

Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Merger Commission Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2009

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.
2. Tom Frantz, Mike Shank, Joan Gallagher, Donna Hellmann, Ron Folkert, Howard Ackerman, Charles Schwegman, Bill Berry, and Linda Hummel were all present. Christine Tieman was absent.
3. Barry Tiffany, Jim Martin, Marvin Moeller, Harold Rogers, Bill Wiseman, Dr. Sam Staley, Jacki Tipton, Bob Billett, and Ben Rader were all present for the meeting.
4. The minutes from the March 4th meeting were approved unanimously.
5. Mr. Tiffany brought up the fact that the Dille property would not be included in the merged community because the merger language refers to “the unincorporated portion of Sugarcreek Township”. The Dille property has been annexed and incorporated by Centerville. Thus an estimated tax income of 150 million to ½ billion would be lost to the township in the next 30 years. The County Prosecutor is to give a final written opinion on an expedited basis. The school taxes would not be affected. He also stated that annexation of the property is complete. Sugarcreek Township would keep the property taxes but that is under appeal by Centerville. Centerville would get any income tax money. Mr. Tiffany questioned whether we should go ahead with a Merger Study contract in light of the probable loss of this tax revenue.

Several members of the Commission indicated that they were elected to do a Merger Study and that a report was pertinent to their completing their work. Mr Shank stated that Mr Tiffany’s information, relative to property taxes and a merger would be one of the factors under consideration in the Commission’s final recommendation.

6. Dr. Sam Staley spoke about local consolidation and merger study issues. Dr. Staley has done extensive research on several merger issues, for example, Indianapolis and Marion County. Using this study would be helpful to Bellbrook – Sugarcreek merger study because of the scale. It would help to ask the right questions, for example the roads, maintenance, contracting out law enforcement, etc. He also brought up the fact that there is often no savings through consolidation, because the cost of implementing is not included, although you can bargain for the costs of consolidation. Dr. Staley suggested using volunteer departments to look at income tax. Dr.

Staley suggests that the merger study continue but build Mr. Tiffany's issues into the scope of work.

7. Mr. Ackerman reported that the subcommittee had resent the proposals to the Mercer Group as well as GEM. Mr. Schwegman stated that he was looking forward to seeing two compliant proposals. Mrs. Hellmann believes that Mercer providing software for a "what if" situation is a plus. Mrs. Gallagher stated that GEM may also be capable of doing something similar. Mr. Shank suggested asking the Mercer Group to clarify their "what if" situation. Mr. Folkerth brought up the fact that GEM has lower prices and that weighs more heavily than the overall quality of their quote. He feels we need to get more information from the contractor.
8. Ms. Hummel stated the timeline for GEM is about 10 months, and wanted to know if this kind of timeline was going to be an issue. Mr. Tiffany said that they will have 1 year from August to do the study. Mr. Berry suggested that if we make changes that they should be presented to both groups. Mrs. Gallagher thinks that it is now time to see the numbers. Mr. Tiffany wanted to know if it was possible to do any of the study ourselves. Dr. Sam Staley suggested that if we are comfortable with the qualifications of both as a consensus pick one and go with it.
9. Mr. Tiffany thinks that we should negotiate now, that will give us time to get an opinion from a prosecutor with no loss of time. Mr. Ackerman thinks that Mercer has a better proposal, Gem is local and has an advantage, and thinks that we should move forward. Mr. Shank thinks that we still need to negotiate with both groups. Ms. Hummel believes that Gem does not have the experience because much of their work is done by students.
10. Comments need to be sent to Mr. Ackerman by Sunday, and the subcommittee will set a date to meet.
11. The next meetings are scheduled for May 6th @ 7:00 PM and June 3rd @ 7:00 PM.
12. In the comments from the public, Mr. Marvin Moeller initially stated that he and other farmers in the area are against the merger. Mr. Moeller then noted that one of the contractors is local. He asked "Who's friend is it?". Several people on the Commission took exception to this statement. Mr Shank took issue with this question finding it insulting. Mrs. Gallagher responded by indicating there were 3 women Commissioners present and they weren't using the "Good Ole Boy" method of doing business. Mrs. Hellmann referred to the considerable time it took to contact and make

arrangements for the consultants to make presentations to the Commission. Mr Moeller then offered an apology to Mrs. Hellmann.

13. Mr Moeller also suggested that “the Township Trustees do a J.E.D. with all of the merchants along Centerville’s Corporation line”. Mr. Schwegman and Mr. Shank asked him to put together a proposal and bring it to the Commission. Mr. Jim Martin (as well as Mr. Moeller) stated that we will not be allowed to have fires and there will be no shooting in the city. He also said that under the O.R.C., “any City can change their laws anytime they want” and he does not like that.
14. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Berry and a 2nd by Mr. Schwegman. The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 PM.