

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

September 27, 2010

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

Minutes of the Special Meeting

Monday, Sept. 27, 2010 4 pm

Municipal Complex, Conference Room A

400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 pm, with Ms. Shabnam Salih 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 September 1, 2010 at 2:00 p.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.

2. Roll Call

Present: Golden, Haynes, Metro, Miller, Goerner, Lilienthal, Lahnston, Simon, Small, Goldfarb, McCarthy, Pascale, Brushchi

Absent: Trotman

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3. Preparation for Interviews

Commission discusses revisions to questions list prepared for the interviews.

Discussion on fixed fees and the terminal point on the contract, as consultants see it.

Additional questions and issues of concern to raise during interview:

Why is Chester Commission work being delayed?

With best and final offer, consultants may add a letter in light of the discussion at the interview.

Concerns about lack of expertise in police and public works (CGR).

FCC mandates and NJ State statues restricting police mergers.

Chairperson Lahnston stresses the importance of staying on time.

4. Comments from Audience

None at this time.

5. Interview # 1

Project Manager, Joseph Stefko, of Center for Governmental Research (CGR) begins with a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation on their proposal. PowerPoint handouts were provided to Commission members. Two other members of the team are present.

Following the 20-minute presentation, CGR turns to Chairperson Lahnston and Commission for questions.

1. Please explain your project methodology.

Our project methodology begins with a baseline review, in information foundation. It is the first opportunity to see both the Princeton in one budgetary context then look into how consolidation could work and what it would look like. We would do this department by department and during the baseline review we will meet with

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department managers and the options go to a detailed level. The shared services study will be a very detailed analysis.

2. What will your technical approach be like?

Our technical approach is focused on data collection. We estimate about 1 to 1.5 months of interviews and data collection.

3. What are the qualifications of your team?

Team members Scott and Joe are experts on public safety and shared services. We have done over 40 related studies. Also, previous work has involved police, fire, consolidation and shared services studies. Scott specifically has a lot of experience in highway, public works and police work.

The three principals will be very hands on and involved throughout the entire project. There will be staff consistency.

4. Do any of the consultants on team have sworn police operational experience?

No, but when direct consultation is needed we contact police management services.

5. If additional consultants (for police) are needed, is that included in the fees?

Yes, that is included in our fixed fee.

6. Who makes final decision if additional expert consultants are needed?

We will certainly keep the requests of the Commission in mind.

7. What will John Fry's involvement be?

John Fry is very interested in shared services and is a former borough administrator. He will be involved in interviews, meetings, and provide his subject matter expertise in the areas of finance and administration.

8. What is the concern with the 6 month timeline/ deadline for the study?

If we can aggressively collect data, conduct all interviews with relevant stakeholders and departments, etc there is no reason for us not to finish in 6 months.

9. Regarding the concern about the 6 month deadline, how does your firm suggest the Commission help prepare the public?

We suggest not sacrificing time for public understanding for the sake of the schedule. April through June will be a critical time for the Commission in engaging the public before the November referendum.

We suggest an initial meeting for the public as opposed to waiting for the baseline report to be submitted.

10. Any questions or suggestions regarding components included in the RFP?

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The RFP separates the three studies (police, public works and shared services) and we will structure report to fit that as stand alone chapters of the report.

11. What are the anticipated problems?

Data collection and availability and active public engagement efforts.

12. How will you get the public engaged at the initial meeting?

We suggest a specific meeting for the public, shortly before or after the 10/27/10 meeting.

13. What kind of data will be requested?

The Commission and township and borough administrators have been provided with a copy of the data form.

14. How much of a time commitment are you expecting from Princeton staff?

Time commitment depends on the sophistication of the form of data. We will not have a strict deadline and will work with everyone to get it as fast as possible. Sometimes Commissions give us all of the information beforehand. The earlier we get the information, the faster we will be able to complete the work.

15. Besides data availability, what are other challenges?

Issues are: Building Commission and stakeholder trust, especially since the potential for consolidation is a weighty issue especially from the perspective of municipal staff; timeliness and data accessibility; trust of Commission; and public engagement.

16. Can you put in the contract, that the Commission may ask for the use of the expert police consultants and is there a comparable group for public works?

We have done extensive project work in police, fire and public works and yes there is a comparable group for public works as well.

17. Is there anything in the RFP that you did not include in your proposal, and if so will there be an extra charge for those components?

No, and no extra fees. We even added an extra meeting.

18. What is the end point of the work?

From the RFP, we see that the end point will be the presentation to the Commission on the final report. For the Nov 2011 referendum, work will be done by June/ July.

19. If at end point, we need additional work, will you give us a fixed fee?

Yes.

20. You reference 4 lenses or approaches to the study and analysis, please explain further.

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Our methodology will provide different options from different perspectives. The first lens is the most conservative way of consolidating. The second lens is less conservative and is more aggressive. Lens 3 is even less conservative and realizes that savings can occur through attrition vs staff reduction. Lens 4 is the most aggressive and starts from scratch, such as if we were to structure a new government today, how would we structure the police, the clerk's office, etc.

21. Will you look into how to make our already joint agencies more efficient?

Yes, because if you look at it from the perspective of a single Princeton, it could be more efficient and yes this is included in the price.

22. Will you do a lens approach for every service?

We will use it where appropriate.

23. Will you look into services that are contracted out to private vendors?

Yes, we will look at intermunicipal services and formal agreements.

24. What else is informing your recommendations?

We don't compare communities to other communities. We focus the level and type of services based on what the community and administrators feel appropriate. In the current menu of services today, we will look at the most efficient way of servicing the community.

25. What are your plans for a presence here in Princeton?

We are in New Jersey regularly. We will be present for 2-3 days at a time for interviews. We will attend all meetings and have a strong presence and make site visits to get a sense of the operations.

26. How familiar is your group with the legal statutes of NJ?

We are very familiar with the local options act and the local municipalities statute. We have not been negatively impacted in this area before.

27. Why has the Chester Commission work been delayed?

The work started October 2009 and the baseline report was completed by March. The Commission opted to delay for one-year because of lack of commitment from state to give property tax numbers to provide to the public. There was also a slight delay in DCA's fiscal analysis.

28. Did Chester meet continuously?

Yes they continuously met, minus a two-month break.

29. How do you plan on working with DCA?

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States outside of NJ, our firm actually provides the type of work DCA does. We have an extensive relationship with DCA and have significant experience in doing what's in the DCA reports.

30. Other ways you suggest engaging the community?

We will give suggestions for community engagement. We will also have interviews with community stakeholders and we suggest a liaison between the different groups.

31. Please explain your expertise in the local options provisions and the municipal consolidation act.

We have crafted our proposal around these statute components and we have a very detailed understanding of the local options act.

32. Concerns regarding cost.

We provide an aggressive price point and the RFP is very weighty.

Best and final offer to be emailed to township clerk by 3pm 9/29/10.

6. Interview # 2

Reagan Burkholder, Director of Summit Collaborative Advisors (SCA) begins with a 20-minute presentation describing their proposal. Burkholder outlines his and the group's variety of management and municipal experience, the level of clarity and thoroughness in reports, and knowledge of the political process. Two other members of the team are present.

Following the 20-minute presentation, SCA turns to Chairperson Lahnston and Commission for questions.

1. Please describe your project methodology.

Our time schedule is lined up with the Commission meetings. We will begin with data sheets to staff for data collection. November there will be a preliminary idea of what the staff of a consolidated community would look like and the consolidation report will be available in March.

2. Describe your firm's technical approach.

We will have extensive data and very detailed. We will also use graphic analysis.

3. What will the data sources be?

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The Princeton staff. We are not asking for any new work, most of the information should be at their fingertips. For the police, for example, we will want a comprehensive staff list with birthdays and dates of hire. We will keep in mind NJ statues on seniority specific to the police.

4. Will you have the same approach for public works?

Similar, but not exactly the same since there are different statutory requirements for the police.

5. Are we assured of your (Burkholder's) continued presence on project?

Yes, we are a boutique firm and I am not engaged in much other work and this project would be my full focus. For public works, Michael is the expert.

6. Are concerns regarding completing the project in a timely fashion?

No, unless you add significant work that is not already in the RFP.

7. Will you meet the 6 months timeline?

Yes.

8. Any questions regarding the RFP? Any suggestions?

No, however one concern I have is that if you looked at each component separately, it would be an 80-90 thousand dollar job. I have a lot of data already to compare to other police departments.

9. Any other consultants in your group have police/fire experience?

Greg has management and operations experience.

10. How would you describe your understanding of typical police technologies?

That would be a part of the police study, seeing what technology to merge, update, etc. We do not foresee making and recommendations to change to a certain technology.

11. Once you decide to merge, have you found major conflicts for consolidation (based on police tech issues)?

No.

12. Any anticipated problems?

If the Commission wants or expects more than what is in the RFP, then it could extend the project's time, cost and resources.

13. What is the endpoint of the project as you see it?

Our endpoint will be when the Commission takes a vote on what the recommendation is. It is important that the Commission is clear on what they want, expectations and comes to a conclusion at the end.

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14. To what extent do you explore a range of options?

Expect to see a full exploration of reasonable alternatives and to be able to say to the community that we have considered all options.

15. Do you provide us with a set of recommendations or an analysis and we form recommendations?

We will provide data and analysis. We will make a recommendation and then we will discuss and look at it from as many perspectives as you would like. Our report will include scenarios considered for recommendations and why those recommendations are made.

16. Is the Analysis of the provisions of the local options act and the municipal consolidation act included in your price?

Yes.

17. Which certain provisions of the local options act are you keeping in mind?

We will look at all relevant provisions throughout the process.

18. How do you plan to work with DCA?

We will work closely with DCA for financial analysis. We will contact them early on, hold meetings with a DCA representative and work collaboratively.

19. How do you plan on getting the staffing/reorganization done by November?

We will work hard and get it done. We also suggest moving the November meeting to Dec. 1st 2010.

20. Can you do the police and public works studies parallel as opposed to sequential in order?

The police study is not something we want to rush. The work will be processed parallel to each other somewhat. The November staffing reorganization report will be very rudimentary in regards to the budget numbers. The specifics of the police and public works, including the supervisory and management structure will be provided in Jan./Feb.

21. Please explain (for example) how you would find: Does our town need 10 sergeants?

We will look at the data, other communities, staff vs brass ratio, patrol zones, interview with departments and take into account any special conditions.

22. When making a recommendation for governance, would you also include options and pros and cons?

Yes.

23. How much time are you asking of the Princeton staff in data generation?

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Everyone except IT, finance and public works, we will likely need 30-60 minutes of their time, for the others, not more than one day. Some qualitative questions we may need answered by Jim and Bob.

24. What are your anticipated problems in the technical issues of merging to police departments?

Since everything is computerized nowadays, there should be readily available digital fixes.

25. What will your work with subcommittees be like?

Hopefully, we will have a high level of communication as to avoid unnecessary work and redundancy.

26. What towns are in your database?

A wide range of communities (mostly well run) East Brunswick, Livingston, Maplewood, Glenn Ridge, etc.

27. Please explain your liability/indemnification clause in the proposal.

As an LLC, I do not carry professional liability insurance.

28. Concerns regarding the budget vs expectations.

For any additional work not included in the RFP, there will be additional fees.

29. Princeton already has 13 shared services, are these a part of your analysis?

Yes, we will look at staffing and look at whether or not it will possibly no longer be a shared service.

30. What about what isn't shared?

Yes, although not in the same depth as police and public works. We will address staffing and efficiencies for those services. Courts will be in the police study.

31. Other examples of things you would add to the RFP and price?

We will handle messages coming into the website but will not be responsible for the technical aspect of the website.

32. What will the structure of the final report be?

There will be three separate parts for shared services, police and public works.

33. Will service end before the public information package?

For another Commission, when we had to design and write a newsletter to send to everyone, that was an extra charge.

Best and final offer to be emailed to township clerk by 3pm 9/29/10.

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7. Review and Discussion of Information From Interviews

Pascale and Bruschi shared information regarding the reference check of both groups.

Commission members discuss the consultant interviews and question and answers.

Chairperson Lahnston shares that his vote on 9/29/10 will be for CGR since he will not be present at that meeting.

8. Next Step- Commission Meeting 9/29/10 at 5:30 PM to Review best and Final Offers

Voting on final consultant will take place at this time.

9. Adjournment

Motion is made for adjournment and motion is seconded.

Roll Call Unanimous Aye

Meeting is adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shabnam Salih, Study Commission Secretary

Approved: October 27, 2010