

WRIGHTSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF MAY 8, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING  
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

The special meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Young, who led the salute to the American flag. Also present were Council members L. Kirkessner, M. McDonald, E. Sipes, T. Groft, N. Habecker, Mayor Rambler, Solicitor Tilley, Engineer Klinedinst, Treasurer Brenner and Police Chief Pearson. The meeting was being recorded.

Solicitor Tilley laid out the ground rules for this special meeting. He stated that the public would be given an opportunity to be heard. Everyone will have one chance to speak with a three minute time limit and only residents of the Borough or taxpayers of the Borough will be allowed to speak. If time permits, non-residents may be given the opportunity to speak. Individuals wishing to speak will speak in the order of the front row, working back to the second row and so on and then around the room and outside. Mr. Tilley stated that only comments would be accepted. Questions could be asked but would not be answered at this meeting. He also stressed that it was important for persons to have the opportunity to express their opinions and concerns so there shouldn't be any other talking, cheering or booing. If this takes place, the person doing this will be asked to leave. Each person was asked to state their name and address.

Patrick Young – 405 Vine Street – Few years ago new people were elected. Good people. Helped to get the Mayor elected as he was believable & trustworthy. He feels two years in powers does something to some people. He feels questions are not being answered about police. He says he lost a good friend in Neil Habecker because of it. He states he wishes the Mayor would be honest. He states he had been for the police department but feels the Mayor is now holding Wrightsville hostage.

Robin Geesey – 130 S. Front – Reported on budget stating that in 2005 the budget was \$148,000 and that now it is \$29,811, which is over and states this does not include insurances. She doesn't think the police force is worth it and the seniors can't afford the hike. She showed a picture of Chief Pearson dropping off his child and states it's unacceptable. She held up a page from a website (of the Mayor) and said she realize there was a Dr. in the house.

Don Hoffman – 430 Hellam Street – He feels the police are doing a great job. Pulling people over. He feels we should compare arrest records of when Hellam Township was providing coverage to now.

Vanessa Peters – 200 Vine Street – States her husband was born here. They have owned many businesses. Council felt Hellam coverage was not enough and got rid of them. Hellam provided 24 hour coverage. In the past, neighbor was robbed and Hellam patrolled.

Lynda Habecker – 419 Locust Street – In the January 2008 minutes Tom O'Hanley asked President Young about the police remaining and she assured him they would. Two months later there is talk of disbanding them. She resents the fear tactics to the elderly and states there were drug issues a couple of years ago but not now.

Lori Kraft – 316 Walnut Street – She feels she's a prisoner in her own home. Drug problem on the street. Racial statements. She said people should come spend a day on her street. She feels the police are doing nothing. She feels if they can't do something about vandalism, rude & obnoxious neighbors and kids in the street, there's a real problem.

Fitz Cooper – 322 Walnut Street – He was very emotional talking about racism. He said his home was broken into last Saturday and the person responsible got a lesser charge. He says the neighbor flies a KKK flag and his five year old son has rights, too. He stated his son doesn't know color. He says there are drugs on the street. He said the police are too busy to protect and serve. When Hellam was here they never had this problem.

Amanda Cooper – 322 Walnut Street – She states she was excited to move here but now they are moving to the country. There is a drunk that runs down the street with a shotgun and they have been told by the Chief that he has a disease. She talked about their home being broke into and that he only got criminal trespassing. She beat the intruder over the head. She doesn't feel safe. She stated the neighbor says nigger, nigger, nigger, I smell a nigger. Sticks and rocks have been thrown at their child.

Wall on Locust Street – Feels bad for man. Wondered why there wasn't enough room for everyone at the meeting – didn't Council think people cared about this issue.

Sharon Amato – 306 Hellam Street – She would like the police to stay. If there are problems, clean them up. "United we stand, divided we fall". She states she no longer worries about kids partying behind the museum. Hellam never came. Melda risks her life to cross our kids. Officers' car at the crosswalk deters speeders. Kids can safely go out with out being intimidated.

Dale Singer – 801 Locust Street – He's been here over 40 years. He's seen mediocre, lousy and good police protection. When Hellam was here, he never saw their cars go down the alley or Locust Street. Car vandalized – keyed. He called Hellam Police at 8:00 a.m. and they didn't respond until 4:00 p.m. the next day and told him he would need to find out who did it before they can do anything. Police officer informed wife that lights were left on in car and waited for her to turn them out. He feels that if Council can afford fancy seats they can afford police protection.

Sandy Dosch – 312 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street – After new Council came in they said that what we were paying for we weren't getting with Hellam Township Police. She never saw Hellam in her area. Wrightsville goes by her house and down alley. She finds the officers courteous. If Hellam didn't give us what we paid for before, why would we be considering them again? She feels Council has child-like behaviors with personal agendas. Thought we could sell fancy building if it would help to keep the police department.

Teen Slenker – 138 Maple Street – Police do a good job at Sunoco. Open in the early morning and majority of convenience stores are women and on occasion call the police. Hellam could be hours and did nothing regarding drive-offs.

Kim Oberdick – 317 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street – She supports the police. They are always there and polite and nice.

Melda Ishman – Crossing guard. Appreciate police. They are there in the morning and evening and are slowing traffic.

Paul Ishman – 50 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – Felt we needed a bigger meeting place and felt Hellam Township police headquarters was Turkey Hill.

Kelly Kissinger – 408 S. Front Street – This is the first meeting she's attended. She said the police sit in the alley and catch speeders.

Howard Kissinger – Feels the Wrightsville Police are doing better than Hellam Township police did. He was wondering what did they do. What crimes did they solve? Wrightsville solved pipe bomb crime. He said he would fork out more money to keep the police, if necessary.

Bill Damiano – 410 Cherry Street – He has 20 years experience in law enforcement. He said that the criminal minds are watching the news and they are hoping these guys get canned. He said we should boost man power.

Marty Peak – 220 Walnut Street – He mentioned he had been hit by a drunk driver and that Hellam Township knew the guy and let him get back in his car stating he didn't have money or insurance anyway. He mentioned his daughter had been offered drugs and that Wrightsville busted the guy. He feels vandalism is cut down drastically since Wrightsville Police Dept. here. He suggested standing behind them and getting them to perform as Council wants. He said he went to 280 houses with fliers to support the police and he felt a lot wanted the police to stay.

Josh Keller – He's a part-time officer and is not here as much as he would like. He said it was great having everyone show up. He stated he was here for the residents.

Lori Cunningham – 118 Chestnut Street – She feels the Wrightsville police are great. The Chief says hello to the kids. She never saw Hellam when they were here. It took Hellam two weeks when she had items stolen and they said unless she saw them they couldn't do anything. She said she was ashamed of the Borough Council and stated that "she" doesn't make eye contact.

Keith Rockwell – 205 N. 7<sup>th</sup> Street – Borough Council needs to bring the town back together. If continuing with police department need to work effectively to be successful. Council needs to bring businesses in that will create revenue. Need to work with Chamber of Commerce and commissioners of York to revitalize. He suggested cleaning up the river front so people will want to eat, buy gas, etc. He feels this is all possible if we all work together.

Clapping commenced. People asked when he was going to run for office. Mr. Tilley broke in stating that we were not going to conduct this meeting as a political rally and it quieted down.

Jack Yohe – 408 Locust Street – He stated that he's been a resident for 40+ years and he supports the police. He said there are legitimate gripes but not reasons for getting rid of the police.

Ernest Feeser – 403 Hellam Street – He said he has observed gangs; up to 40 kids. He said Chief Quickel didn't do anything because he might have to go to court.

John Shannon – 624 S. Front Street – He owns Hakes and brought up the budget stating that the amount originally paid was for five hours of coverage and 24 hours on-call at \$100 an hour. He said that the Wrightsville police force is more expensive but that we're getting more for our money. He suggested talking to all residents before doing something drastic.

George Hildebrick – 602 Walnut Street – Feels it's absurd that Wrightsville is being drug through the mud in the paper. He feels we have a great police department and that there is no substitute for presence. Once every two weeks he observed Hellam Township police car. He sees Wrightsville 3-4 times a day.

Fred Higgins – 341 Walnut Street – Thinks the police are doing a good job. There are things to work on but need to work on it.

Barb Whitsel – 341 Walnut Street – Supports the police. No help with Hellam. Council should look at crime rate and compare.

Bud Livelsberger – 610 Locust Street – He feels the police get out of their cars and talk to kids. They busted counterfeit and drug ring.

Dale Lynn – 513 Hellam Street – Great police department. Chief came to her home on his day off to prove to her child that cops aren't bad. On a Sunday someone tried to poison her dogs. Wrightsville was off and it took the State 1 ½ hours to respond. On Monday, Wrightsville came right away. She said that instead of going after the police department; why not build a rec. center for the kids.

Michelle Young – 125 Chestnut Street – Support the police. There's no price for my safety. Public safety is most important. Council needs to grow up.

Rick Penyak – 409 Vine Street – 25 year resident. Council is representing residents. Council had the police followed in Marietta. I think that's called stalking. Police talk to the old people. They're out there. He said there are not dumb people here. Let residents decide. He suggested putting it up for an election. Do you have a list of people complaining about the high cost?

Margy Yohe – 408 Locust Street – Born in Wrightsville. Sees the police all the time. Council and Mayor needs to start working together.

Tom O'Hanley – 400 Vine Street – He's in favor of the police. Hellam rarely came down his street. Wrightsville patrols frequently. Instead of working against, work toward success. He said it seems that everyone is overwhelmingly in favor. Some members seem to not care what the residents are saying.

Harold Lehman – 136 Orange Street – He's in favor of the police. He's sees them four to five times a day. They are doing a good job.

Jean Billet – 134 Hellam Street – We need Council to be a team. Do your due diligence before disbanding. People are watching; good and bad. Urge you to go after grants. Make ruling, laws and zoning. Get the riff-raff out. She was appalled to hear what others were going through.

Kevin on N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street – He's in favor of the police department. He has contacted them due to drug dealings. They responded timely and followed up. He suggested putting it to public referendum. What is the policy to initiate this process?

Pat Smith – 122 Locust Street – In favor of the police. Suggested giving a little time to grow. Asked why would Council wait until 10:00 p.m. and go behind closed doors to discuss disbanding the police department.

Wayne Smith – 122 Locust Street – He stated that he watched a drug deal go down from a pizza shop and Hellam police wouldn't do anything. He has no complaint with Wrightsville Police. He stated that the elderly people seemed for keeping the police. He said he constantly hears people ask Council for help and they do not get any help for months.

Dave Falk – 2<sup>nd</sup> and Locust Street – Whoever you decide to go with, please stand by your decision. They put their lives on the line. His father was in law enforcement for 40 years and he says he always asks the police if they have what they need to do the job.

Don Wilt – 452 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street – Previous contract with Hellam Township had no specificity. Implores Council to specify coverage when officer on duty. He felt this was one of the failures of the old contract. He said he would rather not change police.

Matthew Jacobs – 222 Orange Street – Reported vandalism and it took Hellam 35-45 minutes to respond. Recently he was involved in a hit and run and Officer Carpenter (Wrightsville P.D.) responded and the person is in jail. He said there are still problems but it's a lot better. Suggested a tip line. He stated that you get what you pay for and that Columbia is in trouble now. He feels businesses will not come here if we go this way.

Eric White – 144 Hellam Street – He stated that three years ago he and his brother made an investment here. Mr. White states he is at every meeting and says that when the police force was being formed everything (cost) was in there. If there are financial issues then the budget is not being followed. He says he sees officers at night.

Anna Weirich – 124 Willow Street – She feels the way to get the police was not done properly. She feels some of the officers do not have enough experience. She said she had a problem in front of her home and the police never showed up. She gave a plate number of a guy doing drugs and the police came down Willow and went up 2<sup>nd</sup>. She feels that if we can't get contracted services, which she is for, then things need to be revised. She feels that if the officers do something wrong they need to be reprimanded. She stated that the Mayor needs to allow the Chief to do his job. She feels that a lot of blame is being put on the new Council and they have only been there for 5 months.

Kim Lentz – 116 Maple Street – She feels that an important issue came up as a last minute thought at the regularly scheduled May meeting and it should have been put on the agenda and not slipped in. When Hellam Police were in town and she informed them people were outside a bar with cups they told her that you couldn't prove what was in their cups. There was noise, drugs and fights but Hellam didn't care. That bar is now closed and river front can be developed. She feels that if you contract service they give you what they want to give you. Asked Council to please make decisions using common sense and conscious.

Richard Gross – 110 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street – He supports the police. He called Hellam and they didn't come except one time and said that if he could find out who did it... Wrightsville comes when called. Council needs to get behind the police and help them.

Mark Lentz – 116 Maple Street – He feels the costs that were stated in the paper were understated for Hellam and overstated for Wrightsville. He says police budget is usually 50% of the budget. He said you got 5 hours of coverage from Hellam and a minimum of 20 hours from Wrightsville. For the cost, that is only a difference of 15% more so you are getting more for your money. If they are disbanded there will be unemployment costs and debt to the bank.

Crystal Bolton – 403 Vine Street – She stated she has been keeping a tally as people speak and shows 38 are "for" the police and 8 are opposed and that is just the people that spoke. She wonders how well they can do their job if bosses are over their shoulder. She stated she had called Hellam regarding speeders on vine and Quickel basically called her a liar. Pearson is on top of it and gives her a report. She feels that if it is a money issue then taxes should be raised. She said it's not the police that put the Borough over budget but rather the lengthy meetings and the Solicitor charging over \$100.00 an hour. She feels this matter should be put up for a vote and some Council members need to step down.

Gentleman in the audience mentioned that when Ms. Geesey read the figures she added in the crossing guard and Streets Department figures so he wanted everyone to know that we were fed a bill of goods.

Annette Young – 328 S. Front Street – She is “for” the police. She sees the police all day long. She has three small grandkids and the police have helped her to cross the street with them. She said that two years ago Council said that they could afford the police.

Steven Miller – 404 Vine Street – He feels the Mayor is picked on. He said that we all voted for his. There are attitudes and disagreements but need to come to compromise.

Audience member requested Council to speak (so they’ll know who to vote out).

Mrs. McDonald – She stated that she came to the meeting with a lot on her mind. She has been concerned that from 2 a.m. until 8 a.m. Hearing how everyone feels she is willing to discuss but need to get a third shift. If no one minds paying, that’s what will be done.

A resident suggested looking at other ways to raise money.

Someone else blurted out that we all need to figure it out and change the way things are done.

Mr. Groft said that the residents were given a change to speak and to please allow Council the same opportunity.

Mr. Sipes – He stated that he is new to Council. That he is having a river front meeting on Tuesday night. There has been a big change with the Senior Center from negative to positive. He stated he visits them two or three times a week and the advertising is paying off. He asked everyone to allow Council to talk about this and likes seeing people come out every month.

Mr. Groft – He said he was glad everyone was there. Asked everyone to give Council some time and to be patient. He said he is willing to do what people want. Suggested that the residents not group them together when saying “you, Council.” Recommended everyone continue to come to the meetings and said grants are being worked on.

Mr. Habecker – Thanked everyone for their opinions. Stated that he hopes to be around to continue to try to work on things.

Mr. Kirkessner – Thanked everyone. Stated that being in the audience is easier than being on Council. He felt money was a factor and was his reason for pursuing other options. He feels we need zoning and a comprehensive plan but that there is not money for that. He was told that the police force was a temporary solution. If everyone is in favor, we’ll raise taxes but we will look for other ways.

Mrs. Young – Apologized for accommodations. Thanked everyone for coming. Addressed the issue of the executive session that was behind closed doors but reminded everyone that it was a public meeting and everyone was welcome to stay but it was that reason that this meeting was held to hear the resident’s opinions.

Mr. Rambler – Stated that he works for the people and had no intention of bringing in the police when he campaigned. He did what he was told for the first two years. He says he did research and had a lot of talks and felt it was the best move and feels the police department is going well. He said that he is over the police department but that he believes Chief Pearson would tell you

that he does his job. He mentioned a need for a winter vehicle that is available for \$12,000.00 and stated that the money was in an account that can be used for this type of purchase. He stated that he will continue to try to be the voice for the people and they wanted the police department. He stated he does this job for \$750.00 a year and had been putting in 40 hours a week until he was removed from his office. He admitted to making personal calls but he stated he is back in his office and is here to serve the public. He stated he will look for grants to see that things work for the town.

Mr. Groft made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Sipes made a second and the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Dietz

Mr. Groft made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Habecker seconded the motion and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie K. Dietz, Secretary