

**BOROUGH OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
WASHINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL MINUTES – July 16, 2015**

The Special Meeting of the Borough Council of Washington, Warren County, New Jersey was held in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Mayor McDonald read the following statement into the record:

“The requirements of the ‘Open Public Meetings Law, 1975, Chapter 231’ have been satisfied in that adequate notice of this meeting has been published in the Star Gazette and posted on the Bulletin Board of Borough Hall stating the time, place and purpose of the meeting as required by law.”

Mayor McDonald led everyone in the flag salute.

Roll Call: McDonald, Higgins, Thompson, Heinrich, Noone, Conry
(arrived 7:10pm)

Absent: Klimko

Also Present: Kristine Blanchard, RMC Borough Manager/Clerk

PRESENTATION: POLICE REGIONALIZATION

Chief Roy D. Seiple of the Colonial Regional Police Department presented information regarding “Regional Policing.” Also present was Mr. Glynn, Chairman of the Commission. Chief Seiple explained that the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and goals explains that every state and local government and every police agency should provide services by the most effective and efficient organizational means available. He explained that the NAJCCJSG also suggests that police agencies that employ less than 10 sworn employees should consolidate for improved efficiency and effectiveness. Chief Seiple explained that his regional police department is governed by an “Articles of Agreement” which establish rules that govern the department. To change these articles, there must be a unanimous vote of all municipalities. The budget must also be passed unanimously. The budget is a calendar year budget. There also must be equal representation of all municipalities on Board of Commissioners.

Chief Seiple further explained that the Colonial Regional Police Department began with 8 officers and they are now staffed by 25. There are no part time officers. They cover 22 square miles with a population of 19,632. They have 9,200 recordable incidents a year. A recordable incident is defined by “an incident that requires a police officer to provide a written report.”

The Colonial Regional Police Department has a \$3.4 million budget. Chief Seiple also stated that Colonial Regional PD was the first regional PD in PA to become accredited. Seiple next showed the organizational chart of the Regional Police Department, and explained that the Commission does not get involved in the day to day matters, and the Commission is used primarily for budgeting and policy purposes. Chief Seiple next outlined the Officer Specialties and Community Programs for the Colonial Regional PD. For Supervisory Training, all Supervisory Staff have attended Command Institute for Police Executives (40 hours), POLEX Police Executive Development Program (80 hours) and POSIT Police Supervisor in Service Training (40 hours). He next explained the make up of the Detective Division, explaining that it consists of a Detective Sergeant and two Detectives, who are responsible for follow up on all crimes referred to them by the patrol officers. He stated that the CRPD currently has 21 officers assigned to the Northampton County Drug Task Force. Chief Seiple additionally stated that the CRPD has 6 officers on bicycle patrol and 2 K-9 officers. The CRPD additionally has an Accident Re-constructionist as well as a Citizen Police Academy. Chief Seiple noted that the CRPD also has a community program called "Shop with Cops" and DARE programs. Chief Seiple further explained that the CRPD also has commercial vehicle inspections. The CRPD also has several grants, including targeting seat belts and aggressive drivers in addition to crime watch programs.

Chief Seiple next addressed how municipalities in the Regional Police Department pay for services. He explained that the formula is established through the initial Articles of Agreement. For example, the CRPD uses a 30% Assessed Property Valuation, 30% Population and 40% Incidents. He next outlined several other possible formulas, such as based on 100% population, 50% population and 50% assessed property value, 40% population, 40% assessed property value and 20% road mileage.

Chief Seiple explained the potential options for Washington Borough, including contract services through an established department, reestablishing their own department, regionalize or acquire state police coverage. Chief Seiple stated that several advantages of regionalization include specialized training and efficiency, unified supervision and management, improved career enhancement and opportunities for personnel, that it is cost efficient, with consistency of enforcement throughout the jurisdiction, coordination of law enforcement services, improved deployment and distribution of police personnel, uniform traffic regulations, rank structure, overlapping patrol areas and training. Next, Chief Seiple addressed several areas of concerns or disadvantages, including loss of control, decreased officer presence, equitable distribution of service, loss of personal touch and costs.

Finally, Chief Seiple explained that if the Borough is interested in a Regional Police Department, they must perform a feasibility study, gather data, analyze data and determine feasibility and set a timeline for implementation.

At this time there was an informal audience discussion regarding the timeline between starting a feasibility study and implementation. Chief Seiple replied that it could be 1-3 years. Questions were asked about the budget preparation process and what would happen if a municipality rejects the proposed regionalized budget. Chief Seiple stated if a budget is rejected, the municipality would be dropping out of police services.

An audience member asked if there ever had been a time that a municipality says they will not pay after the commission has worked on the budget? Chief Seiple responded yes.

Councilman Higgins asked if the council helped with negotiations or let the representative negotiate what they felt was best, and then bring it back to council for approval. Chief Seiple responded yes, they would approve or disapprove and discuss any issues.

There was general discussion of how budgeting could be determined with fluctuations from different towns. There was discussion of how to determine populations, to which it was discussed that the census could be used to determine population.

Chief Seiple next answered questions regarding auditing, and explained that an independent auditor is used. He next addressed what they did if there was a surplus at the end of the year, explaining that the money is put into the police budget, and the money is used to offset costs for the following year. He next explained that they carry over around \$190k a year which is an emergency fund.

There was general discussion that benefits and salaries are paid for through the commission. Seiple explained that in PA there is a law that prevents municipalities from paying benefits or salaries once a Regionalized Police Department has been established, and that the police of the regionalized department were considered employees of every municipality.

ADJOURNMENT:

Hearing no further business, a motion was made by Higgins, seconded by Noone to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Ayes: 6, Nays: 0
Motion Carried

Mayor Scott McDonald

Kristine Blanchard, RMC Borough Clerk