

Approved August 10, 2010

Municipal Building
53 Park Avenue
Park Ridge, NJ

July 26, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING SHARED SERVICES

TRI - BOROUGH MAYOR AND COUNCIL SHARED SERVICES MEETING

Sign in sheet distributed and attached.

Mayor Ruschman read the Compliance Statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, P.L. 1975, Chapter 231.

Mayor Ruschman stated that the three towns have been role models for shared services for many years. Mayor Ruschman then turned the meeting over to Mayor La Paglia, Woodcliff Lake, who prepared the agenda for tonight's meeting. Mayor Ruschman asked that the Mayors and Councilmembers introduce themselves to one another and the audience before we get started.

- Mayor La Paglia stated that Tri Borough shared services has a long history amongst these three towns.
 - Great commonality between the three towns
 - Operating costs discussed
 - Downturn in economy has had a significant impact on the communities
 - Park Ridge was faced with one of its most difficult budget years this year
 - Montvale has struggled
 - Woodcliff Lake has been in a little better shape due to the increase in ratables
 - That changed last year
 - Ratables increased only ½%
 - Decrease in development
 - Increase in costs
 - Park Ridge settled their PBA Contract recently
 - Montvale reopened their PBA Agreement in order to realize a savings
 - Woodcliff Lake currently down 2 police officers; 18 to 16 through attrition
 - Involved in active negotiations since September/October
 - Now in mediation
 - Differences in Labor increases and contract changes
 - Mayor La Paglia stated that he is mentioning the police because it is a large portion of the municipalities' budgets

- In Woodcliff Lake – 22% of the taxes collected go to Municipality
68% to the schools
Balance to the County
- Police are a major concern
- Mayor and Council have no control on school budget – voted on by the residents
- Mayor and Council have no control over County
- Mayor La Paglia stated he read the minutes from the May 17th meeting of Park Ridge and Montvale
 - Reviewed the slide show presentations
 - Expressed support of doing more on a joint level or Tri Borough level
- The agenda for tonight listed specific areas that Mayor La Paglia wanted to discuss, but asked that it not hinder the ideas of others

Municipal Court

- The discussions began in 2009 to consolidate the courts
 - Mayor La Paglia stated that strategically it made sense to him
 - In his opinion if you limit it to just the courts the savings is not significant
 - Woodcliff Lake's total court costs are less than \$100,000
 - Direct costs are \$72,000 - \$73,000
 - He is open to continuing to pursue
 - Discussion of those present on the partnership, even if savings is minimal for some
 - Has to be a benefit for everyone
- Overall the taxpayers will gain from a savings; large or small
- Mayor Ruschman stated that his understanding was that Montvale and Woodcliff Lake were committed to moving forward with the concept of a shared court
 - Mayor Ruschman further stated that Park Ridge would be adopting a resolution on July 27, 2010 in support of a Joint Court
 - Mayor La Paglia stated that it is a segway to the merger of Police Departments and that is where the savings would be
- Discussion on the cost for Police in the three towns
 - Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake each represent \$2.3 million
 - Did not have access to Montvale figures
 - Mayor La Paglia stated that he was aware that this year Park Ridge was faced with the possible layoff of 4 police officers
 - Greatest concern for Woodcliff Lake is the police overtime for court sessions
 - Philosophical issues were raised by the Police Chiefs of Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake with regard to allowing Prosecutors to plea bargain a ticket without the police officer present
 - Mayor La Paglia acknowledged that Linda Murphy, consultant for Government Strategy Group, stated that is how it is done in other municipalities
 - Requires a change in philosophy

- Park Ridge Councilman Hopper stated his understanding was that the police officers would be provided a list prior to court and they could note where they were willing to plea down
- Discussion on purpose for tonight's meeting.
- Mayor Ruschman stated that his hope was that two council members would be chosen from Woodcliff Lake to join those already named from Montvale and Park Ridge to form a subcommittee. In addition alternates would be chosen.
- **Discussion on the police being the largest expense for all towns**
 - Need to look at a merger or sharing of services
 - If the court makes sense those present felt it should be done
 - Discussion that the Joint Court should stand on its own for consideration
 - Park Ridge Council President Kane stated that hopefully after tonight we can leave with names of 2 Woodcliff Lake Council Members and an alternate
 - He further stated that Park Ridge will be adopting a resolution to move forward with Montvale and Woodcliff Lake in looking further into a Joint Court
- Mayor La Paglia advised those present that he wanted to make certain that the Tri Borough Mayors and Council are willing to look at the hard issues
 - The issues have been talked about individually; this is the first time the group is talking about them
 - Discussion that it took 5 years to move the Tri Borough Radio room
- Park Ridge Councilman Viola stated that the joint court did not provide a great savings to Park Ridge
 - The real savings would be in the police
 - He further stated that as a group we need to move forward as quickly as possible
- Woodcliff Lake councilman stated that in his opinion the first step would be to apply for the \$30,000 grant money available for a feasibility study
 - Total would be \$90,000
 - Recommends all councils bring the information back to their governing bodies
 - His understanding is if the study comes back that there are safety concerns the municipalities are not obligated to move forward
 - However, if the study comes back with a savings and safety is not an issue, the municipalities would be obligated to move forward or would have to repay the grant
 - Woodcliff Lake Councilman suggested all towns look into grant
 - Did not think policy had been set yet
 - Teaneck/Bogota are the first to take advantage
- Park Ridge Councilman Hopper stated that a study had been completed in the 1970's
 - He further stated that the governing bodies would need to be prepared to move forward

- He further stated that the Administrators need to get together to look into the grant and submit a request
 - Park Ridge Councilman Misciagna asked for the specifics on the grant when available

Park Ridge Mayor Ruschman and Councilman Maguire left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

- Council President Kane stated that he would like the Steering Committee to meet within the next week
- Woodcliff Lake Administrator, Ed Sandve stated that the small savings could add up to larger savings
- Mayor La Paglia will get back to Council President Kane with the names of Woodcliff Lake's Representative

Pascack Valley Regional High School

- Mayor La Paglia advised those present of Montvale and Woodcliff Lake's intent to separate from the Pascack Valley Regional School
- Mayor La Paglia just wanted to advise Park Ridge that if they were successful in separating from Pascack Hills and Park Ridge was interested in the future with merging with Montvale and Woodcliff Lake they would be supportive

Consolidation of Budgets

- Mayor La Paglia stated that he would like to see the Tri Borough Budgets together on a spreadsheet
 - Easy to do with the state program
 - The three towns do some things significantly different than the others
 - Felt it would be enlightening for the Councils to see the differences in costs
- Councilman Maughan stated that the purpose of this committee should be provide maximum services to the residents at minimal cost
- Mayor La Paglia stated that he felt the Borough Administrators should be given the task to put the three budgets together
- Park Ridge Administrator Helene Fall stated that she would contact Woodcliff Lake Administrator Sandve and Montvale Administrator Iarossi-Alwan

Technology

- Mayor La Paglia stated that the committee should have a preliminary assessment of where the towns are now.
 - Council President Kane advised those present that Park Ridge had a very valuable Technology Committee, consisting of Professional Volunteers
 - Doing a great job on scoping out projects and looking for grants
 - Technology Committee and PKRG-TV have come together to work cooperatively this year
 - Very motivated group

- Mayor La Paglia stated that Park Ridge and Montvale were ahead of Woodcliff lake in Technology
- Discussion on land line survey/audit being conducted and incorporating wireless
- Councilman Maughan advised that Park Ridge is trying to be in the forefront on more shared services
 - Would like to get moving before Trenton tells us we have to
 - Montvale Councilwoman stated that Montvale is ready to go
 - Their committee members are Tim Lane and Sal Talarico
- Council president Kane stated that park Ridge is ready to have a meeting as soon as Woodcliff Lake appoints 2 members

Council President Kane then opened the floor to the public

Carol Lee Adams – Montvale

- Feels the town’s budgets are already at “bare bones”
 - Feels the expense is in County Government
 - Stated if the County is going to give you money for a study
 - They are going to recommend shared services
 - In her opinion the County Police should transfer their duties to the State
 - The County jails are housing people to be transferred
 - County Budget is 12% of our tax dollars
 - Need to look at the County’s budget
- She is forming a committee whose intent is to do away with County Government
 - Asked the Tri Borough officials to support their efforts in asking the County to cut their expenses
 - Mayor La Paglia stated that the individual Mayors can’t do much
 - Recommended contacting the Freeholders
 - Debt incurred is tremendous – nearly double what it was 7 years ago
 - She concluded by asking the Mayors to encourage the County

Alan Belthoff – Park Ridge

- Asked the Governing bodies to realize that this is an emotional issue, not just a fiscal one
 - If expense management is your only initiative you are going to make a big mistake
 - He further advised those present that their goal should be to enhance the communities
- Mayor La Paglia stated that they were all aware that it is not just a financial decision
 - Montvale, Park Ridge and Woodcliff Lake have similar demographics and socio economics
 - Mayor La Paglia also stated that the members of the police forces are in favor of a joint police department

Joe D’Urso – Washington Twp. Council President

- Introduced Washington Twp. Council Vice President Fred Goetz
 - Council President D’Urso stated that Washington Twp. is starting Shared Service conversations with Hillsdale and Westwood
 - He further stated that shared services become a “touchy” conversation when dealing with police
 - Washington Twp. Police represent 33% of the municipal budget

General discussion on Public Libraries and costs

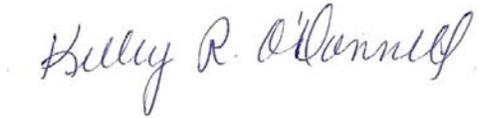
Lee Hopper - Montvale

- Advised those present that the Tri Borough Ambulance Corps was initiated by the Park Ridge Fire Department Only took 2-3 months to put together
 - Advised those present to look to Orangetown for examples
 - Made up of smaller communities
 - Consolidated but kept individual identity

**Council President Kane thanked everyone for coming together tonight
Once we have the names from Woodcliff Lake the Committee will be able to meet
immediately**

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kelley R. O'Donnell, RMC
Borough Clerk