

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 AM. Present were: John H. Fisher, III, Chair; Robert F. Casey; Gary Passanante; Steven M. Cozza; Betty Lou DeCroce. Absent were: Marvin Reed and Steve Petrecca.

The minutes of the April 22, 2010, meeting were approved unanimously. Betty Lou DeCroce abstained.

The Chairman introduced Betty Lou DeCroce, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, as the new designee.

Executive Director's Report: Dennis Smeltzer: Addressed budgetary concerns and that there is carry forward of \$185k into FY'11 leaving approximately \$60k available beyond anticipated expenses. Addressed future issues to be discussed i.e. Gloucester County and its county-wide assessment. Stated that there are two pending appointments to LUARCC and that there should be a reorganization meeting.

The issue of fire districts was raised and that the topic is not such a high profile as compared to construction code. There is a lot of movement currently and we should bring in people who are trying to work on this issue. It was suggested that the Commission formulate what was already in the testimonies about the fire districts and get a report out. The arguments were already heard so a report should now be developed.

Operational Tax Index Update: Meeting was held with the Treasurer and his staff. Treasurer fears that LUARCC report may cause misunderstanding and further confusion at the municipal level. He would like to hold report until after the current budget cycle. The report will be released internally via Govconnect to municipal clerks. Wants municipal officials to review the findings and give feedback prior to public release. There was a concern mentioned that the findings would not get down to the governing body.

A suggestion was made that it might be better to release the findings through the Conference of Mayors to mayors and hope they share it with their governing bodies. Mayors have a high degree of interest in LUARCC findings and recommendations.

A member commented that when a municipality does a study itself, it's invested in the project. With a consultant, municipal officials can disavow the consultant's report and findings and recommendations.

Member suggested a motion that the commission authorize the release of the Operational Tax Index through Govconnect and conference of mayors to mayors only with cover statement indicating what the purpose is and that further release will be discussed at its June meeting at which point in time the Commission can see the reaction of local officials and decide what course of action will be appropriate at that time. Motion was approved. Seconded. Vote: passed unanimously.

Conference of Mayors will be approached and asked if they would form subcommittee to study the Operational Tax Index. Mayors have a high degree of interest on what the Commission is doing. Mayors indicated that they do not have the grants to get anything done so they are looking toward LUARCC for guidance and ways to pay for what they need. The Commission is looked at as a resource.

The meeting continued with a discussion of shared services and police services.

The Commission directed staff to prepare drafts of materials to assist municipalities in achieving savings through the cooperative delivery of public services. Two five or six page drafts are to be prepared for discussion in June. One on shared services generally and one on considerations particular to police services. Drafts on additional services will be prepared if this approach is successful. On the topic of police service it was suggested that the minimal size police department needed to maintain public safety needs to be included.

A draft covering issues regarding fire services is also to be prepared as a standalone report with recommendations.

These reports are to include material from testimony received during earlier Commission meetings. The reports are to summarize key issues, and include appropriate findings and recommendations. Later the reports should be backed by concrete examples on the Commission's web site.

Following completion and posting, the Commission should ask organizations, such as the League of Municipalities and Conference of Mayors to provide a link to the reports on their web sites.

A suggestion was made that LUARCC create a page on web site that breaks down categories of information LUARCC has online – to make searching easier. Information can then be added as the Commission moves forward. This information must be put out quickly along with examples. The Commission needs to have resources available to discuss the experience in the examples with municipal officials.

General Discussion:

June timing will be good for budget discussion.

The League of Municipalities Conference in November was discussed and that LUARCC needs to have a presence. A discussion with Bill Dressel should happen. Need sessions to be more interactive than just a panel. Would like to have a LUARCC session and not a League shared services session. However, must be aware of the problem of having a quorum of LUARCC present at the session and Sunshine Law considerations.

It was mentioned to move from shared services to permanently merged services and thus escape the whims of local politics.

Staff was directed to contact the Walter Rand Institute to discuss the possibility of having a paper on the validity of the Operations Tax Index based on the work they conducted in preparation for the project they proposed last year.

Public Comments: Concerning police services in Woodlynne and Audubon and Audubon Park.

Next meeting: June 3, 2010; 9:30 AM

Adjournment