

Myerstown, PA  
Monday, January 11, 2016

President Bryan L. Rittle called the planning meeting of the Myerstown Borough Council to order at 6:34 p.m., on Monday, January 11, 2016. The meeting was held in Borough Council Chambers in the Myerstown Municipal Center, 101 East Washington Avenue, Myerstown, PA 17067.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, a roll call was taken. Present were: President Bryan L. Rittle, Vice President Michael D. Behm, President Pro Tem Park W. Haverstick, II, Vince Podolski, Jeffrey L. Thomas, Dana Reich, Mayor Gloria R. Ebling, Deputy Secretary Lisa A. Brubaker, Assistant Manager Barry A. Ludwig and Manager Christopher J. Moonis. Absent was: Councilmember Eric Powell.

No minutes of past meetings were presented for approval at this planning meeting and no action was taken on any minutes.

The Council President announced the discussion for this special meeting was to talk with EMA Services regarding the proposed changes to the State Route 422 corridor. In attendance were the Emergency Services Departments – Goodwill Fire Company, Keystone Fire Company, and the First Aid Ambulance Unit. The Council President asked the Manager to address the issues the borough has come upon and review the information that we have received regarding the project.

The Manager stated PennDot is developing a new design for most of the 422 corridor. The Borough initially sent PennDot general comments concerning traffic flow, economic development and safety. Because of that, the Borough was invited and attended a meeting at Lebanon County Planning regarding the improvements in Jackson Township at Ramona Road. While there, we asked questions regarding the proposed corridor improvements in the Borough area. We made our verbal comments known and requested that we are included in all subsequent discussions regarding the corridor. PennDot agreed. PennDot is in the preliminary design phase and is open for comments.

The Manager explained what he believes prompted these improvements. Traffic Engineers pull data of traffic incidents. He believes they pulled the traffic incidents along the corridor and found a high volume of incidents in the island area where traffic crosses onto Railroad Street. As a result, that triggers PennDot to examine those heavier traffic incident areas. The Manager stated he has found there is a higher amount of incidents in that area, but are low severity incidents. The Manager asked that everyone present introduce themselves. Following the introductions, copies of the proposed plan were used for the discussion.

The Manager asked to start the review with the Railroad Street area. The Council President understood their main concern is, if the Railroad Street area is closed it would cut off Emergency Departments on the North side of town. Do they have any other concerns? Dean Wagner stated getting members to the station. The ambulance received 1500 calls for 2015. Upon researching those calls 45% of the calls go through the Railroad Street intersection. The Keystone Hook & Ladder Fire Company received 388 calls - 41% of their calls go through that intersection, with no other way to go that makes sense. If PennDot closes Railroad Street and the ambulance needs to go North on 501 or West on 422, the only route would be Jefferson to College, then to the traffic light. With the heavy traffic conditions on College Street, pulling out with emergency vehicles could cause more incidents. The Keystone ladder truck is 43 feet, without Railroad Street there is no other safe area or environment to turn the truck.

The Manager believes PennDot will ask for alternatives. What alternatives does the group feel the Borough has, if any? Flashing lights and a double traffic light were discussed. The Manager stated the traffic light could be at the Borough's cost at a minimum of \$100,000.00. Mike Shaak stated he talked to the PennDot Engineer, the double traffic light was looked at as an option but it was too costly. The Engineer also explained the left turning lane must be extended with the improvements. The extension would go into the Railroad Street opening.

The Manager stated the Ambulance Deputy Chief Dean Wagner did discuss issues with him. At that time, the Manager suggested he draft a letter with their comments, questions and concerns, which Deputy Chief Wagner has done. The Goodwill Fire Police Captain Terry Miller has also submitted a concern letter.

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The Manager will include these letters along with a Borough letter to PennDot. Then we will contact Jon Fitzkee from Lebanon County Transportation to request a meeting with the County, PennDot, Borough and Emergency Services to discuss the concerns.

The Manager informed Emergency Services that PennDot will be milling and paving State Route 501 – College Street in 2016.

The Manager asked for an updated Officer List with contact information for each department. The Borough is also in need of an Emergency Management Coordinator and Deputy. If anyone is interested please let the Borough know. The County is willing to help with the training and reporting. The Lebanon County Director is willing to meet with anyone, if interested, to discuss the position.

The Manager asked Keystone Hook & Ladder Chief Jake Belleman if they have primary call response for Jackson Township. Chief Belleman stated the southern end and State Route 501. Kutztown for the northern end. The Manager asked if there is anything that would show the amount of homes or residents that they are primarily responsible for? Chief Belleman stated yes and they could provide the information. Chief Belleman stated they run pretty much every call within the Borough and Township. They are on, they may not be in charge, but they are on. Kutztown may have fire command, but Keystone Fire Company will be going.

Dean Wagner stated the EMA has changed the process for companies to submit their “Box Cards”, they have added a step. The company must come to the municipality and have them approve the box cards for mutual aid. The box card is used by the 911 dispatcher to dispatch the units listed on the box card. Approval can be done one of two ways. The box cards can be presented to the Council for approval and signatures. If Council prefers that, then every time any changes are made to the box card the company would have to come back to Council for approval, or Council can pass a Resolution naming Myerstown First Aid Unit as the EMS Organization for the Borough, then he does not have to come back every time for approval. The consensus of the Council is to adopt the Resolution. Dean Wagner stated he can provide a sample Resolution for the Borough and will bring it to the office.

The Council President thanked everyone for coming and for all their volunteerism in the Borough. He does not believe any other Borough in the State has the amount of volunteer firefighters that we do in this Borough and sincerely thanks them for all that they do.

The Council President asked if there were any additional comments for the good of the borough. Seeing none, a motion was made by Park W. Haverstick, II, seconded by Dana Reich, to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. All those in favor: Motion unanimously carried.

Lisa A. Brubaker,  
Deputy Secretary

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