

May 15, 2008

Wallace Township Board of Supervisors
Glenmoore, PA 19343

Gentlemen:

At your February 7th meeting resident Don Titus volunteered to form a citizen's group to study police services in Wallace Township and make recommendations to the Board if appropriate. Supervisor and Brandywine Regional Police Commissioner Rob Jones agreed noting that this would not be an official Township committee. Since that date, a group was formed and has met regularly to examine police issues with an emphasis on cost of service. The undersigned members represent a cross section of the community and include former police officers, former Supervisors, and business people with a wide range of experience. Having completed our assessment of available information, we now offer the following findings and recommendations for your consideration.

Findings – Cost Comparisons

Wallace Township costs for police services are generally higher than surrounding communities on a cost per resident basis (see attachment 1). Surrounding communities may pay less because they have different requirements or conditions. For example the Devereux School in Wallace and the Route 322 corridor through East Brandywine may require a higher level of police involvement. Still, we could find no other Township with higher costs per resident except East Brandywine, our partner in the Brandywine Regional Police.

One reason for a regional police operation is to save money through superior economies of scale. But the BRP appears to have been unable to capture those economies. When compared with other regional police forces in Pennsylvania, only one other department has more officers per thousand residents than the BRP (see attachment 1). In fact 28 of 33 reporting regional police departments had fewer officers per thousand residents.

Findings – Growth Trends

Since 2003 the BRP has grown from 13 officers to 17 full time and up to 3 part time, an increase of 38%. Over that same period, the regional population has grown less than 9% (see attachment 2). Growth in Wallace was even less at about 6% while the cost of police service grew 45%. In 2003 police services cost the average Wallace resident \$142, but last year that figure grew to \$206. Costs are also growing faster than the police work load so that Wallace spending per work unit went from \$161 in 2003 to \$255 last year.

Findings – Cost Allocation

Wallace's share of the regional budget is determined by a complex allocation factor involving population, road miles and property evaluation in addition to the police work load in each Township. The measure of work load is work units which are tracked in each Township. Our research shows that even though East Brandywine work units and population are growing faster than Wallace's, our share of the cost has remained steady at about 33% of the total (see attachment 3). We learned that some police departments use calls from residents as a measure of work load. The BRP, however, defines "calls" to include police initiated activity such as traffic

stops and calls for assistance from other departments in addition to calls from residents. Our efforts to obtain data on calls from residents were unsuccessful.

Findings – Cost Increases

The increase in cost since 2003 stemmed from two factors (see attachment 3). Payroll accounted for nearly 60% of the increase as a result of hiring more officers. The next largest factor was building cost due to the BRP's relocation to the new East Brandywine building. Prior to 2006, the BRP occupied space in each Township at no cost except utilities and upkeep. The movement to temporary quarters in 2006 and the eventual relocation to the new East Brandywine Building resulted in a sharp budget increase. A review of the BRP Commission minutes for 2005 and 2006 revealed no indication that the Commission or the Wallace representative either approved or had input on the building or its design. East Brandywine has refused repeated requests for an explanation of the cost allocation, but we understand the BRP is paying about \$17 per square foot plus utilities and maintenance to occupy the building. Although we know of no market studies for office space within the region, building space rates in the range of \$10 to \$14 are said to be available near the employment centers around Philadelphia.

Alternatives

We believe the Township has a range of options to meet its commitment to full time local police coverage as follows:

- Continue participation in the Brandywine Regional Police with appropriate adjustments in the agreement with East Brandywine Township.
- Amicably dissolve the Regional Police as currently configured and replace the agreement with a contract for service from the East Brandywine Police.
- Contract with another township in the area to provide full time police coverage.
- Establish an independent Wallace Township Police Department.

A survey of Township residents may be the best way to determine just what level of police service is actually needed by the taxpayers.

Recommendations

We believe the first priority should be continuing Wallace's affiliation with the Brandywine Regional Police under terms and conditions which would enable Wallace to more effectively control its costs and better represent the needs of its citizens for police services. This would require negotiation with East Brandywine Township to revise the agreement as follows:

- Wallace should have equal representation on the commission? Note that Wallace and East Brandywine residents pay nearly the same amount per person, but Wallace residents have no voice in management decisions.
- The allocation factor should be revised such that only population is considered? If "calls for service" remain a factor in allocation, only calls from residents and business owners should be used.
- Current staff levels should be frozen until there is evidence that the needs of residents are not being met?
- The building cost assignment should be modified so that East Brandywine bears a greater share?

If negotiations succeed then we believe it is imperative that Wallace representatives to the BRPC play a visible and active role in overseeing the management of the commission and the police

force. If negotiation fails to address these issues before the end of June, we believe work must begin promptly on the other alternatives including establishment of an independent police force.

To assist the Board should they decide to pursue an independent police force, we have prepared a sample budget. This budget is based on a neighboring police department and has been adjusted to provide 24 hour coverage. Keeping in mind that start-up costs for a new department and separation costs from East Brandywine are not included, this budget projects a 2009 operating expense in the range of \$545, 000.

While Township residents may differ on the levels of service offered by the BRP, our focus was the cost of police service. Our findings are in no way a performance evaluation of the members of the BRP. All members of the study group respect the professionalism of BRP officers and appreciate the challenges they face in the performance of their duties.

Respectfully submitted by:

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