





AGENDA

**St. Lawrence – Exeter
Consolidation Committee
Thursday, April 7, 2016
6:00 PM
Exeter Township Building**



Welcome from the Municipalities



Comments

from the
Exeter Township and Saint Lawrence Borough
Consolidation Committee Members

Exeter Township

Gary Lloyd, Jeff Bukowski,
John Cusatis, and
Alternate Lisa Vanderlaan.

Saint Lawrence Borough

Mike Fritz, Warren Lubenow,
Carrie Whitman and
Alternates Steve Geible, Dave Eggert



Facilitators

Paul Janssen, Director

Center for Excellence in Local Government
at Albright College

and

John Kramer, Director Emeritus,
Center for Excellence in Local Government.

How did we get here
tonight?



- Early in 2016 both St. Lawrence and Exeter expressed a desire to examine consolidation. The initial public meeting was held in on March 3, 2016.
- Both Municipalities contacted The Center for Excellence in Local Government to facilitate the process to a decision.
- Berks County Commissioners have committed a \$25,000 grant to the Consolidation Committee to study a potential consolidation.

What are our next steps?

Consolidation Committee has a large task to complete including but not limited to: -

- Determine the form of government
- Modification of financials as the consolidation occurs – Gross Receipts, Hydrant, Debt-funded but not completed Capital Projects, if any, and many more
- Personnel - before and after merger
- Ordinances and Fee Rates
- Facilities and Equipment
- Pension and benefit impact
- Municipal Waste Collection
- Fire Hydrant Tax



Both Exeter Township and St. Lawrence Borough are required to separately adopt an ordinance which includes a “Consolidation Agreement” for both municipalities to merge and language for a municipal referendum. Ordinance must be adopted by both the Township and Borough 90 days prior to the selected election for the referendum.



If the Ordinance is adopted by both Municipalities the referendum language must be delivered to the Berks County Election Services 90 days prior to the selected election. The referendum language will be placed on ballot for the citizens of St. Lawrence Borough and Exeter Township to determine if the recommended “Consolidation Agreement” is in the best interest of both municipalities. Both Municipalities must receive citizen approval of the referendum prior to the consolidation to be initiative. If either community fails to approve the referendum the consolidation can not occur.



Citizen Input –

We want to hear from you!

Please come to the podium and
identify yourself and your home
municipality

- Options for Consolidation -
Legally Municipalities in the Commonwealth are called Political Subdivisions of the Commonwealth
- The choices in this consolidation include becoming one Borough, a 2nd or 1st Class Township, or an “Optional Home Rule” or a Home Rule Municipality.
- Timing for transition to new form municipality, both short and long term.

- The inter-municipal agreement must include the timing for transition to new form municipality, both short and long term.
- Issues include, but are not limited to, the transition timing for the new elected body, transition of staffs, transition of finances, and ordinances.
- One major issue includes the municipal election cycle. 2016 is a general election. 2017 is a municipal election year. This could impact the consolidation!



How?

If one municipality absorbs the other, than elections are not effected, however, the issue of representation must be identified.

Examples are:

Temple and Muhlenberg – No issue

Spring and West Lawn – No issue

Wyomissing and Wyomissing Hills –

Expanded Council by two members for two years.

In each of these consolidations, as with this consolidation one municipality was significantly larger than the other.



- Options:

Borough: 7 to 9 Council persons elected by ward or at large.

Restricted tax base

Specific required services

Mayor required

Civil Service



Second Class Township:

3 – 5 supervisors – must be at large

Open services format

More restrictive tax code

No Mayor

- First Class Township
 - Commissioner form of government
 - 7-9 Commissioners responsible for areas of services
 - Wards or at large
 - More flexible tax code
 - Required services by code
 - Civil Service

- Optional Home Rule

A number of options however,

If Optional home rule is an option then actual Home Rule should be examined:

Why?

- Home rule gives municipalities total control over their form of Government!
 - Pick your form of governing body, your representation by ward or at large, mayor or not, terms lengths.
 - Create your own tax code
 - Pick your management style
 - Customize services to community



- These are the decisions the Consolidation Committee will be working through in the coming months!

Committee Questions?



- Citizen Questions?



Where do we go from here?

- Monthly meetings on the first Thursday of the Month. May 7, 2016, June 2, July 7, (Skip August for financial review), September 1, October 6, November 3, December 1, and January 5, 2017.

- Need to consider the establishment of two citizen meetings. Should be in October 2016 and January 2017. They can be established in September 2016.



Next meeting on

May 7, 2016

here in the

Exeter Township Meeting Room

6:00 PM.