

New Freedom Borough Council and Southern Regional Police Department

- Southern Regional Police Department (SRPD) was formed approximately 25 years ago. The Department consisted of a merger of the New Freedom and Shrewsbury Borough police departments.
- The Southern Regional Police Commission (Commission) was formed as the governing body for the SRPD. There are currently four Borough (Shrewsbury, New Freedom, Glen Rock and Stewartstown) with full membership on the Commission. Payment by each municipality for services was based on a formula created by the Commission in the 1990's.
- Leadership in New Freedom felt that the Borough paid more than its fair share of the total cost for SRPD services. In 2010 based on cost inequities, both Glen Rock and New Freedom Boroughs submitted letters to the Commission of an intent to withdraw. This could have resulted in dissolution of the SRPD.
- The Commission requested that both these communities retract the letters of intent to withdraw. The Commission promised that the fiscal concerns would be rectified by growth of the SRPD. New Freedom stayed in the Commission for the sake of keeping SRPD intact.
- As additional communities were added to the SRPD coverage, the cost for services were not reduced and the cost inequities got worse.
- In 2015, Glen Rock Borough submitted notice to withdraw from SRPD at the end of 2017. Withdrawal from the Commission required advance notice of 15 months.
- In 2016 New Freedom Borough requested that the Commission review the formula and correct the funding inequities. The Commission did agree to review the funding formula and discovered formula errors. Changes to the formula were proposed, but per Commission agreement, no changes could be adopted without unanimous consent by all members.
- In September 2016 New Freedom Borough held a public meeting to discuss withdrawal from SRPD since the problems had not been rectified. Subsequent to this meeting, the Commission was notified of New Freedom's intent to withdraw effective December 31, 2017.
- In 2017, New Freedom proposed a one-year delay in withdrawal pending a review of SRPD funding formula by an outside police expert. As a result, changes were made to the formula whereby the involved communities can purchase service hours as "Police Protection Units" (PPU) which are managed by the Chief of Police. At this point,

Shrewsbury and Stewartstown submitted letters of intent to withdraw from SRPD effective December 31, 2018.

- The PPU formula-based approach was applied to the 2018 budget year. The resulting budget increase for Glen Rock's cost resulted in Glen Rock's refusal to pass the Commission's budget for 30 days.
- To improve the financial and staffing stability of police services New Freedom Borough suggested that the Commission consider merging the SRPD with other regional police departments in an effort to:
 - o Increase the financial base of the regional police department providing much needed financial stability.
 - o Increase the total manpower available to meet unforeseen staffing needs.
 - o Provide increased employment stability of the new regional police force and retain all current officers.
 - o Contain administrative and overhead costs.
- Three member communities were initially receptive to the idea, but Stewartstown rejected the concept of merger. Follow up merger discussions were not pursued.
- Therefore, after eight years of addressing problems without any benefit of financial or staffing stability, and with great consideration, on January 4, 2018 New Freedom Borough affirmed its intent to withdraw from the contract for police services through SRPD, effective December 31, 2018. To date:
 - o New Freedom Borough leadership has met and discussed contract terms with two other regional police departments.
 - o The significant contract terms include:
 - The new regional police department will be operating from the current SRPD Headquarters.
 - Requiring that a police officer be in New Freedom Borough 24 hours per day 7 days per week either patrolling, investigating complaints, providing educational presentations or working from the substation. On any occasion that there is not an officer present (day in court), a back up policeman will be assigned to be in the Borough.
 - Accessing the services of detectives, investigators, supervisory staff, and back up officers from the regional police headquarters be provided for New Freedom on site as the occasion warrants.