

## **Answers to questions asked on the police survey**

### **Is there a drastic problem we should know about that we are thinking of changing coverage?**

No, we were not thinking of changing coverage, as we felt the state police were meeting the needs and desires of the borough. The subject only came up when the Red Hill Council was approached by Marlborough Township about contracting police coverage from their police department and Vicki Lightcap suggested the formation of a new regional police force.

### **Didn't Red Hill have issues regarding poor police coverage when part of UPPD?**

According to a letter that was sent to residents in Nov. 1997, the reason for leaving the UPPD was financial. The services that the borough must provide to its citizens on a daily basis was being endangered by the increases in the UP police commission budgets. The police department has become the largest expense currently at 26.5%. With all the borough budget expenses in relation to the revenues, the council had to make serious decisions regarding present and future budget commitments. After much deliberation a decision was made to go with State Police coverage as it was felt that the State Police can give the needed level of service.

### **Why isn't more information and options given relative to costs with more detail and additional context? Why so much of an increase when we are working with others?**

The numbers we used in the survey were based on numbers we received from Marlborough Police Department. The only details provided, are that it would be a contracted police service, meaning we would have no say in expenditures etc. With regards to regional police that process is just beginning and there is a lot of work to be done by the committee before any costs and contract details can be addressed.

### **Why can't we join Upper Perk Police without a tax increase like Pennsburg and East Greenville?**

Both Pennsburg and East Greenville contribute to the cost of the UPPD, so of course if Red Hill joined we would be expected to do the same. Currently we have no funds budgeted for a police department so taxes would have to be increased to provide that coverage.

### **How long does it take for the State Police to arrive?**

It is important to note that the State Police have mutual aid agreements with local municipalities, which allows them to call another department to cover any emergency call they will not be able to respond to in a reasonable time frame. This is no different from agreements that already exist between local departments. State Police officials have no way to foresee response times. If the patrol unit assigned to cover a municipality is already in the area when a call comes in, the response time will be much shorter. If the trooper is coming from Skippack or another municipalities already ongoing incident, time of day and travel distance will affect the response time.

### **Why not hire a security firm to patrol and then have them contact whatever police department we have?**

This is an option which we have not considered and it is certainly something we can explore, although we know this is done in gated communities I am not sure it is appropriate for a borough.

### **Why not have the local constable enforce the ordinances that the state police do not?**

The constable, although locally elected, is a state official. State statute prohibits them from enforcing either the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code or Local Ordinances. The Constable's authority strictly covers enforcement of all Crimes Codes and Court Orders.

### **Has the crime rate increased since the State Police took over?**

According to an independent study that will be published later this year by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Red Hill's population rose 14 percent but its crime rate has not risen over the same 15-year period that we've been covered by State Police.

### **Where did the money go when we were no longer part of UPPD? Not sure my taxes went down \$500 when we went to state police, provide copy of budget when requesting tax increase options. Taxes are higher than nearby communities.**

The above referenced report by the Pew Charitable Trusts compares "tax burdens" across the Philadelphia region. Due to the fact that Red Hill has one of the lowest tax rates in the study, it will appear in a very short sidebar within the 20-page report. This will highlight the degrees in millage from the year 2000, when the rate was 12.0, to 2015 when the rate was 2.7. The report analyzed income, property, and sales tax rates in 355 municipalities in NJ, PA, and Philadelphia proper. For Philly and each suburb, they calculated the amount of taxes that a median-income family would owe as a percentage of its income - called the family's tax burden. The analysis found that Red Hill's tax burden fell from 12.1 percent to 10.3 percent between 2000 and 2015. It is now one of the lowest tax burdens out of 355 municipalities (the Montgomery County average is about 11 percent). The complete study will be available to read on our website as soon as it is published. Our 2016 budget is also on our website - <http://www.redhillborough.org/budget-financials>

### **Why are taxes higher than nearby communities?**

Red Hill Borough taxes are among the lowest in the county. The few townships\boroughs that have a lower rate are due to a combination of the following facts:

1. No local police department
2. More properties to tax
3. Assessed value of the properties is higher

To compare Montgomery County Tax rates go to <http://www.montcopa.org/622/County-Municipality-Millage-Rates>

### **Provide all details for each scenario; how were numbers provided when there is no final plan?**

Marlborough Police Chief has given Council a formal estimated proposal of costs if Red Hill were to contract their services. We took 50% of that total budget proposed, \$452,000. Red Hill's current real estate tax income is \$294,276 based on 2.7mils. If we added an increase of \$452,000 that would mean our real estate tax revenue would need to be \$746,518, divide that by the Montgomery County's estimated assessed valuation for Red Hill of \$108,191 and that would bring our millage to 6.9.

While the conversation of exploring a new larger regional police department has been suggested, we have not seen any budget proposed, so there is no way to know what it would cost at this time.

### **Are the people renting going to be taxed? They should help out?**

Renters do not pay property taxes, the landlords pay those taxes. The only way renters would help out would be through an increase in their rent. The borough cannot tax the renters.

### **Parking regulations need to be enforced.**

We are working with the State Police on this matter. Additionally we will be having our Fire Marshall and Code Enforcement officials take a more active role in enforcing these regulations.

**Please fix the basketball court and playground lights.** These items have been taken care of. After they were initially fixed some vandalism occurred, but as of today, Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, all should have been repaired.