

SWRPC Questions and Answers

1. What are the goals of the South Warren Regional Police Commission?

The South Warren Regional Police Commission (SWRPC) is being formed to review and research (obtain facts, numbers, cost, etc.) the possibility of joining Lopatcong and Pohatcong Police Departments. This joint police department must save money and must maintain the levels of service and public safety that currently exists in these towns. *Posted 10-17-13.*

2. Can other towns join?

This process was initiated originally with the idea of combining only Lopatcong and Pohatcong Police Departments. Greenwich Township has decided not to join. Other towns may be added in the future. However the standards of saving money and maintaining the current levels of police service still apply. *Posted 10-17-13.*

3. Why are the meetings at 9:00am?

At this time, we are still in the information gathering stage. Accordingly, the various members, police personnel, administration and Chiefs of Police are most accessible, without incurring overtime or other costs, during the 9:00 a.m. hour. Additionally, since most State offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., it is also the time during which most the various State offices providing guidance and consultation are also open. As we have more information, we will most likely change the time to be more convenient for members of the public to attend. We are currently alternating meetings in Lopatcong and Pohatcong buildings. *Posted 10-17-13.*

4. What is the time frame for completion of the joint commission?

Insofar as this is a work in progress, it is difficult to pinpoint a specific end date. At each meeting we try to make progress by checking off items from a lengthy "to do" list. Sometimes we experience longer than expected delays in accomplishing a particular work item but we are doing our best to keep the process moving towards an endpoint. *Posted 10-17-13.*

5. Will the number of police officers be reduced in either town?

All personnel matters are still presently within the province of the NJ Civil Service Commission. *Posted 10-17-13.*

6. Will there be any buy-outs offered to the police officers?

The combined police force logistics will be reviewed by a civil service group in Trenton. They will make that decision. *Posted 10-17-13.*

8. Police specific questions.

Issues related to car painting, badges, stationary, uniforms, weapons, station numbers, and the like, all will be addressed through collaboration between the participating Townships. Application will be made to the State to assist with the costs associated with any departmental mergers. *Posted 10-17-13.*

9. Will this increase taxes in either town?

We may have some additional startup costs, but we are working to obtain funds from the state to assist in those costs. Again, one of the goals of this collaboration is to save money over the long run. More information will be provided as we have it. *Posted 10-17-13.*

10. If there is a consolidation of forces where will the municipal police force be stationed?

At present, it is expected that the main barracks will be located in Pohatcong Township's new municipal building, as it has facilities of sufficient size to house a new department. Substations will be maintained in at least Lopatcong, as of this time, recognizing, of course, that all of these discussions are on-going. *Posted 10-17-13.*

11. We tried this a few years ago – why are we doing this again?

We feel that this is a worthwhile endeavor in an effort to save money. Personnel and town council members have changed and we would like to re-examine the issue. Also, the State of New Jersey is encouraging small towns throughout the state to examine this cost-saving option. We would like to do this now, if feasible, on our own terms rather than being forced into it in the future by the State of New Jersey. *Posted 10-17-13.*

12. Why can't we just use the New Jersey State Police?

The New Jersey State Police will not agree to police a town that already has its own police force in place nor do they want a town to disband its police department so that they may replace them. Towns are actually prohibited from using the state police to provide police protection in any capacity more than they have the previous year. Lopatcong has had a full time police force since 1972, and before that we used our own part time police force.

Because we have had our own police force for decades, we are not eligible to use the NJ State Police. Posted 10-17-13.

13. What is the \$2,500 fee all about?

Each town has agreed to contribute \$2,500.00 toward the cost of obtaining an outside acquisition and merger firm to provide an independent report in addition to our own joint report. A representative from Greenwich was present at the time of this agreement and agreed to this cost however Greenwich later decided to opt-out of SWRPC so of course this fee will not apply to them. Posted 10-17-13.

14. Has it been decided how revenue will be split?

We have not made any final decisions regarding this aspect and it is too early to comment on this issue. Posted 10-17-13.

15. How will it be determined who pays for what?

We have not made any final decisions regarding this aspect and it is too early to comment on this issue. Posted 10-17-13.

16. Are there any financial reports available regarding the proposed merger?

We have not finalized any economic issues at this point. We will be negotiating economic issues as we prepare the contract for these topics. Posted 10-17-13.

17. Who will be in charge of the Police Commission?

This decision has not been made at this point. Posted 10-17-13.