Police chief: Join forces


By Bill Devlin Staff Writer |

Doylestown Township police Chief Stephen J. White said that he knows exactly what he wants for a gift when he retires early next year after 38 years on the force.

You can keep the gold watch.

White wants the proposed Central Bucks Regional Police Department to be a reality.

Tuesday night, the chief gave residents gathered in the township municipal building and those watching on television an overview of the planned force, which will combine police departments in Doylestown Township, Doylestown, New Britain and Warwick.

White said establishing a regional force is necessary "to blunt" the rising costs of operating municipal departments.

According to a state Department of Community & Economic Development study of the merger of the four departments, more than $378,000 will be saved in the first year of regionalization.

White said that the four chiefs began discussing the merger last year. He said that they met weekly and over several months gathered information. He said they decided the time was right because two of the chiefs were retiring and one was leaving for another post.

White and Chief Joseph Costello of Warwick have announced their retirements. Former New Britain Chief Donald Bowers left last summer to become chief of a Central Pennsylvania department. Doylestown police Chief James Donnelly is serving also as New Britain's chief.

The regional force will have 55 full-time officers, a reduction of six from current staffing. The cuts will come from retirements and attrition.

"No policeman working today in those four departments will lose his job," said White.

After giving a 30-minute presentation on the proposed merger, the chief fielded questions from residents in the meeting room and via e-mail from those watching on television.

Frank Dunlap, a former Doylestown Township police lieutenant, asked White if any other municipalities had expressed interest in becoming part of the regional force.
The chief told Dunlap they have talked to a chief from another department who wanted information to provide to his township supervisors.

Later White identified the chief as Duane Hasenauer of Plumstead.

There are nine separate police departments in the Central Bucks School District,” said White. “I would like to see the other five join us. This is a unique opportunity.”

The other five departments are Plumstead, Buckingham, Warrington, New Britian Township and Chalfont.

There was a question about what the new uniforms would look like. White said the light blue uniforms of his department are modeled after those of the New Jersey State Police - “Our first chief was from New Jersey.”

“I would like to see darker uniforms for the protection of the officers, but I’m sure whatever the uniform (of the proposed regional force) is, it will be dandy,” he said with a smile.

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