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July 16, 2008

Ms. Diane Canterbury
Project Manager, FMERPA
Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Planning Authority
2-12 Corbett Way, Suite C
Eatontown, NJ 07724

Dear Ms. Canterbury:

On behalf of the ten Jersey Professional Management Consultants/Associates who have contributed to this project, it is our pleasure to submit these Final Recommendations. These Final Recommendations represent the results of the Feasibility Study for possible Shared Services for the Emergency Services for the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Planning Authority.

These Final Recommendations are the result of 2 months of intensive analysis of the departments and volunteer organizations that provide Emergency Services to the 3 Host Municipalities and the 5 Neighboring Municipalities.

As we have indicated throughout this Feasibility Study, and as detailed in our acknowledgement section at the end of these Final Recommendations, we sincerely appreciate the significant cooperation, time and effort given to this project by the many Municipal Officials, Employees and Volunteers involved in these departments and volunteer organizations. Without their cooperation, the Final Report and these Final Recommendations could not be as accurate, thorough or complete.

It has been a pleasure working with you, and all the other FMERPA officials and employees throughout this process. If you have any comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dan Mason, President
Jersey Professional Management

**Feasibility Study for Possible Shared Services
For Emergency Services
For FMERPA
(Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Planning Authority)**

Final Recommendations

**Prepared by
Jersey Professional Management
23 North Avenue East
Cranford, NJ 07016**

July 16, 2008

**FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR POSSIBLE SHARED SERVICES
FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR FMERPA
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Based on the contract between the Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Planning Authority (FMERPA) and Jersey Professional Management (JPM), a Shared Services Feasibility Study for Emergency Services was recently conducted to explore opportunities for improved services and/or reduced costs, through possible new and/or expanded Shared Services, for and between municipalities impacted by the scheduled closure of Fort Monmouth in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The Final Report was delivered on July 7, 2008. This document, which contains a summary of the recommendations contained in that Final Report, is referred to as the Final Recommendations.

FMERPA recognized that the scheduled closure of Fort Monmouth on or before September 2011 would result in the Host Municipalities of the Boroughs of Eatontown, Oceanport and Tinton Falls having to assume the Public Safety responsibilities associated with the Fort Monmouth land presently under Federal jurisdiction and control. It was also recognized that the public safety resources, associated with the Fort Monmouth Division of Emergency Services, may benefit not only the Host Municipalities, but also surrounding municipalities. For this reason, this Shared Emergency Services Study included certain Neighboring Municipalities that were anticipated to be impacted as well, probably to a lesser degree.

The concentration of this Shared Emergency Service Study was on the three Host Municipalities of the

- Borough of Eatontown,
- Borough of Oceanport, and
- Borough of Tinton Falls.

The primary study goal was to identify potential new and enhanced interlocal cooperative ventures, generally known as “Shared Services,” in the following specified Public Safety areas:

1. Municipal Court Services
2. Police Services

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- 2A. Office of Emergency Management (OEM)
- 3. Fire Services
- 3A. Ambulance/First Aid Services

The secondary study goal was to evaluate the extent to which selected Neighboring Municipalities could benefit from and be included with the Shared Services options for Emergency Services that were developed for the Host Municipalities. This phase of the study was identified as Task 4. The selected Neighboring Municipalities were:

- Monmouth Beach
- Sea Bright
- Shrewsbury Borough
- Shrewsbury Township
- West Long Branch

Jersey Professional Management formed multiple Study Teams with expertise in each of the Public Safety study areas. The Study Teams engaged in an extensive study process involving detailed fieldwork, interactive interviews of many officials, employees, representatives and volunteers, a thorough review and analysis of existing systems, and a collaborative recommendation development process. The result of the work of each of the Study Teams in each of the study areas (Tasks 1, 2, 2A, 3, 3A and 4) is embodied in the report submitted by JPM on July 7, 2008.

Based upon all of the above, these professional consultants compared the possible Shared Services for Emergency Services for the Fort Monmouth region with the Best Practices of existing Shared Services throughout the State of New Jersey, and made recommendations in the Final Report for the best potential new and expanded Shared Services for this area.

GENERAL OVERALL SHARED SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

These Shared Services recommendations, which are fully explained in the July 7, 2008 Final Report, are summarized below for each of the emergency service areas.

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Task 1 – Municipal Court Services

General Conclusions

- The Borough of Tinton Falls Municipal Court operation is sound and would not realize any significant benefit from a shared service approach with either the Borough of Eatontown or the Borough of Oceanport. The office handles a high volume of activity and enjoys the benefits of newly constructed facilities that meet the guidelines of the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- The existing interlocal services agreement between the Borough of Eatontown and the Township of Shrewsbury is mutually beneficial. Given the limited size and level of activity within the Township of Shrewsbury, any consideration of the establishment of their own Municipal Court operation would be neither efficient nor economical.
- The Municipal Court operation in the Borough of Oceanport is not able to be operated on a cost effective basis based upon their lower volume of activity. The hours of operation do not conform to regular business hours and the physical facilities do not meet the guidelines of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

General Recommendations

- The Borough of Tinton Falls Municipal Court should continue to operate as it presently operates. Any additional workload resulting from the closure of Fort Monmouth could be absorbed.
- The Borough of Eatontown and the Township of Shrewsbury should continue with their present relationship involving the Borough of Eatontown Municipal Court providing all court services to the Township of Shrewsbury in conjunction with the recommendation below.
- There should be established a joint court operation that would include the Host Municipalities of the Borough of Eatontown and the Borough of Oceanport, as well as the Neighboring Municipality of the Township of Shrewsbury.

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Task 2 – Police Services

General Conclusions

- The Tinton Falls Police Department’s personnel strength and geographic area are able to justify their continued operation independent of any other police department. Their headquarters is sized to be able to absorb additional responsibilities associated with the future growth of the Borough, including the development that may take place on what is presently Fort Monmouth land.
- The Eatontown Police Department’s personnel strength and geographic area are able to justify their continued operation independent of any other police department. The Borough’s geographic location makes it a potential policing partner with one or more of the neighboring municipalities with smaller police departments. Their headquarters is meeting their present needs and could potentially absorb an expanded operation to a limited degree. The potential of the Eatontown municipal operations moving to Fort Monmouth’s Mallette Hall further expands the ability of this police department to partner with other municipalities.
- The Oceanport Police Department’s staffing and activity levels, combined with its headquarters that was identified by the JPM Study Team as being “inadequate,” make Oceanport a prime candidate for participation in a joint policing operation.
- The Tinton Falls Police Department uses the Monmouth County Communications Center for all of its dispatch needs. Eatontown and Oceanport each has its own local dispatch center.

General Recommendations

- The Borough of Tinton Falls should continue to operate its Police Department independent of any other of the municipalities that were a part of this study. Tinton Falls should also continue with its present dispatch relationship with the Monmouth County Communications Center.

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Task 2 – Police Services, Continued

- Eatontown and Oceanport should create a joint Police Department, with Eatontown serving as the lead agency, providing police services to Oceanport through a contract arrangement.

- Eatontown and Oceanport should utilize the services of the Monmouth County Communications Center. In the event that the Monmouth County Communications Center would not be in a position to accept this added workload, then this new joint Police Department should establish a regional dispatch center. The offer of these dispatch services should also be extended to other Neighboring or area municipalities.

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Task 2A – Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

General Conclusions

- There are sound OEM models in place in all of the Host municipalities.
- The administrative burdens associated with Emergency Management operations in a post-September 11 era are increasingly complex.
- There is a significant overlap among the emergency management plans of Monmouth County municipalities.

General Recommendations

- The sound Emergency Management Models that have been developed in each of the Host Municipalities should be maintained to continue to meet the requirements of the future.
- It is recommended that the Host Municipalities jointly hire and fund the employment of a part time OEM Administrator. This person would be assigned to handle a portion of the burden of the local OEM Coordinators by assisting with administrative duties.

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Task 3 – Fire Services

General Conclusions

- The volunteer fire departments in the Host Municipalities operate well and provide a high level of fire protection service to the communities they serve.
- The Fort Monmouth Fire Department’s specialized services, such as its HAZMAT response, are valued by area municipalities.
- There are seven HAZMAT response units in Monmouth County in addition to the Fort Monmouth Fire Department.
- Monmouth County has an excellent system of mutual aid.
- Monmouth County has an excellent Fire Academy and associated training programs.

General Recommendations

- Encouragement by the Host Municipalities for their volunteer fire departments to continue to provide the high level of fire protection services that have historically been provided. (This encouragement could be in the form of providing annual donations, new equipment, replacement vehicles and facilities.)
- Implementation of a practice of immediate and automatic mutual aid in all communities.
- Utilization of the Monmouth County Communications Center for all dispatch needs, as soon as possible.
- The current fire service station and storage shed in the Charles Wood section of Fort Monmouth should be conveyed to the Tinton Falls Fire District #1.
- The current fire service station in the Main Post section of Fort Monmouth should be conveyed to the Oceanport Fire Department.

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Task 3 – Fire Services, Continued

- The Fort Monmouth Fire Training Facility should be conveyed to the Monmouth County Department of Law and Public Safety to become part of the Monmouth County Fire Academy.
- In the unlikely event that weekday, daytime response becomes inadequate or somewhat delayed at some point in the future, the volunteer fire departments should consider hiring paid daytime firefighters to supplement the volunteer organizations.

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Task 3A – Ambulance/First Aid Services

General Conclusions

- The paid daytime ambulance service in the Borough of Tinton Falls has adequately addressed the challenges they had previously been experiencing with staffing ambulances during the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This program is largely self-supporting and has had no negative impact upon the level of volunteerism. Also, there is an ability to handle the anticipated call volume increases associated with future development including the redevelopment of the Fort Monmouth land in the Borough.
- The Eatontown Ambulance Corps also serves the Township of Shrewsbury. In spite of thin volunteer ranks, they are generally addressing the needs of the community. However, the demand upon this limited number of volunteers is of some concern. The daytime population of the Borough makes providing consistent weekday, daytime response a challenge.
- The Oceanport First Aid and Rescue Squad is a well equipped, well staffed and well trained agency. However, they suffer with the challenge of providing consistent weekday, daytime coverage. (We note that this is a challenge throughout New Jersey.)
- There is a mutual aid system in place, but its structure at times leads to a delayed emergency response.

General Recommendations

- Start a consortium of First Aid Squads to create a new agency and contract out for a weekday, daytime Basic Life Support paid ambulance service. This new service would become the primary responder only during the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- In addition to the primary recommendation above, there are a series of secondary recommendations that will support and enhance the provision of a consistent and quality response during all hours of the day and night as follows:

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Task 3A – Ambulance/First Aid Services, Continued

1. Develop an enhanced dispatch protocol to speed the provision of mutual aid when needed
2. Provide radios to all active volunteers
3. Consistent use of the Monmouth County Communications Center
4. Develop a mutual aid program to possibly and occasionally take advantage of crews already in service
5. Seek acquisition of Fort Monmouth EMS vehicles and equipment for the benefit of the Host Municipalities
6. Concentrate on Basic Life Support functions, as opposed to rescue operations
7. Establishment of a uniform record keeping system
8. Create a volunteer standby program
9. Develop a joint enhanced recruitment program

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Task 4 – Neighboring Municipalities

General Conclusions

- The selected Neighboring Municipalities are smaller communities with populations that range from an estimated 2007 population of 8,272 for the Borough of West Long Branch, to an estimated 2007 population of 1,098 for the Township of Shrewsbury.
- These smaller municipalities often rely upon part time employees and have limitations with respect to the availability of space in their public buildings. Shrewsbury Borough was the notable exception with a municipal building that is only 5 years old.
- Through shared services arrangements, many municipal services could be enhanced in terms of service level, and may also be provided at a lower cost.

General Recommendations

- **Municipal Court Services** – Contingent upon the ability of the Borough of Eatontown to acquire Fort Monmouth’s Mallette Hall, the establishment of a Regional Municipal Court would be a benefit to the Neighboring Municipalities.
- **Police Services** – Contingent upon the ability of the Borough of Eatontown to acquire Fort Monmouth’s Mallette Hall, the Neighboring Municipalities could benefit from becoming a part of a regional policing agency as outlined in Task 2. In the alternative, various special services provided by police departments, could be provided through shared services arrangements.
- **Office of Emergency Management** – The concept of a shared part time OEM Administrator could easily be expanded to include additional municipalities and is recommended for the Neighboring Municipalities.
- **Fire Services** – All of the recommendations set forth above under Task 3 are equally applicable to the Neighboring Municipalities.

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Task 4 – Neighboring Municipalities, Continued

- **Emergency Medical Services** – Both the primary and secondary Task 3A recommendations are appropriate for implementation by the Neighboring Municipalities. The addition of more municipalities in a consortium of First Aid Squads that would contract out for a weekday, daytime Basic Life Support ambulance service would actually enhance the Task 3A recommendation. This is possible since it takes a minimum number of calls per day to make the service pay for itself. To reach a break even point in the budget, the revenues received (based upon the fees paid by insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid) must be sufficient to pay for the fixed expenses, which are costs related to the required number of ambulances and paid employees.

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CONCLUSION

The overall conclusion, as is fully outlined in the July 7, 2008, Final Report, is that there are significant opportunities for the provision of shared emergency services. As is evident from a number of the recommendations, there was not an assumption that shared emergency services were required or beneficial. This was specifically evident concerning the conclusions that were made with respect generally to Tinton Falls, and with respect to Fire Services for all municipalities.

There is some regret that Fort Monmouth will be closing, but for many, this is instead being viewed as an opportunity. With respect to the implementation of shared services for emergency services, this should be viewed as a significant opportunity.

Specifically, due to the prospect of the acquisition of certain Fort Monmouth properties that can support and enhance public safety shared services, this opportunity is considerably better.

As highlighted in the Final Report, the number of municipalities that could actually participate in the new shared services extends beyond the 3 Host Municipalities and the 5 Neighboring Municipalities. The Feasibility Study and the Final Report create a solid foundation for the municipalities in the Fort Monmouth Region to begin to create and develop new shared services agreements for emergency services. This next step would include the development of an Implementation Plan, which could be paid for by a New Jersey SHARE Grant.

Jersey Professional Management believes the recommendations as outlined above are sound, and should be implemented as described. However, we recognize that these recommendations are likely to be modified in varying degrees as the local municipal officials, employees and volunteers review and consider their details. It is common for the recommended shared services included in a Feasibility Study Final Report to be implemented. Frequently, there may be some variation from the original recommendations.

The development of an Implementation Plan involves extensive local input from all of these respective stakeholders, including the elected officials, department heads, employees, volunteers, citizens and taxpayers.

We recognize that the implementation of new Shared Services in the public safety arena is a sensitive matter; therefore, we recommend a transition period during which the new Shared Services are implemented in a gradual, developing manner.

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FMERPA SHARED SERVICES FEASIBILITY STUDY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On behalf of the Team of Jersey Professional Management Consultants and Associates who participated in this Feasibility Study, we would like to thank all of the individuals who provided the background information and data included in, and so vital to, these Final Recommendations.

We are grateful for the excellent cooperation and significant input received from many Elected Officials, Municipal Employees, numerous Volunteers, FMERPA and Fort Monmouth Officials and Employees. We especially want to thank the FMERPA Project Manager for her assistance and cooperation throughout this Feasibility Study.

Also, we would like to highlight the support and cooperation received from the Mayors of Eatontown, Oceanport and Tinton Falls. They added an essential ingredient to this Study.

Respectfully submitted,

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