

Draft Fairfax Town Council Minutes
Special Joint Meeting with San Anselmo Town Council
Drake High School Student Center
January 31, 2007

FAIRFAX COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Larry Bragman
Susan Brandborg
Mary Ann Maggiore
Lew Tremaine
David Weinsoff

SAN ANSELMO COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Wayne Cooper
Peter Breen
Ted Freeman
Judy House
Barbara Thornton

FAIRFAX STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Kelly, Town Manager
Ken Hughes, Chief of Police
Ian Roth, Finance Director
Judy Anderson, Town Clerk
Chris Morin, Police Sergeant

SAN ANSELMO STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Debra Stutsman, Town Manager
Chuck Maynard, Chief of Police
Jim Providenza, Police Captain

San Anselmo's Mayor Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Introductions – Selection of Chair

Mayor Cooper introduced the San Anselmo Town Council and staff and Mayor Bragman introduced the Fairfax Town Council and staff. Mayor Cooper stated that Mayor Bragman had asked that Mayor Cooper chair the meeting.

Open Time

Mayor Cooper stated that the subject matter for open time would have to be something that was pertinent to the joint jurisdiction of the two towns.

Louise Mathews, Foothill Road, San Anselmo, asked for clarification on the format of the meeting and whether or not there would be an opportunity for the public to speak.

Cindy Swift, Fairfax, asked when the public would have a chance to speak.

Presentation on the "Report of the POST Management Study for the Fairfax and San Anselmo Police Departments" regarding possible consolidation of Police Services, by David Sylstra of Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST)

San Anselmo Town Manager Stutsman introduced Senior Consultant David Sylstra of the Commission on POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training).

Dave Sylstra described his forty years in law enforcement. He stated that he had tried to maintain neutrality on the issue and that he was not an advocate for the agencies or the towns. He further stated that there were very few police consolidations in California and that the Twin Cities Police Department was the only successful one.

Mr. Sylstra presented the report of the Management Study for the Fairfax and San Anselmo Police Departments.

In summarizing the findings, he stated that consolidation or contracting between the departments was feasible and possibly desirable, and that cost savings were possible, depending on the form of consolidation. He further stated that no "significant event," like the loss of a chief executive, had taken place that prompted the discussion of potential contracts or consolidation. He noted, however, that recent flooding in both communities had resulted in financial trouble for both towns and may have prompted the discussions. Mr. Sylstra emphasized that it was vital to the success of a possible consolidation to provide information and a presentation of what consolidation was, its various forms, how it worked or could work, and how services could be provided to the community without the loss of local control and input.

Summary of Recommendations:

Hold an independently facilitated "consolidation" workshop/seminar/retreat(s) for key decision makers, with the following goals:

1. To inform participants of preliminary information on consolidation to allow them to decide if there was sufficient reason to continue dialogue and to continue to study and evaluate the consolidation option;
2. Identify the issues that needed to be resolved to make informed decisions about consolidation;
3. Identify the necessary steps that must be taken to successfully accomplish planning and implementation of consolidation.

Determine if there was sufficient support for additional study of consolidation; if so, *what form of consolidation or contract*. If, after sufficient public discussion, it should be determined by the agencies to be feasible, to pursue a more detailed cost/benefit analysis and other studies of the "approved" forms of consolidation/contracts.

Mayor Cooper opened the discussion to the public.

Louise Mathews, Foothill Road, asked about the unfunded pension liability and what impact that would have on the consolidation; if there was a tax, whether it would need a majority of voters in both towns; cited the 2004 annual report done by Chief Maynard that included information about how long employees had been with the San Anselmo Police Department and noted that the Chief had thirty years of service, Captain Providenza had thirty years and Officer White had Thirty-two years of service, and asked how recruitment would be handled for these positions and what impact their retirements would have on the unfunded pension liability for the town; that consolidation was wanted by the public but wouldn't save money; asked who would be the source of the information for the study; and asked about how much influence the synopsis of interviews had on the study.

Jeff Kroot, San Anselmo, noted that the only successful consolidation in California was Twin

Cities and asked about the unsuccessful consolidations in California.

Mr. Sylstra responded that an attempted merger between the police departments of Grover Beach and Arroyo Grande had been unsuccessful. He stated his opinion that the failure was due to an insufficient preparation of the decision makers and the public. He further stated that Campbell was another city that studied consolidation and ended up entering into a contract with the County Sheriff's Department to provide police services.

Linda McCarthy, Fairfax, ascertained that 30 consolidations had been studied for the report, five in California, and that contracts were the most common form of consolidation.

Patty Brett, Fairfax, asked what wasn't working well that would prompt the towns to investigate consolidation and whether the towns were trying to fix something that already worked.

Mr. Sylstra responded that it kept being proposed and discussed because of the shared geography, the redundancy and duplication of tasks, and the fact that the two entities had worked well together in the past.

Mary Ann Maggiore, Fairfax Council Member, stated that they were looking for ways to save money.

David Glick, Fairfax, tried to clarify what issues had to be addressed besides cost savings, better service and local control.

Cindy Ross, Fairfax, stated that she didn't think it would work and didn't favor it; asked why the discussion was happening at that time; confirmed that Twin Cities was the only viable consolidation in California; and asked why the Councils would waste time and energy on the issue.

Peter Lacques, Fairfax, asked for the current actual costs per citizen for police services in the two towns.

Mr. Sylstra responded that the numbers in the newspaper were incorrect and that the current costs were \$333/citizen in Fairfax and \$298/citizen in San Anselmo and that it was too early in the process to ascertain what the cost per citizen would be with consolidation. He explained that the numbers in the report were taken from the budgets of the two agencies; that the citizens needed to decide what services they wanted, the current service level or expanded service; and stated that consolidation could save money and was feasible.

Mayor Cooper explained that the meeting could be followed up with more meetings; that the current meeting was just to receive the report; that the two Town Councils then had to decide whether or not they wanted to go forward; that detailed questions about costs were premature; that the police departments currently used each other for backup; and that further study could tell them whether or not service could be improved.

John Wright, San Anselmo, stated that there were two very successful consolidations in the Ross Valley, the Ross Valley Fire Service and the Ross Valley School District. He commended the two councils for looking at the issue, stated that it was all about money and that it was the responsible thing to do from the taxpayer's point of view. He encouraged the councils to go to the next step.

Guy Meyers, San Anselmo, stated that it was a question of accountability and that the people

needed to feel that the Councils were exploring options to save money.

Sierra Salin, Fairfax, stated that bigger wasn't necessarily better but that it should be studied.

Louise Mathews, San Anselmo, stated that Mayor Cooper had said that the two councils would go back to caucus among themselves and asked if the citizens would have input. Mayor Cooper responded that the discussions would be held at public agenda meetings and that the public would be welcome.

Rose Taber, Fairfax, stated that there was an undercurrent of hostility to some members of the audience and asked that the Council members stop it.

Fairfax Councilmember Maggiore stated that the citizens of Fairfax passed Measure "F" and that the Council wanted to show the citizens that they were exploring all options to save money; that the Fairfax Council had been meeting one Saturday of each month to explore how to cut costs and/or increase revenues; and that none of the Council Members wanted to be hostile to the audience.

Nancy Okada, San Anselmo, asked how much it had cost the towns for the study, stated that the increased police presence at council meetings was intended to intimidate citizens and asked about the number of unmarked cars used by the departments.

Mr. Sylstra responded that there was no cost for the study, that POST was directed to provide analysis for departments, that forfeitures and fines paid for POST activities, but that additional studies and funding might be necessary.

Frank Egger, Fairfax, stated that police consolidation had been considered a number of times over the years; that the two police budgets used for a comparison of costs were not comparable because the COPS grant money was included in the Fairfax police budget and not in the San Anselmo police budget; that the combined overtime amounts of \$130,000 would not be enough for a consolidated department; that the 24/7 Fairfax dispatchers performed other than police services that would be lost to the public; that neither police facility was large enough to house both departments; that three cities in Northern California were going in the opposite direction and were starting their own police departments; and that one of the police stations would have to close if the consolidation happened.

Mayor Cooper closed the discussion to the public.

Fairfax Councilmember Tremaine stated that the report called for a public process on the issue but, until a decision was made about the level of the consolidation, the numbers couldn't be known; that a decision had to be made about whether or not to proceed; that, according to the report, consolidation didn't usually work; and ascertained from Mr. Sylstra that consolidation could increase cooperation and save money.

San Anselmo Councilmember Breen stated that any discussion of staffing, money and where stations would be were very premature; that they had an ethical obligation to the citizens to explore all options to save money and reduce costs; that "if" was the first question and "how" was the start of the second question; that the meeting was a positive start; and that nobody was trying to fix a problem with either department.

Fairfax Councilmember Brandborg stated that they were not there to decide the particulars but

just to hear the report; that the financial information necessary to make an informed decision wasn't part of the report; that they had to decide whether or not to do further study; that they needed to make sane and sound decisions based on information provided; and noted that the Ross Valley children already went to school together and played together through the school consolidation.

San Anselmo Councilmember House stated that the public had been brought into the process early; that it was the first meeting on the topic for everyone; that she was pleased to be a part of a positive, reasoned and thoughtful look at the possibilities; that it was a very public process; and that she was interested in hearing about the steps that had been taken to form the consolidated schools and the consolidated fire service.

Fairfax Councilmember Maggiore stated that she saw little reason to go forward with consolidation discussions, that if it wasn't broken, it didn't to be fixed, and that she was proud of the Fairfax Police Department just the way it was.

San Anselmo Councilmember Thornton stated that the report was different than what she expected; that total consolidation of services might not be necessary; that whether or not there was sufficient support to go forward wasn't known; suggested that it could be discussed in a workshop setting; and stated that she would like to go forward with the discussions.

Fairfax Mayor Bragman stated that the financial questions needed to be folded into the discussion; that money was driving the discussion; that the costs of consolidation were conspicuously missing from the report; that a new physical plant would be needed to house a new consolidated department; that bigger organizations had bigger costs; that more management would be needed for a larger department; that the Fairfax Police Department had a chief and sergeants and no middle management; that the Twin Cities' police department had been consolidated for twenty years, had a total budget of \$7,286,000 and couldn't meet its overtime goal with overtime costs of \$211,000; that the cost of the administration of the Fairfax department was much lower than San Anselmo's; that mergers did not necessarily result in economy according to the record; and that the numbers had to be part of the discussion right away.

San Anselmo Councilmember Freeman stated that they had been presented with lots of material including a number of appendices; that they ought to continue to explore the issue; that costs were certainly important; that sharing of services might lead to some efficiencies; that retention was a problem with both departments; and that there was more to it than just the money.

Councilmember Weinsoff stated that the Town of Fairfax was running out of Measure "F" income and was interested in finding cost savings; that Fairfax could "date" San Anselmo for a while without marrying them on the issue; that if the numbers looked good it could be put before the voters; that he was interested in going forward; acknowledged the local control issue; and stated that Fairfax didn't have enough money and had to keep looking at ways to save.

San Anselmo Mayor Cooper stated that he didn't have much to add to the comments already made; that the key was going to be the economics; that it had to be decided whether it would be full consolidation or partial sharing; that the possibility of having to build a new facility had to be considered; and that each Town Council would have to discuss the consolidation issue as they each saw fit.

There was a discussion about next steps and a consensus that the individual Councils would meet to decide whether or not to go forward to explore the options for consolidation or sharing of

police services. Mr. Sylstra stated that he could facilitate a workshop or retreat on the subject. San Anselmo Mayor Cooper asked that they receive information from their Town Attorney about any Brown Act limitations for such a workshop or retreat.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Anderson
Fairfax Town Clerk