



http://www.mcall.com/news/local/all-b3_3forksjan04,0,5945377.story

From The Morning Call

Forks Township eliminates part-time police positions

Supervisors agree to hire two more full-time officers.

By Joe Nixon
Of The Morning Call

January 4, 2005

The Forks Township Police Department has decided to go full-time all the time.

Township supervisors Monday approved the hiring of two more full-time officers, bringing the total full-time staff to 18 and eliminating the need for part-time officers. The force last year had six part-time officers on the roster, but a few of those saw little work time, Police Chief Greg Dorney said.

The two new hires, William Mills and Michael Friel, were two of the part-time officers who worked the most hours. Both came highly recommended, Dorney said. The township phased out its part-time officers as of Friday.

Dorney said he's been a big proponent of switching to a force without part-time officers. He said part-time officers generally work for other departments and Forks must spend money to train and outfit those officers who often move on.

Dorney said that adding the two full-time positions, provided for in the 2005 budget, will fit in with the department's four-platoon system in which patrol officers work 12-hour shifts. Dorney said the quality of work "is much better, generally," with full-time staff. "I want quality personnel," he said.

Supervisors on Monday also approved the new \$52 emergency and municipal services tax, a levy that replaces the \$10 occupational privilege tax. The new tax is paid by workers in a municipality. Many municipalities have opted to enact the new tax at the maximum \$52 level. The money is supposed to be earmarked for police and fire services, or road construction and maintenance. Those who earn less than \$12,000 can apply for an exemption.

The board voted 3-1 for the tax, with Supervisor Henning Holmgaard opposed. Supervisor Dave Hoff was unable to attend the meeting.

In other business, supervisors heard a request from elected tax collector June Vail for a pay increase. Vail, who said she made about \$7,000 last year, said her pay pales in comparison with some other area communities. In Bushkill Township, for example, she said the tax collector makes \$15,000 a year, plus tax certification fees. In Palmer, she said,

the tax collector is paid \$50,000.

"I would just like some fair compensation," she said. Vail took the township to court last year over her salary, and the two sides eventually reached an agreement on her current salary of \$5,000 for the first 2,500 tax bills and 75 cents for each bill over that amount. She also retains tax certification fees.

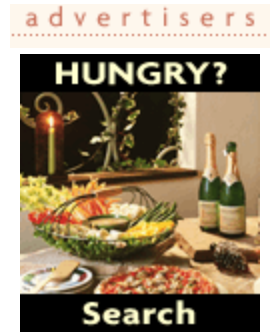
The issue will be discussed at the board's Jan. 21 meeting.

Supervisors also reorganized Monday, with John Ackerman and Donald Miller being re-elected as chairman and vice chairman, respectively. The board also voted to reappoint Township

Manager Cathy Kichline. Supervisor Bonnie Nicholas voted against retaining Kichline.

"It's my opinion," she said of her vote.

Tim Weis, the township's code officer and building inspector, was appointed fire chief. Weis, a former fire chief, also is township fire



mcall.com: Forks Township eliminates part-time police positions
marshal. He succeeds Steve Dutt as fire chief.

joe.nixon@mcall.com

610-559-2145

Copyright © 2005, *[The Morning Call](#)*