Present: Golden, Haynes, Metro, Goerner, Lilienthal, Lahnston, Goldfarb, Trotman, Pfeiffer

Absent: Miller, Simon and Small

3. Review and Approve Minutes from 2/15/11 and 2/16/11

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Mayor Goerner makes a motion to approve both sets of February minutes, February 15 and 16, 2011.

Lilienthal seconds the motion.

All vote in favor.

Minutes are approved.

4. Community Engagement Subcommittee Report and Discussion- Carol Golden

Golden explains that they have met with all PTO's, except the Riverside School, which is schedule for April 13th and have continued with neighborhood gatherings. She estimates that they have met with about 150 people thus far and there are approximately 20 people at each of the meetings. The group is looking forward to the Princeton Future meeting. They will also be meeting with additional groups like Not In Our Town.

Chairperson Lahnston asks if anyone knows about the group Not In Our Town.

Haynes responds that she has contacted with them.

Golden asks for the Commission to find additional people willing to host neighborhood gatherings.

Chairperson Lahnston discusses a letter he received from a community member expressing their concerns over consolidation and the person's offer to host a neighborhood gathering.

5. Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee – Bernie Miller

a. Report on Recommended Form of Government

In Miller's absence, Goldfarb explains that the subcommittee reviewed all options available and recommends a Borough form.

Lilienthal discusses two issues brought up by a community member at the public meeting regarding the wards system and the possibility of nonpartisan elections, to allow

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Republicans a chance to get voted in.

Goldfarb states that nonpartisan elections take place in May. Also, he adds that in West Windsor, where they have nonpartisan elections, community members still know the candidates' party. Further, he explains that a wards system does not guarantee that Republicans could get voted into office in Princeton.

Chairperson Lahnston clarifies the form of governance as recommended by the Commission, which is Borough form, with a Council of 6 members, a mayor elected by the community, partisan elections, and no wards. He emphasizes a comment made to him a while ago, which was that the Commission should be conscious of the importance of each of their votes, as it has the potential to impact the community for many years to come.

b. Commission Discussion and Vote

Motion made by Mayor Trotman to officially recommend the Borough form of governance.

Motion seconded by Mayor Goerner.

Lilienthal explains it is important to point out that some people prefer the wards system because they prefer direct representation on the Council.

Mayor Goerner explains that although Goldfarb points out that we don't have control over setting wards, there are other ways to getting efficient services and fair representation.

Chairperson Lahnston notes it is important to represent these concerns in the subcommittees.

McCarthy explains that other forms of governance relinquish power to the mayor and administrator.

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Pascale adds that he thinks the ward system is the worst option and further fragments the community.

Vote on recommending the Borough form

All vote in favor

Vote in Unanimous

Chairperson Lahnston asks Stefko what the next steps are for the subcommittee.

Stefko responds that they will be reviewing options in all other departments and all offices outside of Police and Public Works.

Mayor Goerner asks Stefko if he has all of the data.

Stefko responds that he has most of it.

Haynes adds that affordable housing is an issue that should be discussed.

Lilienthal adds that at the finance subcommittee meeting there will be discussion about what is possible and that the subcommittee will need a slot at an upcoming local finance meeting.

Mayor Goerner states that the Commission should have representatives at the local finance meeting if there will be voting on extended service districts.

Chairperson Lahnston states that this issue should be held for the new business portion of the agenda.

6. Department of Public Works Subcommittee- Valerie Haynes

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Haynes hands out two worksheets outlining possible options for the Public Works Departments. She explains the options for staffing.

Stefko adds that the worksheet provides a good summary.

Mayor Goerner wants to hear more about option 3 and asks if the subcommittee is working on estimates for option 3.

Stefko responds that they are working on identifying additional efficiencies but all efficiencies may not be instant but over time.

Mayor Goerner asks if there is any consideration of equipment.

Haynes responds that that will be coming in the near future.

Lilienthal asks if the subcommittee has thought about special improvement districts and how that would affect budget and efficiencies.

Stefko explains that when fleshing out this issue, they found that special service districts could provide some enhanced services.

Chairperson Lahnston adds that PW Superintendents warned him that the special needs of the downtown should not be overlooked.

John Fry warns that creating special service districts is a difficult thing to do and it is especially hard to collect taxes. The difficulty with these specialized districts is when the community uses general municipality funds for specialized services.

Lilienthal explains that these functions are currently funded by general funds.

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Mayor Goerner states that it is good to consider and look into these options for special districts.

Lilienthal adds that Township road maintenance and Borough downtown maintenance are major chunks of the DPWs.

Goldfarb states that he believes Special Improvement Districts could not charge for services that people were already receiving from the municipality.

Haynes now moves onto the options on the DPW facilities worksheet.

Goldfarb states that for there to be shared use of the River Road facility, both the Township and Borough would need to agree since they both own it. He adds that a \$20 million facility for River Road costs more than the library and the pool.

Mayor Goerner states that option 1 is realistic and that both governing bodies are in agreement against funding an entirely new facility at River Road.

Mayor Goerner explains that to deal with the problems of a centralized location, satellite facilities should be created.

Goldfarb states that there is a need for a DPW cold storage facility.

Chairperson Lahnston asks what the possibilities are for DPW use of the fire station at Harrison Street.

Mayor Trotman explains that how the fire stations will be used is an issue that is currently up in the air. She adds there is an aggressive conversation between the Township and the Borough about the firehouse and there will be a report at the end of March.

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Mayor Goerner explains that he does not think the Commission should make some recommendations with such specificity. The Commission's emphasis should be on staffing and the services aspect, but not exact satellite locations.

Goldfarb disagrees and says that since the question is going on the ballot that the Commission should be as specific as possible for the public's benefit.

Mayor Goerner responds that time does not allow for the Commission to do some things - - for example -- to recommend specific satellite locations.

McCarthy will talk to Mark Pfeiffer tomorrow and reach out to Chairperson Lahnston with answers regarding several procedural questions asked by the Commission.

Lilienthal asks if the police will work on forecasting costs if the merger does not happen. He also asks where police cars will go if there is a merger of the two municipalities or Police Departments.

Mayor Goerner answers that the triangle wedge (Valley Road and Witherspoon) could be used for additional police parking.

Goldfarb adds that if additional police cars are serviced at the old servicing location then neighbors will complain as they did in the past.

Mayor Goerner stresses a long-term focus for equipment.

7. Police Subcommittee Report- Bill Metro

Metro hands out working papers.

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Metro discusses staffing structure, command structure and the size of staffs. He also teased out the definition of shared services. He explains that all the models explained in his charts can work in a consolidated or contracted out method.

The major concern for the police department is a clear line of command.

McCarthy adds that some communities have shared services for police and talking to people in advance could help avoid issues later.

Metro explains that it is possible for the two Police departments to consolidate. He adds that the shared use of the Township jail is an example of a shared service.

Goldfarb asks if there has been any attempt to see what the lowest staffing level with efficient service would be.

Metro responds that that is the next step.

There is discussion as to the amount of utilization and detractors. Metro estimates there is a 65% utilization of staff, and 35% taken up by detractors such as training.

Stefko states that the Township facility is large enough for a consolidated department but there are issues such as the evidence room, parking and the communications center. The initial raw estimate for updated technology came in at \$750,000 but it has been further estimated to be \$1.5 million for increased equipment and new needs.

Mayor Trotman explains that \$750,000 is an initial figure but the Police Department will have to come back with additional information including the costs for technologies that need upgrading.

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Chairperson Lahnston states there is a distinction between transition costs and necessary upgrades and this must be taken into consideration.

Goldfarb explains that Lawrence and Ewing did a joint dispatch study.

Mayor Trotman discusses the Consortium of Dispatch (for 5 towns in the area.) She also discusses that County program.

Mayor Goerner states that they will have additional information on the above at the next meeting.

Chairperson Lahnston asks Stefko what is next for the police subcommittee.

Stefko responds that it is necessary to bring a staffing cost for each model and that he will have the numbers in the next couple of days, then they will know the cost benefit for each model.

8. Finance Subcommittee- Chad Goerner

a. Update and Next Steps

Mayor Goerner states that the subcommittee has not met since the last Commission meeting and will have a meeting this Friday. The subcommittee will continue their discussion on the apportionment of debt and they have also been working on the transition costs. The Mayor explains that there will be a March 28th meeting with Senator Sweeney, then a meeting on the Local Option Law and then he will report back to the full Commission on the subcommittee's work.

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b. Discussion

Chairperson Lahnston asks McCarthy about the letter regarding special improvement districts.

McCarthy responds that his staff feels the requests in the letter are moderate and that the letter was specific in its requests and it gives a good push to get things done.

He suggests Commission members be present at the April 6th meeting of the finance board to stress importance of the work being done.

Lilienthal asks if there is another way of shaping districts.

McCarthy responds that he will work to best accommodate the needs of the community.

9. Focus Group Report- Current Plans- Carol Golden

Golden shares that there are two focus groups planned; one focus group is planned for April 9th, the other for April 14th. There will be 10 participants in each and 1 person from each voting district will be randomly selected and invited to participate. The subcommittee is currently working to give the consultant additional information and help prepare her for the focus groups.

10. Comments and Questions From the Audience

None.

11. Princeton Future Meeting Design and Materials- Anton Lahnston

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Chairperson Lahnston hands out a flyer, which will be advertising the meeting, and also CGR gives a handout of the slides, which will be presented at the meeting. Lahnston invites each person who will be taking a table group to take a look at the slides being presented.

Golden suggests that the portion of the flyer advertising discussion on the form of governance should make it clear that the Commission has already voted on and recommended Borough form.

Goldfarb is concerned that the Commission not put their stamp on the Princeton Future meeting, as it seems to be very pro consolidation.

Lilienthal agrees that the Commission should not seem biased and explains that Sheldon wants larger turnouts from the public.

Mayor Goerner adds that it is not a Commission meeting therefore the Commission is not responsible whether or not the flyer seems biased.

It is decided the meeting will be publicly noticed.

There is discussion about shifting of the table groups half way through the meeting or not. It is decided that table groups will not be shifted.

12. New Business

The deadline for everything to be complete before the referendum is August 25th.

There will need to be a joint meeting between the Borough and the Township to prepare for the referendum.

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13. Adjournment

Motion made to adjourn by Golden.

Motion seconded by Lilienthal

All vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shabnam Salih, Study Commission Secretary

Approved: March 23, 2011

Handout 1

Summary of Preliminary Staffing Options in Public Works

The full analysis of the options for the consolidation of the Borough and Township public works functions indicates some savings could be realized, but the gains in operational efficiency may be greater. While it is important to consider the potential for long-term gains in cost avoidance and better capital planning that could result from a more efficient staffing framework, this summary is restricted to the immediate results that were estimated in the detailed analysis of options.

Three options are presented in comparison to a merged baseline structure. The merged baseline of 43 positions plus seasonal workers indicates an estimated increase in salary

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and benefit costs of \$113,766 (about 2 percent of total wage and benefit costs) due to the leveling up of wages and benefits under one bargaining unit contract and one management structure, although the Commission could consider an alternative to leveling up.

Option #1 proposes little change other than a repurposing of the duplicate role of a second superintendent of public works into a line staff position. The savings of \$59,704 for the repurposed role is offset by the \$113,766 in leveling up, yielding a resulting increase in cost of \$54,062 (about 1 percent of total costs). The reduced administrative need in the merged structure yields an additional line employee to enhance service to the public.

Option #2 proposes a reduction in headcount of 2 positions, a superintendent and a foreman, resulting in savings of \$218,862, which yields net savings of \$105,096 (about 2 percent of total costs) after removing the increase in costs due to leveling up. Some restructuring is proposed, removing the role of an Assistant Superintendent for Parking Operations and creating the broader role of Assistant Superintendent for the Business Downtown, which will continue to have oversight over parking operations and also will manage the services to the business downtown and municipal buildings. The role of a second assistant superintendent is continued in the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administration, a role that manages Grounds & Open Space and Roads. A dotted line relationship between the two assistant superintendents formalizes the current practices of temporarily assigning staff to meet changing needs in these service areas.

Option #3 creates a framework to realize other gains quickly but does not yet estimate any cost savings beyond the net savings of \$105,096 estimated in Option #2. It does so by combining all asset maintenance functions under Public Works. It proposes an administrative structure that includes the maintenance (not the programmatic) functions currently housed in the Recreation Commission and the sewer maintenance operations currently under the Princeton Sewer Operations Commission (without changing the oversight responsibilities of the Commission). Recreation maintenance would be supervised by the Foreman of Grounds and Open Space under the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administration. A new Assistant Superintendent of Infrastructure and Technology would supplant the role of Control Supervisor/PSOC Manager, with broadened responsibilities for technical aspects of all infrastructure maintenance.

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Handout 2

Summary of Preliminary Facilities Options in Public Works

The full analysis of the options for housing the consolidated Borough and Township public works functions emphasizes the recognition by the Public Works Sub-Committee of the state of the existing facilities in the two communities. The detailed analysis is grounded in the premise that some development of improved facilities is necessary, even if no merger occurs in public works. However, if no merger occurs, there would be some benefits in a common planning approach to developing facilities that could efficiently serve both municipalities. The 2009 French & Parrello Associates report on the feasibility and costs of developing the Princeton Sewer Operating Commission River

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Road facility, which is referenced in the detailed analysis, contemplates both a merged and non-merged public works function.

Three options are presented in comparison to a merged baseline structure, which is comprised of just the existing facilities, as they exist. These facilities are Harrison Street, John Street, Valley Road, and limited off-site storage at River Road. The major issues include temporary trailers for administrative staff, awkward arrangements for maintenance of larger vehicles, and lack of indoor storage of expensive equipment. This baseline merger of facilities has little cost associated with it, but no real operational benefits.

Option #1 represents a first stage of the transition to developing the River Road facility. It proposes creating indoor cold storage capacity to protect expensive heavy equipment and some smaller equipment. It would have a short-term benefit of prolonging equipment life. Also, it proposes the development of administrative space, a necessity for the Township and a benefit if merger occurs. It contemplates closing the John Street facility (contingent on the relocation of the salt and sand dome) and returning it to the tax rolls or using it for a different public purpose.

Option #2 continues the long-term development of the River Road facility with a combined fleet maintenance facility that would improve the efficiency of heavy equipment maintenance. In addition, it proposes the development of warm storage for vehicles and equipment, which require it. One result of completing this development of a full facility at River Road is the ability to sell or re-purpose the Harrison Street facility, but Option #3 considers alternatives.

Option #3 describes a full facility at River Road, which is enhanced by a satellite facility closer to the downtown center of Princeton. It discusses three options:

- John Street, recognizing the existence of the salt and sand dome and the proximity to the downtown, but noting on the negative side of the ledger the small size, lack of a permanent structure, and the “out of the way” location.
- Harrison Street, with its existing maintenance capacity for small vehicles and administrative offices. It is adjacent to residential neighbors and contains an infrequently used firehouse that is under the control of the volunteer fire department.
- Borough Hall because of its location and familiarity to service the public and provide administrative space, if some current Borough offices were moved into the current Township building as the result of a merger. Some parking could be accommodated if court and/or police were among the functions moved, but adequate storage for small equipment is not a benefit of this building as a satellite.