

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
POLICE SERVICES OPTIONS WORKSHOP MEETING  
1580 PAOLI PIKE  
August 28, 2012 – 7:00pm  
Final Approved Minutes**

**Present:** Chairman Senya D. Isayeff, Vice-Chairman Thom Clapper and Supervisor Carmen Battavio. Supervisors Marty Shane and Chuck Proctor were absent, as was Township Manager Rick Smith. Also present were CFO Jon Altshul, Interim WEGO Police Chief Gene Dooley, Erich Meyer (Park & Rec), former Supervisor/ Police Commissioner John Chatley, Police Chief Joe Gleason of West Goshen, and reporter Michael Price from the *Daily Local*.

**Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

Senya called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and had John Chatley lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Moment of Silence**

Carmen Battavio called for a moment of silence to honor the troops

**Recording of Meeting**

Michael Price of the *Daily Local* and resident Leo Sinclair recorded the meeting.

**Introduction of Chief Dooley**

Carmen introduced East Whiteland Police Chief Eugene (Gene) Dooley. Carmen announced that Chief Dooley will provide interim leadership for WEGO until the current contract issues have been solved, hopefully in a way that will allow WEGO to remain together. He will stay on until WEGO is in a position to recruit and hire another full-time Police Chief to replace John Dumond, who is retiring at the end of August. Senya presented Chief Dooley with a copy of the book *Images of America: East Goshen Township*. Chief Dooley thanked Senya and said he would be available for questions from residents after the meeting.

**Opening Remarks from the Chairman**

Senya noted that Supervisor Marty Shane was away on vacation, and Supervisor Chuck Proctor was celebrating his 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. He said that the Board would be taking no action this evening, and no votes would be taken. The purpose of the meeting this evening was to let everyone share their comments, thoughts and ideas.

**Update on Recent Developments**

Carmen announced that WEGO held a bargaining session with the Police Association last evening that lasted until 1:30am. The special Police Commission meeting that that was scheduled for August 29 at 5:00pm has been cancelled. Thornbury has an offer pending from West Chester Borough which could lead to negotiations and potentially a contract to have the Borough provide police services to Thornbury. Carmen said he left voicemails for Bob Miller and Brody Bavera requesting that they work with WEGO on the timing of the transition as much as possible before they commit to another resource. Carmen said there is a great deal of police

experience within WEGO and a lot of very good officers. He hopes for a time extension so that this issue can be resolved.

Carmen said he still believes that maintaining WEGO is a viable option, especially under the interim leadership of Chief Dooley. Carmen said we're not doing this to make people mad, to jeopardize the 27 WEGO officers or to change the great police protection East Goshen has.

*Public Comment: Richard Brodhead, Ulster Terrace* – Asked what the net financial result would be for the Township if Thornbury is not part of the WEGO equation. Jon Altshul said he does not believe losing Thornbury would lead to a significant cost savings in the short term. Some money would be saved on gasoline, but there would still be four officers scheduled on each shift. Mr. Brodhead asked if Thornbury is not part of WEGO would it be a net negative for the Township, and Jon said that was a fair statement.

Mr. Brodhead asked if the Police Association were to offer concessions on healthcare and pensions would that make it possible for WEGO to remain intact. Senya said everyone is working hard to find common ground. Mr. Brodhead asked if there has been any movement on the issue of concessions. Senya said that discussions are ongoing. Mr. Brodhead asked if healthcare and pensions were the sticking points. Senya said they are the two most costly aspects of the matters under negotiation.

*Public Comment: Neale Quenzel, Tanglewood Drive* – Asked about the timeline for negotiating a new contract. Senya said if a charter member of WEGO wants to withdraw, they must inform the other Township one year in advance of the contract expiration date which is December 31, 2013. Given that date, either Township must inform the other of their decision to withdraw by December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. If a decision is made to dissolve the partnership, the contract requires WEGO to provide the Police Association six months' notice which would be June 30, 2013. He said WEGO would like to enter a new five-year contract actually over six years given that the recent discussions with the Association have been to renew the contract through December 31, 2018. If Thornbury is lost, then WEGO has to make a decision as to what they want to do before the end of year.

Mr. Quenzel asked what specific concessions have the Police Association offered and what concessions has WEGO offered to the Police Association. Senya said he was not at liberty to share these matters as discussions are ongoing; however, he could say that the Police Association has offered a counter-proposal and WEGO has offered a counter-proposal. Mr. Quenzel asked if binding arbitration is under consideration and Senya said no.

*Public Comment: Jeffery Ditz, Anne Drive* – Asked what is East Goshen's bottom line number to amicably resolve this. Senya said he was not quite clear about the question but noted that Emergency Services account for 46% of the Township's budget. Carmen explained that legacy costs and disability pensions are also a factor. This Board of Supervisors has decided to put money aside to help make up for the legacy costs, and not kick the can down the road.

Jon Altshul mentioned that the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 45 requires governmental entities to show on their balance sheet the actuarial value of future

retirees' benefits. To offset that, a trust fund is set up, and East Goshen set up such a fund about a year ago. Not every municipality has complied with the GASB requirements. Jon said that on the pension side we are about 60% funded (in "severe distress"). The last evaluation by an actuary revealed that WEGO has a \$5M pension liability and a \$5M medical liability. These numbers have probably increased since then. Thom added that the actuarial studies are always two years behind.

*Public Comment: Leo Sinclair, Lochwood Lane* – Asked when GASB 45 came out and Jon said in 2005. Leo asked why the Township waited so long to comply. Jon said that GASB is a reporting requirement, not a funding requirement. Mr. Sinclair said the Township should have dealt with the issue of the unfunded liability many years ago. Senya said it's not that the Township is just looking at it now, but having the two contracts about to expire at the same time has brought this issue to the forefront. However, this has been on the radar of the Board of Supervisors and the staff for a long time. Mr. Sinclair then asked what is the balance of the Capital Reserve Fund and Jon said about \$6M. Mr. Sinclair asked about the balance of the General Fund and Jon said he didn't have it in front of him but it's somewhere between \$5M and \$6M. Mr. Sinclair asked how many Township employees are receiving a pension plan. Jon asked if he meant a defined benefit plan and Mr. Sinclair said yes. Jon said he would have to check as he did not know offhand. Mr. Sinclair then stated that the Township just hired two new Fire/EMS employees. Carmen said that was not correct – they were hired by the Goshen Fire Company, a completely separate entity.

*Public Comment: Gerry Ruffenach, Reservoir Road* – Said he was happy to see the Board of Supervisors take a proactive approach to this issue. He stated that after reading the handout "Comparison of Current State and Federal Requirements and Existing WEGO Contract Requirements" [available on the Township website] he was appalled. All the enhancements in the contract are what got us into this mess. He asked why is East Goshen on the hook for pensions and disability. Why doesn't WEGO quote a dollar amount number to East Goshen for what they need, and the Township negotiates for that. He added that there are other options available rather than negotiating a broken contract system.

*Public Comment: Jim Schorn, Cornwallis Drive* – Asked why there has been no arbitration. Senya said if something can be worked out involving only the interested parties, that is the preferred way. That is better than having the input of a third party that has no stake in the matter, and no skin in the game. Mr. Schorn asked at what point WEGO might consider bringing in a third party. Senya said that WEGO has recently brought in Chief Gene Dooley and both Townships hope that his overall experience, education and the difference he made in East Whiteland will be of great assistance with this effort.

Senya said that although a few residents stated at the last meeting that they would be willing to pay higher taxes to keep WEGO, East Goshen has to make every effort to maintain low taxes and help preserve property values. Senya said that of the eight municipalities in the WCASD, East Goshen has lost the least amount in terms of property values during this economic downturn. The Board wants to keep East Goshen as attractive as possible to new residents and businesses.

Mr. Schorn said he hopes the Board keeps the arbitration option open. Senya assured him that the Supervisors are residents and tax payers too, and have the same interests as the other residents.

Mr. Schorn said fire and police protection are the most important Township services to him. He can live with less mowing, less plowing, and less road improvements but he wants a top-notch police force and fire protection. He said he is willing to pay more in taxes if necessary, as the safety of his family is of utmost importance to him.

*Public Comment: Neil Atkins, Troon Lane* – Said he found it hard to believe that folks would not be willing to pay another \$100 per year in taxes for great police service. He would hate to lose the great service and fast response time of WEGO.

*Public Comment: Gerry Ruffenach, Reservoir Road* – Said he is not worried about the cost of police service, but the costs of all the perks the officers are getting. Personally, he is not willing for someone to be at home rather than on the job. [Note: An individual who did not identify himself made several unrecognized comments while Mr. Ruffenach was speaking.]

*Public Comment: Joe Virgilio, Hershey Mill Road* – Said he does not want the quality of life in East Goshen to diminish. He has small children and wants them to be safe. He asked what is the exit strategy if this cannot be resolved. Senya said the details would have to be worked out. Mr. Virgilio asked if there are any plans to send out a questionnaire or survey to residents. Senya said that was still under discussion as there is a cost involved.

*Public Comment: Ellen Sinclair, Lochwood Lane* – Asked if there is any talk of trying to restructure the pensions. Senya said there are major differences between state requirements for pension plans and the current pension plan for officers. He said WEGO is in discussions to make the pension more financially sustainable for the charter townships. Mrs. Sinclair asked if calculations have been done regarding what it would take for East Goshen to form its own police force from scratch. Senya said that it would be in the millions. Mrs. Sinclair asked why the Capital Reserve Fund could not be used for that purpose. She then had questions for Jon Altshul about funds in the budget. Mrs. Sinclair stated that she does not want the State Police to cover East Goshen. Senya said the goal is to have the best possible police force in Chester County. Mrs. Sinclair said she agreed with Mr. Virgilio that a survey should be taken. She said she does them for a living and offered her assistance in developing the survey, weighting the questions, and compiling the results.

*Public Comment: Leo Sinclair, Lochwood Lane* – Asked if the five options before the Board are written down on paper somewhere. Senya stated that they are in the minutes. Mr. Sinclair said he did not see them in the minutes posted to the website so far. For Mr. Sinclair's benefit Senya enumerated the options again:

1. Continuity of the current arrangement of having the three Township make up WEGO (this is the Township's preference).
2. Continuity of the current arrangement plus working to add additional Townships to WEGO.

If neither of those two options are possible, the Township will have to consider:

3. Changing over to State Police coverage.
4. Becoming “like a Thornbury” to another Township (paying to receive the services of someone else’s police force).
5. Going solo and building a new police force

Senya stated that a sixth option would be to merge with another existing police force, such as West Chester Borough, East Whiteland, West Goshen, Willistown, etc.

*Public Comment: Gerry Ruffenach, Reservoir Road* – Asked that the Township put all the police-related documents in one place on the website. Jon Altshul said that was a good suggestion and he would start working on that tomorrow morning.

*Public Comment: Paul Day, Ashton Way* – Asked that everyone at these meetings treat one another with civility, courtesy and respect.

*Public Comment: Neil DeRiemer, Hershey Mill Road* – Asked what the police officers currently pay toward their healthcare and pensions. Jon Altshul said they pay 5% toward their pension, and WEGO pay 100% of their healthcare premiums.

*Public Comment: Joan Atkins, Troon Lane*- Asked if having the officers contribute more to their own pensions and healthcare premiums has been brought up in the discussions. Senya said that has been part of the ongoing discussions.

*Public Comment: Neale Quenzel, Tanglewood Drive* – Thanked the Supervisors and staff for all the time they have been putting in to resolve these issues. Their efforts are appreciated.

*Public Comment: Jack Trevisan, Joshua Drive* – Said he is a police officer in another location, and he knows WEGO does a fine job. He hopes this can all be worked out so the officers can keep their jobs.

*Public Comment: Jim Walsh, Jefferson Way in Hershey Mill* – Said this is the first time in 11 years of living the Township that he has come out to a meeting. He thought the topic was so important that he needed to attend. He said it’s important for the Township to take a survey of the residents as it’s a cost-effective means to gather information.

Carmen asked that the Hershey Mill residents let their neighbors know that the Township will be having more than three special meetings to discuss the police options. He suggested that the Hershey Mill residents consider designating liaisons to come to the meetings and then fill in their neighbors on what took place. This will help keep an accurate flow of information to residents who might not be able to attend. Senya reminded everyone to sign up for Constant Contact on the Township website to get information as it becomes available.

*Public Comment: Joan Atkins, Troon Lane* – Asked why East Goshen doesn’t have a Township emergency call system similar to the one in West Goshen. Carmen said it was looked at in the

past but had too many quirks at that time. Carmen said the Township would look into it again, hopefully toward the end of September.

*Public Comment: Candy Kulzer, Ashton Way* – Read aloud a statement in support of the police officers. She said she is in favor of paying more in taxes to keep WEGO. She stated that property values will go down if WEGO is lost. She stated that West Goshen and Willistown are able to fund their police forces so she is not sure why East Goshen cannot make it work.

**Adjournment**

There was no further public comment or discussion from the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm.

Anne Meddings  
Recording Secretary