

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

Public Meeting

Tuesday, September 21, 2010

7:30 p.m.

Yorktown High School Library

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**Members Present:**

Paul Cox  
Phil Gregg  
Bob Ratchford  
John Mogush  
Ed Smith

**Others Present:**

Pete Olson  
Members of the Public  
Paige Gregory, CPA  
John Seever, CPA

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The meeting was called to order by John Mogush. The Pledge of Allegiance was lead by Phil Gregg.

The first order of business was to elect a new Recording Secretary due to the resignation of Jodi Moisen. Bob Ratchford volunteered and was elected by vote.

John Mogush asked the public present to share information from the meeting with their neighbors in order to get correct information, and not rumors, disseminated to the residents of Mt. Pleasant Township and Yorktown. He then introduced Paige Gregory and John Seever of Umbaugh Associates.

Paige Gregory outlined the consolidation process by providing the background behind government consolidation, exploring the possible reasons for consolidation, and explaining the process of consolidation and issues to consider. She also estimated that the entire consolidation process would take 1 to 1 ½ years.

John Seever addressed questions regarding the Zionsville consolidation and why they chose to consolidate.

- 1) The Town of Zionsville had very strict land use requirements, so developers would put in large subdivisions just outside town limits and could use county land use requirements instead.
- 2) Another aggressive, near-by community was beginning to annex the neighboring township.
- 3) To avoid over annexation and many costly court cases.
- 4) Land use was the biggest issue.

He emphasized that the law, I.C. 36-1.5, is very flexible to allow for opportunity for consolidation. The law may change later to tighten up the requirements, so it is best to act now while there are many options and flexibility.

It was noted that under a plan currently being considered by Muncie/Delaware County, all townships would be dissolved and absorbed by the county. If the Yorktown-Mt. Pleasant consolidation doesn't go forward, Mt. Pleasant Township may disappear.

The responsibilities of a township government include:

- Fire protection
- Cemetery maintenance
- Poor relief

John Mogush reported that August 24, 2010 was the first meeting of the Consolidation Committee and that they have made great progress. They have already established subcommittees and the town website will include the subcommittee reports, maps, and minutes of the meetings.

Delaware County and Muncie have put together a reorganization plan and it is before the Legislature. John referenced an article from the September 13, 2010 issue of the Star Press written by Larry Riley which discussed the incentive to Muncie to consolidate in order to cover budget shortfalls. Zionsville had little conflict with their reorganization because the township citizens wanted to be added to the town. Yorktown/Mt. Pleasant Township residents want to maintain control and be in charge of their own destiny. They don't want Muncie to be in charge.

The Consolidation Committee is moving along quickly-more quickly than Fishers did. Zionsville took two years to complete their consolidation process. The soonest Yorktown will be able to present our consolidation plan will be the November, 2011 election. Steve Craycraft will get information to John as to the deadlines.

The Township Board is in favor of consolidation and would like to hold down taxes and have representation. If the board approves and certifies the plan it will go the Election Board. We don't need as much time as Zionsville did because we aren't as big.

The Consolidation Committee's commitment to the people of the town and township is to hold taxes. We believe this is possible because there are a number of services provided by the county and we can create an inter-local agreement with the county to keep that relationship. This would alleviate the need to increase the Yorktown street department, which is a major cost. Police services would remain with the county. We have no interest in increasing the public's taxes to increase the police department if residents of the township are satisfied with the service they are currently receiving. The intent is to work out an agreement with the county Sheriff's department to continue services.

The Zoning & Planning subcommittee would create separate urban and rural areas, We may have to increase the hours of our part-time Zoning & Planning Commissioner to include the township which would be only a minor expense.

There are approximately 15,000 people in the combined town and township. We have low taxes, low housing costs, efficient government, and little to no overlap of town and township. We are not overloaded with government employees. We have the potential for economic development

and could attract new businesses to the area due to our low taxes, infrastructure, sports park, and biking trails. We have things going for us that the rest of the county does not. We need to capitalize on these things.

John stressed that consolidation is not annexation. It is the coming together of two entities.

There is no incentive to move services to the township. If residents of the township want additional services, the Town will work out the costs in order to give them an estimate of increase in taxes.

The Indiana Code 36-1.5 allows leeway to develop whatever government entity is appropriate for us. This includes tax rates and government structure. Zionsville was very good about communicating with the public. John emphasized that he would like more people at the public meetings and would like those who are there to spread the word and encourage more people to attend.

Evansville, Fishers, and Greenwood are all currently working on the same process.

The floor was then opened for questions and discussion:

- There will be no special election. The municipal election in 2011 qualifies under the code so consolidation will be on the ballot for November 2011. It is important to get it on the ballot in 2011, because the Muncie/Delaware County consolidation is working toward a 2012 date.
- Rezoning would be done on an exception basis, leaving the current zoning in place. There would be no change in the unincorporated areas which would be termed rural. The goal is to continue things as they are initially, with changes to be made later as the need arises. Farming and agriculture must be protected.
- A discussion was held about the areas to be patrolled by the Yorktown Police and the areas to be patrolled by the Sherriff's Department. Chief Todd St. John was reported to have stated that he might be able to add the township to YPD responsibilities with the addition of only one officer. The Sherriff's Department may not want to give up the township, however, because it might mean that a deputy would get laid-off.
- Consolidation is similar to Uni-Gov (like in Indianapolis/Marion County) in that there is a sharing of resources and efficiencies of consolidated government, however it differs in that all the rules in terms of classification, government, and taxes are determined here locally.

A motion was made by Phil Gregg to allow John Mogush and Pete Olson to retain a consultant and to solicit bids from attorneys to assist with the consolidation. The motion was seconded by Bob Ratchford and approved by vote.

The email address for the Consolidation Committee is [consolidationinfo@yorktownindiana.org](mailto:consolidationinfo@yorktownindiana.org). Messages will go to each member of the committee. The public was asked to send in comments and questions to the committee.

John Mogush thanked all who attended and adjourned the meeting.