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Lancaster Township Special Edition:

City may be inhibiting regionalization

According to Lancaster Township manager Bill Laudien, top City officials have been “*relatively uncooperative in addressing [the Township’s] needs under this current [police] contract.*”

According to Laudien, the City first earned this “*uncooperative*” characterization while negotiating the price of a 2010 contract renewal. Laudien said that the Township had worked with City officials for several months to find a mutually agreeable annual cost for the City’s services, which had previously been billed at \$1.484 million. An early draft was placing the 2010 bill at \$1.51 million, Laudien said. Then the City reevaluated its pricing structure and came up with a bid of \$1.85 million.

Laudien told *NewsLanc* that he is committed to pursuing a regional, metropolitan police force in Lancaster, regardless of whether the Township chooses the City or Manheim Township for its next police contract. But even the City’s \$1.65 million coverage option, which has been pushed

by Mayor Gray as a step toward regionalization, has not been adequately defined to address the Township’s concerns, Laudien said.

At the Township’s insistence, the City also offered a \$1.65 million proposal, which would bypass municipal borders and essentially cover Lancaster Township as if it were part of the city.

Laudien also said that the Township had asked for the City to propose solutions for a number of shortcomings in their existing arrangement. For example, he related, **the Township has not been adequately served by sergeants in supervising patrols and undergoing investigations. In the past, Lancaster Township patrolmen have been “fragmented and reporting to different lieutenants,”** Laudien asserted. **Concerns such as this have not, at any point, been addressed in the City’s proposals.**

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MT says police proposal is only exploratory

Manor Township Manager Michael Rimer says that, although newspaper reports have presented the MT proposal as a “*done deal,*” the process has actually been an exploratory one, not only for Lancaster Township, but for Manheim as well.

Under the current policing contract between Lancaster Township and the City of Lancaster, 10% of the City’s annual fee amounts to “*pure profit,*” as Lancaster Township Manager Bill Laudien explained. Under Manheim Township’s

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City may be inhibiting regionalization (continued)

...The Township also wanted to know how the City would distribute officers under the broad \$1.65 million proposal. *“We had hoped that the City was going to come in last Wednesday and present us with their coverage scheme,”* Laudien said; however, *“the City elected, on two different occasions, not to present any plan whatsoever, other than to say, ‘it’s basically the same as what you’re getting.’”*

In response to a question from *NewsLanc*, Laudien conceded that in the case of a “*shooting*” or other major incident, the City would be able to send several squad cars to the scene more rapidly than MT, especially if the incident occurred in the southern or western parts of the township.

Laudien said that Lancaster Township had supplied information to all four bidders for police protection and he would not be concerned if, in fact, MT had

not been in touch with the City officials to learn about their experiences.

He also expressed the hope, were MT to be chosen, that there would be no bad feelings affecting inter-municipality cooperation on police matters.

Laudien also emphasized that he was trying to provide information while remaining impartial. His position is that it is for the Supervisors to decide.

The Lancaster Township Public Safety Committee concluded its public meeting last week with a 3-to-2 vote in favor of a \$1 million proposal by Manheim Township Police Department to extend its own coverage into Lancaster Township. Committee Chair Michael Pickard, as well as Laudien, was clear in noting that a vote for the MT proposal was not equivalent to a vote against the future possibility of regionalization.

MT says police proposal is only exploratory (continued)

...proposal, there is no provision of direct financial profit for MT, even though the plan would expand the patrolling territory for several of their officers.

Whether MT residents are aware of such inter-municipal philanthropy is uncertain; however, Rimer says that maintaining current protection is certainly a matter of concern for MT officials.

According to Rimer, MT presented their proposal at Lancaster Township’s request. The MT Commissioners, Rimer said, are comfortable with the plan from a financial perspective, but remain in discussion regarding how it might affect the quality of police coverage within MT.

Of particular concern to Rimer is whether MT will have to lower its level of service in the process of “*ramping up*” to cover the additional territory.

Rimer also noted that the contract presents some risks for MT. For example, he said, if there was a massive incident in Lancaster Township requiring the use of several detectives, these resources would simply be lost to MT without the ability to bill for the extraordinary services.

Without the obvious, substantive benefit of a monetary profit, MT officials are presently unclear as to how this relationship would serve their constituents, especially in light of the contract’s inherent risks.

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