

**CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE MEETING
16 W. SCRIBNER AVE.
DUBOIS, PA 15801**

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022 @ 12:00 P.M.

MINUTES

MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Dick Whitaker called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Committee Members:

Shawn Arbaugh

Dan Kohlhepp - by phone

Kris Kruzalak

Joe Mitchell

Chris Nasuti

Kevin A. Salandra

Herm Suplizio

Ed Walsh

Dick Whitaker

Staff Present:

Kristen Dunn – Recording Secretary

Bobbie Shaffer – City of DuBois Secretary

Christopher Gabriel, Solicitor

Adam Shienvold, Eckert Seamans – by phone

LaToya Bellamy, Eckert Seamans – by phone

LeeAnne Rogers, PEL – by phone

Others Present: See attached sign-in sheet

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Dick Whitaker led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

None

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 27, 2022, MEETING

Motion by Ed Walsh second by Shawn Arbaugh to approve the Minutes of the April 27, 2022, meeting. A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Herm Suplizio – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes

Chris Nasuti – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzalak - yes

Kevin Salandra - yes

Dick Whitaker - yes

Motion carried.

TABLED / UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Public Works Subcommittee Assignments / Recommendations

Shawn Arbaugh reported that the Admin Committee looked over the proposal, have no comments, and made the motion to pass it up to the 10-member Board. Joe Mitchell second.

Kevin Salandra asked if we are motioning to move to the next committee or will there be any discussion at this level? Are there any budget constraints? Do you have any plans that we can do similar work for a lower budget?

Chris Nasuti – Do you mean is there a way to do the work that we proposed for less?

Kevin Salandra – If we need to get back to the same amount of work with a lower budget – is there any room for budget cuts? – we promised the public when we brought this forward that there would be savings. Is there a plan B or C that would show any savings?

Chris Nasuti – In the public works department there's going to be the same amount of road maintenance and utility maintenance – we could not identify any places to cut personnel. We looked at saving money on contracted work. Right now we are estimating it would be the same budget. One critical point in our staff size is winter maintenance. If we cut back, we couldn't provide the expected service in the winter.

Joe Mitchell – I don't think we're going to realize the savings until it actually happens with the public works as they have gone through the equipment inventory and streamlined what they have so the savings will be year-to-year in the non-replacement of some of the duplicate equipment.

Chris Nasuti – we put together an equipment list that we need for utilities and for streets and found equipment that we can share. There is a third list of other equipment that we recommend we hold on to in that first year to see if it's used and if not, it can be something we can get rid of. We developed a capital budget replacement system so we can better budget for future acquisition. A roll call vote was then taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes

Kris Kruzelak - yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Chris Nasuti – yes

Kevin Salandra - yes

Herm Suplizio – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Dick Whitaker - yes

Motion carried.

2. Police Subcommittee Presentation

Shawn Arbaugh – the Admin Committee's general consensus is that we reviewed and have some concerns about the costs of the number of officers being added. The committee asked if there is a way to hire as needed, or phase in officers as needed. Maybe explore a regional approach – multi-county / multi-municipality, working with the State on the drug task force may be more efficient. The Admin Committee is not comfortable with how it was presented.

Dick Whitaker asked the consultants that as far as budgeting, it is very difficult to budget three years in advance with inflation. How fine-tuned does it need to be?

Adam Shienvold – Initially our first step on the budget is to do the fiscal analysis which is looking back and seeing what the financial situation and trends are. The next step is to look forward with budgeting assuming the continuation of services within the existing municipalities. The third step is to look into the consolidation plan once all the recommendations from the committees are taken into account.

LeeAnne Rogers – We are building a budget which we will be able to modify based on what we know today based on policy recommendations that come forward from the community. If there is a desire to move forward with adding “x-number” of police, we can budget that and what it looks like in today’s dollars. That may change over time as the communities work toward the final consolidation. I think there will be an opportunity to update those budgets projections based on the then current circumstances.

Kris Kruzalak – I am not opposed to have a plan of eventually reaching “x-amount” of officers. Our goal as a subcommittee was to come up with an ideal police department and show what benefits the new municipality and the community would get. Those numbers could be adjusted, but you’re going to lose certain things – like a multitask force – the current drug task force is used by full-time police officers. A lot of officers don’t have extra time to put into the drug task force. Having the staffing we were requesting gives the new municipality the control in designated time for other issues. If we cut officers from patrol the shortfall is covering shifts and having enough officers on the street answering calls for service. We need the manpower to be proactive.

DuBois City Sergeant McCleary (police subcommittee) stated that both departments are handling everything right now – calls for service and investigations. We have to prioritize and that’s where the community doesn’t get the justice they want and deserve. The organizational chart we put forward, and what we’re asking for, will solve a lot of those problems and the public will get better police service.

Kevin Salandra – when one committee wants one thing and another committee wants another, isn’t that our job on this committee to try and get subcommittees to the same end result before we put it up to the 10-member Board? I think as part of the 10-member Board we asked for more of a balanced budget to come forward – shouldn’t we be working that out here instead of sending up to the 10-member committee with two disputed outlooks?

Dick Whitaker stated that eventually this committee has to make a recommendation but ultimately it will be the 10-member Board who will make the decision based on what we send up.

Kevin Salandra – I thought the nine-member Committee’s job is to offer a recommendation that the majority of the nine of us think and the 10-member Board can change that or ask more questions.

Joe Mitchell – we are still waiting for a financial analysis from our consultants. We have done our due diligence trying to put together the existing budgets, but it seems right now we are going back and forth on our own committee needing validation. We have asked for funding abilities or funding streams utilized in other municipalities and other third-class cities. We are waiting for anything that would help. Raising taxes is not the answer anybody here wants.

Kris Kruzalak – Why can't we send it up to the 10-member Board and they decide on how many police officers they want or can afford? I understand there has to be some recommendation from the finance committee, but I don't want to be stuck in limbo too long at this committee. It should be the elected officials that have the final say.

Kevin Salandra – Can the consultants clarify what the purpose of this committee is?

Dick Whitaker – They've made their recommendation, others have reservations. You have to give them something to work with. I want to send something to the 10-member board in two weeks.

Joe Mitchell – my take on what we are doing - the subcommittees report here. We validate that they are using correct calculations, data etc. If we pass it to the 10-member Board, then at the 10-member Board they can make comments and pass it back to us. At some point in time we need to put it together as a package and then send it up as a whole package.

Adam Shienvold – The 9-member committee's job is designated by the elected officials to evaluate the existing operation and to make recommendations for an operational plan for how the consolidated municipality will work. Where opportunities arise for consolidation of operations and to evaluate with the assistance of the consultants the technical, financial and legal consideration in whatever plans are put together. Once everything is agreed on what the plan is based on the operational, financial and legal considerations, then it becomes our job to put together the legal and technical documents and procedures to implement that plan. Part of this exercise involves looking for efficiencies, looking for places to save money by consolidation, but also looking for places that we can improve government operations overall. What the tension I am hearing is on the police verses the admin subcommittees – police have identified opportunities to improve the operations of the police force and the finance and admin are looking for ways to seek efficiencies. Both are being recognized. Part of our work is in accordance with doing the financial and management audit. It is in the course of the planning for consolidation to develop a strategic management plan that we can use to seek further funding and grants to implement the operational structure. The STAMP plan will be the blueprint for funding and support from the State and other sources to implement these ideas. The purpose here is to look at and identify the areas for a consolidated operation that we can improve how to do it.

LeeAnne Rogers – The first step is to combine operations and then if there are opportunities for improvement for cost savings, etc., and identify those. There has been discussion about potentially phasing in the plan looking at regional engagement and those do not have to be done as part of the consolidation. They can occur separately as a consolidated community in the future or as you work toward consolidation. We will be documenting the wishes of the community as we put together the STAMP proposal, we will be able to price out what those policy decisions might look like knowing that may change over time. Its up to the new community to figure out what they want.

Dick Whitaker – There are 25 officers working between the two right now. It seems both entities feel they are understaffed. Should they send forward to the 10-member board what they think they need, or do they send something the Admin and Finance feel will be financially able to handle? If I understand right, there might be more money available if they put in for the bigger plan or needs?

LeeAnne Rogers – We can certainly document the idea that the police subcommittee has put together in terms of building out a drug task force for example which would add staffing. We can

build that into a set of recommendations. There may be some opportunities for grant funds to support that, but I won't speak for DCED – generally the grant does not support personnel costs but can maybe support other parts of growing the force. Regardless if the communities decided to increase that police force now or in the future, we can document that it is something the community is looking at.

Adam Shienvold – from a consolidation perspective, we need to have an understanding of what we are going to do with the existing police forces and how were going to combine and operate them. While the consolidation plan will address the operation structure and ultimately the budget for the police forces, the effort to expand or improve the police forces is something that is an elected official decision. The decision on how to spend and where to spend will be based on elected officials and community sentiment from consolidation moving forward. The recommendations that this 9-member committee is making to consolidate and to consider the possibilities or opportunities for enhancement or improvement and if appropriate, under the overall budget, once they are developed, is to then consider within that budget what opportunities exist.

Joe Mitchell made the motion to pass the Police Subcommittee Recommendation to the 10-member Board for comment, understanding this is one part of a bigger project that is going to come back to this committee for review. The calculations are sound. We do not have a complete financial analysis, so I don't think it's fair to cut unarbitrary numbers out of something we are not sure needs to be cut. Motion was second by Ed Walsh.

Joe Mitchell – I would like the motion to formally ask the 10-person Board for their comments on this proposal.

Kevin Salandra – I serve on the 10-person Board, and we had asked that recommendations that come up are feasible for the budget.

Shawn Arbaugh – some of the numbers were not correct in the report. There were some financial mistakes in the report.

Joe Mitchell spoke to Sergeant Johnston, and we received the correct numbers. They will be corrected before they're sent to the 10-person Board.

Kevin Salandra – We have never evaluated anything at the Finance Committee level, correct? – you (Joe Mitchell) have looked at it, but the finance committee has not? Joe Mitchell said that is correct.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes, qualified by the revisions being made before it goes up

Dan Kohlhepp – yes

Kris Kruzalak - yes

Joe Mitchell – yes

Chris Nasuti – yes

Kevin Salandra - no

Herm Suplizio – yes

Ed Walsh – yes

Dick Whitaker - yes

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Sub-Committee Updates

Police (by Kris Kruzelak) – We are working on Act 57 items; our subcommittee got the Civil Service plan together. We are unsure if that goes to Chris or the consultants. Sergeant McCleary went by what the City of DuBois currently has with some verbiage changes. Solicitor Chris Gabriel stated that will be discussed after the meeting for direction.

Public Works (by Chis Nasuti) – We completed all of our assignments with the submission of Agenda item #3 to be discussed later.

Finance (by Joe Mitchell) – The consultants presented an Authorities report. We reviewed it and made suggestions on the report and are waiting to hear back. We believe our committee has gone as far as they can with the budget information that we currently have. At this point in time, we are waiting for the financial analysis report that is due from the consultants.

Codes / Zoning (by Dan Kohlhepp via phone) – We have completed our first assignment and are working on the second part of how to combine zoning districts. We have 18 zoning districts to reduce to 8. We started our preliminary analysis which indicates we should reduce it to 9 districts. We are also working on a zoning map at this time. We hope to have that ready at the next meeting.

Administration (by Shawn Arbaugh) – We received the same presentation on the municipal authorities and our biggest concern is if we did not have an Authority for sewer and water, would it be subject to PUC oversight? We are waiting on an answer from the consultants to move that forward. We will be discussing later a grant for renovations to the City building for work locations. We discussed an organizational chart, and it was a consensus to move that forward. We are working on job descriptions and hope to have that in a few weeks. We are also working on HR office duties and a drafting an employee manual. We are looking for direction on whether to send that to the consultants first, or this committee for review. We have discussed pension items and will have additional discussion as we need additional assistance from the consultants. Budget and Capital – we had a discussion, and with the Chairman's approval, we would like to have the finance committee help with our budget to establish a baseline budget. We talked about communication issues within our committee. There was a suggestion that I work out of the city building for a day or two a week to help with communication. I would be remiss not to bring that up.

Fire (by Herm Suplizio) – We have completed our tasks and handed everything up to the 10-person Board.

Parks and Recreation (by Herm Suplizio) – We had our first meeting discussing tasks.

Sam Mollica (Parks and Recreation Subcommittee) stated they are meeting again next week and are focusing on costs that each municipality is spending now, and also to identify what is underserved in recreation. We are looking at facilities and also yearly community events.

2. Consultant Update

LaToya Bellamy – We continue to attend subcommittee meetings and communicate with the solicitor on matters. Recently the Admin and Finance subcommittees received their presentation with regard to the future of various Authorities. Questions were posed that we have been asked to review. We anticipate a few more requests and subcommittees who are wrapping up their

assignments and recommendations. The consultants plan to present a detailed update to the 10-person Board on Monday, May 16, in person.

LeeAnne Rogers – The team is currently looking at three different analysis that we're working on. We will be presenting the status as far as historical numbers and projections for both Sandy and DuBois. We will then be preparing a combined budget based on today's dollars, today's operations, that would not include any of the policy decisions that the 10-member Board has yet to make. We anticipate scheduling some time with the members of the finance subcommittee the week of May 23 to do a preview of that financial analysis. That puts us at June 8 to present to this committee. We are a little behind our original schedule because unfortunately my staff at the Economy League have had in the last couple weeks a death in the family, taking one staff member out for a period of time, and two staff members came down with COVID. These are unavoidable which put us back a bit in terms of our planned schedule. I will be reaching out to schedule those previews with members of the finance committee including the two managers and use that June 8 date to do a public presentation. To reiterate – as the communities begin to make initial policy decisions, we can work with the communities to modify the draft budget to incorporate those to reflect the policy decisions that the communities are making. The baseline budget will be updated over time as policy decisions and negotiations, etc. continue.

Shawn Arbaugh – We were supposed to have the draft by May 1st, 11 days ago. We are just getting the update today that it will be late. The final was to be done by May 15. It should have been brought up weeks ago if it was going to be behind schedule that far. Shawn asked if this will impact the rest of the schedule moving forward?

LaToya Bellamy – we don't believe that it will. The next report on the schedule in terms of reports is the management audit. We are comfortable that it will continue on schedule. The dates in the RFP – the May 15 and June 15 – those are sort of "goal posts" – things to meet but not set in stone.

LeeAnne Rogers – I agree that this does not cause any undue delay. I apologize but a death in the family and COVID is out of our control.

Chris Nasuti – I understand the dates aren't set in stone, but the dates are there for a reason. If you could, revise a milestone schedule for us based on the meeting dates we have for the 9-member Committee and 10-person Board. Anticipating when people are going to have their assignments done is important.

Kevin Salandra – I thought a lot of these dates were set due to deadlines by the STAMP program in order to get funding?

LaToya Bellamy – our understanding based on past experience is the dates are a guide. We don't have any concern that DCED would view negatively that the financial analysis presentation is going to be June 8.

Shawn Arbaugh – commenting on the RFP letter you sent stated you were fully committed to meeting the schedule and delivering required reports by the stated deadline. That seems hard-fast and not a goal post.

Adam Shienvold – Our proposal did include meeting deadlines. On the first report – the financial trends report – at this point the sole item that remains to be accomplished is the meetings with municipal officials to preview the report. That is a step we added with consultation with the solicitor to make sure from each municipality and the finance committee before we get to the 9-member Committee, that we have taken into consideration all the concerns that are present from either municipality before we publish the report and the analysis to the 9-member Committee. In terms of overall project management and overall project deliverables, we apologize that we are not meeting the May 15 deadline. Our evaluation of the tasks is that the remaining tasks remain on track, that all the essential deadlines are going to be met and the statutory deadlines, which is the deadline for the consolidation plan, is well on its way due to the work of the subcommittees and this committee. The upcoming deadlines for the summer, the management audit and proposed budget, are on track. There is no question in our mind we will meet those deadlines to move this project to a successful completion well within the timeline expected under the Consolidations and Merges Act.

Kevin Salandra – I would like to update the committee from the finance committee – I questioned how the budget was going to be done accurately and efficiently when none of the staff at the township and none of the staff on the finance committee for the City yesterday has been asked a single question about anything that was submitted. The answer we got at the finance committee level yesterday was that “we will have time for that after we go over it with the finance committee”. It doesn’t seem like there’s a lot of time left to go over it, back and forth, and have a public presentation in less than a month.

Adam Shienvold – based on the work that’s been done, the remaining tasks that are to be accomplished, we are still confident that we will be able to provide a complete analysis within the timeline.

3. Public Works Equipment and Capital Budget Recommendation

Chris Nasuti – we provided in our packets our recommendation for the public works equipment list and capital budget recommendations. We split it into utilities, water/sewer, and then street department. We’ve listed the equipment for each department that we think we’ll need and a replacement cycle cost for each equipment and we’ve done an average spending per calendar year. We have a recommendation in there for a capital budget item for utility equipment and capital budget for street equipment. We want to present this to 9-member Committee and put it on the website for public review and then get a presentation to send up to 10-member Board.

A Motion was made by Chris Nasuti to pass to the 10-member Board the Public Works Equipment and Capital Budget Recommendation. Second by Herm Suplizio.

Kevin Salandra – the Township and City have historically rotated through equipment – The City uses new equipment and has less maintenance cost, where the Township keeps equipment for a longer period of time and get more use of the life of the equipment. Have you analyzed which approach seems to be the most cost effective?

Chris Nasuti – for the larger equipment we have gone with the approach you mentioned like Sandy Township does and the small equipment that we can recycle more efficiently, we are recommending we go on a shorter cycle.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes
Joe Mitchell – yes
Herm Suplizio – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes
Chris Nasuti – yes
Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzelak - yes
Kevin Salandra - yes
Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

4. DuBois City / Sandy Twp Consolidation of Public Facilities Grant Letter

Shawn Arbaugh – we had a meeting with DCED to discuss grant needs and capital needs for consolidation. One item we discussed is the availability of grants to help keep within the budget. There are some opportunities. DCED asked us to put together a list of priority needs and to submit for a grant request as soon as possible. Admin Committee reviewed this and wants to present to 9-member Committee to pass on the 10-member Board for a positive recommendation to move forward. We don't have to take the grant even if we are awarded it.

Herm Suplizio – We need a building to work out of, we need fire stations – grant dollars are competitive so the sooner we get this in the better. This could be a \$9,000,000 project and anything towards that will help.

Herm Suplizio made the motion that we move forward to the 10-person Board the Consolidation of Public Facilities Grant Letter for approval. Second by Kevin Salandra.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes
Joe Mitchell – yes
Herm Suplizio – yes

Dan Kohlhepp – yes
Chris Nasuti – yes
Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzelak - yes
Kevin Salandra - yes
Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

5. Paying of Eckert Seamans Invoice

Shawn Arbaugh – In reviewing the invoices there are a lot of costs associated with sitting in on the subcommittee level. I don't know if that is necessary unless there is a need for them to sit in on certain meetings. Money would be better spent sending them an update from the chairman via phone or email. We are not receiving much feedback or participation, there does not seem to be very good communication at this point.

Dick Whitaker – I have spoken with most of the subcommittee chairman and feel it would be better to contact the consultants on an "as needed" basis.

Kevin Salandra made the motion that Committee Chairs will contact the consultants and keep the consultants informed as to what is happening at their meetings. Second by Shawn Arbaugh.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes
Joe Mitchell – yes
Herm Suplizio – (absent for vote)

Dan Kohlhepp – yes
Chris Nasuti – yes
Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzalak - yes
Kevin Salandra - yes
Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

Joe Mitchell made a motion to pay the Eckert Seams Invoice of \$26,961.50. Second by Chris Nasuti.

Kevin Salandra asked for a total of the bills year to date. We are getting close to the half-way mark - we are close to \$86,000 out of \$200,000.

Shawn Arbaugh – we were at \$59,639.48 before this invoice.

A roll call vote was taken.

Shawn Arbaugh – yes
Joe Mitchell – yes
Herm Suplizio – (absent for vote)

Dan Kohlhepp – yes
Chris Nasuti – yes
Ed Walsh – yes

Kris Kruzalak - yes
Kevin Salandra - yes
Dick Whitaker – yes

Motion carried.

OPEN MEETING TO THE FLOOR

Dana Smith (fire subcommittee) gave an update on the mutual response on box alarms between the City and the Township. We had our first response a week or two ago and it went very well.

Kevin Salandra – I want to clarify my no vote on the motion to pass the Police Subcommittee Recommendation to the 10-member Board for comment. I feel the 10-member Board appointed the nine of us because they valued our individual expertise and opinions. I would also say rather than “tension” there is competing interests among the committees, and that we should work those out between the nine of us before we pass up. As far as the finance committee – on the limited information that we’ve looked at – we’re in favor of trying to get something that was more in tune with a budget than was presented. I’m not against it, or in favor of one committee over the other, I just feel the 9-member Committee should discuss more before pushing to 10-member Board.

Dick Whitaker thanked everyone for the work they have done so far.

ADJOURN

Dick Whitaker adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Kristen Dunn
Consolidation Committee Recording Secretary

SIGN-IN SHEET

Consolidation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 11, 2022 @ 12:00 p.m.

PRINT NAME

ADDRESS

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