

**LONDON GROVE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Richard Scott Harper
David Connors
Robert Weer
Michael Pickel

STAFF PRESENT:

Steven C. Brown, Township Manager
9 Audience Members

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Scott Harper opened the meeting at 7 p.m. and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Scott Harper said the primary reason for the meeting is to discuss an emergency services needs assessment that a consultant is performing for the Township. He introduced Mr. William Jenaway, VFIS, who will conduct the meeting.

Mr. Jenaway said his company works with a number of municipalities, mostly in the Mid-Atlantic, and they have a broad perspective. He reviewed his professional and educational background and noted he is Supervisor in another township.

Mr. Jenaway said tonight is an opportunity for the public to provide their input into the process. He said the expectations are the number 1 driver of change for these municipal services. Demographics and population changes will also drive the demand and need for services.

Mr. Jenaway then asked for comments and questions from the public.

1. It was asked where he gets the police data for the study? Answer – from the 9-1-1 Center and the State Police reports provided to the Township.
2. Were there any studies that they conducted where the State Police barracks are located in the municipality as is the case in London Grove? Answer – not directly.
3. An audience member noted that a couple of years back the Township was discussing the possibility of joining a new regional police department, but the idea died. Now the Township is getting parking complaints from the neighborhood across the street from the Avon Grove High School. He said the school has a role in the problem. Response – Mr. Jenaway said he would drive through the neighborhoods to see the extent of the problem.
4. A resident asked if the parking problem was one of the main problems faced by the Township forcing them into considering police services? Answer – Mr. Scott Harper said it is a current issue. He noted the Board has also had complaints about burglaries, enforcement issues, etc. He stated the Board wanted to have facts from an assessment to help decide the matter. An audience member noted that you need to make certain that you get value for money spent. Mr. Weer agreed and stated that is why the Board contracted with VFIS to have the needs assessments done.
5. An audience member who identified himself as an ex-Fire Chief of Avondale Fire Company said he agrees with the Board and hopes the study will generate facts.

He asked would the study be available to the public before a public vote on any decisions? Answer – Mr. Scott Harper said it will be a public document and will be provided for review and comment.

Mr. Connors clarified for the audience that the Board was not discussing a regional police force, but has been discussing contracting for police services. He said he viewed it as an opportunity to possibly provide additional services to the residents and that the assessment will help guide that decision.

Mr. Jenaway commented that a part of the assessment is the preparation of a 5-year plan, with recommendations for each year.

6. A resident asked how much the assessment cost and when will it be done? Answer – approximately \$7,000 and a draft will be ready next month.

There was a discussion of the cost, details and other matters related to the idea of contracting for police services. Mr. Pickel stated that the discussion on the subject is in the very preliminary stages. Mr. Scott Harper noted that the Supervisors will have another public meeting to discuss the matter of contracting for police services before a decision is made.

7. An audience member commented that they believe West Grove and Avondale Fire and ambulance do a phenomenal job and have handled the growth in the community and does not see any outstanding needs.
8. Mr. Guy Swift, Avondale Fire Company President, said he met with Mr. Jenaway. He believes the questions asked and information sought was good and fair. Mr. Jenaway made it clear to him that this process was intended to be positive and is anxious to see the outcome. Mr. Swift stated that Avondale will do what they need to do to work with the Township and thanked the Board for embarking on this process.
9. A question was asked about the data that was being collected. The response from Mr. Jenaway was that he could not get data from the fire companies like he can in Bucks and Montgomery Counties as it is not possible to delve as deeply into the software here. Because of that, he relies more on data from the County 9-1-1 Center. Mr. Swift noted that the County figures do not match the figures that the Avondale Fire Company has.
10. Is the study looking at a Fire Marshal/Codes position? Answer – yes, options are being investigated.
11. Is the Board looking at options for the parking issue near the high school? Answer – Yes, the Board has and will discuss a variety of options. There are ways to handle it without police. Mr. Scott Harper said the Board will also schedule a meeting to discuss this specific matter. The Supervisors said that the parking issue is really Township-wide.
12. What are the steps to be taken after the assessment is done? Answer – A public meeting will be held to discuss the results; however, the next steps somewhat depend on what the study says.

13. Are Mr. Jenaway's recommendations based on his experience or standards?
Answer – Mr. Jenaway stated that they use national standards and benchmarking, but will also make interpretations of the data. He will look at trends to see where the community is going. Solutions will follow that information.
14. Are the Pennsylvania State Police providing input? The resident said he heard that they see no need for contract police and do not understand it. Answer – Mr. Jenaway stated that he will talk with them about their call trends and how that impacts London Grove Township.
15. A resident stated that he is open minded when it comes to the needs for police services in the Township. He said he has had disappointing service from the State Police in the past due to them being busy. He went on to say that he spoke with a Police Chief near West Chester and was told that they had 3 full-time, 6 part-time officers that provide 24/7 coverage for approximately \$600,000. He stated that he believes a local, part-time service might make sense. He asked to see accurate numbers regarding the cost of the various policing options.

Mr. Connors said that on September 21st the Board was holding a 5-year budget meeting where they will discuss how a contract for police could be afforded without increasing taxes.

W. Woodview Road bridge replacement

Mr. Brown stated that the State plans to use the Rapid Bridge replacement program for this bridge. The Board is being asked to approve the detour proposed for the project. Mr. Weer made a motion to approve the W. Woodview Road bridge replacement detour, Mr. Pickel seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-1. Mr. Connors voted nay.

Mr. Scott Harper stated that the Township Engineer, Ragan Engineering Associates (REA), review escrow release #8 for Rose Hollow. REA recommends approval of the release in the amount of \$32,464. Mr. Connors made a motion to approve escrow release #8, Mr. Pickel seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

Mr. Brown stated that the Brandywine Conservancy intends to make an application to the DCNR for a grant to plant riparian forested buffers. The Conservancy has asked London Grove if we would like to participate and contribute \$50,000 of Open Space Fund money towards the match. The Board stated that they are interested but needed more details and time to consider the request. They noted the Conservancy had just asked Mr. Brown this week and needed a decision by September 15th.

II. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven C. Brown
Township Manager