**ATTENDING:** Gary Hadden-Ontelaunee Commissioner, David Franke-Maidencreek Township Commissioner, Ron Strause-Leesport Commissioner, James Moquin-Leesport Alternate,

Kim Berger-Ontelaunee Township Alternate, Diane Hollenbach – Maidencreek Alternate, Ruth Manmiller-Secretary, and Christopher Gerber-Solicitor.

**GUESTS:** Eric Bauman, H. Elliott, Heather Schoener, Heidi Fiedler, Jason Holmgren, Jamie Kilyk, Shea Nolan, Marcie Nolan, Sean Showalter, Scott Eaken, Harold Wagner, Joshua Steingraber, Michael Cardell, Bryan Althouse, Susan Althouse, Cody Madeira, James Cecchini

Commissioner Hadden called the March Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Pledge to the Flag & Moment of Silence

**APPOINTMENTS:** Commissioner Hadden resigned as Chairman of the Northern Berks Regional Police Commission effective immediately.

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Franke to accept the resignation of Commissioner Hadden as Chairman for the Northern Berks Regional Police. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

Commissioner Franke made a motion appointing Commissioner Strause as Chairman for the Northern Berks Regional Police for the remainder of 2021, seconded by Commissioner Hadden.

All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden to appoint Commissioner Franke as Vice Chairman for the Northern Berks Regional Police for the remainder of 2021. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**FOR THE RECORD:** Executive Sessions conducted 2/15/2021, 3/1/2021 & 3/8/2021

**MINUTES** –**February 2021**

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

**AGENDA CHANGE:**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Dissolution of NBRPD**

Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Strause to rescind the motion for the dissolution of the Northern Berks Regional Police on May 10, 2021. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**Retirement**

The Solicitor reported was not ready to present a final agreement for Brian Horner’s retirement. The Commission authorized the Solicitor to continue working on Brian Horner’s retirement agreement until a final date can be determined and to modify his job duties and chain of command pending his retirement. Det. Sgt. Wood is currently the OIC for Northern Berks Regional Police.

**Future Job Description and Search for Chief of Police**

Commissioner Hadden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Franke authorizing the Solicitor to continue working on a job description for the future Chief and prepare a newspaper advertisement for applications for an interim Chief. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**Consultant Agreement**

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Franke to accept Ronald Smeal’s Consultant Agreement to conduct a study of Northern Berks Regional Police Department for future percentages, staffing needs and equipment/supplies for $14,286.00.

**Questions/Comment on the motion;**

**Heidi Fiedler** asked, How long would this study take and when would it be completed? Will the log sheets be examined for the time spent in each municipality? Will all the information be shared?

The Solicitor confirmed that as soon as the agreement is signed, the work will begin. Most definitely

all information will be shared with all three solicitors. He wanted to commend all three municipal solicitors and board members who diligently worked together during our day-long meeting to address department issues surround the pending dissolution of the police department.

**Harold Wagner** questioned if everything will remain the same with Northern Berks Regional Police?

**Commissioner Strause** confirmed all three municipalities are working together to arrive at an amicable solution for NBRPD to remain together.

**Commissioner Hadden** added the percentage amount per municipality needs to be addressed since the percentages have not changed since 2003.

**Commissioner Strause** added it was always a financial issue regarding Leesport Borough decisions. Leesport Borough had studies completed in 2012 and 2014. The 2014 report proved Leesport Borough’s percentage should be reduced to 10.4%. This reduction never occurred. Things have changes since then; Ontelaunee Township and Maidencreek Township have grown – Leesport has not and can’t!

**After questions and comments,** on the motion toaccept Ronald Smeal’s Consultant Agreement for $14,286.00 to conduct a study of Northern Berks Regional Police for percentages, staffing needs and equipment/supplies. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**Chief Horner**

Commissioner Franke made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hadden to accept the retirement of Chief Brian Horner, as he will remain on personal leave with limited capacity, with no authority and will assist the consultant during the study. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Internal Affairs Policy**

Commissioner Strause made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Franke authorizing the Solicitor to move forward with finalizing the Internal Affairs Policy. All Commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

**TREASURE’S REPORT** **- February 2021**

Money Market $259,310.45

General Checking $ 11,846.81 Tompkins Vist $180,576.46

Payroll $ 43,257.53 NNO $9,238.55

Total Budget Bal. $314,414.79

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

**DEPARTMENT REPORT – February 2021**

Presented by OIC Wood

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

Maidencreek 221 14 111 122 1 19.58 per day

Ontelaunee 176 15 64 77 0 17.01 per day

Leesport 68 12 47 54 1 10.16 per day

Administrative 37

**TOTAL 502 41 222 253 2**

**Fuel 834.29 MILEAGE 7603.5**

**Fines Collected**

**Maidencreek $733.59 Ontelaunee $734.63 Leesport $510.91**

**OIC Wood** clarified specifications for attendance for this Commission meeting. Regulations allowed for 25 people to be in the meeting room, after deducting Commission personnel, there were 16 seats available for the public. It was upsetting that some couldn’t attend.

**Commissioner Franke** read a prepared statement reflecting on the collective efforts of all three municipalities, solicitors and association to preserve Northern Berks Regional Police.

**Commissioner Strause** extended his apologies to the officers and their families for the unbelievable

stress they were under since the decision to dissolve was announced. We are all working in a positive manor to begin a new direction for the department.

**Commissioner Hadden** assured everyone there is a collective effort to work together to fix the problems within the municipalities and implementing safe guards that something like this does not happen again. It was never about the department and/or the officers.

**COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR**

**Sean Showalter**, Sergeant for NBRPD and president of the NBRPD Association thanked the commission, alternates, solicitors, and association who worked together to resolve the problems, I’m sure making some difficult decisions along the way. We remain committed to the municipalities we serve. What are you going to implement to prevent this from happening again?

The Solicitor assured everyone the Commissioners and all municipalities are working together to prevent a dissolution and/or withdrawal from happening again. .

**Commissioner Franke** added that everyone worked together discussing the issues and working on resolutions to solve them. Northern Berks Regional Police officers are the best and are committed to protecting and serving our communities. This is a 30 year agreement that needs some fixing however; we are committed to move forward in a positive manor.

**James Cecchini** asked if the IA policy be made public.

The Solicitor assured everyone that copies will be made available.

**Harold Wager** asked if the problem was within the Commission that led to all these problems.

**Commissioner Hadden** commented, the contribution percentage was one of the main issues addressed during the meeting and that is why an independent study is being completed.

**Joshua Steingraber** questioned the Commissioners what will happen when the results of the study are completed. Will there be an increase – decrease? What about manpower? Has an OIC been designated since Chief Horner retired?

**Commissioner Hadden** stated the Commission will move forward hiring additional officers to complement the decreased staff as soon as possible. We all agreed that the information obtained through the study will be agreed upon to move forward.

**Commissioner Franke** added Chief Horner was administrative and not counted as an officer on the street. The study will tell the Commission how many officers will be required for the department to be fully staffed and operate effectively.

**Jamie Kiluk** thanked the Commission for their efforts to save Northern Berks Regional Police; it’s the best news for all communities. I hope safeguards will be put in place to prevent this from happening again. When will the study begin?

**Commissioner Strause** advised one of the provisions to be added to the charter is for a 3-5 year time table for review of the department, officers and the Commission. We want everything to be fair for all involved.

**Eric Bauman** thanked the Commissioners, municipalities, and solicitors for working together to preserve Northern Berks Regional Police. He thanked Commissioner Hadden for his services as Chairman.

**Heidi Fiedler** is pleased that the dissolution was stopped however; wanted everyone to know that Maidencreek was not in favor of the dissolution. Now that department will remain and Chief Horner has retired; there can be a fresh start of which Maidencreek is in favor 100%. She asked that the Charter be revisited.

Commissioner Hadden commented the Commission will move forward focusing on the problems as everyone has agreed and will abide by the results of the study.

Commissioner Strause reminded Heidi Fiedler that all this was discussed during the joint meeting last Monday.

**Scott Eaken** thanked everyone involved in keeping the police department together. He cautioned, that somehow the actions of the last few months should be recorded to use as guidance for future municipalities who may consider withdrawing and/or dissolution.

**Sean Showalter** thanked the public for their support during this trying time.

**Michael Cardell** thanked the Commissioners for stepping up and dealing with the problems. He asked that in the future they to remember to check your egos at the door for the welfare of municipalities and the officers. When searching for a new Chief take in to consideration their leadership skills, it’s a necessary asset to possess to run a police department – weak leadership will destroy it. He congratulated the officers and their families.

**FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

**ADJOURN**

Commissioner Franke made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 PM, seconded by Commissioner Hadden. All commissioners voted, “Aye.” Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth M. Manmiller

NBRPD Secretary

CC:

NBRPD Commission & Alternates

Kim Berger, Ontelaunee Township Secretary

Sandra Weiser, Leesport Borough Secretary

Christopher Gerber, Siana Law Offices