

The York Area United Fire and Rescue Commission held a Strategic Planning Meeting on Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 6 p.m. at the Springettsbury Township Offices, 1501 Mt. Zion Road, York, PA

MEMBERS IN

ATTENDANCE: Bill Schenck, Chairman
Kathleen Phan
Cara Beth Zortman
John Fullmer

MEMBERS NOT

IN ATTENDANCE: Austin Hunt
George Dvoryak
Eric Lehmayr

ALSO IN

ATTENDANCE: Robert McCoy, YAUFRR Chief
Sandy Ratcliffe, YAUFRR
Dan Hoff, YAUFRR Battalion Chief
Jay VanPelt, YAUFRR
Jean Abreght, Stenographer

1. CALL TO ORDER

SCHENCK Chairman Schenck called the Strategic Planning Session to order. He stated that the meeting was open to the public.

A. Purpose of the Strategic Planning

SCHENCK Chairman Schenck stated that, with the inception of the Strategic Planning session, the board is restarting the planning process with the goal of putting structure in place to move forward. He asked Chief McCoy for his suggestions as to where to begin with some background and history.

MCCOY Chief McCoy responded that Strategic Planning began in the spring of 2013 with the idea of bringing in a facilitator to assist and guide the board in presenting YAUFRR to other municipalities in the future. The Commissioners had contacted several facilitators but had not made any selection. At that time the board felt that there was a need to clarify the focus at the Commission level. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis was done, which listed the top five strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Chief McCoy reported that, having reviewed the list, the Funding Formula item, which had been considered a weakness, had already been determined. An additional item included how to present YAUFRR to neighboring municipalities.

Chief McCoy suggested that this date, discussion could be for the issues previously mentioned in the original sessions along with a schedule. In addition, as the Manchester discussions had increased, discussion should deal with the potential merger. He noted representatives from Manchester Township in the audience, David Brosend and Tim James, who had been invited to attend, as YAUFR had been handling their Management Services since 2010.

B. Action Points

PHAN Ms. Phan asked whether the goals are to be set for one year, two year or five-year goals. She was curious to know how the goals would be accomplished.

MCCOY Chief McCoy responded that the internal tasks had been identified and then prioritized with soliciting opinions from each Commission member. The core issues were reviewed including weaknesses, funding formula, relations with neighbors, vision of the future, change and resistance to change, personnel administration. One big issue was, if YAUFR continued to expand, would it grow beyond the scope of what Springettsbury Township should or could provide through a services contract. Priorities may have changed at this point in time. He offered copies of the recap of the previous discussions.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer appreciated the paper copy of the spreadsheet recap. He noted at the time that the Commissioners just randomly commented on their thoughts. All the members have different perspectives than those in the trenches who have operational needs. However, the board needed to continue to look at the big picture with long term and short-term goals. Some of the questions that surfaced included how to grow into other municipalities; when will there be a need for in-house financial assistance to eliminate the services Springettsbury Township provides. The priority included the Funding Formula, for which a short-term fix was initiated. The question exists as to how the Funding Formula will be affected with the addition of Manchester or another department.

PHAN Ms. Phan commented that as goals are set, there would be sub-goals as well that might reoccur and need continual monitoring.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer noted that having identified some of the areas, the next step would be to create objectives and action plans to accomplish them.

MCCOY Chief McCoy stated that there had been initial discussion about the marketing perspective, which spurred the ideas focusing on basic internal issues.

- FULLMER** Mr. Fullmer noted that it was important not to re-invent the wheel. He had researched other Strategic Plans throughout the county and Pennsylvania. Chief McCoy has the documentation of those plans and issues. There was discussion surrounding whether or not an outside facilitator was needed, but it was determined that initially it was not necessary.
- PHAN** Ms. Phan questioned whether the Strategic Planning included some continuing education as well.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy responded that he envisioned a branch of the fire department expanding on what is done at the Commission level.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck added that at the Commission level there is a vision, but it was important to challenge the professionals with what looked strategic to each of them.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy noted the strategic portion is where it costs money.
- PHAN** Ms. Phan added that it is important as well to have a written tracking list.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy responded that as far as what they are doing, he had been working on a drafted regional plan for years. It is a fluid plan that continues to change based on current matters.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck asked Chief McCoy which item was the number one priority; which one received the most votes.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy responded that by going through the list, there was a wide range of priorities for everyone.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck commented that the obvious issues came to the top. The Funding Formula itself was a weakness because it was causing a lot of angst at the time. As far as the strengths, the Funding meant that there was adequate funding and YAUFR is not distressed. However, the matter of how YAUFR is perceived by the public and other communities was important.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy mentioned that it included the relationship with neighboring departments; however, there are still citizens who do not understand the department.
- PHAN** Ms. Phan asked how this strategic discussion will get into writing.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck noted that figuring that out is the current status. They did not think they needed a facilitator to go through the SWOT Analysis in the initial meetings. He noted there could be someone on the board who would have the

skills and the time to pull this together; otherwise some additional outside help is needed.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer agreed that, especially now with some new members on the Commission, to have someone provide focus in the right direction is needed. The strengths and weaknesses have been identified. One big focus obviously is bringing Manchester in by providing them with enough information that they can go to their board and say it logically makes sense. At the upper level, expansion is top priority.

PHAN Ms. Phan asked what qualifications would be important in a facilitator.

- Fire Company knowledge not necessary; should not bring a bias.
- Smart enough that explanation of the fire service is not necessary.
- Good quality as a facilitator.
- Skill set to be able to ask the right questions.
- Candidate must recognize only to provide focus and not a plan; it is a YAUFRR plan.
- Candidate could be a business facilitator asking questions and directing toward the goals.
- Average cost was suggested at about \$6,000; charged by the hour, 40 to 60 hours.
- Preliminary interviews to be done with the Commissioners to gain some background of the fire service, administration and the Commission.
- Contract to be written based on the hours with a flat rate for initial investigation followed by a per hour cost. Contract could be renewed or expanded.

Consensus was that Commission members would seek potential facilitators before next meeting to see if there were any duplicates.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer noted that the board was more concerned about some of the decisions made that were not properly documented for future individuals to understand the thought processes. That was what had been done with the Funding Formula.

MCCOY Chief McCoy added that some of the issues were out of their control, such as the Unfunded Mandates and the Cancer Presumption. Unfortunately, both those issues were a threat to the budget. He noted that he, Steve Hovis, and Austin Hunt met with the York Delegation at the Legislative Breakfast. They allowed them an hour and a half to present the threats for potential new legislation.

Consensus of the board was that the six o'clock timeframe worked for the Strategic Planning sessions.

C. Manchester Township

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer stated that he would like to get some comments from Manchester Township as to issue or questions they might have to help them make a decision.

JAMES Mr. Tim James introduced himself as Manager of Manchester Township. He stated, on behalf of their board, that they want to see some form of a number that would indicate they are not going into something blind. They want to be assured that 10 or 15 years into the future they can look back financially and see that they made a good decision. He noted that managing capital savings is an important piece along with improving service, keeping department costs in check. He noted that the service they currently receive from YAUFRR is great, and that can continue for as long as they need it. Chief and his crew do a fantastic job. However, they cannot maintain what they currently have. They know there is an advantage to get into regionalization.

PHAN Ms. Phan asked whether they were looking at the cost analysis to be in the next year or two; a year to five.

JAMES Mr. James responded that if they could get a cost settlement for a year or two that would be ideal. Additionally, there are advantages in the capital purchasing in the future. He noted they will have to replace a number of pieces that are past due.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer commented that, in order to provide what they are asking, they may need to provide more information as to what they have to offer. For instance, they have equipment, but they also have some debt on that equipment. There have to be some tangible ways to analyze if Manchester gives YAUFRR X equipment to join, here is what YAUFRR proposes it will look over time. There will be a certain amount of savings in maintenance, for example. Mr. Fullmer noted that the Funding Formula had been tweaked, and he believed that as YAUFRR grows, assessed values may be a better way of divvying things up. One additional item is the union contract, which is a big issue. In the initial merge, there were two different contracts, and it took two and a half years to get into one contract and people could cross the boundary lines. Major savings are seen throughout, especially in the overtime area.

JAMES Mr. James questioned how they would feel about having a contract with what they have. The contracts will eventually mesh together.

SCHENCK Chairman Schenck stated that when it came to the union contract, the board determined to work essentially with contracted labor under two different contracts. It sent a message that it was going to happen and they had to get on

board. It was an effective way to begin. He would support that again because it worked and operationally got them closer to the end game.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer added that it would be a more smooth transition if, when the Manchester union negotiations take place, an attempt is made to get the language as close to what we have now, and then it becomes less of an issue.

JAMES Mr. James responded that their contracts are a little closer to what YAUFRR has and hopefully that will continue.

MCCOY Chief McCoy stated that the situation is unique. It is not designed for the budget to go down. It is designed to stabilize the increases, and they had been able to accomplish that in a lot of places. The biggest achievement with Manchester was their contract negotiations that made great steps toward pushing the contracts together. They enacted the same pension. They keep what they have. New hires come in under a DC.

FULLMER Mr. Fullmer noted that when the Spring Garden/Springettsbury merger took place, they had done the same thing. It was made known that Springettsbury had a defined benefit plan and their unfunded liability was theirs. In addition, even though the two union contracts were together, there were all new uniforms, all equipment was YAUFRR, all of which sent a huge message that things were moving forward.

MCCOY Chief McCoy added that they tried to honor everything but then draw the line in the sand from now on. With regard to staffing, they don't want anyone to think because YAUFRR comes in someone will lose their job. While the complement may be a bit heavy in the beginning, through attrition it will be as painless as possible on the employees. This could build something that the employees will love.

PHAN Ms. Phan questioned the volunteer status.

JAMES Mr. James responded that there is a very little volunteer staff.

PHAN Ms. Phan asked if he knew why.

JAMES Mr. James responded that it could be other things going on in life, or just relying on the paid staff.

MCCOY Chief McCoy mentioned that in Manchester and in Springetts as well, they hired most of their active employees.

- PHAN** Ms. Phan noted that was the process where she is from, the fire company in Bedford County. One had to be a volunteer at that station before moving into a career position.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck stated that YAUFRR has a lot to offer and that hopefully will come out in the Strategic Plan. Management Services are being provided to full volunteer companies, Eagle and Union. That increases the feet on the fire ground and is a great opportunity. They get the high level of training, the leadership and all the other benefits.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy brought forward an additional high priority opportunity, local colleges with York College and Penn State. There is a prime opportunity to get a facility on campus. If a facility is built correctly, the college population each year holds about 15 to 20 volunteers from outside of the area. Build a fire station with individual dorm rooms and computer labs, that is free room and board for a student. If the college students are qualified based on YAUFRR standards, career people could be moved to another area to kill overtime or fill vacancies. That does not mean a reduction in staffing; just moving people.
- PHAN** Ms. Phan added that the young men and ladies work hard because, as a volunteer, they know what is coming for them. They drill two or three times a day.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy commented that one problem with a college fire house is that retention is going to be two to three years. A new group of students comes in every year. Mr. Fullmer and representatives from Spring Garden Township have a meeting set up with the new President of York College. There is a prime opportunity to try to get a facility at that campus.
- FULLMER** Mr. Fullmer commented that a really good strategic decision had been made that bricks and motor are the property of the township along with the responsibility to fund it. The volunteers have made an enormous contribution to the new fire station.
- MCCOY** Chief McCoy questioned whether the board is interested in revisiting what was identified in the SWOT Analysis.
- SCHENCK** Chairman Schenck stated that any information that is available should be distributed, even the posters if there is an easy way to reproduce them.
- FULLMER** Mr. Fullmer encouraged the Manchester representatives to do a SWOT Analysis of their own facilities. If there are items they want to add to the board's list, they would encourage that too.

SCHENCK Chairman Schenck asked Chief McCoy to make sure that Mr. James receives the same documentation as the board.

ACTION ITEM: Focus on the facilitator and distribute any and all materials to the Commission members and to Manchester Township Manager, Tim James.

Consensus of the board was to schedule the Strategic Planning Sessions each month prior to the regular Commission meeting, with the exception of the pension meetings, all at six o'clock.

4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS

There were no citizen comments.

5. ADJOURNMENT

SCHENCK Chairman Schenck adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file at YAUFRR Headquarters

John Fullmer
Secretary
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