

**BETHEL TOWNSHIP & TULPEHOCKEN TOWNSHIP**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Joint Meeting Police Merger**  
**April 28, 2016**

The Bethel and Tulpehocken Township Board of Supervisors joint meeting was called to order by Chairman Gary Deck. In attendance were Gary Deck, Lester Feick, Richard Kramer, Jake Meyer, Mike Graby, Robbi Lane and Jayne Seifrit. Officer in Charge Ryan Murphy, Chief Kris Kerschner and Todd Szkwarek were also in attendance. Meeting was held in the Bethel Township Meeting Room at 60 Klahr Rd, Bethel Township. Other interested persons were in present.

**Approval of Minutes**

Rick Kramer made a motion to approve the minutes from March 16, 2016, seconded by Jake Meyer. All agreed. Motion carried.

**Grants**

Jayne Seifrit reported there are grants available but they are not plentiful; less for merging as compared to regionalizing. There is no guarantee the grant would be awarded and they are for a year or so; funding would need to be in place for future years.

**Cost Overview**

Robbi Lane provided the Board members with a cost overview for each department as it is currently (with the numbers she had available), then an overview if the departments would merge.

**Schedule**

Robbi Lane reported she and Chief Kerschner worked on a schedule to see if there would be additional hours that could be covered with the current number of police officers. The schedule does reflect additional coverage hours could be realized. Discussion ensued concerning vacation, sick and other time off; it was concluded it would adversely impact the sample schedule even more than the current schedules. The state would not cover if there is already an officer on duty (merged). Now, if the independent departments have a call off the stated covers. It was stated the safety of the Officers comes first.

**Discussion**

The Board members asked what crimes do we have and the kind of time it takes to conclude the process. OIC Ryan Murphy and Chief Kris Kerschner agreed they are mostly domestics, thefts and traffic accidents. Chief Kerschner stated one domestic could result in approximately 15 hours which would include investigations, local court and county court. Patrolling the Township was noted as key in deterring crime. Currently Tulpehocken Police Department is the school districts resource officer for 6 hours a week. In that time the officer is visible in the school; whether it is having lunch with the students or taking care of an issue. Having an Officer in the school is viewed as a deterrent for more serious crimes and hoping to catch the students before they consider doing harmful or illegal activities.

Several residents expressed interest in 24 hour coverage. It was said if the taxes need to be raise to do this they would be in favor. Not all in attendance echoed that thought. The Board members stated they are not looking to raise taxes or increase the departments unless that is what the residents want. But raising taxes is what would have to happen to expand the departments,

merger or not. Some stated they did not see an advantage to a merger so we should stop beating a dead horse and leave things as they are.

The Board asked the Police Officers if there is a way to do more with what is in place. Chief Kris Kerschner stated they can look into it once the school is finished. Closer coordinating of the schedules may be a possibility, and they can look at other areas.

Consensus of the Boards is to stay as is for now with the Police Departments being directed to see what they can coordinate between departments to be safe and enhance coverage and service for the residents of both Townships.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jayne K Seifrit, Bethel Township Manager