**ATTENDING:** Gary Hadden-Ontelaunee Commissioner, Heidi Fiedler-Maidencreek Township Commissioner, Granville Sandridge-Leesport Commissioner, Ron Strause-Leesport Alternate, David Franke - Maidencreek Township Alternate, Kim Berger-Ontelaunee Township Alternate, Ruth Manmiller-Secretary, Chief Horner and Andrew Rongaus-Solicitor.

**GUESTS:** Joan Campbell, Diana Rollins, Kenneth M. Schittler, Kristin Schittler, Harold Wagner, Michele Bement, Heather Schoener, Joann Chabrol, David Reichlein, Laura Hadden, Brenda Eaken, Scott Eaken, Cory Deily, Christina J. Troyer, Eric Bauman, William Klein, James Holmgren, J. Santos, Cody Maderia, Robert Wood Jr., David J Reimer Jr., Francis A Scott, William McEllroy, Fred Harrison, Sean C Showalter, Donna Culp, Kevin Cunningham, Michael Cardell, Casey Tiderman, James Keiser, Osborne Buchanan Jr., Diane Bucharad, Michael Holcombe, Donna Franke, Marlene Biros, Lisa Meredith-Unrath, Abbie Miller, Shelly Heller, Michael Miller, James Cecchini, James Patterson, Bill Consugar, Tim Snyder, Ron Devlin, Allyson Hamburg, Tyler Galczyshi, Jamie Kilyk, Josh Mech, Erin Palango, James Moquin, Ethan Moquin, Melanie Hoffman, Nick Volo, Maggie Schearer, Tyler Allwein,

Commissioner Hadden called the November 9, 2020 Northern Berks Regional Police Commission to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge to the Flag & Moment of Silence

**FOR THE RECORD:** Executive Sessions were conducted September 14, 2020, 6:00 PM and November 9, 2020, 5:00 PM

**MINUTES** – September 14, 2020

Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sandridge to accept the September Commission minutes as presented. Commissioner Hadden and Commissioner Sandridge voted, “Aye.” Commissioner Fiedler voted, “No, because in the past her corrections were not recorded. Motion carried.

**TREASURE’S REPORT** **September & October**

**SEPTEMBER**

Money Market $383,985.99

General Checking $ 7,271.11 Tompkins Vist $295,812.83

Payroll $ 28,753.52 NNO $10,338.55

Total Budget Bal. $420,010.62

Commissioner Sandridge made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden to accept the September Treasurer’s Report as read. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**OCTOBER**

Money Market $177,741.31

General Checking $ 33,885.77 Tompkins Vist $295,752.23

Payroll $ 24,533.01 NNO $9,238.55

Total Budget Bal. $236,160.09

Commissioner Fiedler made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sandridge to accept the October Treasurer’s Report as read. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**CHIEF’S DEPARTMENT REPORT – September & October**

**SEPTEMBER**

**CALLS CITATIONS WARNINGS CONTACTS ARRESTS HOURS OF SERVICE**

Maidencreek 287 59 127 166 0 27.93 per day

Ontelaunee 174 82 144 196 6 22.73 per day

Leesport 83 31 59 89 0 11.17 per day

Administrative 23

**TOTAL 567 172 330 451 6**

**Fuel 1183.348 MILEAGE 11,048**

**Fines Collected**

**Maidencreek $2,900.48 Ontelaunee $2,937.39 Leesport $1,307.99**

**TOTAL $7,145.86**

**OCTOBER**

**CALLS CITATIONS WARNINGS CONTACTS ARRESTS HOURS OF SERVICE**

Maidencreek 298 55 144 185 3 30.05 per day

Ontelaunee 179 68 131 184 1 22.49 per day

Leesport 74 29 72 98 3 12.59 per day

Administrative 22

**TOTAL 573 152 347 467 7**

**Fuel 1244.99 MILEAGE 12466**

**Fines Collected**

**Maidencreek $1,167.17 Ontelaunee $2,810.66 Leesport $710.57**

**TOTAL $4,688.40**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**IA POLICY**

Tabled

**LEASE AGREEMENT**

Commissioner Hadden asked for a motion to approve Ontelaunee Township lease agreement for the Police Department as presented till May 10, 2021. Commissioner Sandridge made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fiedler to approve the Ontelaunee Township lease agreement for the police department until May 10, 2021. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**AGREED UPON PROCEEDURE FOR NBRPD 2019**

Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sandridge to approve the proposal submitted by Long Barrell Accountants not to exceed $4,400.00. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**2021 BUDGET**

The 2021 Budget was presented at the September Commissioner meeting, since that time the October Commission Meeting had to be canceled and no budget workshops were conducted. As a result of the 2020 Budget was first adopted in August of 2020; Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Fiedler to continue with the 2020 Budget for 2021 per the Charter. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**DISSOLUTION OF NORTHERN BERKS REGIONAL POLICE**

Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sandridge to dissolve Northern Berks Regional Police effective May 10, 2021.

Commissioner Fiedler read a prepared statement on behalf of the Maidencreek Township residents voting “no” to the dissolution of the Northern Berks Regional Police Department. A change in a change of a Commissioner and cooperation from the current Chief of police could allow for this regional police department remain together. Commissioner Fiedler stressed that Maidencreek Township was not aware of these discussions or decision; only finding out the Friday prior to this meeting.

Commissioner Hadden and Commissioner Sandridge voted, “Aye.” Commissioner Fiedler voted, “No.” Motion carried.

**RESOLUTION 2020-3 DISSOLUTION OF NORTHERN BERKS REGIONAL POLICE**

Commissioner Sandridge made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden to adopt Resolution 2020-3 to dissolve Northern Berks Regional Police effective midnight May 10, 2021 pursuant to the terms set forth in the Charter and direct the Commission Solicitor to take all necessary measures to move forward with this dissolution and to work with the police with impact bargaining. . Commissioner Fiedler voted, “No.” Motion carried.

**Lisa Meredith-Urath, Ontelaunee Township** asked the Commissioners where is public comment in this matter? I’m an Ontelaunee resident and I’m not happy with this decision. This is the first I hear of this. Where the publics vote is in this matter? There was no notice, no discussions. You take the vote and then ask for public comment – that’s not the way is works! We voted you in to office, you should be informing the public of you decisions that seem to be going on behind closed doors.

**Commissioner Hadden** assured the public there would be no lapse in coverage during the transition period or when Ontelaunee Township Police Department is formed. He stressed that none of the decisions were made behind closed doors. Public meetings were advertised and conducted in the appropriate manner. Leesport Borough even included the police issues in their meeting advertisement.

**Leesport Alternate Commissioner Strause** informed the public the reasoning for leaving the regional police department is of a financial concern for the Borough. The Borough has been discussing this for years. The percentage hasn’t changed but the budget has and the Borough can no longer afford Northern Berks Regional Police which far outweighs the personality conflicts. The Borough has been looking at alternatives for police coverage. The first three months I was on the commission I became aware and is/was concerned about the legal fees.

**Commissioner Fiedler** added that during the September executive session Mr. Strause did mention Leesport Borough’s financial issues, but you never brought up information pertaining to the dissolution. Again, Maidencreek first found out about this on Friday. Exactly, I too have a concern for the legal fees as well and now with this decision tonight there will be more.

**Kevin Cunningham, Maidencreek Township** asked the Commissioners who agreed to decision. This should have been brought to the public for vote for all residents/tax payers of the three municipalities. It should have been on a ballot for the public to be aware. What about the officers and their contracts?

**Harold Wagner, Leesport Borough** asked the audience why they didn’t attend Commission meetings when all the problems began on the Commission. The Commission meetings are on YouTube and the minutes are on the NBRPD web site, it’s not secret. As a resident you need to come to the Commission meetings so you could see for yourself the problems and issues.

**James Patterson, Maidencreek** asked the Commission how long this discontent has been going on.

**Commissioner Hadden** responded for approximately 21 months. We have tried numerous times to resolve the problems with no input or budging on Maidencreek’s part. We asked for a meeting of all boards; everyone showed up except for Maidencreek. They sent their manager and solicitor.

**Commissioner Fiedler** confirmed that the manager and the solicitor attended as Maidencreek’s representative because their solicitor felt all the elected officials meeting would be a violation of the Sunshine Law. You are putting Maidencreek in a bind.

**Fred Harrison, Ontelaunee Township** informed the public that he has lived in Ontelaunee Township since 1989 and has been attending these meetings for approximately 10 years. There is

only one person on this Commission that has caused the issues. This has not just come about since last Friday, or that this is the first time Maidencreek has become aware of the possible break up – it’s been going on for over a year.

**Cory Deily, Ontelaunee Township** informed everyone he too has been attending Commission meetings for years. If you would show up for the meetings and/or view the meetings on you tube; you would know that all the problems with this Commission is the cause of one person. I agree 100% with the break up because there is no possible way things can work as long as the Maidencreek representative remains on the Commission. I work with numerous police departments on a daily basis and Northern Berks is by far the best. I urge the Maidencreek people here this evening to watch the videos and then attend a Maidencreek meeting and tell them exactly what you think.

**Eric Bauman, Maidencreek Township** commented that he too has attended Commission meetings for over 14 months and watched the destruction of this fine police department by one individual. I understand that people are busy and can’t always attend meetings but you can watch the videos and read the minutes to be informed. I have asked Commission Fiedler to resign at numerous meetings – both Commission meetings and Maidencreek Township meetings and she refuses. Alternate Dave Franke promised to remove her at 2020 Reorganization meeting – didn’t happen. Then again in March he tried to remove her and she threatened with legal ramifications – which she is so good at. I’m asking you again Heidi please resign from the Police Commission and do not muddle in the police department again. To the Commission, think what you are doing to this fine group of officers who will most definitely suffer because of this breakup. Heidi you always bring up the fact of legal fees, when

in fact you are the reason for the excessive legal fees. One example is your frivolous attempt to discredit Chief Horner with an Internal Investigation which by the way turned out to be false.

He asked the Ontelaunee Township and Leesport Borough Commissioners to reconsider and asked Maidencreek Township to remove Heidi from the Commission at their 2021 Reorganization Meeting.

He asked the public to research “Heidi Wheaton” and you discover that she did the same thing in Lancaster.

**Commissioner Fiedler** stated that the investigation was not frivolous and in fact Chief Horner was reprimanded.

**Solicitor Andrew Rongaus** stopped all discussions at this point; warning everyone to speak one at a time and stressed that the IA or any investigation for that matter could not be discussed in public. He allowed Commission Fiedler to continue.

**Commissioner Fiedler** went on to mention how Maidencreek Township sent letters to Ontelaunee and Leesport voicing their displeasure with the illegal reimbursement of Chief Horner’s legal fees that should be returned to the Commission and that Chief Horner should learn to conduct himself in a manner conducive of a Chief. This same Maidencreek letter also included Commissioner Hadden’s actions towards the Maidencreek representative during the meetings, executive sessions and even outside of this building. It is obvious that you brought your “cronies” here this evening and other meetings as well.

**Michael Cardell, Maidencreek Township** read a prepared statement of his firsthand experience of his regional police commission made the decision to dissolve. Officers lost their jobs, had to reapply, and if they were lucky enough to get rehired; they suffered a pay cut, put on probation and decreased benefits. He reminded the Commission that this is the second time he has been before the NBRPD Commission tasking them to reconsider their decision. He asked the Commissioners to consider the lives of the Northern Berks Regional Police officers before making such harsh decisions. He asked the Commissioners to leave their egos at the door and do the right thing for the department. Northern Berks officers are second to none and he would hate to see the regional police department dissolve.

**David Reichlein, Centre Township** stated that the Commission is acting like always – doing things in the dark. Commissioner Fiedler has brought light to deceptive ways and working conditions within the department. Just wait till Angel Toro…….

**Kevin Cunningham, Maidencreek Township** who spoke before wanted to stress to the Commission that the public should have been made aware of this decision prior to tonight. This is not fair, all the residents are being screwed over. We are caught in the middle and we should have a say.

**Maidencreek Township Alternate Commissioner David Franke** who has been in Law Enforcement for 45 years hates to see what is happening. This is sad for the communities and the police officers. It’s obvious that the crowd here this evening is not in favor of this decision. Maidencreek Township needs 24/7 coverage and asked Ontelaunee and Leesport to reconsider so in some way we can move forward as Northern Berks Regional Police. He asked the community to stand behind our officers as they are the ones whose future is at stake. This is the only part of our government that works 24/7. I realize – we all realize that money is a huge issue in this – we all have money issues! A Regional Police Department is the way to go to get more bang for your buck.

**Scott Eaken, Maidencreek Township** commented on past decisions municipalities made to leave the Northern Berks Regional Police always using the finances as the issue. Leesport submitted their withdrawal letter and formed a committee was to try to get out of the regional police. This same committee found that Leesport was getting their share of service for their contributions. Leesport turned down an offer to reduce their percentage. I was on the other side and saw the destruction this does to the officers and their families – the morale of the department.

All this work that each municipality is preparing to do to separate the police department should have been done prior to this motion. Public meetings should have been conducted so everyone could voice their concerns. To my knowledge there have been 15 or more elected officials that served on this Commission and Heidi the personality you brought to the meetings has forced the Commission to make this decision. You have violated your oath.

I ask the Commission to reconsider and rescind the motion at their 2021 Reorganization Meeting and then do your due diligence to work through the differences. There is no way two separate departments can provide the quality of service that this one can…. Mr. Frank, one thing you must do – get rid of the Zoom Meetings!

**Donna Culp, Maidencreek Township** commented that she has lived in different areas of the country getting to know how different police departments operate. Northern Berks Regional Police is the best department and would be a loss to all three municipalities. She asked the Commissioners to reconsider.

**Solicitor Andrew Rongaus** asked the Commission to vote on the dissolution again as a manor of proper procedure – allowing for public comment prior to the vote.

**Commissioner Hadden** made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Sandridge to dissolve Northern Berks Regional Police effective May 10, 2021. Commissioner Hadden and Commissioner Sandridge voted, “Aye.” Commissioner Fiedler voted, “No.” Motion carried

**Commissioner Sandridge** commented on the violations occurring at the traffic light at Pottsville Pike and East Wall.

**Commissioner Fiedler** stated this action could be a reason to file a Sunshine Law violation since Maidencreek Township didn’t have a say and/or even aware of this decision. The township first became aware of this decision on Friday. There should have been public comment.

**Janie Kilyk, Maidencreek Township** asked the Commission what this will cost. She feels Ontelaunee is in cahoots with Leesport.

**Michael Schittler, Maidencreek Township** found out about this decision on Facebook 5 days ago. Shouldn’t you have informed the public of your decisions?

**Bill Consugar, Leesport Borough** is very upset with this decision. He has a concern for his family and his daughter as she walks home from the bus stop and all the Leesport representative is concerned about is the violations at the Turkey Hill traffic light! As a CPA, I’m concerned what the cost will be to separate the departments and then form new ones.

**Brenda Eaken, Maidencreek Township** asked why the public had to learn of this decision on Facebook. You should have let the residents of all three municipalities know of you intentions. We don’t want this!

**Alyssa Christman, Ontelaunee Township** asked how much a police vehicle costs and is Ontelaunee prepared to fund a department on its own. The residents should have had a say in this decision.

**Commissioner Hadden** assured everyone that Ontelaunee Township is prepared to take on the expenses of their own police department.

**Michele Bement, Maidencreek Township** commented that all three municipalities are being held hostage because you can’t get along. Stop the bitching – suck it up! We want the police department to remain as is because they do a damn good job. This is ridiculous!

**ADJOURN**

Commission Hadden closed the meeting 7:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth M. Manmiller

NBRPD Secretary

CC:

NBRPD Commission & Alternates

Kim Berger, Ontelaunee Township Secretary

Sandra Weiser, Leesport Borough Secretary

Christopher Gerber, Siana Bellwoar Law Offices