

To the residents of East Greenville

For more than a year, Borough Security, and subsequent issues relating to the termination of the Upper Perk Police remain clouded with misinformation through the actions of Organized Labor, Social – Printed and Televised Media, and Word of Mouth Opinion.

It is imperative, that the Regional Public and Elected Officials in Harrisburg understand that the People of East Greenville fully support Law Enforcement officers both regionally and across the Nation.

The issue at hand is not a public attack on our police officers, or a comment on their performance.

Our officers are good people, many with families living here in the Upper Perkiomen Valley. We commend not only the Upper Perk Officers and their colleagues, but all First Responders for shielding our citizens from the many threats and challenges we face locally and throughout the Country.

Tonight I want to comment on 3 key issues that reflect:

- 1.** The needs of our small borough and the present and future budgetary concerns for our residents;
- 2.** The desire for the Borough of East Greenville to maintain its independence as a self-governing body;
- 3.** And our goal to provide the residents and business owners of East Greenville with the highest rate of public services at the minimum cost to our taxpayers.

The first point looks at the security needs and budgetary hurdles of our Borough of East Greenville:

There have been many financial issues over the years regarding the police department, and East Greenville's ability to maintain service and manage the numerous needs of our community.

Our issues go back many years from the time of a regional police department with the Boroughs of Red Hill, Pennsburg and East Greenville.

Many things have changed over the years, but fiscal responsibility has always been at the forefront for the participating municipalities.

I don't want to hash out old history here tonight. I want to look at more recent events that when combined with other similar actions in the past few years brought us to our current police coverage decision.

As a near-term example, last year a former East Greenville Council president along with a former finance chair utilized \$92,000 from savings and \$30,000 from Road Improvement funds ...to balance the budget for 2016.

The result of this financial juggling act will result in an estimated 1.25 to 1.5 tax millage increase to balance our Borough budget for (2017);

- Mind you, this increase is before any other budget items are considered such as managing the maintenance of our crumbling infrastructure >

>and addressing our obligations to overall community service in East Greenville...

These areas could mean even greater taxation.

The Officials in question approved the hiring of a 9th officer in December of 2015, which placed even more future financial obligation on the East Greenville taxpayers in terms of ever growing employee and operational costs.

I vetoed the 2016 budget in December 2015 stating I had concerns in the way council balanced the budget.

I also attached an email from October 14, 2015 where the two East Greenville Officials in question confirmed an agreement not to hire a 9th officer.

During this period, the regional boroughs as a body also agreed not to hire a full time officer for 1 to 2 years after a Sgt. retired.

- **An important point for East Greenville residents is that the 3 out of 5** council members who voted yes to override my veto have walked away from their responsibilities...washing their hands >

>of the situation they created leaving both the present Council, and residents of East Greenville to bear the financial burden going forward.

I only mention this example to prove a point that there are long term consequences that come with fiscal irresponsibility!

To give you some perspective of East Greenville, The Upper Perkiomen School District provided me with the following statistics:

- We have a population 2985 people in East Greenville
- Estimates 5.1% of those residents live in poverty
- Estimates 7.7% are without Health Insurance
- Male Median income is \$37,778
- Female Median Income is \$25,789

Additionally, I've found that there are approximately 1102 parcels in East Greenville that pay property tax, which helps support our ongoing financial obligations.

If you only look at property (real estate) tax with the millage, the current police department cost is **93 Cents on the Dollar for property owners.**

If you add in other revenue such as Earned Income Tax, then the police cost is \$.49.3 cents on every one of your tax dollars paid to the Borough.

- **The only way the borough can obtain any revenue under the current spending program is to raise the property tax, which is not sustainable to our community, and certainly a burden on our property owners.**

Point number two

The need for the Borough of East Greenville to maintain its independence as a self-governing body

Although East Greenville has maintained a working relationship with its neighbors in Pennsburg, the relationship has become unmanageable over the past few years;

There is consensus among most East Greenville officials that East Greenville residents are no longer receiving fair and equal representation for their invested tax dollar.

We are an independent governing body, and it is our responsibility to insure our community is treated fairly in any contractual obligation.

Sadly, this is not the case. I offer just a few examples:

In 2012 we supported Pennsburg to lay off officers so they could manage their budget.

In 2015 Pennsburg would not support East Greenville with the same request!

In 2016 Pennsburg refused to pay for the Police Commission's solicitor, but would not provide East Greenville with documentation to support their claim of bias. It is East Greenville's position that there are no bias acts conducted by said solicitor.

In August of 2016 Pennsburg refused to show up for a Police Commission meeting that was advertised for 10 months! The result was that the commission could not have a quorum to pay its bills to our regional vendors and supporting entities.

Perhaps the most alarming action by Pennsburg came on April 25th 2016 at the Police Commission meeting where Pennsburg asked East Greenville to get out of the Upper Perk Regional Police Department.

Point number Three

Providing the residents and business owners of East Greenville the highest rate of return at the minimum cost to our taxpayers.

The current plan for the East Greenville Police Department will provide local police coverage by hiring a full time Chief of Police, fulltime officer or officers, and other part time officers.

They will be tasked with community policing, war on drug, partnership with the school district, and local ordinance and traffic enforcement. We will also augment our coverage with the Pennsylvania State Police.

For those of you that don't know, we are currently covered by the Pennsylvania State Police and 1 shared officer between both boroughs in cases of illness, vacation time, personal time, injury, etc., when The Upper Perk Police Department can't provide total coverage.

This isn't disclosed as far as timing in an effort to insure the safety of our officers, but the Pennsylvania State Police coverage in East Greenville and Pennsburg isn't anything new.

I want to talk directly to the residents of East Greenville now!

I understand you have concerns about East Greenville having their own police department.

Please remember that we are a small community with no outward growth potential and very little industry and commercial business to help support the overall increased tax burdens facing us in the future.

We cannot financially support the current law enforcement model. The residents of our town deserve a safe environment, but they also deserve and demand that their tax dollars commit to the town as a whole, and not to one segment leaving the rest unsupported and in disrepair.

Our plan will provide police coverage with 100 percent of the officer's time in East Greenville instead of partial coverage at a fulltime price.

Based on our ongoing research, the figures suggest that local coverage will save our residents hundreds of thousands of dollars in current and future financial expenditures when matched against the current policing model.

It is our goal to provide East Greenville residents not only a safe community, but also reduce long term obligations that free up funds to maintain our infrastructure and provide for the general welfare of our citizens.

As Mayor of East Greenville I respectfully ask for your patience and understanding as our borough goes through these import changes in 2017. Please remember, the issue at hand is not a public attack on our police officers, or a comment on their performance. Our law enforcement officers are good people and public servants.

In 2016 we know that East Greenville is at a financial threshold, and it is our duty as public servants to make the necessary budget changes for our community.

Remember our goal to provide the residents and business owners of East Greenville with the highest rate of public services at the minimum cost to our taxpayers.

East Greenville residents, thank you for your consideration and support during this difficult transition.