

**Regional Police Development Committee
North Cornwall Township & North Lebanon Township
March 7, 2024**

Call to Order:

The March 7, 2024, meeting of the Regional Police Development Committee was called to order by Mike Wahmann at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. In attendance were Justin Thompson, NCT Manager; Chief Harry Ward, NCT Police Department; Mike Wahmann, NCT Supervisor, Ron Sell, NCT Supervisor; Lori Books, NLT Manager, Chief Timothy Knight, NLT Police Department, Arden Snook, NLT Supervisor, Gary Heisey, NLT Supervisor and Dan Bost, District Director for Senator Gebhard.

Others in attendance are listed on the sign-in sheet.

Discussion/Action:

Approval of Minutes from February 22, 2024, Meeting – The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the February 22, 2024, meeting. Mr. Sell made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as written. Mr. Heisey seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Charter Agreement:

Mr. Wahmann reviewed the changes made to the second Draft Charter Agreement from the February 22, 2024, meeting to ensure all agreed and to discuss any more potential changes. There were no comments made nor changes requested from the Steering Committee.

Proposed Budget Discussion:

Mr. Heisey began the discussion of the Proposed Draft Budget #1 for a Regional Police Department. He explained that the budgets from both Township's police departments were put together to form this draft. Line items were combined for a consolidated presentation. Two budget proposals were initially considered, one for twenty-three officers and another for twenty-four officers. It was determined that adding another officer still resulted in a savings to the North Lebanon Township compared to what they approved in their 2024 police department budget. The Committee will be considering the budget proposal for twenty-four officers. Mr. Heisey proceeded to review the line items of Draft #1-24 Officers.

Public Comment:

Todd Dissinger requested clarification on the revenue section of the proposed budget to understand how NLT will save money. NLT and NCT Township contributions and other revenues were explained.

Susan Mion asked if there were overtime costs that exceed what is in the budget, would the costs be shared by both NLT and NCT Townships? A committee member responded that yes, the overtime costs would be shared. Ms. Mion inquired how future cost increases in health care, salaries and other areas of the budget would be addressed. Mr. Heisey explained that cost increases happen every year to Townships. He anticipates incoming grant funds will help to build up the capital reserve account to help cover those increases.

Bruce Sattazahn asked if the officers would be working 8-, 10-, or 12-hour shift schedules and how the shift differences affect coverage. He also inquired if the officers are on a 12-hour shift, totaling a 36-hour work week, will they be paid for 40 hours a week? Mr. Heisey said he prefers an overlapped schedule to provide more police coverage. He is not in favor of a 12-hour shift. Chief Knight added that a 12-hour shift further increases coverage and explained a few ways to manage the 4-hour difference to a 40-hour work week. Chief Ward explained that NCT has a 10-hour shift schedule with a lot of overlapping in the afternoon shifts, when they have a rise in calls of service. This schedule also helps with coverage to the community when an officer is in a court hearing.

Cheri Grumbine inquired if the amount in the budget proposal for overtime was enough for a regional department since it was similar to NLT's police department overtime line item for 2024. Mr. Thompson responded that 10- or 12-hour shift schedules would help to cut down on the overall overtime. He added that NCT's current overtime budget is much smaller than NLT's. Combined, the budget proposal for overtime is within \$10,000 of the combined 2024 overtime budget. Ms. Grumbine asked for various further clarifications. Various committee members answered her questions and concerns. Assurance was given that the Charter Agreement will be turned over to a labor attorney for review.

Ms. Mion asked how future additions to the Regional Department would be considered and how the Commission would be affected by the addition of a larger or smaller department. Mr. Heisey answered that a new incoming municipality would have to be a good pairing (similar) and would only get one seat on the Commission if they become a member of the department. Mr. Wahmann added that to keep an odd number of members within the Commission, the citizen at large position would be eliminated, if necessary. If the number of members within the Commission were to be even, then the at-large member would be reintroduced. Mr. Heisey further explained that a new addition can also be a contracted member, as West Lebanon Township would be in the Regional Dept. A contracted member will pay for police services but cannot vote on any decisions as a member of the Commission.

Lee Spencer expressed his concerns regarding the merger. Discussion with Mr. Wahmann followed. Chief Knight encouraged Mr. Spencer to look at this potential merger with the current officers and his neighbors in mind. He added that at times there is only one officer on duty. Citing a rise in major crimes, calls, traffic and population, he needs more manpower. Chief Knight answered he would have to hire seventeen additional officers at an average of \$150,000 (with benefits) to match the manpower, services and specialties this merger would offer. Mr. Snook added that with the merger, there will be two more full-time detectives.

Allen Heagy thanked the Committee for having an evening meeting. He asked the Committee how a 50/50 split will benefit either Township when there is a difference in population? Mr. Thompson replied that the call volume for service is similar. After an inquiry into how the pay scale will differ from local to regional, Chief Knight explained that officers are applying to larger departments for better pay and benefits. Mr. Heisey added that a merger will provide better advancement opportunities. Joining the NCT and NLT departments will make applying for the job more attractive to qualified candidates.

Emily Bixler requested a summarization of how the line items in the proposed budget were calculated. Mr. Thompson replied that 75% is salaries and benefits. The rest is a combination of

the usual expenses from both Townships, with extra projected items needed for start-up. Health care and startup costs will be reevaluated when exact quotes are received.

A Seven Mountains Media reporter asked for clarification of who the Commission members are. The response was that two Supervisors from each Township and one at large citizen will be Commission members, retaining the oversight that they have now.

Tom Kissinger approached the Commission. He said 16 years went by without hiring extra police officers while the Township was growing. Money, he added, is not the only consideration, but also doing what is right and more manpower is needed.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is March 27, at 3:00 p.m. at the North Lebanon Township building, 725 Kimmerlings Road, Lebanon PA 17046.

Adjournment: Mr. Sell motioned to adjourn at 7:11 pm. Mr. Heisey seconded. All were in favor.