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EXPERT COUNSEL



REAL SOLUTIONS

# Township Public Safety Services: So Many Options

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2021 MTA VIRTUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

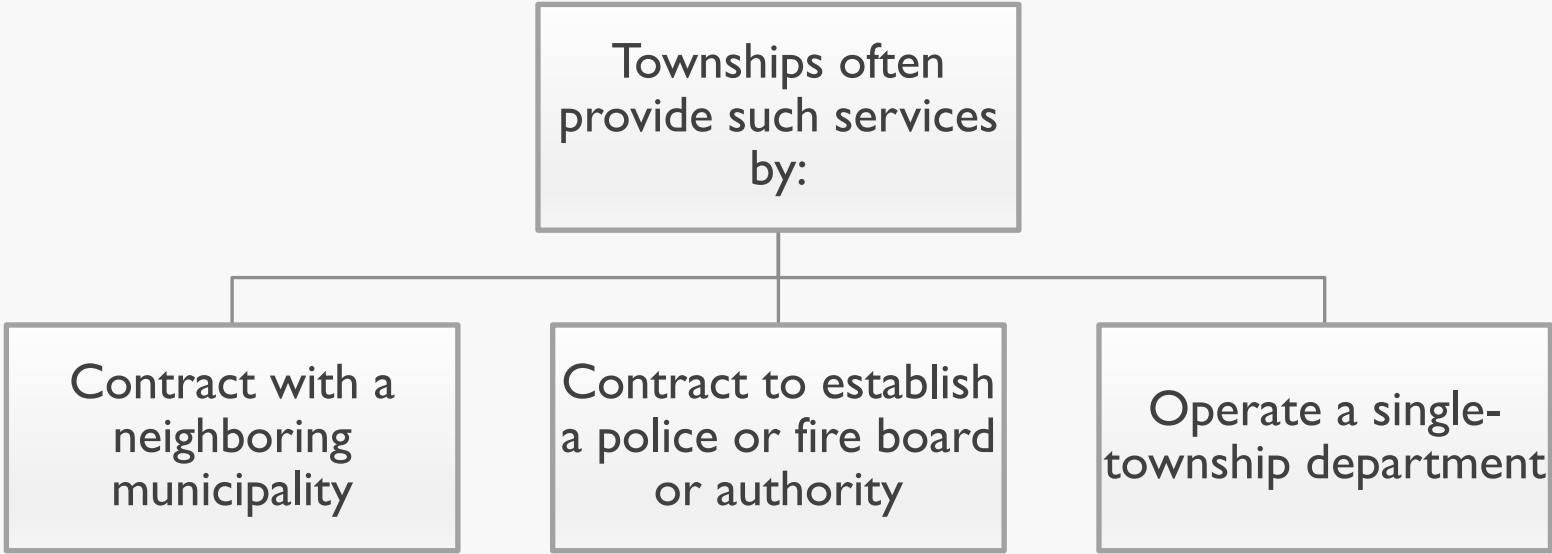


# Township's Role in Police, Fire and EMS

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- Townships are NOT required to provide police, fire protection or EMS services to their residents.
- Townships that have villages located within their boundaries are NOT required to provide police, fire or EMS services to those villages.

Townships often  
provide such services  
by:



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graph TD; A[Townships often provide such services by:] --- B[Contract with a neighboring municipality]; A --- C[Contract to establish a police or fire board or authority]; A --- D[Operate a single-township department];
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Contract with a  
neighboring  
municipality

Contract to establish  
a police or fire board  
or authority

Operate a single-  
township department

## Township's Role

# Overview of Intergovernmental Cooperation

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- Municipalities can partner to deliver police, fire and EMS services more affordably or expand to create new services.
  - Usually more efficient and inexpensive when operating on a joint basis.
- In order for those benefits to continue, there must be a consensus that the manner of dividing the joint costs is equitable to all involved.
- Disagreements can cause units to split into separate departments or realign with other partners, which can create long-term divisive issues.



# Legal Authority for Intergovernmental Cooperation



- Michigan Constitution, Art 3, § 5 and Art 7, § 28
- Urban Cooperation Act (Public Act 7 of 1967)
- Public Act 35 of 1951
- Intergovernmental Transfers of Functions and Responsibilities Act (Public Act 8 of 1967)



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Authorizes municipal corporations to enter into contracts with other municipal corporations for the operation of a facility, performance of a service, or ownership of property

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**- PUBLIC ACT 35 OF 1951**



**1**

**Township Police  
and Fire Protection  
Act (Public Act 33  
of 1951)**

**2**

**Municipal  
Emergency Services  
Act (Public Act 57  
of 1988)**

**3**

**Urban Cooperation  
Act (Public Act 7 of  
1967)**

**4**

**Intergovernmental  
Contracts Act  
(Public Act 35 of  
1951)**

**Specific Statutes for Police, Fire and EMS**

# Considerations for Intergovernmental Authorities/Agreements

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- Avoid informality
- Correct failures and new-found issues
- Regular meetings of members and meetings of the authority
- Budget detail and process for submission and approval
- Composition of the board that operates the authority, balance of power
- Authorized personnel for expenditures from approved budget
- Financial disbursements and payroll
- Auditing and record keeping (including the number of items)
- Control and oversight of department
- Rules and regulations for the governance of the department
- Staffing issues
- Ownership of property and employment of staff
- Scope of the service offered under the agreement
- Mediation/arbitration process for grievances
- Withdrawal
- Dissolution



# Financing Options

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**General Tax  
Revenue**

**Department-Wide  
(Multi-Unit)  
Special Millages**

**Single-Township  
Millages**

**Special Assessments  
for the Services,  
Buildings or  
Equipment**

**Fees for Services  
(Fire Runs or  
Emergency Runs)**

**Contracts and  
Rates/Fees**

**Bonds and  
Borrowing**

**Grants and  
Donations**



# Meridian Charter Township and Williamstown Twp Police Contract

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1. 2008 Recession presented interesting opportunity
2. Coverage Area: Williamstown Township (exclusive of coverage being provided by Meridian Charter Twp within Meridian Charter Twp)
3. Number of Police: 37
4. Number of Fire: 10
5. Contract Information: The Police Department continues to provide police services to Williamstown Township with general terms including 80 hours of service, plus additional hourly charged services for detectives, additional road patrol, etc. The contract price is based on a flat fee with the hourly charged rates having an additional maximum cap for a given quarter and year. The contract extends to the end of 2022. The contract includes annual increases to cover the increasing costs of personnel and equipment. The cost of the services provided to Williamstown Township is covered by the contract with neither community “subsidizing” the other.
6. Williamstown Township Funding: Funding for police services is by Special Assessment throughout the Township. The Special Assessment amount for 2020 is \$100 per residential unit and \$175 per business unit.



# Meridian Charter Twp and Williamstown Twp Police Contract

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- I. Meridian Township Police Chief Ken Plaga (517.853.4896)
  1. Ensured fair and reasonable price where costs were consistent with services offered—neither township has supplemented the other
  2. Understand and communicate the additional service benefits, which for this contract include medically-equipped officers who have basic medical devices and training for first arriving at a scene; fully-staffed detective department; training and policies, and well-run department
  3. Create a pathway for communicating the services being provided (currently accomplished through quarterly visits to the Board meetings, monthly reports and annual reports, as well as constant availability to the Township and residents (even at the management level))
  4. Meridian Charter Township gets benefit of additional resources for officers when needed and an allocation to capital and equipment commensurate with service level
  5. Williamstown Township gets benefit of simple fee for budgeting and invoicing, plus the services
  6. Framework for police contracting services
    1. Does MSP/County provide adequate staffing and services
    2. If not, does call volume sufficient to support your own department
    3. If not or not financially reasonable, determine core requirements from other area service providers
    4. Determine level of service with available providers



# Meridian Charter Twp and Williamstown Twp Police Contract

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- I. Williamstown Township Supervisor Wanda Bloomquist (517.655.3193)
  1. Level of County service was not adequate—ending road patrol post-recession
  2. Multi-member authority did not come to fruition, but individual contract with Meridian appears to have been an even better choice
  3. Huge benefit to pay flat fee and not handle administration, coverage, licensing, training, and other employee hiring
  4. Added services of neighborhood watch and even other services, such as house checks
  5. Some community members think county service would be sufficient; others slowly came around to additional services
  6. Strong communication from Department to community





## Allocating Costs Among Municipalities and Setting Contract Prices

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- Cost of Service
- Formula for Allocation
- Population
- Taxable/Assessed Value Formula
- Emergency Runs

# Blended Formula

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- In order to better match the division of emergency services costs with the source of those costs and the value of the service, costs may be divided based on a weighted formula of several factors, such as (1) population, (2) average number of emergency runs (last 3-5 years) and (3) SEV.
  - Population recognizes the value of life that an emergency department protects.
  - The number of runs recognizes the volume of emergency service consumed.
  - The SEV recognizes the value of the property protected by the department.
  - Each factor is given a particular weight (30-30-40; 33-33-33; 25-25-50; etc.).



# Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority

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- a. Coverage Area: Serves 77 square miles in southern Clinton County encompassing the City of DeWitt, Olive Township, and Riley Township.
- b. Number of Firefighters: 23 (volunteer/paid/on call).
- c. Number of Stations: 3
- d. Funded: By the general fund of each municipality (DeWitt, Olive, and Riley).
- e. Budget: \$ 307,700.00



# Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority

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Section 2.3 Funding Formula. The City and Townships shall contribute to the budget for the Authority as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Description</u>
State Equalized Value	40%	State equalized value for each municipality as certified by the Clinton County Equalization Department.
Population	20%	As determined by the most recent decennial census completed by the U.S. Bureau of Census.
Occupied Households	20%	As determined by the most recent decennial census completed by the U.S. Bureau of Census.
Number of Runs	20%	Based on the average amount of the previous three years runs. Mutual aid runs shall not be included in this calculation.



# Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority

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Section 8.3     Political Involvement. The Authority shall be non-partisan and shall not take part in or lend its influence, either directly or indirectly, to the nomination, election or appointment of any candidate for public office, nor shall it sponsor or participate in any meetings of a political nature.



# Dewitt Area Emergency Services Authority

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## I. Chair Sheryl Landgraf, City of Dewitt (517-669-5004)

1. “Run a lean ship”



2. “You will not win every battle”



3. “Have committed board members”



# “We’re Paying More Than Our Fair Share”

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- Sometimes, the problem with a joint arrangement is not the total costs, but the way the costs are being divided. Here are some ideas to approach this kind of dispute:
  - Agree upon or modify the formula
  - Try to balance value and cost
  - Avoid obvious subsidies
  - DDA issues



# Benton Charter Township Fire & EMS

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- a. Coverage Area: Serves 36 square miles in Eaton County encompassing Benton Charter Township and the City of Potterville
- c. Number of Stations: 1
- d. Funded: By general fund/millage for approximately 1.96 mills, plus contract rate (approximately \$125,000 on average)
- e. Financial Resources: Approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000



# Benton Charter Township Fire & EMS Department

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1. Township operated fire department
2. Historical Events from approximately 2012 - Present
  1. Previously existed as a joint-department with the City of Potterville and Benton Township
  2. Post-2008 recession fall in property taxes caused limited funding for a budget, resulting in the City's objection to funding the joint-department around 2012
  3. After a “divorce” of assets, both the Township and City operated their own departments
  4. At one time, the School District within the City contracted for services from the Township
  5. With time, the City ended its own department and is again receiving service from the Township through a contract rate
3. More information call Gary Suits, Township Supervisor (517-645-7061)



# Resolving Disputes Among Members

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- Develop a reasonable position.
- Listen to what the other side says.
- Consider whether you can meet all parties' needs.
- Building relationships is essential.
- Avoid attacking the other side.
- Avoid highly-charged emotional arguments.
- Ask questions about proposals to clarify the proposed deal.
- Make a few alternative proposals.
- Seek continuous feedback from the other side to be sure you are being heard and understood.
- Summarize points on which both sides agree.
- Don't be afraid to walk away for the day if the other side is not behaving well.
- Consider mediation or arbitration.
- Have a clear exit strategy.



# Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority

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- a. Coverage Area: Stockbridge Township (includes Village of Stockbridge), Bunker Hill Township, Waterloo Township and White Oak Township
- b. Number of Firefighters: 28
- c. Medical First Responders: 10
- d. Funded: 1.6 mills in each jurisdiction with approximately five years remaining.
- e. Budget: \$1,135,550
- f. Funding highlights: Bill for ambulance runs, do not bill for car accidents/fire runs, and very creative subscription program to pay for co-pays.



# Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority

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a. John Beck, General Manager (517 851-7943)

“There is value in ownership”

**15179378500**



# Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority

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a. John Beck, General Manager (517 851-7943)

“Need to focus on the service”



John Beck



# Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority

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a. John Beck, General Manager (517 851-7943)

“Board members are committed to the authority’s purpose”



John Beck



# Stockbridge Area Emergency Services Authority

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a. John Beck, General Manager (517 851-7943)

“Funding equipment across multiple jurisdiction provides economies of scale”



John Beck



# Questions

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## Zoom Room for further deliberation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81311489674?pwd=dTE4VWkFUdmFoMnI3RGFiYVJWRkjadz09>

Meeting ID: 813 1148 9674

Passcode: 647682

