

**Minutes for the Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of
Princeton Borough
and
Princeton Township
December 14, 2011 – 6:59 p.m.
Township Municipal Building – Committee Room, Princeton NJ**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:59 p.m., with Phyllis Persicketti reading the Open Public Meetings Act Statement:

The following is an accurate statement concerning the providing of notice of this meeting and said statement shall be entered in the minutes of this meeting.

Notice of this meeting as required by sections 4a, 3d, 13 and 14 of the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided to the public in the form of the written notice attached hereto,

On December 28, 2011, at 9:30 a.m., said notice was posted in the official bulletin board, transmitted to the Princeton Packet, the Trenton Times, the Town Topics, filed with the Township Clerk and posted on the Princeton Borough and Princeton Township websites.

ROLL CALL - ATTENDEES

Commission Members Present – Anton Lahnston, (Chair), Mayor Mildred Trotman, Carol Golden, Committeeman David Goldfarb, Ryan Lilienthal, Deputy Mayor Bernie Miller, Alice Small, Bill Metro, M. Patrick Simon, Bob Bruschi, (Borough Administrator), James Pascale (Township Administrator) and Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Representative Eugene McCarthy

Absent: Mayor Chad Goerner and Valerie Haynes (Vice Chair)

Roll Call was called out by Board Secretary Persicketti. There was a quorum present, therefore, the meeting was held.

Chair Lahnston indicated that the meeting with the Board of Elections is scheduled to commence at 7:30 p.m., therefore, the Commission meeting will only last ½ hour because the deadline for the redistricting (to be completed by the Board of Elections) is December 23, 2011.

REVIEW and APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 21, 2011

A motion was made by Mr. Miller to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Golden. No discussion. All board members voted in favor

with the exception of Mayor Trotman, who abstained (because she was absent from the meeting on November 21). Therefore, the *November 21, 2011* minutes were approved. Note: Ms. Persicketti will forward the final version of the minutes to Mr. Stefko, of CGR for posting on the CGR/Princeton website.

UPDATE ON BUDGET STATUS

Chair Lahnston said that at the onset the Consolidation Commission's budget was \$120,274.00. To date, the Consolidation Commission has spent \$90,980.70 leaving a remaining balance of approximately \$30,000.00. The remaining monies will be used as needed by the Commission over the next 18 months.

DEFINING THE ADVISORY ROLE OF THE COMMISSION WITH THE TRANSITION TEAM

(a) Is this a task for the Municipal Consolidation Sub-Committee?

Chair Lahnston indicated that he did not have a clear answer to the afore-mentioned question posed. A proposal by Chair Lahnston: the Municipal Consolidation Sub-Committee meet to discuss the question on the role of Commission moving forward because the role is unclear and has not been defined. The work of the Transition Team needs to be clarified first. Thereafter, the role of the Commission in relation to the transition team should be formulated. The Municipal Consolidation Sub-Committee needs to take this task and they should be called together once the core transition team has been identified and their work clarified, per Chair Lahnston. Chair Lahnston feels that the Commission should assume an advisory role to the transition team. (At this time, Mr. Miller advised the Commission that he will be away in January from the 11th through February 1, of 2012).

Mr. Goldfarb advised the Commission that this issue was discussed in the Borough Council and the best way for the process to take place is for the Consolidation Commission to be the citizen group responsible for overseeing the process. Furthermore, after reviewing the resumes received, there are certain people with specific skills, who do not want to spend their time in a committee where they are going to be asked to express their opinions in areas beyond their expertise. The consensus of the Mayor and Council was that the Commission would be the transition team and the Commission would take the resumes and select people to create the sub-committees.

Mayor Trotman said that she had been asked by Council to contact Deputy Mayor Sue Nemeth (in Mayor Goerner's absence) regarding the Twp. and Borough working jointly to write a mission before the applicants were selected for the transition team. It was Council's belief that if there were a mission before the applicants were selected for the transition team, then when the applications are reviewed, everyone would be on the same page, and when each individual applicant's resources were queried they could be more appropriately assigned to task. She further stated that she had already emailed that request to Ms. Nemeth and Mr. Miller and had been told that it would be discussed by Township Committee at their next meeting."

Chair Lahnston asked, "What is the role of the staff in relation to the transition process?" The Commission discussed the role of staff in relation to the transition process. Mr. Lilienthal additionally asked about the role of the Commission in relation to the transition team, and noted that the administrators and staff have already begun working on the transition.

Chair Lahnston replied that he is strongly opposed to limiting the amount of citizen involvement in the transition team. It should be a staff/administrator/resident joint effort with key input from residents. The Commission should play less of a role going forward when compared to a new transition team, per Chair Lahnston.

Mr. Metro said that the work which has to be done to make the transition happen has to be done by the employees of the township or borough. They have to do a lot of the work under the direction of supervisors and up through the administrators. The team of people would be employees of the government of the municipality. There would be a transition team to guide the transition and the Commission would be advisory to the transition. The team doing the transition would be employees asked to combine offices, merge activities, etc. It would be cumbersome for citizens to come in and join employees without a clear definition of how the transition was going to happen.

Mrs. Golden asked whether the applications for the transition team and the subcommittees should be separate. She feels that perhaps there is no need for the transition team; but there is a need for sub-committees. The sub-committees may or may not be made up of a combination of employees and citizens.

Administrator Bruschi stated that he and Administrator Pascale had meetings and discussions with staff and there is a roadmap, which was given to them by the Consolidation Commission, so they know what they are implementing. Administrator Bruschi is in favor of citizen involvement, as needed, to ensure that people are comfortable that the roadmap has been implemented. Both administrators have identified issues which need to be handled in addition to what the plan calls for. However, the momentum gained cannot be slowed down. Administrator Bruschi would rather see the key subcommittees put in place and the two (2) critical ones would be police and public works. The Administration has the expertise to sit down and prepare the process because the Commission spent a lot of time preparing the road map.

Mayor Trotman replied that her recollection of sub-committees under the transition team was specifically aimed at tapping into the knowledge which may be needed from citizens who have the expertise.

Chair Lahnston is concerned that the work is currently being done only by people inside the 'tent' and this is a concern. Chair Lahnston said that he is opposed to work being done only by people 'inside the tent.' When asked if he considers the Commission as being 'inside the' tent', he replied 'no'. Mr. Miller said that there is a need for oversight to make certain that what happens is in accordance with the way it was laid out and is also in accordance with the budget and the schedule so that when the January 1, 2013 date happens, everything is ready to go. Mr. Bruschi agrees with Mr. Miller's afore-mentioned statement. Mr. Miller is not questioning the

capability of the professional staff. However, Administrator Bruschi questioned as to why this cannot be done by the governing body because they have sub-committees at the governing body level such as: public safety, public works, etc. Administrator Bruschi would like for all of the staff to be used and then have citizens pulled in as needed. The issue, per Administrator Bruschi, is to re-educate people on why “you” (as the Commission) made the recommendations you did. The administration is following the Commission’s recommendations and we will also decide when we can go a step further. Ultimately, the governing body makes those decisions, per Administrator Bruschi.

Mr. Miller responded to Administrator Bruschi by stating that “yes”, the governing body does make the decisions. But, before the governing bodies make those decisions, there is a level of detail which must be examined and he feels that the governing bodies do not have the time to examine it at that level of detail and feels that a separate group with expertise, for example financial expertise, can do this work.

Chair Lahnston stated that the above conversation goes back to the municipal bodies: Township Committee and Borough Council. The two governing bodies have already publically asked people to submit their applications with their qualifications. The request has already been posted. To back-off at this point would be unfair. Mayor Trotman said that she had been in discussion with Mayor Goerner and mayor-elect Moore and they had agreed that basically using the same selection process as was used to select applicants for JSSCC probably would be the best way to go; however, a decision had not yet been made." Mrs. Golden said they just need to have the individuals with the right expertise.

Mr. Goldfarb said that there are categories which the staff will not be addressing during the transition year to include: harmonizing the ordinances and getting the neighborhood advisory districts set up. Someone will need to address these during the transition year. The staff cannot be relied on to do this.

Administrator Pascale said that the good news is that everyone wants in; yet it is not a free for all. There are two (2) governing bodies, administration and a transition team that has already been advertised for and interviews in the township began on December 14, 2011. The two mayors and the two governing bodies will come to a final decision on this matter. Administrator Pascale’s view as Administrator of the Township is that he embraces public input. Per Administrator Pascale, the ‘bible’ is the CGR Report which was done by the Commission and prepared by CGR. The process can be overseen by the Consolidation Commission, two governing bodies, and the public; but there needs to be an orderly process which needs to start on Monday with meetings of the two department heads. That is the plan, per Administrator Pascale. The process needs to start with the professionals (police, etc.), in consultation with the administrators who will formulate a plan (which is a draft) for the Consolidation Committee’s review and consideration and this is how Administrator Pascale wishes to proceed.

Mrs. Small stated that what is being discussed is a management role for the transition team supplemented by staff expertise. There is a lot of work that needs to be done by the staff. The essential role of the transition team, which to an extent was decided by the Consolidation

Commission, is that they will be overseeing and managing the process as it moves forward, done by the staff on ground.

Chair Lahnston said that the next step is the municipal vote on the transition team and then the work needs to be in partnership between the administration, staff and community. If that is lost, then everyone is losing something precious.

Mr. Miller suggested that the Township Committee take the suggestions Mayor Trotman made and discuss them when they meet with Borough Council.

ADVISING THE TRANSITION TEAM ON TRANSITION COSTS

a. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair Lahnston said since there currently is not a Transition Team in place; this matter will be put on hold. He asked the Finance Subcommittee to represent the Commission and work with the administrators and the new Transition Team on transition costs in an advisory role, as required, until the Commission's next meeting in January. Mr. Simon agreed to follow-up on this.

It was suggested that the Consolidation Commission prepare either a handbook or a guidebook which other municipalities could use in the future based on Princeton's experience. If there is interest on the part of the state and if State wants that done, they should provide money to have this done, per Mr. Miller.

Chair Lahnston said that the Commission made a presentation at Princeton University where students attended who were interested in the Consolidation process. Chair Lahnston met with one of the students on December 13, 2011. The student is very much interested in the process of working toward consolidation. The State is very interested in having a hand/guide book in place so that they have a complete footprint going forward of the decisions, the questions raised, etc., but they have no money to pay for it. Chair Lahnston said he would follow-up with the student after the first of the year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comments portion of the meeting commenced at 7:30 p.m.

Peter Walonin said that he assumed the transition team would have some delegated authority. And, the governing bodies have effective decision making authority instead of being an extra 'layer' as previously referred to.

No one else from the public came forward; therefore, the public portion of the meeting was closed at 7:31 p.m.

Mayor Trotman asked if another meeting should be called on the transition issue or just wait to hear from the governing bodies as how to proceed. Chair Lahnston replied that the governing bodies have all the information to move forward and that their resolution for the transition team, once made available to the Commission, should state how the Commission will move forward.

The next meeting date for the Consolidation Commission will be **January 9, 2012** commencing at **7:00** p.m.

At this time, Chair Lahnston acknowledged Mr. Goldfard for his contribution to the Consolidation Commission and the community (Mr. Goldfarb will no longer be a member of the Borough Council as of January 1, 2012). He handed-in his resignation and will no longer serve on the Consolidation Commission).

ADJOURNMENT

No other business came before the Committee, therefore, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Golden and the motion was seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Persicketti, Board Secretary
Joint Consolidation/Shared Services
Study Commission

/p