

Alle-Kiski Intergovernmental Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Meeting #10 - June 15th 2023
New Kensington City Hall

Attendees (D-Delegate, A-Alternate)

AK IGC: Tom Guzzo (D-New Kensington), John Andrejczik (D-Lower Burrell), Dennis Scarpiniti (A-New Kensington), Matt Grantz (D-West Leechburg Borough), Mike Kornis (D-Allegheny Township), George Hawdon (D-Arnold), Melissa Cortilesio (D-Upper Burrell), Marilee Kessler (A-Vandergrift Borough), Kristen Sarno (A-East Vandergrift)

Westmoreland County Planning: Daniel Carpenter, Jillian Caswell

Guests: Leslie Zellers **Public:** None

Meeting started at 5:05 PM.

1. Review/approve minutes from Meeting 9

A motion was made by George and seconded by Missy to approve the Meeting 9 minutes. The Meeting 9 minutes were approved.

2. AK IGC Blight Inventory and Plan

a. Agreement status

Daniel said that the draft agreement for the blight inventory and plan project is prepared. The agreement will be distributed after the meeting and comments and feedback are needed within two weeks.

Daniel reminded the group that the project's payment structure was defined in the proposal previously circulated to members. He explained that the project invoices will be issued quarterly based on the percentage of work that has been completed. Invoices will not start until the beginning of next year. Daniel explained that the agreement will lay out a two year timeline for the project, which will begin as soon as the agreement is executed.

Daniel noted that since the last meeting, Dennis inquired about a potential funding opportunity with the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County (CFWC). Daniel stated that the CFWC offers a *Revitalizing Westmoreland* grant that opens in the fall. He suggested that the group reach out to the CFWC to discuss options for reimbursing municipalities since the blight project will have already started. He suggested applying for the grant as a group to build a stronger application.

3. AK IGC shared code enforcement

a. Subcommittee report

George led the subcommittee report, sharing that he contacted two third party companies which offer code enforcement services - KLH Engineering, Inc and Harshman CE Group LLC. George also contacted BIU and PCS but they did not respond or turned down the offer to work with the group because of staffing issues. George said Harshman is from Washington County and KLH is from Butler County. Harshman currently services around 40 municipalities and KLH currently services around 100 municipalities.

George explained that both companies have agreed to come and present to the group about their services. George noted that he will coordinate with Victoria and the rest of the CEO subcommittee to schedule the upcoming presentations.

George shared price lists and information from both companies. He mentioned to both companies that there is a group of municipalities that is requesting services and the services for each municipality may vary depending on their area's needs. Both companies said they would be willing to negotiate a volume discount. George mentioned that this negotiation would have to be done by the IGC as a group or by Westmoreland County.

George further explained that not every municipality would have the need for all of the services listed. He said for example Arnold does not have new building permits often but in a place like Allegheny Township, this service might be helpful. He added that working with any of these companies could provide opportunities for a volume discount and priority services, even if the initial pricing appears expensive.

John asked if the companies have experience serving only individual municipalities or groups like the IGC. George said he didn't think they have experience with any groups yet. John suggested an initial step for this process could be the IGC presenting to the companies first and identifying their current needs.

Tom noted the benefits of a full range of services offered by each company. He said this range of services could be helpful for municipalities with different needs. John agreed and said Lower Burrell has their own code enforcement officer but they might need some other additional services once they evaluate their needs. Mike mentioned that Allegheny Township's zoning officer is retiring soon and that he could see this service being helpful.

George said he plans to present the service list to Arnold's council along with suggested needs. George asked members to email him what they think could be useful from the service lists provided.

Daniel suggested that George also contact the firm, Strategic Solutions. Strategic Solutions is located in Pittsburgh and offers interim zoning officer, staffing, and code enforcement services.

4. Joint purchasing equipment

a. Wish List Analysis

John noted that he hadn't yet provided input on Lower Burrell's shared equipment interests. He said he will provide input this week and asked for an updated copy of the list afterward.

Daniel presented the joint purchasing wish list analysis that Victoria prepared using the group's input. He explained that the table matches communities based on their mutual equipment interests. Daniel noted that communities will need to discuss details such as insurance, storage, operators, etc. Daniel also distributed a handout from the PA DCED's guide [Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook](#). This resource can be utilized as communities take next steps in accomplishing joint equipment purchases.

5. Regionalization/consolidation of fire service

a. Memorandum letter

b. Continue discussion

c. Create subcommittee

Mike led the discussion on regionalization of fire service. Mike recommended that everyone use the memorandum letter and take it back to their boards and councils to let them know the IGC is exploring the idea of shared fire service. Mike also suggested that the group form a subcommittee for this topic. He offered to chair the subcommittee.

A motion to make Mike the Chair of the shared fire service subcommittee was made by Tom and seconded by George. John and George volunteered to be on the subcommittee. The shared fire service subcommittee was formed.

Mike mentioned that not every municipality or fire department would need to be involved in shared service because some are doing well on their own. Similar to the group's conversations on code enforcement, Mike suggested members should talk to their fire departments about their needs to assess which municipalities want to be involved. Mike asked that the group come back next month and have an idea of what level their municipality would like to be involved.

Missy mentioned she reached out to Upper Burrell's fire chief regarding this topic and he expressed disinterest. She said she would reach back out with the memorandum letter.

George suggested that consolidation of fire service might be difficult because of the varying structures of departments from community to community. Consolidation would require a joint agreement between various fire departments or companies.

Mike suggested that the group steer away from using the word consolidation and instead focus on sharing resources and services. The group agreed and noted that everyone will approach this process differently, depending on the structure of fire service in their municipality and the feedback from their boards or councils.

Tom suggested the group focus on trying to solve the root of the problem by promoting junior firefighters programs and recruitment of younger people in fire service. Tom also recommended the group focus on the question, "how do we encourage more people to become firefighters?". Members agreed that working on this topic would be helpful.

John suggested the group could pioneer shared fire safety and services without consolidation. The group agreed with this idea. Tom noted the use of shared services could help the group face difficulties like trying to obtain new ladder trucks.

Daniel shared that Hempfield Township recently underwent a process of regionalizing several different fire companies. Daniel suggested the group reach out to the Township to learn about their work on fire safety.

6. Next AK IGC meeting date: Thursday, July 20th, 2023 @5pm

Daniel reminded the group that July will be the last meeting of the Year 2 agreement between the county and member communities. Daniel suggested several options for the group to consider: to become more self-sustaining by member communities taking on the administrative work to run the group, work with a consultant (such as Susan Hockenberry) to provide facilitation/administrative services, or continue to receive administrative support from Westmoreland County Planning.

Tom suggested that the group mutually agrees that they would like to receive continued support from the county. Daniel noted that whichever option the group chooses, the county will still be involved in some capacity. Daniel and John suggested the group start thinking about how the AK IGC can move closer to self-sustainment in Year 4, working towards this in Year 3.

Daniel explained the current Dues schedule still does not completely cover the county's costs. If the group chooses to continue with county support, the Dues should be re-reviewed and approved for the Year 3 agreement. Daniel said he will

provide the updated proposed Dues schedule before the July meeting. He asked for members to review the proposed Dues schedule and provide feedback in time for approval in July.

7. Public comment

None

Other Discussion

Tom introduced guest Leslie Zellers and provided an overview, history, and purpose of the AK IGC. He said the Alle-Kiski communities are stronger as one united body for certain projects and programs.

Leslie introduced herself and explained she is a candidate for district judge. Leslie thanked Marilee for inviting her because she was able to witness different concerns and leadership developments within the different Alle-Kiski communities.

Leslie noted that code enforcement is a recurring issue she hears about from communities. She said it is helpful that this group is looking at ways to support this issue. She mentioned that collaboration at the local level makes a difference. Leslie suggested that the group get more publicity so that other communities can learn about what the AK IGC is working on. Tom noted that the group is in contact with the local paper and is in the process of organizing press.

A motion to make Mike Kornis the Delegate for Allegheny Township was made by Tom and seconded by Missy. Mike was made the Delegate for Allegheny Township.

A motion to make Greg Primm the Alternate for Allegheny Township was made by Mike and seconded by Tom. Greg was made the Alternate for Allegheny Township.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Tom and seconded by Missy to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 6:00 PM.