

**BOROUGH OF MEDFORD LAKES, NJ**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**POLICE REGIONALIZATION/CONSOLIDATION FEASIBILITY STUDY**  
**September 21, 2009**

A Special Meeting of the Borough Council of the Borough of Medford Lakes, New Jersey, was held on the above date in the All Purpose Room at Neeta School, 44 Neeta Trail, Medford Lakes, NJ 08055 beginning at 7:00pm. Following the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence (Council and the public observed a moment of silence to honor service men and women defending our country), Clerk McIntosh read the Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: this is to announce that adequate notice had been provided to allow publication 48hours in advance and was (1) posted on the Administration Building bulletin board, (2) emailed to The Central Record, Medford, NJ, (3) emailed to the Burlington County Times, Willingboro, NJ, (4) emailed to the Courier Post, (5) posted on the Borough Web Site and (6) filed with the Municipal Clerk. Advance written notice of this meeting was mailed or emailed to all persons who requested such notice according to the Clerk of the Municipality. Publication of notice was made on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the Central Record.

**ROLL CALL**

Acting Clerk McIntosh called roll. Mayor Paul G. Weiss, Esq., Councilman Timothy S. Casey and Councilman Gregory C. Lackey answered in attendance. Also present were Manager Geoffrey D. Urbanik, Police Chief Frank Martine and Deputy Manager/Acting Clerk Mark J. McIntosh.

**PRESENTATION**

*Mayor Weiss introduced Kim Downs, CEO of Salmon Ventures Limited (SVL), contracted to complete a Police Regionalization/Consolidation Feasibility Study.*

Ms. Downs provides an overview of her company and introduces her study team assistants. Mr. Dale Finch was the team leader, Mr. Bill Herman (retired police chief) and Mr. Andrew Young.

Ms. Downs began showing a Power Point program explaining the studies goals, Mr. Dale explained the demographics that were researched, Chief Herman (ret.) explained the patrol numbers, and Mr. Young provided an overall analysis and options. Mr. Finch explained in more detail the hybrid three-year option and Chief Herman (ret.) explained the other hybrid options.

Ms. Downs concluded the PowerPoint presentation.

*Mayor Weiss thanked Ms. Downs and opened the meeting to Council for comments.*

*Councilman Casey asked if Medford needs to increase the size of their department to take on the Borough, he asked if Medford will be able to adequately cover the Borough and what kind of training of the Borough characteristics will take place.*

Mr. Finch stated that Medford would increase its staff to cover the Borough, that Medford can adequately cover the Borough and that Medford Officers are continuously training.

***Councilman Casey asked that training and an analysis of the last ten years and the future ten years is included in the final report to the Borough.***

***Councilman Lackey stated that the report covered the economics adequately but why didn't the report address the intangibles. Why did this report not touch on studies conducted in other municipalities? Had earlier involvement by Council been solicited by the study team it would have been beneficial for everyone.***

Ms. Downs stated that Council needs to use the reports numbers to look at intangibles. The scope of services didn't ask for a comparison of other municipal studies.

***Councilman Lackey asked SVL to explain their conclusion that Medford could provide an equal efficient/effective response.***

Chief Herman stated that the Borough would be gaining twenty-five extra services and thus overall service would be enhanced.

***Councilman Lackey asked if those twenty-five services were needed in the Borough.***

Chief Herman stated one in particular would be the dive team with the Borough having twenty-one lakes.

***Mayor Weiss asked SVL to explain the delta regarding response times and did type (i.e. medical, fire, etc.) play a role.***

Chief Herman stated that the response times were based on figures provided by the towns and that distance/size of the towns were contributing factors not type.

***Councilman Lackey stated that the extra services costs didn't increase at the same rate as the police manpower base rate.***

Mr. Finch stated that the services were controllable costs and that a contingency was built into the costs.

***Councilman Casey explained the Borough's form of government and stated that the report submitted by SVL was a draft that explains many options and that it was clear that the Borough could save some money if they adopted the study recommendations but that the savings for one resident are necessarily a savings to another.***

***Mayor Weiss opened the meeting for public comment and asked that all observe a three minute time limit on questions or comments.***

### **PUBLIC COMMENT (in bullets)**

#### **John Holtz, 122 Lenape Trail:**

- Thanked council for holding the meeting in the Neeta All Purpose room.
- No surprise in the findings.
- Any change may devalue my property.
- In this town everyone looks after each other making it a great place to live.
- We feel very safe living here and this would be the first step in losing the borough's uniqueness.

#### **Dave Fox, 32 Natchez Trail:**

Submitted by Mark McIntosh, RMC  
Acting Clerk

- Five years ago my wife Diane stopped breathing due to an airway obstruction, the police provided immediate oxygen and within minutes the EMS transported her to the hospital. Without immediate oxygen she may have suffered permanent brain damage. I hope the MLPD is always available.

Francis Kinney, 60 Syosset Trail:

- I am a retired municipal police chief.
- Both departments are very good but there is nothing like a small town cop.
- Why did SVL use NJ State averages?

SVL – to complete a fair comparison.

Michael Levinski, 135 Chippewa Trail:

- The borough looked into a merger with Medford before in the 1980's and the residents didn't support it.
- Due to past health problems the quick response by the police has been appreciated.
- The MLPD does senior citizen checks weekly.
- A recent problem with kids in town ended with five thank you letters from the juveniles for lessons learned.
- You can't put a cost on the intangible benefits from having our own police.
- Was the revaluation factored into the study?

SVL (Kim) – Yes

- Were health costs and benefits included in the study?

*Councilman Casey – There would be an initial payout, the benefits would go away and be included in the contract with Medford Township*

*Mayor Weiss stated that the study looked at the local purpose tax only.*

Joe Maggelet, 236 Chippewa Trail:

- Call response time prioritized and was a sub-station considered?

SVL (Herman) – the hybrids address response times.

SVL (Kim) – the sub-station would be a decision between the two towns.

Sam Beamer, 69 Kosoto Trail:

- For a full takeover by Medford Township was extra staffing factored?

SVL (Dale) – Not included in numbers factored.

Robert Hanold, 45 Natachez Trail:

- Thank council for a difficult topic to review and study.
- SVL is looking at this from a dollar and cents perspective.
- There is a significant delta between response times.
- Did SVL look at Medford's demographics ten years from now?

Doris Dorsey, 245 Briarwood Trail:

- This is a unique community, residents have a unique relationship with the police, they do vacation checks and we have a low crime rate due to their presence. I vote to keep them.

Robert Lee, 172 Chippewa Trail:

- Great respect for council looking into this issue.
- I have lived all over and the MLPD outshines all others.
- Once the decision is made the cost to go back is too risky.
- Let's keep our police.

Bill McQuillen, 206 Cayuse Trail:

- Reminded council that they were elected by the people, the voters and we have a great community and great employees.

Arlene Deibel, 81 Sagamore Trail:

- Having our own police force has value.
- A merge with Medford will cause the borough to lose some of its uniqueness.

Anthony Amato, 164 Chippewa Trail:

- Were copies of previous studies done by SVL provided to council?

SVL (Kim) – No.

SVL (Dale) – No ten year studies.

- Where did the crime index come from?

SVL (Tony) – NJ Uniform Crime Report.

SVL (Kim) – will be provided in final report.

- The study costed out to 2019 but did SVL go back ten years and calculate inflation numbers?

*Mayor Weiss agreed and asked that SVL go back and look at this.*

*Councilman Casey stated that Chief Martine has done a great job year after year reducing the operating costs and there wasn't much to carve out if any.*

- Are all of Medford's services needed?

*Mayor Weiss stated yes, all of the services were important*

*Councilman Casey stated you never know when services are needed and which ones*

*Councilman Lackey stated these services were all offered in base proposal*

- Was SVL the lowest bidder?

*Mayor Weiss stated no.*

- Are there any direct relationships or contacts with any borough official or township official?

SVL (Kim) – none, never had a contract with Medford.

*Councilman Casey asked the audience by show of hands how many supported council doing a borough wide survey of residents. Very few hands went up.*

*Councilman Casey asked the audience by show of hands how many supported council putting this to a voter referendum. Most hands went up.*

*Councilman Casey concluded that the preference amongst tonight's attendees is for this question to be put to a referendum.*

Pam O'Neill, 82 Tecumseh trail:

- Any way to breakdown the response times? By 1, 2, 3 minutes?
- Can't K-9 and SWAT be provided by the County or State Police?

*Mayor Weiss stated that it is difficult to state what an exact response time would be for any individual incident and it was his understanding that the borough didn't have an School Response Officer (SRO)*

SVL (Kim) – they were unaware of the borough police having an SRO.

- Who was interviewed and how long were the interviews?

SVL (Dale) – the Police Chiefs, Police Lieutenants, Police Union Representatives, Borough Manager, Town Manager and Medford Lakes School Superintendent. The interviews varied from fifteen minutes to one-hour.

- Why no 2008 figures?

SVL – none available at time of study.

Dave Wasson, 97 Wabun Trail:

- Option B states the average savings is \$400.00. Is that correct? When do I get my check?

*Mayor Weiss stated it would appear as a reduction in the tax bill.*

- On the hybrid model it shows 10am to 10pm coverage. Shouldn't it be an 8am to 8pm coverage when school kids are out and commuter traffic?

SVL (Dale) – the times were based on call for service statistical information provided.

- The reason for no morning calls is because the borough police are on duty.
- Has SVL done prior police studies?

SVL (Dale) – Only Passaic County sheriff's department operations.

SVL (Kim) – to address the conflict of interest claim, SVL answered the borough's RFP and met all requirements. SVL has many associates and some may live or come from Medford Lakes but no Medford Lakes resident was engaged in this project.

- Thank Medford for proposal but keep Medford Lakes as is, plus rumor has it that the Mayor is moving.

Cindy Gronickon, 150 Apache Trail:

- Thought in the past that two council members were against this and the Mayor was the one who pushed through the study.
- Don't feel that council is listening to the residents.
- Love Medford Lakes.
- The July 31<sup>st</sup> storm took out all power to her residence, streets were closed off and Chief Martine came to house and checked on residents and helped with tree removal issues.

***Mayor Weiss stated that a mayor can't order this study by himself and that council ordered it.***

Sandy Wasson, 97 Wabun Trail:

- Thank SVL for study.
- Amazed we are still looking into this issue.
- Extra services are already provided through mutual aid agreements.
- Do we have any MLPD members on either the Medford dive team or SWAT?

Chief Martine stated that the dive member changed years ago and the SWAT member left Medford's team at the start of this process.

- If Medford's officers cost more in base and overtime how does SVL figure this?

Mike Ramm, 170 Conawaga Trail:

- Appreciate council looking into this.
- What are next steps in the process.
- In favor of keeping our cops.

***Mayor Weiss stated that per Councilman Casey's straw vote the majority in attendance wants a referendum so let's move in that direction.***

Rob Burton, 150 Manhasset Trail:

- Will council vote what the residents want after the referendum is tallied?

***Mayor Weiss stated he would like to see where they end up.***

***Councilman Casey stated that he would be influenced by a majority but if the vote were close he would have to evaluate what is best for the borough.***

- The Passaic study looked at a sheriff's department only?

SVL (Dale) – yes

Ted Kobiello, 18 Hiawatha Trail:

- I am a former NJ State Police Officer.
- Believe that the study figures are credible having known of SVL's work.
- The best insurance policy is to keep MLPD.

Bill Garvey, 165 Tabernacle Road:

- The report implies a 7% maybe figure – an exactness that doesn't exist.

Tom Wolfe, 139 McKendimen Road:

- The borough is trying to compare apples to oranges.
- Can't compare Medford with Medford Lakes, we are too unique.
- All of council is doing an excellent job.
- We are all willing to pay a little more for the services we receive.

Unidentified Resident:

- Mr. Casey stated that Frank was doing a great job.
- Why take away a job from someone who is doing such a great job.
- We should applaud Frank for being so frugal.
- I appreciate council looking into the subject but there is no new information since February.
- Medford Township is 40 times larger than us.
- What happens as Medford grows?
- We need to know the ten year costs at the end of this contract, what costs if the borough has to rebuild its own dept.
- I am concerned about devaluing of my property.

Joe Aramondo, 285 Shingowack Trail:

- Council and the residents should be commended.
- This decision should go in front of the voters.
- The borough should heavily publicize how this going to proceed.
- Council developed the RFP and if there is stuff missing that didn't get answered that is councils fault.
- Are other meetings going to be held?

***Manager Urbanik stated that the RFP allowed for five meetings at councils discretion***

***Mayor Weiss stated that council would have to digest the comments tonight and decide on how to proceed.***

Randy Budd, 94 Nantucket Trail:

- Disappointed if council makes a decision based on this study from a company that never did a police study before.
- Read the quotes on the borough's own website that talk about community safety being the backbone of the borough.

Janice Clements, 39 Minnetonka Trail:

- If this is just a monetary problem lets eek out \$1,000.
- Medford Lakes is a gem of a community.
- I want my police, I want my Medford Lakes.

Tom Healy, 165 Cheyenne Trail:

- Been in Medford Lakes since 2003 and this is the best community.
- Came from Philadelphia and am employed as an auditor for the defense department and I know how to spin numbers.
- SVL was tasked with completing a study that showed a savings. They have done that.
- We have a special bond with our police, let's keep them.

Tom Schlight, 116 Pegwuk Trail:

- Grew up as a military kid, the kids in this town are well protected by our police.
- The MLPD is there when you need them and friendly to work with.

Gary Miller, 43 Osage Trail:

- Unable to get here earlier to see the SVL presentation.
- Impressive outpouring of love for our police.
- Council needs to represent the residents and drop this issue.

Mark Wilson, Non-Medford Lakes resident:

- Eleven square miles in the future patrol district.
- Where is the patrol time going to be spent?
- Will Medford Lakes get enough patrol time?
- Overtime the proposal cost will go up and then a town can't afford to go back.

Joe Magelett, 236 Chippewa Trail:

- Originally in favor of eliminating the police but have found that Medford Lakes is the police. Let's keep them.

Francis Keenis, 60 Syosset Trail:

- What past surveys did SVL research?
- All employees should be asked about losing their own police.
- This is the communities business.

Sandy Wasson, 97 Wabun Trail:

- Send out a mailer instead of spending \$15,000 for a special election.

Robert Hanold, 45 Natchez Trail:

- If we go with Medford Township do we lose our court?

***Mayor Weiss that hasn't been determined***

- It appears that the Police Chief wasn't properly interviewed. Did SVL ask all of the questions regarding current services provided?

SVL (Kim) – we were fully aware of all services provided. The council would have to decide what services they would want from Medford and then apply those costs.

Ed Gilliland, 82 Onondago Trail:

- The recent articles didn't acknowledge what Medford Lakes Police do only what Medford does.

*Councilman Casey stated that council appreciated all of the comments tonight but didn't here from one single person in favor of changing. That lack of comments speaks volumes.*

*Mayor Weiss asked if there was further comment.*

*Mayor Weiss thanked the residents and SVL for coming out to tonight's meeting and motioned for adjournment, seconded by Councilman Casey.*

VOTE TO ADJOURN SPECIAL MEETING

Ayes: Weiss, Casey, Lackey

Nays: None

Motion carries, meeting adjourned.