

## BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT

September 27, 2016

We as representatives of East Greenville Borough apologize for the trickle of information we have been able to put forth regarding our 6-0 decision to depart from the Upper Perk Police Association. We were caught flat-footed in our response because we were not expecting the vociferous concern of those that are served as well as those who are not-served by the Upper Perk Police district. We were expecting possibly a dozen moderately curious East Greenville residents but not much more. This is why.

During the April 2016 Police Commission meeting Pennsburg Borough representatives formally invited East Greenville to separate from the Upper Perk Police District. They stated, "...If that (leaving) is the sentiment of East Greenville, then I ask that you depart quietly and amicably; allow Pennsburg to become part of something greater." In addition, they stated, "It is the intention of the Borough of Pennsburg to pursue these new ideas and seek new opportunities. We will do so, with or without East Greenville." These words carry the same weight in a municipal partnership as they would if you used similar wording with your life partner. This is not the way you talk to a partner that you want to remain partners with. Nonetheless, East Greenville still had hopes that things could improve.

As East Greenville representatives, we were stunned by the open lack of valuing East Greenville as a partner. This sentiment was further solidified in the June police commission meeting when Pennsburg Mayor Lightcap stated that Police regionalization was a "Pennsburg Issue". East Greenville apparently had no place in these discussions and are viewed as a nuisance partner.

After the April meeting we were expecting the public outcry to save the UPPD that we are now seeing. This concern didn't materialize when one partner openly invited the other to leave causing dissolution of the Police district. Not a single soul questioned Pennsburg on this divisive decision to invite East Greenville to leave. Not a single "I support UPPD" sign or shirt was worn. Not a single marquee sign was altered to support the UPPD. Not a single town hall meeting by our state representatives was held. It was as if no one cared. From that point East Greenville was pushed even harder and further to the decision we were forced to make. Unfortunately, those that now care are questioning the wrong Borough Council six months late.

Borough Council **does** support the Upper Perk Police District. It is the Police Commission that has become dysfunctional due to financial impasses and a breakdown in communication among its members. The decision to terminate the agreement that established the Upper Perk Police District and in turn the Police Commission was not taken lightly, and was truly a last resort. It was a decision that was brought about by necessity and lack of options.

First, financially, the Borough has seen the cost of police rise over the last few years. For 2016, budgeted real estate taxes are \$659,305.50 and the budgeted police allocation is \$611,056.80 plus budgeted miscellaneous police items of \$4,450.00 for a grand total of \$615,506.80 spent on police. The Borough is spending 93.4 cents of every dollar received from real estate taxes on budgeted police line items. If we look at total revenues after subtracting out dedicated revenue line items (\$1,249,641.50), then the Borough is spending 49.3 cents of every dollar received as revenue on budgeted police line items. Either way, the Borough is still currently spending over \$615k on police, a number that has been gradually increasing.

Next, a breakdown in communication has occurred. Pennsburg Commission Members accused the Commission solicitor of bias towards East Greenville and against Pennsburg, but refused to provide any documentation or explanation to the solicitor or East Greenville Commission Members. When pressed for details, our Commission Members were told that they were not going to get any. Pennsburg then refused to pay any of their portion of legal fees to the solicitor. It's apparent Pennsburg feels their half of the partnership carries more weight than East Greenville's. Those of you who attended Commission Meetings heard this discussion on numerous occasions

Pennsburg's Mayor initiated a community-wide discussion of possibly establishing a larger regional police department, which in itself is a noble thing to do. Initially, East Greenville was not informed of any discussions or meetings, nor was the Police Commission. In fact, when the Police Commission Chairperson placed the item on the agenda for public discussion, Pennsburg Commission members refused to discuss it and stated that it was a "Pennsburg issue", not a Police Commission issue. East Greenville believes that any discussion about either a new police department or a change to the existing one, most definitely is a Police Commission issue.

Additionally, the Drug Task Force, another noble thing to do, was not brought to the attention of the Police Commission. A Pennsburg official reached out to some individuals including a councilman indicating he was looking for key players to participate. Since East Greenville council believed it to be important as a police issue, council was concerned about the liability to having Corporal Lavin take on responsibility of the lead role of the task force. To address this concern, East Greenville members of the commission made motions to approve insurance coverage for the officers involved until the details could be worked out. But again, when the Police Commission Chairperson requested an update at a public meeting, the Commission was told by a Pennsburg official attending the meeting that it was not Police Commission business, yet then demanded insurance coverage be continued as if it were a Police business.

These are just a few examples of how the deterioration between the Boroughs has grown..

Further, a governing entity with equal numbers often leads to tie votes and no mechanism to move forward. That is exactly what has happened over the last few months. Whether the system worked for one week or fifty years, it was doomed to dysfunction at some point.

These are a few examples of why East Greenville believed that it was in the best interest of both municipalities to terminate the agreement.