DAUPHIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP MEETING

OCTOBER 14, 2015
10:00 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Haste, Chairman
Mike Pries, Vice Chairman
George P. Hartwick, III, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT

Chad Saylor, Chief Clerk; Marie E. Rebuck, Controller; Joseph A. Curcillo, III, Esq., Solicitor; Randy Baratucci, Director of Purchasing; Steve Libhart, Director of EMA; August Memmi, Director of Community & Economic Development; J. Scott Burford, Deputy Chief Clerk; Kay Lengle, Human Resources; Fred Lighty, Esq., Solicitor’s Office; Jennifer Simpson, Court Administration; Amy Harinath, Press Secretary; Melody Osborn, Commissioners’ Office; Ruby Doub, Commissioners’ Office and Richie-Ann Martz, Assistant Chief Clerk

GUESTS PRESENT

Rob Martin, Jason Umberger, Barb Miller, Karl Singleton, Tom Connolly, James Roxbury, FOX 43, Leah Eppinger and WGAL

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Haste, Chairman of the Board, called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Everyone observed a moment of silence.
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There are three sets of meeting minutes that will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS HELD BETWEEN MEETINGS

Mr. Saylor reported that no Executive Sessions were held between meetings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS/GUESTS

A. Jason Umberger, Chief of Swatara Township Police Department, and Rob Martin, Public Safety Director of Susquehanna Township

1. Review of Police Regionalization Efforts in Dauphin County

Mr. Haste thanked Mr. Martin and Mr. Umberger. If it wasn’t for their input, this would not be where it is at today.

Mr. Umberger commented on last night’s regional meeting. From a police service public safety perspective, PERF (Police Executive Research Forum) did an outstanding job analyzing the operations of the 16 municipal police departments in Dauphin County. The study was devoid of any political considerations, which he believes is the best means to study an issue like this. The report was thorough and understandable. It laid out several excellent options for Dauphin County and its municipal entities to enhance and improve police services for any municipality who would choose to participate. An added bonus to improving police services and public safety for the citizens is cost savings. These cost savings are the result of a careful analysis and the utilization of industry-wide police staffing formulas, which took into account the number of service calls, the uniform crime report data and the geography of the agencies being considered, patrol zone coverage, efficiency in answering calls for service and the efficiency of investigating crime across jurisdictional boundaries.

Cost savings are realized immediately and can be maximized over time through attrition with the reduction in the number of full-time equivalent officers that currently are needed to staff much smaller agencies on a 24/7 basis. This reduction takes into account no
longer needing part-time police officers, who are calculated as part of the full-time equivalent currently being used.

The study showed that larger consolidated agencies can provide increased patrol coverage, more specialized services, such as traffic safety units and specialized criminal investigators that most of the municipalities do not currently enjoy. Other savings come in the form of streamlined organizational structures, cooperative purchases of equipment, such as vehicles and uniforms and savings in overtime costs and facility upkeep to name only a few.

He updated the Commissioners on the current agreement that Swatara Township has with Paxtang Borough. It has been nine months and from his perspective things have been going extremely well. He has frequent communications with the Borough Manager and the Mayor. Either him or a Lieutenant attends at least one Borough Council meeting on a monthly basis and provides Borough Council and their citizens with an activity report and answered all questions they had on police services in the Borough. The feedback from citizens, Borough officials and other police officers has all been very positive. He believes that they enhanced the public safety for the citizens of Paxtang and have earned their trust. They will strive to keep doing that.

Mr. Umberger read a letter that he received from Paxtang Mayor Ninosky on the transition and that it has been a win/win for the residents.

Mr. Umberger feels that the meeting went extremely well last evening. There were many positive comments from the public. His hope is that municipal leaders will recognize the wisdom and consolidation of police services and do what is in the best interest of public safety for all the citizens in their respective communities. He is willing to speak with any municipal entities that would like to discuss how consolidation can work for them.

Mr. Martin indicated that it is important to recognize the County Commissioners in exercising the leadership in pushing forward with this study, because the efficiency of government starts with elected officials. The Commissioners have exercised great leadership in putting this study forward. It is budget time for the municipalities across the County. Budgets are tight and costs keep going up, whether it is medical benefits or whatever to sustain a municipal government. He is sure that this study has pointed out that in every case where there is a full-time police department in Dauphin County, that police department, by enlarge is the largest portion of that municipal budget. It is a good study. It is important for everyone to know that this is the starting point. Moving forward the hard work really starts and that hard work lies with the local officials to start a conversation. It has never been law enforcement that wanted to stand in the way of regionalization, as long as their paying benefits were protected, which is important. They see the value of efficiency and the value of larger regional departments to provide them more career opportunities as they go forth. The crux of this study is cost savings. No one can ignore that. He thanked the Commissioners for pushing this forward and
making this a priority and giving the elected officials a starting point to have that conversation.

Mr. Haste asked how the County is facilitating those conversations. That is the next step. He asked what the next step is from an administrative standpoint, not from the study standpoint.

Mr. Saylor stated that the next step for the County is PERF is going to fine tune the final draft of the report. That should be done in the next week or so. That report will be made available for all the municipalities. This Board has also made them aware that the State is willing to partner and certainly the County, through gaming grants or intergovernmental cooperation. The ball has now been passed to the local levels and it is now upon them to begin to have the conversations to take the police chief up on his offer to meet and talk about what the next steps are at their level.

Mr. Pries mentioned that Ed Marsico has requested that another meeting be set up in the near future of the Police Regionalization Committee to have an opportunity to give feedback based upon the information they were provided last night. Everyone just saw the data for the first time last night. It is a lot of information to digest. They are going to ask PERF to be available to provide some additional information based upon the next meeting. The County website is going to be updated. The full detailed study will be available in the future for public consumption. They will reach out to the municipalities to let them know of the study and the results. At the end of the day, this was a study that was performed by PERF. He thanked Mr. Martin, Mr. Umberger and Mr. Marsico for getting in front of this. Years ago this was looked at, but not everybody was on the same page to even have an opportunity to look at the numbers. That was accomplished this time. It is up to the local elected officials to determine what their next steps will be.

Mr. Hartwick thanked Mr. Martin and Mr. Umberger for their leadership and also thanked Mr. Pries and Mr. Marsico for taking on a challenge that could elude to significant improvements and at least a dialogue to look at more efficient ways to do government generally. The idea of putting information out there is one thing, but actually giving an opportunity for elected officials to come into a room with local law enforcement and the ability to take a look at the PERF report and provide a summary of some of the information that has been provided and then the potential of saying that the next steps and dialogue with those regional areas and again it has been clear that it is up to the municipalities to determine this. The County could set up a forum and an opportunity for next steps would be a good step, based upon the momentum that has been built. The idea of how to get local leaders to understand and digest what the potential savings may be and then facilitate discussions between those interested municipalities may be a good next step.

Mr. Pries stated that regardless of what it looks like in the future, he commended Swatara and Paxtang for taking the ball and running with it by merging the police departments. That is the largest cost for the municipalities. There were seven options,
but it does not need to be one of those options. The Board doesn’t want this to be a County driven thing, they want it to be of, by and for the locals. The Committee can assist them in various ways.

Mr. Haste stated he assumes that this has been discussed in the Police Chiefs Association.

Mr. Martin stated that there were several elected officials at the meeting last night. It is important not to get caught up in the seven options. The seven options are very good, but there could be 11 or 12 different options. The important part is A, it is proof of the cost savings at a time when the citizens demand that before taxes are raised that everything possible be done to be more efficient in government. The second thing is this starts the conversation.

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

Ms. Lengle asked if there were any questions on the Salary Board Packet and/or the Personnel Packet. (There was none.)

The Salary Board Packet and the Personnel Packet will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

Mr. Saylor asked when the next hiring window will occur.

Ms. Lengle indicated that it is mid-November.

**PURCHASE ORDERS**

Mr. Baratucci stated that in addition to the Report, there is a requisition that came in after the report was done. The Director of the Judicial Center contacted his oversight Commissioner and received approval to have this added to the Report. There are a few over budgets that need to be fixed. The Report will be ready for consideration next week unless there are any questions. (There was none.)

The Purchase Order Packet will be considered at next week’s Legislative Meeting.

**TRAINING PACKET**

*It was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. Pries that the Board approve Items #1, 14, 15 and 21 of the Training Packet.*

**Question:** Mr. Haste – Aye; Mr. Pries – Aye and Mr. Hartwick – Aye; motion carried.
SOLICITOR’S REPORT – JOSEPH A. CURCILLO, III, ESQ.

Mr. Curcillo reported that everything on the Solicitor’s Report will be ready for consideration at next week’s Legislative Meeting. He asked if there were any questions. (There was none.)

CHIEF CLERK’S REPORT – CHAD SAYLOR

Mr. Saylor stated that he has nothing to report unless there are questions of him. (There was none.)

Mr. Pries thanked him and the staff for a wonderful job last night with the Police Regionalization meeting. It was standing room only and the staff did a great job handling it.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

There was none.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. Hartwick and seconded by Mr. Pries that the Board adjourn; motion carried.

Transcribed by: Richie-Ann Martz