Adamstown Borough Council **August 26, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 80 E. Main Street, Adamstown, PA by Council President Randy Good.

Council Present: Randy Good, Dave Matz, Cindy Schweitzer, Mark Bansner, Joe Dietrich, Jessica Kelly

Visitors Present: George Beever, Alex McManimen, Sandy Roth, Bob Stork, Ray Burns, Michele Walter Fry, Mike Elmer, Sandy Gideon, Kristen Nuneville, Christopher Bennett, Lynn Keene, Christina Cervantez, Eric Dickson, Chance Firestone, Mark Schweitzer, Bryan Schweitzer, Austin Schaeffer, Jonathan Zaun, Cpl. Terry Arment, Christopher Luongo, Cayla Stoner, Dee Utz, Carolyn Hildebrand, J.J. Stoner, Tracey Poole, Toni Mumma, Blake Daub

Others Present: Dean Johnson, Ralph Vedder, Sam Toffy

POLICE DISCUSSION – The Fire & Safety Committee, comprised of Dean Johnson, Cindy Schweitzer, David Matz and Ralph Vedder, was given the task of researching police service options for Adamstown Borough.

R. Good opened the meeting stating that Mr. Vedder would give his presentation which would be followed by questions by Council, then questions by Adamstown residents, and finally questions by others. An executive session will immediately follow to discuss personnel issues and police contract issues.

R. Vedder began his presentation by noting that 6 police service providers were approached. The Committee also reached out to several non-police service providers for their input. A Lancaster County 911 representative attended a meeting and a fire police member was interviewed. The Committee received no response from Fivepointville EMS or Reinholds EMS. Of the six police service providers contacted, four were interested and of those four Mr. Vedder detailed/compared the services, costs and management offered by each. Ephrata Borough was the only provider to offer a solid 5-year cost and those numbers were compared to the base cost provided by East Cocalico Township with projections made based on information from East Cocalico Township. Based on the data, interviews and historic knowledge the Committee is recommending Ephrata Borough Police. It was noted that the Ephrata Borough offer is contingent on West Cocalico contracting service with Ephrata.

D. Johnson commented that Mr. Vedder's comparison between ECT and Ephrata's 5-year costs is the most defining reason why it appears that Ephrata Borough should be the clear choice for police service.

M. Bansner questioned Chief Beever if Ephrata Borough would be able to hire officers who may be let go from ECT. Chief Beever said it is possible, however they would lose their time and service accrued.

Sandy Roth, Adamstown resident – Ms. Roth inquired which two EMS providers were contacted and Mr. Vedder responded that Fivepointville was one and he could not recall who the other one was (Reinholds EMS) but noted that neither returned his calls/emails. She expressed her concern with how many officers/cars would be provided for Adamstown and R. Good responded that one car would be assigned at all times, with backup car(s) available if necessary. Ms. Roth asked what the next choice would be, should West Cocalico Township choose to not contract with Ephrata Borough and Mr. Vedder responded that no further recommendation was made at this time, but the Committee is still in discussions, should that happen.

Mike Elmer, Adamstown resident – Mr. Elmer questioned how ECT came up with their 5-year projected costs and commented that it is difficult to determine actual costs because there are too many unknowns such as how many municipalities will be involved. Mr. Vedder clarified that the 2016 cost provided by ECT would be $232K with a 4% increase per year for the next four years but that cost could increase dependent on pension and health care costs, or the possible additional cost for the purchase of a building and vehicles if/when necessary. Ephrata Borough's 2016 cost would be $197K with a 3.3% per year for the next 4 years.

Sandy Gideon, Pastor of St. Paul's Church and East Cocalico resident – Ms. Gideon asked if the 5-year contract price provided by Ephrata Borough is a locked in price or if it is a projected price and R. Good responded that it is the 5-year locked in price they quoted to the Committee in writing.

Jonathan Zaun, Adamstown resident – Mr. Zaun thanked Council and the Fire & Safety Committee for being forthcoming and providing numbers so the public can better understand the comparisons.

Kristen Nuneville, Adamstown resident – Ms. Nuneville commented that she knows all of the ECT officers and she knows they would do anything for anyone. As a person who has had to call 911, response time is everything. The residents have come to Council telling Council what they want but it seems Council is not listening. She understands that Council has a very difficult job, but she asked that they think about how good it's been for so long with what they have now before they jump to another police department. C. Schweitzer commented that the Borough has 900-plus households yet the room has only a handful of people who are extremely passionate about retaining the services of ECTPD. Perhaps the large majority of Adamstown residents don't attend the meetings because they feel comfortable allowing Council to make the decision? It is unknown what the majority of residents are thinking.

Christopher Bennett, Adamstown resident – Mr. Bennett expressed his support of the ECT police department. He said they are an inherent part of the community and they have personal connections with the residents of the community. They are not just the police in the community, but they are also a valued part of the community. He feels it is important that the kids in the neighborhood have a good relationship with the police, as it helps to build the children's relationships with law enforcement as they grow older. Mr. Bennett said he used to live in Ephrata and he did not think the Ephrata police professionally handled the situations he witnessed. ECT's response time is much faster and they are more professional. His concern is if Adamstown leaves this area for police protection and the residents are forced to rely on outside sources that have longer response times, citizens may feel the need to take matters into their own hands.

Lynn Keene, Adamstown resident – Ms. Keene asked if ECT mentioned that they would be willing to work with percentages regarding the possible need for a new building or other necessity that may come along. C. Schweitzer responded that the numbers we were given by ECT were not negotiable. R. Good commented that Adamstown has requested 5-year numbers from ECT several times and they do not want to provide numbers. She appreciates that Adamstown has not walked away from the table. She said that Cindy's comment to Ms. Nuneville was upsetting because she feels that the reason the meeting was so sparsely filled is because people have given up. She feels that no one is heard. C. Schweitzer responded, saying that everyone who speaks is heard. These public meetings are called so that the public can voice their opinions but in government, decisions are not based solely on the input from the citizens. Council has a responsibility to citizens to make the best decisions for the community. R. Good interjected saying that what they are doing is looking for what is best for this community long term. He said he has many family members living in the Borough so he, as much as anyone, wants good protection. But at the same time, in order to live in a good community, you have to have a balance of all things which must also be maintained. You have to have a good fire company, you have to have an excellent police force and you must have other facilities that attract people to the community, but you also must maintain those facilities. The way the costs are going with ECT, at no fault of the officers, it is not sustainable long term in this community with the current tax rate so taxes would have to be dramatically increased. Some people say that the solution is raising taxes, yet there is a substantial amount of back taxes currently owed and water/sewer shutoff notices will be going out next week, so there are those who cannot afford an increase in taxes. You have to attempt to balance everything. When Ephrata Borough was approached they were completely transparent and laid everything on the table. ECT provided costs for one year and said they can't give us costs for the other four. How do we plan that way? D. Matz commented that in dealing with ECT over the years on any issue, they have never been transparent.

Sandy Gideon – Ms. Gideon said she does not get the newspaper and therefore did not know that the Fire & Safety Committee meeting originally scheduled for this evening had been changed to a special Council meeting. She said she found out on Facebook.

Tracey Poole, West Cocalico Township resident – Ms. Poole asked that if Adamstown were to choose to go with Ephrata Borough, would West Cocalico Township then be able to go with Ephrata Borough as well? D. Matz explained that WCT can go with Ephrata whether or not Adamstown does, but we cannot go with Ephrata unless WCT also goes with them. R. Good added that we could potentially go with Spring Township or the State Police on our own and it would not be contingent on whether WCT goes with them. Ms. Poole then asked if Adamstown chooses to go with Ephrata Borough, would there only be so many positions for the police to fill? R. Good responded that Ephrata Borough said if Adamstown and WCT were to elect to go with Ephrata Borough, they would pick up 5 additional officers.

Christina Cervantes, Adamstown resident – Ms. Cervantes questioned the response time of an Ephrata Borough second police car on a critical case. C. Schweitzer said there would be one sector car assigned to the Borough and WCT and one supervisory car that roams. Ms. Cervantes said that on August 9th she had to call 911 due to what she thought were gunshots across the street, and three officers were at her house within minutes. Her son felt comforted by seeing familiar faces. She asked why Council can't allow the community members to come out and vote so that Council can get a clear consensus of what the community wants. R. Good responded saying that Council is attempting to educate and inform its citizens and all of the Council meetings and Committee meetings are advertised. Council is elected by its citizens to make decisions for the community. Ms. Cervantes said that not everyone is cut out to be a Council person but the citizens put their trust in those who are on Council. She understands that Council has a financial responsibility to everyone, but at the same time there is a responsibility for safety.

Eric Dickson, Adamstown resident – Mr. Dickson noted that what he had to say may sound contradictory. He said that he has been a juvenile diabetic for most of his life and his wife has had to call the EMS three times and two of those three times Officer Josh Sola came to his aid. But at the same time, no one in this room would buy a car if they didn't know what the monthly payments would be. He said that he does appreciate the service of the ECT police, but at the same time he would not buy a car if he did not know the monthly payments.

Chance Firestone, Reinholds resident – Mr. Firestone said that this all started out with the attempt to form a regional police force. Currently only ECT and Denver are involved. He asked if the price given to Adamstown by ECT was the price with or without WCT being factored in. R. Good responded that the price given by ECT is contingent on WCT being in. Chief Beever concurred and added that without knowing who all would be involved, it was difficult for ECT to give a 5-year projected cost. Mr. Firestone who is an Adamstown firefighter said there was an incident recently on Rt. 222 which involved a fatality. The ECT police were the first to arrive and attempted to revive the victim. The State Police (PSP) arrived about 15 to 20 minutes later. There have been other incidents where it has taken the PSP almost an hour to arrive at an accident on Rt. 222. Mr. Firestone asked if Ephrata Borough's average response time of 4 minutes, 20 seconds, which was mentioned by R. Vedder earlier, was if the officer were coming from WCT. R. Vedder was not sure but said he would check on that. Mr. Firestone also commented that the ECT officers get to know the children in the school district and if a child starts getting into trouble, the officers are proactive and talk to the school who in turn steps in to redirect the child and get them on the right path. Our officers are proactive rather than reactive which is why the crime rate in our area is lower than in other areas. R. Vedder requested a copy of the crime rate data from Mr. Firestone.

Mike Elmer, Adamstown resident – Mr. Elmer thanked the ECT police for their service over the years and said that he wants to see them stay. He also commended Council for having to deal with East Cocalico Township. He said he is aware of the information requested of ECT by Adamstown, and ECT's reluctance to provide it. He said that familiarity with the community is important. The ECT police know their citizens and the relationship with them has been phenomenal. We can either increase taxes to keep what we have or we can take less service to prevent an increase in taxes.

Cpl. Terry Arment, East Cocalico Police Officer – Cpl. Arment said that what gets lost in the shuffle of all of this is peoples' livelihoods. He said that Council will do what it needs to do, but he is asking that everyone in the room and

in the Cocalico community keep the officers in their thoughts and prayers because they will have a lot of life changing decisions to make in the next few months. He explained that a police officer cannot change jobs immediately; there is a process that takes several months before being hired by another department. So even though Ephrata Borough said it would pick up additional officers from ECT, which Cpl. Arment applauded, he said it will take months before they can work again. He asked Council to remember that we have an incredible group of officers with high level character.

Ray Burns, West Cocalico Township resident – Mr. Burns noted that several service providers were invited to attend the public Fire & Safety Committee meetings and he asked if ECT or the police department were invited to attend any of the meetings. D. Matz responded no and Mr. Burns asked if the only communication between ECT and the Committee was via paper trail. C. Schweitzer said she believes the only reason ECT was not invited was because the Committee wanted to meet with the various agencies to familiarize the Committee with the services they provide. The committee is already very familiar with ECT and the police department. Mr. Burns said in his 30 years in the business he does not ever remember a request being made for a multi-year contract and he felt it was not fair. He asked Council if the meeting was going to be adjourned prior to going into executive session or would it be reconvened after executive session then adjourned. D. Matz explained that the meeting is kept in session when going into executive session then reconvened to adjourn.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Council went into executive session at 8:24PM to discuss personnel issues and police contract issues. The regular meeting reconvened at 8:50PM.

R. Good stated that the executive session was held to discuss personnel management at the pool and police contract issues. He said that Council will tentatively meet for another special meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2015, after West Cocalico Township's meeting. The meeting will be advertised and posted at the Adamstown post office for those who do not receive the newspaper.

Adjournment:

Motioned by D. Matz, seconded by M. Bansner and unanimously carried to adjourn.

The meeting ended at 8:55PM.

Attested: _____
Sam Toffy, Adamstown Borough Administrative Secretary