



## E-Pathways: Your direct source for information

Greetings!

Dear Residents & Friends,

For nearly two years Schwenksville Borough Council has been involved in discussions with Lower Frederick Township regarding a partnership that would bring local police services to Schwenksville Borough. The discussions began in part because of increased legislative activity at the state level that seems to be leading towards new requirements that would have municipalities serviced by the State Police pay on a per capita basis for those services. The Borough also is interested in local police services to fill a need for quality of life policing that entails enforcement of Borough "Peace and Good Order" Ordinances, community policing and a stronger presence in the Borough to deter crime and slow down traffic. This initiative was spearheaded by Mayor Joe Giunta.

Last year Lower Frederick Township invited Schwenksville, Perkiomen Township, and Upper Frederick Township to participate in a feasibility study to examine the costs and feasibility of forming a Regional Police Department that would provide 24 hour, seven days a week police coverage to the four municipalities or three of them. The study was funded by a grant from the Department of Community and Economic Development and up to this point there have been no out of pocket costs to the Borough other than legal notices for public meetings. In December this study/report was presented to the public in detail at a public meeting held at the Perkiomen Valley West Middle School conducted by the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development. The Report is available on the Borough's website at <http://schwenksville-pa.org/services/police>. The report explains how a regional police agency would be formed, how each municipality would be represented and what powers and authority to vote on all police matters they would have, including the selection of personnel. It outlines two options for a four-municipality Regional Police Department and a three-municipality Police Department (Excluding Perkiomen Township) that would provide 24-7

coverage from a full-service police department to its member municipalities. If all four municipalities joined Schwenksville's share would be approximately \$183,442 per year and if three municipalities joined the cost to Schwenksville Borough would increase to \$203,049.00. On a per capita basis, the cost amounts to approximately \$132 per person and \$147 per person respectively.

On the surface, this proposal seems quite reasonable and that the costs are comparable to other Regional Police Departments as illustrated on page 22 of the Study; but Schwenksville Borough is different from its neighboring townships in many ways including the size of our tax base. Residents would not be billed based on how many people live in their household. Rather, a Real Estate Tax increase for the purpose of funding the Police Services would need to be adopted and due to the small size of our tax base, the increase would be significant. One mill is equal to \$1.00 of tax for every \$1,000 of assessment. In Schwenksville, one mill of real estate tax brings in approximately \$48,500 of revenue. Understanding that it would take a tax increase of between 3.78 mill and 4.19 mill to fund the Regional Policing Options, Schwenksville asked Lower Frederick if they would be willing and able to tailor police services to meet our needs and a budget to be determined. And the answer was yes.

At a public meeting held on May 30, 2019 at the Schwenksville Borough Municipal Annex, Lower Frederick Police Chief Paul Maxey addressed Borough Council and members of the public and reviewed the Regional Police Options as well as two options for purchasing local police services. **No proposal has been provided to Schwenksville Borough.** Rather, Chief Maxey explained that in Lower Frederick, the cost of a full-time police officer's salary and benefits is approximately \$134,859.00. Therefore, if Schwenksville wanted 40 hours per week (approximately 6 hours per day) of police coverage that's how much it would cost. If we needed fewer hours per week, it would adjust downward using an hourly rate. He also illustrated that if we went to 80 hours per week of service, the cost of approximately 12 hours per day of coverage, would be greater than a Regional Police Option that would provide 24 hours of coverage. The purpose of this illustration was to suggest, that if we start small, but like the results, it would still be possible to form a regional police agency in the future.

**Your opinion matters to us.** To calculate the impact the alternatives considered would have on your property please use the chart included below and complete the survey by following the link provided below. For those residents/property owners who would prefer to complete a paper version of the survey, it is included in a printed newsletter being mailed to residents this month. The deadline is October 31, 2019.

## How to Calculate the tax impact

To determine what **your** tax liability is you take the assessed value of **your property** and multiply it by the tax rate measured in mills and then divide that product by 1,000. For example, a home assessed at \$176,357 multiplied (x) by the current Schwenksville Borough Tax Rate of 6.4 mills divided by (/) 1000 = \$1,128.68 in local tax. A 4-mill increase would be calculated \$176,357 x 4.0

mill/1000 = \$705.43. The Chart is also available on [www.schwenksville-pa.org](http://www.schwenksville-pa.org)

Police Service Alternative Options	Cost to Schwenksville	\$ Revenue from one mill of Real Estate Tax for Schwenksville	Tax Increase Required for option (mills)	Schwenksville Borough Tax Rate After Increase (mills)
Regional w/4 Municipalities	\$183,442	\$48,482	3.78	10.18
Regional w/3 Municipalities	\$203,049	\$48,482	4.19	10.59
Purchasing 20 Hours per week	\$67,429.50	\$48,482	1.39	7.79
Purchasing 40 Hours per week	\$134,859	\$48,482	2.78	9.18
Purchasing 80 hours per week	\$269,718	\$48,482	5.56	11.96

## Quick FAQ's

The quick facts below can also be viewed at [www.schwenksville-pa.org](http://www.schwenksville-pa.org).

- Currently the Borough's police services are provided by the Pennsylvania State Police Skippack Barracks **at no/zero additional charge** to Schwenksville Borough or residents.
- Perkiomen Township, Upper Frederick Township also currently utilize the Pennsylvania State Police to provide police services to their communities. Lower Frederick currently has its own Police Department but does not currently provide 24 hour, seven days a week coverage and supplements its coverage with the State Police.
- Pennsylvania State Police provide: Traffic and Vehicle Code Enforcement, response to motor vehicle accidents, 911 Emergency Response, Well-being Checks, Criminal Complaint and Investigatory Services and limited patrol of Borough Streets and the Perkiomen Trail.
- Pennsylvania State Police do not enforce local "Peace and Good Order" ordinances such as noise, loitering, parking, animal, or nuisance ordinances.
- Pennsylvania Legislators have proposed as many as 5 bills that would impose fees on municipalities who do not have a local police department or a full-time local police department for utilizing the Pennsylvania State Police. The fees proposed in the legislation for a Borough of Schwenksville's size range from \$0.00 per person to \$25 per person. If one of these bills were to be enacted into law, Schwenksville could be forced to pay up to \$34,625, or more depending on the next census, annually to continue being serviced by the Pennsylvania State Police. There would be no change/increase to service with the legislation that has been proposed.
- Pennsylvania State Police Skippack Barracks has 48 Troopers servicing a population of 57,942 for a 0.8 Trooper per 1,000 residents ratio compared to Lower Merion Township that employs 131 Officers to service a population of 58,234 (2.3 ratio) or Abington that employs 92 officers to service a population of 55,623 (1.7 ratio).
- The Four Municipality Regional Option looked at establishing one full-service [patrol coverage to all areas with officers assigned to specific patrol zones, along with Patrol Sergeants, Traffic Officers and a full-time Detective] and full-time (24 hours a day, seven days a week) regional police department, consisting of 18 sworn full-time officers and 2 full-time civilian clerical personal to serve the four combined municipalities with a resident population of 18,897 and a jurisdiction 23.67 square miles in size. Estimated cost to Schwenksville Borough is \$183,4442 annually.
- The three Municipality Option looked at establishing one smaller

full-time regional department with a population of 9,758 from only three municipalities and a jurisdiction of 18.95 square mile. It would still have specific patrol zones, but would be limited to 10 sworn officers including a detective, a sergeant and a Chief of Police. Estimated cost to Schwenksville Borough is \$203,049.00.

- A Regional Police Department would be governed by a Board composed of elected officials representing each of the member municipalities. The governing board would hire a new Chief of Police. The current Lower Frederick Township Police Officers would be offered positions with the Regional Police Department and then the Governing Board would hire additional officers as needed. This Board would be governed and operated independent from any of the member municipalities. Police Coverage would be 24-7.
- Purchasing Police Services would mean the police department would be managed by Lower Frederick Township and Schwenksville would not have a vote or role to play in decisions governing the police department. It would not be 24-7 coverage. State Police would be on call during off hours.

## Police Services Citizen Survey

**Schwenksville Borough Council invites all Borough residents and property owners of at least 18 years of age, to complete the on-line citizen Survey located at [www.schwenksville-pa.org](http://www.schwenksville-pa.org), or to complete the paper survey that is included as an insert in the print newsletter mailed mid September. The survey responses need to be submitted or received at Borough Hall, 140 Main Street, Schwenksville, PA 19473 by October 31, 2019.**

**Please follow this link for the 2019 Police Services Survey.**

*Should you have questions or concerns about information contained in this e-newsletter; about projects being undertaken by Schwenksville Borough or about Borough operations please contact us at [info@schwenksville-pa.org](mailto:info@schwenksville-pa.org) or call 610-287-7442. Residents are also welcomed to attend a Council Meeting on the 2nd Thursday of each Month at 7 PM --except for January of even years when the Borough conducts a reorganization meeting the first Monday or day after a holiday in January.*

### Hours of Operation

M- Thursday 9 AM - 5PM  
[closed 12PM to 1PM]  
Friday 9AM - 2PM  
140 Main Street  
Schwenksville, PA 19473  
Phone (610) 287-7442  
Fax (610)287-8098



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