

**Minutes for the Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission
and the
Transition Task Force (TTF)
of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township
December 19, 2012 – 7:05 p.m.
Borough Hall, Princeton NJ**

(These minutes were reviewed during the joint meeting on June 12, 2013. They were also reviewed by members following the June 12 meeting of the Commission and the TTF. Therefore these minutes are posted without formal approval by the Commission or the TTF.)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m., with Ms. 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 February 2, 2012, 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.

Chairman Lahnston conducted the meeting.

ROLL CALL - ATTENDEES

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

Commission Members Present – Anton Lahnston, (Chairman), Ms. Golden, Mayor Goerner, Mr. Lilienthal, Mr. Simon, Mrs. Small, Ms. Trelstad, Ms. Howard, and Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Representative Eugene McCarthy

Absent: Vice-Chair Haynes, Mr. Miller and Administrator Bruschi (Borough)

TTF Members Present: Vice-Chairman Sillars, Mayor Goerner, Ms. Butler, (Borough Council), Ms. Berkhout, Mr. Middlekauff, Ms. Mather, Mr. Levine (alternate), Mr. McCarthy (DCA Representative)

Absent: Chairman Freda, Mayor Moore, Mr. Miller, Mr. Patteson and Mr. Davis

Also Present: Acting Administrator Monzo (Twp.) and Ms. Persicketti (Board Secretary for both the Consolidation Commission and the TTF)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consolidation Commission – October 24, 2012 – Mrs. Small said that on page 3, paragraph 5, Mr. McCarthy’s name was spelled incorrectly. The noted change will be made. A motion was made to approve the minutes with the amended change by Ms. Trelstad and Mrs. Small seconded the motion. A general “YES” vote took place and all commission members were in favor. Motion passes and minutes approved.

Also, in the October 24, 2012 minutes, the August 15, 2012 minutes were approved. However, Mr. McCarthy voted. It was pointed out that Mr. McCarthy cannot vote because he is not a voting member. Therefore the minutes of August 15 were not officially approved by a quorum in the meeting on October 24, 2012. Chair Lahnston asked for a new vote of the Commission members present on December 19, 2012 to approve the minutes of August 15, 2012. Mrs. Small made a motion to approve the minutes of August 15, 2012 and Ms. Trelstad seconded the motion. All commission members (Golden, Trelstad, Howard, Goerner, Small and Lahnston) were in favor. Mr. Lillienthal and Mr. Simon ‘abstained’ because they were not at the meeting on August 15, 2012. Motion passes and minutes of August 15, 2012 are approved by a quorum.

Transition Task Force – Vice Chair Sillars asked for a motion to approve the November 28, 2012 minutes as read. The motion was made by Ms. Butler and Mayor Goerner seconded the motion. A general “AYES” vote took place and all TTF members were in favor. Motion passes and minutes approved.

WOODROW WILSON PRESENTATION (see accompanying slide presentation)

Chairman Lahnston ‘thanked’ Mr. Logan Clark for coming to the meeting. Chairman Lahnston said that there were five (5) students involved in the project and they did not get credit nor did they receive any pay for the work they conducted which commenced in March of 2012. The students looked at the transition process and consolidation from an outside perspective. They did an analysis and provided documentation on the transition. The document prepared by the students looks at issues and how to possibly make them better. Their product is not final. Once completed the students’ report will go on the new Princeton web-page, as well as CGR’s web page and will also be sent to Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Chairman Lahnston introduced Logan Clark who represented the five (5) students who submitted the document. Mr. Clark gave a brief background on himself and also noted that he is a resident of Princeton. Four of the students are enrolled in the Public Affairs Program and are obtaining their Masters Degree. Mr Clark said the students accomplished the following: they had open discussions, reviewed the work of the transition process, discussed transition learnings and recommendations, and finally answered questions and made observations. Each one of the five students took on a subcommittee within the TTF umbrella (Facilities, Finance, Infrastructure & Operations, Personnel and Public Safety). Their research mythology included capturing data to the extent possible.

Mr. Clark pointed out that CGR wrote the CGR report to document events and actions. The Woodrow Wilson students – different than CGR -- did a subjective analysis of the transition process. Their report does include some criticism, per Mr. Clark. He reiterated that they received no credit and conducted their research while carrying their school load, taking care of their families and traveling. Mr. Clark also noted that the students were impressed with the TTF as well as the Consolidation Commission. Mr. Clark said that he knew that Consolidation in Princeton was attempted three times and failed. Many factors made this effort different including: consolidation leadership, the TTF, the TTF subcommittees, the governing bodies and DCA.

Recommendations (by the students):

- (1) They question the structure and sequence for setting up the TTF. However, the municipal leaders overcame this and improvements were made. Mr. Clark feels that some people were shut out who had a lot to bring to the table, for example the administrators had no voting rights.
- (2) Mr. Clark recommended a Hybrid Option Model, which would create a TTF composed of some members of the Consolidation Study Commission and some members of the governing bodies and administrators from each municipality. The process should give votes and proper deference to professional administrators.
- (3) Define the Transition Scope of Work – There is no precedent in the State of NJ for establishing a TTF by resolution. It is recommended that a resolution establishing the TTF be clear on the parameters of its authority and also set jurisdictional boundaries. This should be communicated to the subcommittees as well.
- (4) Regarding money matters they should harmonize the budgets of both communities. They should also seek clarity on cost reimbursement for transition – especially receiving greater clarity from the State on cost reimbursement.
- (5) In terms of transparency, there were concerns and confusion over disclosure requirements. Recommendation: Establish the Open Public Meeting Policy (OPMA) prior to the deliberations.

On the issue of communication to the public there could be greater understanding of the conflicts at play. For example, the potential conflict between maintaining service and the cost of service. The TTF should take measures to ensure a balanced representation of the interests of achieving both. In order to balance the issues of service levels vs. savings – the Wilson School students recommend bring in outside consultants to help w/ deliverables. CGR was helpful.

Mr. Clark commented that Princeton has unique resources -- especially human resources -- in the community and therefore many benefits to the community. Citizens initiate and provide a lot of municipal leadership. The community has unique benefits from its resources.

Closing Remarks by Mr. Clark (Woodrow Wilson School):

The Princeton residents came together and were remarkable. Mr. Logan is privileged to take part in the process. He hopes that what Princeton accomplished, will help other municipalities.

Audience Questions for Mr. Logan Clark (Consolidation Commission and TTF members and the Public)

Ms. Golden (Consolidation Commission) asked if there was a survey sent out to TTF and subcommittees and how many responses were received. Mr. Clark said that there was a survey but he was not certain of the final number of responses received. Chairman Lahnston stated that he thought responses were received from approximately half the members of the TTF. A total of 16 surveys went out and approximately eight were received. Mrs. Small (Consolidation Commission) remarked that the people came together and they had community outreach and she said that the Consolidation Commission worked very hard to get this message across to the residents of Princeton. That is the main reason consolidation was a success after the fourth attempt.

Mr. Lilienthal (Consolidation Commission) said that regarding the different alternatives CGR gave continuity to the process. He also feels that the hybrid model works.

Mayor Goerner (Consolidation Commission and TTF) said that in the hybrid model – the potential of ‘burn-out’ exists. The Consolidation Commission put in the time and effort to get Consolidation passed. Then the process went to the TTF. He feels that the Consolidation Commission Committee members should have been asked if they wanted to serve on the TTF and then move forward to find others. Also, there would be more continuity using consultants.

Ms. Berkhout (TTF) agrees with the fact there was a gap. They should have started with an outline and get the tasks started. Also, she feels that the students’ report is inconsistent. The TTF had expertise in the fields, as was needed. Ms. Berkhout asked Mr. Clarke, “Who stays on to fill the gap that exists for the expertise that is needed on the TTF?” Mr. Clark remarked that he is mindful of the Commission’s time and expertise. New expertise is needed and therefore the TTF should engage new members with experience and expertise.

Ms. Butler (TTF and Borough Council Member) – feels that if there is a personality issue with a member on a committee, it may be hard to move forward with a TTF that consists of several existing commission members (example cited: Mr. Goldfarb served on the Consolidation Commission and was against consolidation). Therefore, it may be good to have a new committee formed as was done with the TTF.

Mr. Lilienthal (Consolidation Commission) – In response feels that the TTF focused on the mechanics of making the transition happen. The Consolidation Commission focused more on policy.

Mayor Goerner (Consolidation Commission and TTF) – agrees with the hybrid approach including expanding the skills of the TTF. Also, some of the subcommittees seem to overlap: for example Finance/Community Outreach.

Chairman Lahnston noted that a joint Borough and Township resolution formed the TTF.

Mayor Goerner felt that it was not necessary or helpful. In a hybrid model, one does not need to have a resolution. Mayor Goerner said if a separate TTF is created, then a resolution needs to be created.

Mr. McCarthy (Consolidation Commission & TTF) commented that with respect to the statutory reference for a TTF – there is none. The current statute refers to the state committees.

Mr. Simon (Consolidation Commission) – stated that the TTF is a local creation of Princeton.

Mr. Singer (Public) – said that what needs to be considered is the difference between “transition” vs. “transformation.” Is this transition or transformation?

Ms. Butler (TTF) – said that consolidation passed even though there was some strong opposition to it. Therefore it is good to have another committee appointed to do the work of transition.

Mr. Lilienthal – (Consolidation Commission) – likes the hybrid model – he feels that the Consolidation Commission had a solid process that underscored the credibility of the argument supporting consolidation.

Ms. Berkhout (TTF) – said that she did not understand what was meant about the tension between the Personnel Subcommittee and the Public Safety Subcommittee. She said that Chairman Freda (absent) had the committees look at everything and she feels there was no tension and the subcommittees reported their status at each TTF meeting. Mr. Clark replied that the students observed some tension.

Mr. Levine (TTF) with respect to the OPMA, he feels that some of the subcommittee meetings should not have been open to the public to attend. Chairman Lahnston remarked that clarity needs to be received by the TTF from Council regarding OPMA.

At this time, Chairman Lahnston ‘thanked’ Mr. Logan Clark.

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business came before the Consolidation Commission or the TTF.

ADJOURNMENT

No other business came before the Consolidation Commission or the TTF, therefore; a motion was made by Ms. Trelstad (Consolidation Commission) to adjourn and Vice Chair Sillars (TTF) seconded the motion at 8:24 p.m. All Consolidation Commission and TTF members were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Phyllis Persicketti, Board Secretary
Consolidation Commission and TTF