

**Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2004**  
**Board of Supervisors Special Meeting**

Manager Rambo called the Board of Supervisors Special Meeting between West Brandywine Township and Honey Brook Township of June 11, 2004 to order at 8:12 a.m. Supervisor Obernier then led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call of the Board of Supervisors by the Township Manager noted Vice-Chairman Lindborg and Supervisor Obernier in attendance. Chairman McCaffrey arrived at 8:19. The following individuals were also present: Ronald A. Rambo, Jr.; WBT Manager, Capt. Walter M. Werner; Chief WB Police Department, Mike Brown; Honey Brook Township Manager, Donald Johnson; Honey Brook Township Supervisor, Greg Cary (arrived at 8:28 a.m.); Honey Brook Township Supervisor and D. Weston Darby, Jr.; Honey Brook Township Supervisor.

Manager Rambo advised the Board that the purpose of this special meeting between West Brandywine Township and Honey Brook Township is to discuss police services. West Brandywine Township was approached by Honey Brook Township.

Vice-Chairman Lindborg asked for an overview of what they are looking to do and asked what the current level of police is. Mike Brown expressed that WBT and Honey Brook both have police departments and they are looking at a way to make the service in the area more efficient and cost effective for the taxpayer. They are two different communities that have been operating independently from one another. He drew up a memo dated June 1, 2004 for points of discussion. The first point discussed was the commonality of vision, values and philosophy of government between the two communities. An example was noted of the different visions and views that two communities can have of each other was East Goshen and Westtown who have a regional police department. From his experience the two communities have different views of themselves and of each other with different priorities. They needed a new police facility and it took four years to come to an agreement after having been together for twenty years. It was exactly like a marriage with the consequences of marriage.

Vice-Chairman Lindborg asked what services Honey Brook Police Department provides. Mike Brown stated they have a chief, sergeant and three part time officers. Within that scope they do everything, some things are done well and some not as well because they don't have the necessary resources. They have 6,278 residents according to the 2000 census and have

approximately 50 road miles. Manager Rambo noted we are within ten miles of each other for road miles and WBT has 1,300 more people. WBT has 13 square miles while Honey Brook has 25 square miles.

Chairman McCaffrey suggested that the cost be broken down per hour for comparison. Vice-Chairman Lindborg asked what type of services Honey Brook was looking for, e.g., twenty-four hour coverage, level of service. Mike Brown asked how many shifts WBT runs each week.

Chief Werner noted that WBT has two part time slots a week, vacation time, holidays, comp time, sick time and they also run extra details as well.

Supervisor Obernier reiterated Vice-Chairman Lindborg's question and asked what Honey Brook Township is looking for. Mike Brown stated he would like to see more service by reaching an economy of scale, which he perceives through a larger department, the savings that we don't need to duplicate. He would like to see a regional department that would possibly include West Caln, West Nantmeal, Parkesburg, and Honey Brook Borough and feels that geographically it would make sense.

Chairman McCaffrey felt that a partnership would be more feasible than having one regional department, everyone makes demands of their own department to try and stretch their services out as far as they can, if you don't have the costs nailed down then you may have one police department subsidizing the other one. Chairman McCaffrey suggested having something set in place, so if you want to attract other communities who might want to join, then they wouldn't pay for more than their share. If they have fewer miles and are a smaller community their dollar amount should be reconfigured.

Mike Brown explained that they had Honey Brook Borough as a customer up until two years ago. He personally felt they lost them as a customer because of the same reason that any business loses a customer; that they did not get the value for what they were spending.

Mike Brown explained the mechanics of it, if asked what the single most important value for each community was with respect to police services, there might be two different answers given. One might answer the least amount of services possible and another may answer to provide the absolute best of everything.

Chairman McCaffrey suggested that the flexibility and mechanisms should be built into this right from the beginning while everybody is amicable before any problems arise. You should go into this knowing that we all have different views and different demands that would be put on the department. He noted difficulties in the past with Wallace Township.

Mike Brown suggested that each community would have their own representative. Manager Rambo felt that in the beginning everything should be contractual and while doing that, establish community research to see what services and grant money may be available as well as what services might be needed.

Supervisor Cary stated he wouldn't rule that out as a stepping-stone. There is a Police Association, which has exclusive rights within their jurisdiction. They couldn't enter into a contractual agreement without their Police Associations acquiescence. This could probably be achieved but they would have their concerns that would have to be addressed.

Chairman McCaffrey noted they could all agree on the idea of looking for grant money. Manager Rambo suggested possibly looking for grant money for COPS in schools, if West Caln came aboard, then combined there would be five schools. Those types of grants usually run for three years, and then there are means to approach the school district to see if they want to keep the officers there. Chairman McCaffrey would like to see a list compiled of potential costs.

Supervisor Obernier explained the experience that he had with regards to the agreement WBT had with Wallace to provide services. This agreement was entered into before he came on board. Their motivation in doing so was to save money, when they no longer were together then the Township was faced with having to lay two people off. Wallace and East Brandywine created a regional police force with the intent to save them money, but in reality it was quite the opposite. He expressed that he was hard pressed to understand how regionalization would save money other than not having two physical police departments. As time passes each municipality would want a physical presence and twenty-four hour police presence. Since they formed a regional department their costs are out of control and both townships (East Brandywine and Wallace) have had substantial increases in the cost of police services. It sounds nice to regionalize, but WBT is well funded, and over time they have addressed and resolved different problems, e.g., police cars had over 250,000 miles – now the cars are rotated over a three-year period. In some places the police department has an adversarial relationship with the elected officials, that is not the way it is at WBT. If they were going to go in the direction of a regional police department he would like proof of the savings first. If they move in the direction of regionalization, then he would prefer to reach a contractual relationship of providing services and see how it goes. Supervisor Obernier doesn't believe it would be cost effective.

Vice-Chairman Lindborg asked why Brandywine Regional's costs have gone up. Supervisor Obernier stated they have received ten percent raises multiple years in a row. Chief Walt Werner noted they raised their officer's pay scale which is now comparable to WBT Police Department's. Chairman McCaffrey explained that their commission forms the budget, which doesn't have to be that way; it can be that the Township does the budget, that tells the commission that they have to work within the budget. All of these things have to be taken into consideration with the initial setup.

Supervisor Darby asked if WBT has an hourly figure for operating costs for an officer on a contractual basis. Chairman McCaffrey feels that would be very difficult to determine, he feels the way to do it would be that each community has to pitch in for basic police services, one vehicle, one officer, and the basic infrastructure that supports the department. After that, you would have a basic rate to get a second officer. He felt that it would be difficult to agree to what the level of service should be, agreement to the level of service will be in a constant state of flux as you add more communities. Newly elected people may have a different idea of the level of service from what had been agreed upon.

Supervisor Cary stated that you would have to decide the level of service from the beginning. Chairman McCaffrey stated that different communities would want a different level of service. He noted he was elected to reduce taxes and if he wanted to reduce one police vehicle to save taxes the whole thing may fall apart. As a whole you would have to look at it as if you have three townships that come together for this, what is there for us as partners would be greater than if they would be working individually on the other hand they would maintain individual control over their own department.

Supervisor Obernier suggested that if you just contract for services, you can decide how high a level of service that you want and if it comes down to an hourly rate, perhaps they don't need a physical building for a police department, we have one here, then it would be economical for them. To be fair, if they were contracting police services for a number of dollars then it would help support the physical building that we have, if you are looking for economy that would be the best way to do it. He personally agrees that it would be a mistake to give away control to a commission. When you actually sit down and work the numbers out in the end, after a few years the grant money would go away and we would have to pay for this. The best control that you have is when you can decide and change the level of service when the BoS wants it. He felt that the simplest thing to do would be to start with a level of contracted services. Experience with that over time would probably be the most cost effective way for us all to do this.

Chairman McCaffrey stated he liked the idea of a partnership; it would add professionalism to the department and increase the level of service with an increase in visibility of police patrolling the street. He felt that West Caln is growing and some day they will need a police department. If they join in they would benefit from the services and get a level of services they have not come to identify yet.

Supervisor Cary noted that he has been in Honey Brook Township for ten years. Recently Parksburg has recently started servicing Honey Brook Borough after deciding on an hourly rate for what it would cost to provide services to the borough. He would like to see that happen in Honey Brook Township, which would keep everything simple. There are not many people currently happy with the level of service provided in Honey Brook Township and would like to see this happen to provide a better level of service. He noted that WBT is a very fine department and that he has a lot of respect for WBT Police Department.

Chief Walt Werner explained they have certain restrictions that they are under, one being that they cannot just layoff their people. Supervisor Obernier asked if they could pick the level of services that they receive from the police department, would they be willing to accept an extra expense should the state mandate something that would be an added expense to the Township. He pointed out that the rate the contract was based on could change during the middle of the year.

Chairman McCaffrey stated that there should be a minimal level of service that each department should have to contribute to, but from that point on you would then have the ability to build on that level.

Supervisor Darby stated that after listening to everyone speak, it sounds as though this would be like a business entity. With every business it would have a basic level of overhead and based upon customer demand it adjusts and charges accordingly.

Chairman McCaffrey explained that each department may have different costs associated with it, there has to be some basic plans in place before adding all of the “bells and whistles.”

Chief Walt Werner suggested that the Township Managers look into Northern York County Regional Department that uses a similar system as well as a patrol unit cost. Chairman McCaffrey explained that he spoke with someone from PSATS who explained that they had a wonderful working relationship until one of their communities decided to do a redevelopment project which turned into an area where there are now a string of clubs and bars, which caused the entire police department, it seemed, to live in that area and there was nothing written in there regulations about that and it’s now tearing the entire association apart because they didn’t provide for the actions of one community causing a tremendous burden on the regions department. You need some rational way to deal with “hot spots.” He suggested that they deal with all the issues and costs associated upfront and try to put together a great association. He felt that Supervisor Obernier’s suggestion to try things out first was a good idea. Honey Brook is looking for an increase level of service from what they have.

Supervisor Darby asked what would happen to the current police that are in Honey Brook if they were to merge into one. Chairman McCaffrey said since they are looking for an increase level of service from what they had, that WBT uses a manual and if those people if they were qualified, they would be doing the same duty as they currently are, but augmented here. Supervisor Obernier noted that they require a psychological exam of new hires, a physical exam, and also a certain level physical fitness. If they were contracting or merging they would expect that the guys from Honey Brook would be able to pass those exams.

Manager Brown stated they use the procedure manual that WBT Police Department uses as well but they don’t have the physical agility test. They have sworn officers that have been serving the community for a long time. Chairman McCaffrey noted that Honey Brook is looking for a change; generally people that are looking for a change have a weakness associated with that.

Supervisor Darby noted that they did not come to the meeting with the idea that they had a problem and that WBT Police Department was going to solve the problem. Chairman McCaffrey stated he didn’t say that. Supervisor Obernier noted that was the feeling that he got from them. Chairman McCaffrey stated his feeling from what he heard during the meeting was that Honey Brook is looking for increased services, as they are sitting there looking for the possibility to form a regional department and apologized for misunderstanding the language that was brought up about what would happen to their police.

Manager Brown stated that was simply brought up so that everyone understands the legal aspects of it, if there were some type of merger that would happen, then Honey Brook Township has to address that issue and he viewed it as a minor issue.

Chairman McCaffrey suggested that the Supervisors should decide if they would like their Managers to explore what grant money is available. They need to examine how the costs would be contained as well as review the levels of service that would be needed.

Supervisor Darby suggested that if other Townships were to enter into the partnership, it may be better to ask them to come into this from the very beginning. Both WBT and Honey Brook agreed that they were both interested in exploring the possibility to form a partnership. Other participants such as West Caln, West Nantmeal, and Honey Brook Borough will be sent a letter asking for their level of interest in joining the partnership.

Chairman McCaffrey stated they will send the letters out but felt that there would be a cool reception for this and suggested that between Honey Brook and WBT they should start looking into what features they feel are important, maintain the feeling of control for our community, at the same time take advantage of a partnership.

Manager Rambo and Mike Brown will meet in a week to further discuss how they should move forward. Vice-Chairman Lindborg will assist with the planning process. Manager Rambo will request a copy of Brandywine Regional's contract.

Don Weston noted he liked some of the ideas about contracting.

With no other business left to discuss, Vice-Chairman Lindborg made a motion to adjourn the meeting 9:43 a.m. Supervisor Obernier seconded the motion. Board Members Lindborg, Obernier, and McCaffrey all voted aye in favor of adjournment.

Ronald A. Rambo, Jr.  
Township Manager/Secretary/Treasurer