

**NORTHERN BERKS REGIONAL POLICE
COMMISSION MEETING
February 8, 2021 6:05 PM**

ATTENDING: Gary Hadden-Ontelaunee Commissioner, David Franke-Maidencreek Township Commissioner, Ron Strause-Leesport Commissioner, James Moquin-Leesport Alternate, Kim Berger-Ontelaunee Township Alternate, Ruth Manmiller-Secretary, Chief Horner and Christopher Gerber-Solicitor.

ZOOM GUESTS: Amy Shinkus, Becky Hobart, Becky Williams, Bill & Heidi (Ontelaunee), Bobbi Jo Green, Brandy, Scott Eaken, Casey Tideman, Chad, Christina Wood, Chuck, Cindy Parks, Dave Drazenovich, Dean Horning, Diana Rollins, Diane Hollenbach, Debra Didyoung, Donna Culp, Eric Bauman, H. Elliott, Heather Schoener, Heidi Fiedler, Jason Holmgren, Jamie Kilyk, Jo, Joann Chabrol, Joe Rudolf, Josh Meck, Judy Halteman, Kate Gruber, Marcia & Shea Nolan, Melissa Lenglet, Robert Wood.

Meeting conducted on ZOOM

Commissioner Hadden called the February 8, 2021 Northern Berks Regional Police Commission to order at 6:15 PM.

Additional subject added to the Agenda under New Business – Amending Dissolution Date

Pledge to the Flag & Moment of Silence

FOR THE RECORD: Executive Session conducted 2/8/2021 5:00 PM

MINUTES –2021 Reorganization Minutes

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Strause to accept the 2021 Reorganization Meeting Minutes as presented. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

MINUTES –December 14, 2020

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Strause to accept the January 2021 Commission Meeting minutes as presented. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

TREASURE’S REPORT December

Money Market	\$345,465.95		
General Checking	\$ 12,194.34	Tompkins Vist	\$180,541.84
Payroll	\$ 43,257.53	NNO	\$9,238.55
Total Budget Bal.	\$400,917.82		

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Franke to accept the January 2021 Treasurer’s Report as read. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

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CHIEF'S DEPARTMENT REPORT – January

	CALLS	CITATIONS	WARNINGS	CONTACTS	ARRESTS	HOURS OF SERVICE	
Maidencreek	209	15	104	122	4	24.76	per day
Ontelaunee	163	22	105	146	1	18.09	per day
Leesport	67	8	52	57	1	7.9	per day
Administrative	29						

TOTAL 468 45 261 325 6

Fuel 978.45 MILEAGE 9236

Fines Collected

Maidencreek \$1,438.45 Ontelaunee \$1,708.22 Leesport \$ 622.60

Executive Session 6:20PM-6:29PM – Impact Bargaining

Cody Records Management requested a meeting with Ontelaunee Township Commissioner and Maidencreek Commissioner to work out the logistics of separating and forwarding records to each municipality. Dates will be confirmed and everyone will be advised.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Eaken comments;

1. Status of the dissolution and if there is any consideration in rescinding the motion?
2. Concern and displeasure that the NBRPD meetings are being conducted on ZOOM when both Maidencreek Township and Ontelaunee Township conducted their meetings in person but NBRPD remains by ZOOM. On 1/4/2021 The Governor lifted many of the restrictions.
3. Is there an update on the interviews for both Maidencreek & Ontelaunee?
4. He is concerned about the long term effect this will have on the officers and the department as it currently operates.

Commissioner Franke informed everyone that Maidencreek has conducted interviews for the Chief's position however; they are not in a position to offer a conditional offer of employment until all interviews have been conducted.

Commissioner Hadden & Commissioner Strause – No Comment

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Jamie Kilyk comments;

1. Criticized the Commissioners for conducting the NBRPD meetings by ZOOM. It is very difficult to hear the Commissioners' responses. It's time to stop the ZOOM meetings!
2. She asked how Ontelaunee Township obtained the same application format that was used for NBRPD testing and the emails to send out applications.

Ontelaunee Alternate, Ontelaunee Township Secretary Berger reported emails were obtained from the test applications from individuals who tested and passed the NBRPD test in September 2020. Ontelaunee Township confirmed they sent applications to both the test applicants and NBRPD Officers.

3. Do you have a cost estimate for the dissolution?

Ontelaunee Alternate, Ontelaunee Township Secretary Berger confirmed there is no cost estimate to dissolve the NBRPD. Cost estimate will be provided when available.

4. What about the Officers' Pension?

Christopher Gerber, Solicitor added that later in the meeting the Commissioners will take action to engage council to lead the Commissioners, Townships and Borough through the Pension issues.

5. Once again Jamie asked Ontelaunee & Leesport to reconsider and conduct a "re-vote" on the dissolution. Having a meeting at 3:30 in the afternoon is not considerate to the public who voted you in.

Dean Horning comments;

1. NBRPD should have 15 officers; currently you are down to 11 officers. How many officers will each separate police department hire?

Ontelaunee Alternate, Ontelaunee Township Secretary Berger commented each department should have 5 to 6 officers for each department.

2. Has there been any discussion, applications and/or interviews for an Ontelaunee Police Chief?

No comment.

Heidi Fielder comments;

1. Questioned why Pennsylvania State Police had to provide service for NBRPD jurisdiction on January 28, 2021 – 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM. This action was a total disservice to the communities NBRPD is responsible to protect and serve. Why didn't Chief Horner fill in? By the Commissioners allowing this to occur; they are not fulfilling the responsibilities per the charter.

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Chief Horner asked the Commission and was granted permission to respond;

During this time period when I was on vacation; a Sergeant was OIC. Prior to me leaving on vacation; all shifts were covered including confirmation that an officer who would be returning from an extended sick leave, pending a doctor's slip to return. Due to HIPPA I can't go any further into that situation. The OIC found out late in the day on January 28, 2021 that the returning officer had not obtained a doctor's excuse so he couldn't work his assigned shift. The OIC had the scheduling officer post an overtime shift on "When2Work" (scheduling program) for any officer to fill in the entire shift and/or a half of a shift. While on vacation, I contacted the officer taking care of the scheduling to confirm the issues posted on "When2Work" and then proceeded to call the day shift officers for assistance in filling the shift. January 29, 2021 day shift officers were contacted, but were unavailable to fill the shifts. Since no one was available the only solution was Pennsylvania State Police. The jurisdiction was covered. The Commission was not aware of this problem until I contacted them.

Don't believe everything on Facebook, the comments are not always accurate.

Commissioner Franke confirmed the Commission is working to resolve this issue and to not create any more problems moving forward. NBRPD is a 24/7 police department but with 2 officers out sick, vacations, personal time, a decreased staff scheduling is becoming very difficult. He asked the public not to lose faith in NBRPD. We have a fine group of officers.

Donna Culp commented that the NBRPD is the best department in the Berks County and it will be a disservice to the communities to dissolve the department. I believe there should have been more public input concerning the dissolution decision. The public does not want this to happen. Please reconsider.

Commissioner Strause commented that he is only 1 of 7 Leesport Council members and can't speak for the others. Nothing is impossible.

OLD BUSINESS

2013 Chevrolet – Unit # 5

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden authorizing the Chief to accept the \$3,757.50 insurance offer for Unit # 5 and then pursue selling it to a local junk yard. All Commissioners voted, "Aye" Motion carried.

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NEW BUSINESS

Dissolution Date

All municipalities with their legal counsel have been discussing the NBRPD Pension with our Administrator actuary. It has been determined that moving the dissolution date from May 10, 2021 to July 2, 2021 would be a financial benefit for the plan. Reports that to be file in 2022 will then reflect officers working for the first 6 months of 2021.

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Frank to amend the dissolution date from May 10, 2021 at midnight to July 2, 2021 at midnight. All Commissioners voted, "Aye" Motion carried.

NBRPD Pension Plan

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden to sign an Engagement letter to retain the services of CLARK HILL PLC for direction and decisions relative NBRPD Pension Plan at a rate of \$350.00 per hour for attorney fees and \$150.00 per hour for paralegal fees. All Commissioners voted, "Aye" Motion carried.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Brandy asked the Commissioners what steps they are taking to keep the NBRPD together. Do you even have a plan to attempt to save the NBRPD? This is not fair. The public doesn't even get a chance to vote. There are no statements, no plan and now you are extending the dissolution date for the best interest of the pension? Once the equipment and the buildings are divided there will be no turning back. There is no plan for either township to work independently.

Bill & Heidi have concerns for the safety of his home and family having to rely on Pennsylvania State Police. The municipalities covered by NBRPD are putting an extra burden of the Pennsylvania State Police. Why not consider staying together for the benefit of the public in the three municipalities? It's obvious that the public doesn't want this and there are personality conflicts between Commissioners. Why is the public being ignored? One of the reason I moved to this area was for the 24/7 police coverage. This decision is total disrespectful to the community.

Judy Holtman stated this entire situation is embarrassing; no one is together on anything, no plan in place and you are not listening to the public concerns. It's time to get together and try to resolve the problems.

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Strause to retain Ron Schmehl to prepare a cost study for the dissolution. All Commissioners voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

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Jamie Kilyk asked why the dissolution date was extended and is the Commission aware the new date is the beginning of the 4th of July holiday?

Commissioner Franke informed everyone the date change was to benefit the pension plan. NBRPD adopted a budget and all services are covered. This extension is to benefit the officers and I hope we all can respectfully work together to the end. Sorry it had to come to this.

Melissa Lenglet asked the Commissioners; why it is so difficult for you to listen to the people because you represent us? Why can't you put your personal conflicts aside for the public? Let's put this issue to a vote for the people to decide.

Commissioner Franke confirmed that the Commission must move forward.

Commissioner Strause provided history concerning Leesport Borough's participation with the regional police department. Leesport Borough had financial concerns two years after joining. Twice the Borough submitted letters to withdraw and then reconsidered. In 2016 it became obvious that the borough could no longer justify their costs towards the operation of the regional police department. Yes, for Leesport Borough the decision is definitely a financial decision. Leesport Borough conducted an advertised public meeting specifically for the sole purpose of voting on their future participation with NBRPD. The vote count was 5-1 (6 members present - 1 out sick) since that time the vote has changed to 7-0. I can take the concerns back to the borough council but I'm sure the vote wouldn't change.

Prior to entering into the executive session, the Commissioners confirmed there would be no action and the meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Franke made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM, seconded by Commissioner Strause. All commissioners voted, "Aye." Motion carried.

Executive Session 7:35 PM – 9:00 PM – Personnel

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth M. Wann Miller

NBRPD Secretary

CC:

NBRPD Commission & Alternates
Kim Berger, Ontelaunee Township Secretary
Sandra Weiser, Leesport Borough Secretary
Christopher Gerber, Siana Law Offices