



Leaders mull police study

It would involve possibly creating a large regional force.

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Dover Township supervisor Curtis Kann thinks he would be remiss in not looking into a regional police study that YorkCounts is pitching.

His township has been involved with Northern York County Regional Police for decades, and he thinks that overall, the residents are pleased with the service.

"You have better coverage for your money," said Kann, chairman of the board of supervisors.

Kann isn't committing to anything with the proposed study. The supervisors will have to see what's involved and if the township would benefit from it.

Carl Anderson and Dave Meckley, co-chairmen of YorkCounts' Public Safety Committee, will be meeting with officials in nearly two dozen municipalities during the summer and fall to ask them to participate in a regional police study.

Some municipalities already have contacted YorkCounts to set up a time for the representatives to address their boards, said James DeBord, director of YorkCounts.

Others want to get involved. The advisory board of the Northeastern Regional Police Department has expressed interest in participating, Chief Darryl Albright said.

Northeastern Regional covers the boroughs of Manchester and Mount Wolf as well as East Manchester Township.

"There's no telling how far this could ultimately reach," DeBord said.

But a couple of municipalities informed YorkCounts last year that they would not participate.

One was Lower Windsor Township, where officials were confused about whether their municipality was included in the study area, manager Kelly Kelch said.

In a letter to YorkCounts, officials argued the township's needs are different from more metropolitan areas, and officials worried that local ordinance enforcement would not receive as high of a priority in a regional department.

Lower Windsor is not included in the list of municipalities that will be approached.

West Manchester Township supervisors also sent a letter to YorkCounts last year saying that they believe that public safety in York County is a concern. But supervisors feel their police department is efficient, cost effective and has "a rich history of cooperation with other departments and agencies," the letter states.

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"After much thought and discussions we do not believe a regional department can offer this level of service without increasing costs significantly," the letter states.

Rosa Hickey, chairwoman of the board of supervisors, said they believe that other viable recommendations exist.

In their letter, the supervisors said they would support the county levying a countywide tax for hiring additional officers for departments that are understaffed, the letter states, or the county providing supplemental manpower for understaffed or overwhelmed departments.

All recommendations should be considered for their viability, said Hickey, who served as a committee member on Metro-York's municipal committee. Metro-York made a recommendation last fall to create one police department for the immediate York area.

The township had sent a letter to YorkCounts in 2006 that a body of literature and studies show that fragmented government is just as effective and efficient as centralized government.

The Pennsylvania Economy League has reported that many municipalities are not headed in a positive direction, DeBord said. Tax revenue is declining, and they don't have any room for growth.

He said YorkCounts welcomes other ideas, and they're encouraging officials to consider what a regional police consolidation might look like.

"We just want people to be open to the idea," he said.

WHO WILL PARTICIPATE

Nearly two dozen municipalities will be asked to participate in a regional police study.

They include those with their own police forces: City of York, West York and the townships of Spring Garden, Springettsbury and West Manchester.

They also include municipalities served by Northern York County Regional and York Area Regional police.

Northern York County Regional covers Dover and North York boroughs and Manchester, Dover, Conewago, Jackson, Paradise and Franklin townships.

York Area Regional covers Dallastown, Felton, Jacobus, Red Lion, Windsor and Yoe boroughs and Windsor and York townships.

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