

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

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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 27, 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, Trotman, McCarthy, Miller, Simon and Small

Absent: Goldfarb

Additional Attendees: John Fry, Bob Bruschi, Jim Pascale and Joe Stefko.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM 4/13/2011

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Mayor Goerner makes motion to approve the minutes.

Golden seconds motion.

All vote in favor

Motion approved.

4. OPTIONS REPORT DRAFT – JOE STEFKO

Stefko shares a PowerPoint presentation. Stefko explains that the options report will be online before the upcoming public meeting.

Lahnston clarifies for the group that the options report will include all options available and the Commission's formal recommendations. Subcommittee recommendations, if finalized by that point, will be included in the report.

Stefko explains how the analysis works through the different lenses, and that all feasible options will be shown and explained, summary of options for departments will be included, as will debt, government and ordinances.

It is the intention of the report to document the many conversations that have taken place at the subcommittee level.

Stefko explains that the public meeting will be an opportunity for the public to share their opinions on the recommendations.

5. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE – CAROL GOLDEN a. FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Final report written by consultant was emailed to the Commission. Simon then passes out a handout summarizing some key points of the report. He shares the information and conclusions.

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Simon explains that the focus group numbers are too small for the information to be looked at statistically.

Lahnston suggests looking at the focus group information very cautiously.

Golden suggests finding a way to thank Deborah Macmillan for the valuable services she volunteered.

b. NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Golden explains that 12 have been held thus far and there are 9 more scheduled. Another 12 people have expressed interest in hosting gatherings but the CE subcommittee will hold off on these until the fall.

Mayor Goerner asks if the feedback they are getting is similar to the issues brought up in the focus group.

Golden explains that she has yet to hear anything brought up in the focus groups or in the gatherings that someone else has not expressed concern over before.

Metro asks what concerns they have heard about police.

Lahnston explains that they have heard about differences within the two police organizations and if there is consolidation there must be a serious look at how to bring together two separate organizations as one. Also, people do not want to lose any services -- and gain services if possible.

Golden explains people are also concerned that consolidated police efforts will be concentrated in the Borough leaving the Township with insufficient services and vice versa.

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c. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – UPDATE

Golden, Haynes and Lahnston are working on the FAQs.

d. COMMUNIVERSITY PLANS

Golden needs more volunteers to help man the table. The table is at an excellent location. Metro volunteers.

Golden reminds Commission about the Fri April 29th meeting at Borough Hall East Conference Room with a design psychologist.

Lilienthal asks that the two mayors schedule a joint meeting with the two governing bodies.

6. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE – VALERIE HAYNES

a. RECOMMENDATION ON INTEGRATED STAFFING MODEL

Haynes explains that since the last Commission meeting she and Carol met with the recreation management committee to discuss including the recreation maintenance functions within a consolidated Department of Public Works. Alice Small and John Fry also met with recreation staff along with staff from public works and the engineering departments to discuss how the recreation functions could be integrated with public works. The key concern is the need to maintain recreation service levels.

Next, the subcommittee will consider its recommendation regarding a shared service model for public works. As a shared service, the staffing model could not be as ambitious because the engineering departments would not be merged. .

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Stefko states that in addition to the quantifiable savings, there is potential for operating efficiencies and cost savings that cannot be quantified.

Haynes refers to the minutes of the subcommittee's meetings for more in depth discussion of the staffing recommendation as well as information on the subcommittee's meetings with the different departments.

Lahnston states that the model the subcommittee is looking into is an integrated model.

Stefko adds that these departments already work together cooperatively.

Haynes adds that several members of the public have suggested including school grounds maintenance in an integrated DPW but at present the schools have not expressed interest in doing so and the school district is not within the purview of commission's study. This idea should be revisited in the future.

b. REVIEW OF DRAFT OF FACILITIES RECOMMENDATION

Haynes explains that there is a lot of work that is needed on the current DPW facilities. The biggest problem is a lack of cold storage. The report done a year ago provided an estimate that was too high for such basic facility structures and therefore the subcommittee asked the staff to develop a current cost estimate for a phased upgrade focused on the most critical needs. The estimate developed by the staff is much more reasonable.

She adds that there is a desire to use the John and Harrison St. facilities less and the subcommittee is also looking at centralized fueling.

Lilienthal asks if the facilities discussion is necessary for consolidation.

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Haynes answers that on the day 1 of consolidation, operations would occur out of the current 4 sites but over time the changes would occur.

Lahnston explains that to move forward maintaining the level of services then the current state of substandard facilities needs to be improved.

Small asks if facilities can be left to operate on their own in the case of consolidation.

Miller responds that would be least efficient and would not be affordable in the long run.

Mayor Goerner asks if the level of services is the same regardless of the model.

Haynes answers yes.

Golden adds that there are neighborhood complaints about the John and Harrison St. facilities.

Fry states that he has the numbers on operating savings.

Haynes will provide the Commission with figures on facilities savings at a future time.¹

c. EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATION

Haynes states that both municipalities currently have six-year capital plans and an ongoing annual process to replenish equipment and sell unneeded equipment

¹ See Options Report, page 62.

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through public auction. At the outset of a consolidated operation, no redundant equipment is anticipated, but over time it is likely that some replenishment cycles can be lengthened. The biggest savings in equipment will come from development of a cold storage (garage) facility which will greatly extend the life of these expensive vehicles. Currently, vehicles and equipment are stored in the open...

7. POLICE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – BILL METRO

a. STAFFING – DAY ONE AND TRANSITION TO STAFFING GOAL

Metro discusses a question that has been brought up in the past, which is whether there are two different philosophies in the police departments. Although it is true that the two police departments respond to different types of calls, there is no reason to believe that there are different philosophies. True police professionals lead both departments.

Small asks if in a merged police department, if officers currently serving the Borough would patrol there and those currently in the Township patrol there.

Metro responds no.

Metro expands into the options that the subcommittee has been discussing. They have looked at many different models, including the number of officers and how to get to the goal. They have also been looking at the transitional period.

The recommended model will be 3 to 5 years down the road. Day 1 there will be 60 police officers and the task force that is developed would put together a transitional plan. At 3 years the goal is to have 55 police officers and at 4 to 5 years the goal is 51.

The recommendation is for a target of 51 in 3 to 5 years.

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Mayor Goerner says that a question he has heard from the public is why the subcommittee is not recommending cutting down to 51 from Day 1 of consolidation.

Metro responds that there needs to be an adequate level of supervision and management due to the reorganization and other changes that would occur on Day 1 and through the transitional period.

McCarthy adds that with either consolidation or shared services the cost of early retirement packages could be picked up by the state.

Metro explains that it could always be possible to get to the target sooner than projected.

Lahnston asks Stefko if he has found savings for this recommended model of 51.

Stefko explains that the draft estimate is \$2.1 million savings per year.

Miller explains that he does not want the public to perceive a threatened quality of life, safety of property or life.

McCarthy asks Metro if he has the cost of a shared dispatch.

Metro does not yet have this number but does not foresee a savings in shared dispatch.

Simon asks if there are new services being proposed.

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Metro explains that some services currently exist in the Township and by being able to change the structure there will be room to add additional services by having a contingent section in the force.

b. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

It is also recommended the commissioning of one dispatch center, leveraging the Township facility, Township technology and putting the Township technology into the current Borough police cars. If consolidation does not occur, the recommendation is still for one shared dispatch center.

8. MUNICIPAL CONSOLIDATION SUBCOMMITTEE – BERNIE MILLER

a. RECOMMENDATIONS ON “OTHER” DEPARTMENTS

Miller explains that much of the following information in more detail is in the subcommittee minutes provided online.

The referendum question will note the form of governance, which was decided to be a Borough form because of a direct election of the Mayor as well as officials’ interaction with the professional staff. A more through discussion on why the Borough form was chosen and wards were not included is outlined the old minutes.

In regards to why a special charter was not chosen, Miller explains that there is a good chance it would not have happened in a timely manner.

b. LOCAL OPTIONS AND ADVISORY PLANNING DISTRICTS

The subcommittee has begun looking at advisory planning districts, a new tool provided by the Local Option Law. Lilienthal explains that the subcommittee will discuss this at their next meeting.

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Mayor Goerner states that he will look into municipal zoning laws with lawyers and will answer questions pertaining to the advisory planning districts and make recommendations soon.

Lilienthal explains that the public is concerned with the future of their neighborhoods and the impact of the zoning and planning boards.

Lahnston asks Miller to please discuss recommendations for additional departments at the public meeting in May.

Lilienthal adds that some of the small departments might be better discussed in some other subcommittees.

Lahnston states that the subcommittee should ensure that all departments have been discussed.

Simon adds that there is an estimated savings of \$750,000 for administrative departments.

9. FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE – CHAD GOERNER
a. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PROJECTED SAVINGS AND IMPACT ON AVERAGE HOMEOWNER

The subcommittee is working with DCA to find the fiscal tax impact on the public. They are working on combining savings estimates, and determining the net effect. They are also looking at efficiencies that can be established over time. They are looking at long-term financial impact as well as savings on Day 1. They will go through the equalization process in regards to the debt solutions. The subcommittee still needs data from other subcommittees.

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Mayor Goerner explains that the initial financial impact will not be significant but over time the impact will give the community budgetary flexibility.

Golden states that an issue may be that one group may be impacted differently than another.

Lahnston asks Goerner what his level of confidence is regarding answering the public's questions on specific numbers, savings, etc.

Mayor Goerner states that May 11th may be a little early but he will have specific number before the meeting on May 25th.

Lahnston says that the subcommittees need projected savings numbers from different subcommittees and that the Commission needs help from DCA.

McCarthy states that he needs the transitional cost numbers.

Mayor Goerner explains that the subcommittee will work on transitional costs after the public meeting.

Mayor Goerner explains that if the benefit is larger in one community than another then the subcommittee could look at applying to one municipality to equalize then looking at revenue dedication to one community. He will update the Commission on this as soon as he has data.

b. NEXT STEPS

The subcommittee has a meeting the following week. Please check www.cgr.org/princeton

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10. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Tony Lunn – States that he is a 32-year resident of the Borough and greatly appreciates the work of the Commission. He explains that the benefits on property taxes will be minimal and is worried about the dis-benefits of consolidation and doesn't believe those issues, such as lifestyles and different ordinances, are being properly addressed. He also explains his belief that a loss of wards will impact the municipalities and it will lessen the value of votes in the Borough. He asks the Commission to please spend more time on lifestyle issues and not to compromise lifestyle for small financial gains.

Lahnston explains that the Commission and subcommittee have been holding neighborhood meetings for these reasons.

Mayor Goerner states that at the next Commission meeting the Commission will discuss non-financial advantages and disadvantages.

Phyllis Teitelbaum expresses the opinion that many people in the Borough do not realize that they will be outvoted in the case of consolidation. She also expresses concern over differences in ordinances and values in the two municipalities.

Miller states that the consolidation study this year is far more comprehensive than years before and includes more detail on qualitative and quantitative issues.

Simon explains that the Community Engagement Subcommittee is essentially a lifestyle issues subcommittee.

Travis Linderman thanks Lunn for this articulate comments.

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Mark Schneider is concerned regarding the staffing of the Police Department, especially given the upcoming pressure that will be facing the community. He asks how the 10% reduction in staffing will impact the increased needs of the community.

Metro responds that the subcommittee has thoroughly looked at manpower deployment, calls for service, and completed a thorough analysis. If there is an increased need in the future then staffing will be dealt with at the time, but they will not increase staffing in anticipation.

Schneider follows up by asking if the subcommittee has looked at the volunteer fire department.

Mayor Goerner answers that fire is a joint force.

Miller answers that fire is already a consolidated effort.

11. REVIEW OF DATES AND MILESTONES –Anton Lahnston

Meeting on May 11th is to present to the public options and recommendations.

Lahnston explains that Stefko needs draft recommendations no later than Tues.

Stefko explains that when he sends out the draft options report he will make it clear the stage of the recommendation.

Lahnston explains that the May 25th meeting will be to discuss recommendations and whether or not to move forward with consolidation.

Miller states that on the 25th the Commission will also discuss putting shared service on the referendum also.

12. REVIEW FOR PUBLIC MEETING ON MAY 11, 2011 – CONFIRMING:

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

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a. TIME AND LOCATION

7:30 p.m. in the Township Committee Room

b. PURPOSE AND AGENDA

Options Report, Recommendations and Discussion and feedback from the audience

Subcommittee chairs will be responsible for discussing recommendations.

13. NEW BUSINESS

None.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made to adjourn by Goerner.

Seconded by Lilienthal.

All vote in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shabnam Salih, Study Commission Secretary

Approved: May 17, 2011