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Treasurer

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Controller



**VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1**

**December 2015**

**Messages from the Mayor**

**Budgeting and Finances**

As we near the end of 2015, I believe it is worth looking at what we have had to deal with over the last 16 years. To begin in the 2008-2010 time frame, we went through a very serious recession. Economic growth slowed to almost nothing, wages stagnated, and unemployment increased. All of these seriously affected income for the City. On the expense side, health care costs and pension costs skyrocketed to almost incomprehensible levels. Health care up by more than 500% and pension costs by more than 600%. Through all of this, taxes remained low increasing by 6 mils over the last 20 years. One mil is about \$25/year for the average homeowner. Translated, you are paying about \$150 a year more on the average than you did in 1997. In addition, we now have the highest bond rating we have ever had. This helps with costs in our borrowing as needed.

With decreasing revenue, rapidly increasing costs and holding down taxes, how did we balance the budget? This was done a number of ways: leveraging was done with neighboring communities to keep capital (buildings and equipment) costs down, grant efforts were increased resulting in millions of dollars in grants, techniques were developed to evaluate the best way to obtain maximum value for every dollar spent. Council did excellent work to insure only absolutely necessary things were budgeted, multiple creative changes from suggestions by City employees and residents were put into place. I could go on but you can see it wasn't one magical thing but hard, creative work and sometimes extremely difficult decisions that resulted in where we are today. As I leave office next month, I can only say a big thank you for this collective effort.

**Business in Lower Burrell**

The City continues to be an excellent place to do business. We have seen a wholesale

change in the nature of our business as needs and opportunities continuously changed. The net effect was that business has had its ebbs and flows but is stable. Most people are surprised to know that we have more than 600 registered businesses in Lower Burrell. They range from single proprietor to large scale retail stores.

Widewaters, Inc., the owners of the former Wards/Penneys site has not been able to generate the retail business they are seeking. We remain committed to helping search for potential occupants and remain open to assist with creative state financing programs if that becomes necessary.

Here are the new businesses we have seen in the past year:

- Doing It Right Roofing and Siding  
3012 Leechburg Road
- Carinci Nationwide Insurance  
104 Rogers Drive
- Carosella Insurance  
3281 Leechburg Road
- The Health Insurance Store  
3283 Leechburg Road
- Hospice Business  
2837 Leechburg Road
- Monarch Behavioral Health Associates  
2644 Leechburg Road
- Tate's Top Shelf  
2795 Leechburg Road
- The Cottage in La Valley  
3033 Leechburg Road
- Salon Po  
3033 Leechburg Road
- Hillcrest Beer Express  
3245 Leechburg Road
- Forza Motorcars  
2555 Leechburg Road

Current businesses that will be opening soon if all goes well:

- Career Training Academy  
Hillcrest Shopping Center
- Around Back Restaurant  
Relocating to the former Clementine's Restaurant

**SHOP LOWER BURRELL FIRST**

**A WEDIG COMMUNITY**

**OUR LOCAL BUSINESS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT**

**Sewage Update**

**Wildlife Lodge Road** sewer line is complete and residents are tapping in. This will provide sewage to more than 100 residents. The \$2.5 million dollar project was made possible through an \$800,000 grant obtained by the late Congressman Murtha and a \$64,000 Community Development Block Grant.

**Little Puckety Interceptor** has been redesigned and replaced to give better sewage flow and limit water infiltration at a cost of \$900,000. This is a critical part of our overall sewer facilities plan to meet state and federal requirements on sewage overflows.

**Multiple leaks** have been located and repaired. Residents have been generally cooperative in removing illegal downspouts and driveway and French drains from emptying into the sewage system.

**Sewer lines** have been installed in preparation for removing several pump stations. These stations are costly and difficult to maintain. Design work has started to upgrade the Chartiers pump station.

**Consent Order** – This is an agreement with the DEP/EPA to have a Long Term Control Plan to be implemented in three phases over a 21 year plan. This is a combined effort among Lower Burrell, New Kensington, Arnold, and Plum. The plan jointly developed has been submitted to the DEP/EPA and is waiting approval for implementation. This is a major effort and the preliminary cost estimates to implement the entire plan are in excess of \$30 million over the 21 years.

**Storm water** – A second initiative being required by the EPA is storm water management. We are currently reviewing

our ordinances to determine what changes may be required to be in compliance. This again will be a complex and long term effort. Congressman Rothfus is working closely with us to find financial assistance for this effort. You may hear us talking about MS4 implementation. This is the best practices determined by the EPA. Stay tuned. There is a lot more to come on this one.

All of the sewer and storm water efforts are being driven by the Clean Streams Law of 2014.

### **Thank you**

As I leave office, I want to extend my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all of you who have been there to help over the last sixteen years. Many hundreds of you have served on boards, committees, volunteers, firefighters, ambulance, and emergency personnel. Special thanks to the many merchants and businesses that have supported community programs in a generous manner. The staff and employees of the City who work so hard to provide for your safety, maintain your roads, parks, and sewers and continually look for ways to keep down costs and improve your quality of life. And to the elected officials with which I have had the opportunity to serve with over the years, their dedication has always made me want to do my best.

Most of all, thanks to my wife, Debbie, who helped me in so many ways through good times and bad times. She was always there and there is no way to express how important that was and will continue to be. Also my children, Brigitte, Brenda, and Casey were always there to help with events and be tolerant when I had to leave in the middle of a dinner or miss some other event.

My very best wishes go out to the new administration. They have a tough job and need your support. They certainly have mine.

**Leechburg Road:** As we all know, the condition of Leechburg Road is poor. Through the efforts of Senator Brewster, I have received written word that extensive patchwork will be done this fall and next spring. Penn Dot officials were very disappointed that Leechburg Road had received repair and resurfacing just over five years ago and had deteriorated so badly. A major redo will be done according to Penn Dot in the next two years based on budgetary requirements.

**Signs** - Advertising, garage sales, personal (political) signs are not permitted on telephone poles, power poles, street identification posts, etc. These signs are unsightly, most unreadable, and just plain illegal. Using these signs without permission put you at risk for fines. If you do have permission, the signs must be removed within 72 hours after the event.

Also please maintain your property. Weeds, litter, etc. set a very poor impression of our beautiful city. Please do your part to keep the city beautiful. I have a very hard time believing it should take a fine to control signs and beautify our City.

### **BREAKING NEWS**

**Taxes:** There will be no tax increase in 2016.

**Sewage:** There will be no sewage rate increase in 2016.

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### **A Message from Mavor-Elect Richard Callender**

As the newly elected mayor, I would like to thank everyone who took the time to go out and vote for me. I am truly honored to be the next mayor of this great city. We are blessed to have a very ambitious council that has great ideas for improvements in the city.

As most of you know, I am a very fortunate man. This summer I received a double lung transplant after the primary election. The surgery and recovery have been a very long process. There have been a lot of ups and downs, good days and bad, progress and setbacks. All being said, I am feeling better than I have in 20 years. I am getting stronger everyday and look forward to all the good things in the future.

This will be the same path I will take as the mayor. The beginning stages of learning all of my roles and responsibilities will be long and hard. There will be ups and downs, good days and bad, progress and setbacks. But I will get smarter and stronger in my position everyday. Maybe one day you can say that I was a good mayor like the people that proceeded me. Thanks to all. I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the swearing in ceremony on January 4th at 7:00pm!

## **Lower Burrell Police Department**

### **New Police Officer**

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the City residents to our newest Patrol Officer Robert Acquaviva.



Officer Acquaviva joined the department in May of 2015. Acquaviva is a 2012 graduate of the Allegheny County Police Academy.

Prior to joining the Lower Burrell Police Department Acquaviva worked as a police officer for Oakmont Borough for two years.

Prior to the start of his police career, Patrolman Acquaviva earned a B.A. Degree in Political Science and Religious Studies from The University of Pittsburgh. I am extremely happy we had the opportunity to bring Patrolman Acquaviva on as a member of our team. I have noticed that Patrolman Acquaviva approaches his duties with a strong sense of public service. I believe him to be a man of strong integrity who will serve our community well. I look forward to his continued contribution to our police department and our City as we work with him over the course of his career.

Chief Weitzel

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### **Public Works Councilman Richard Callender W. Scott Johnson, Foreman**

#### **Public Works Department**

#### **Street Department**

The street department is finishing road repairs and maintenance consisting of spot base repairs, catch basin rebuilds, cutting branches, and presently replacing 480' of 24" stormline from Burgley Avenue to Edgeview Road. Seal coating of Crestline, Kenview, Penn, Princeton, Colgate, Cornell, Glenview, Wedgewood, Braddock, Vance, Aloha, Holly, Broadway, Pike, Zane, Pittsburgh, New York, and Chicago streets have been completed along with the street sweeper

following close behind to pick up any loose chips.

The Street Department is also constructing a larger storage facility for salt to aid in any possible future supply constraints. All plows and spreaders will be reviewed and installed in preparation of the winter months ahead. Please remember to remove and/or turn all basketball hoops from the roadway area so as the damage is not incurred to them or City equipment. Remember to watch the weather and plan ahead by parking in your driveway or in a way that the plow trucks can pass through more easily. If cars are parked too close, we are not able to plow and/or salt that section of road which will create an unsafe situation, so be courteous with your neighbors and work together when parking in the winter.

On the topic of storm water, we are governed to follow certain guidelines by the DEP and EPA with the storm lines throughout the City limits. Please keep in mind that it is a violation to dump grass, leaves, or any foreign matter into catch basins or into the outfall of any storm pipe. When cutting lawns, please refrain from directing the grass out into the street as this is also considered a violation as the clippings eventually get to the catch basins on the street. Not only do these situations create a potential back up/flood situation, but it also contaminates the streams which feed our rivers. If you see someone doing so, please call 911 to help keep our streams and rivers clear. We also have information/resources on our website to help with any storm water issues that may pertain to your property.

As a reminder, if there are any issues with your street, street signs, or street lights, please call the street department at 724-889-2007. A simple call helps our department keep up with any repairs in a timely fashion and it is greatly appreciated.

#### **Sewer Department**

The Sewer Department is performing manhole inspections as well as camera evaluations of the sanitary system. Routine cleaning and root cutting of lines are also being performed. Pump station repairs are completed as needed when evaluated twice a week.

The City of Lower Burrell has been working with the Municipal Sanitary Authority of New Kensington and other engineering firms in the evaluation and monitoring of flow levels throughout the

sanitary system in our City. Arnold and Plum are also involved in this process as a regional approach to see what can be done in order to provide a tighter sanitary system for each community. Each community involved is trying to eliminate inflow and infiltration issues that will eventually lead to potential savings in the treatment of sanitary sewage and keeping our waterways clean.

The Wildlife Lodge sanitary sewer line extension project has been completed and approximately 18 homes have already connected to public sewage. The Westmoreland County Planning and Development was also involved in this project to help some qualifying residents receive grant funding for payment of the lateral tap ins for this project.

The Sewer Department has been making corrections to any issues with the main lines found during the camera evaluations. While performing camera evaluations, any laterals that show increased flows are being documented and residents will be notified of the situation in order to correct the problem. The City has an approach to work with each resident on any private lateral infiltration issue with the time frames for making the corrections, as long as progress is being made with correction. If we all work together, we can all help to eliminate the rain water from entering our system, which will in turn help to keep rates manageable by not having to treat the unwanted rain water entering our sewage system that is eventually sent to the Municipal Sanitary Authority of New Kensington.

Just a reminder, any downspout, exterior drain, or driveway drain connected to the sanitary lines is in violation of City Ordinances, State Law, and Federal Law. These connections are overloading the sanitary lines during heavy rain storms causing manholes to overflow in the lower areas of the City and then flowing directly into the streams, which run to the river.

A large portion of the City's manholes now have rain guards, which help reduce infiltration and lower the opportunity for ash and grit to enter the sanitary system. Please keep in mind that the rain guards will hold water just under the lid which you will be able to see when looking through the holes on the lid but the rest of the manhole will remain unaffected. If there is water **constantly** running from a manhole, please call 724-889-2007 during the week day or 911 on weekends or holidays.

We would like to wish everyone a very healthy and safe Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!!

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#### **A Message from Councilman Joseph Grillo Public Safety**

Thank you to the residents for making a concentrated effort of not putting up signs on telephone poles and on our street signs to advertise their events and garage sales, etc.

Please consider making a monetary donation to our firefighters. The donation stays in our community, and the money is always well spent.

This is a good time of year to have your furnace checked to make sure that it is running properly and efficiently. Don't forget to change the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. When fires are detected, families can escape.

I would like to personally wish Mayor Don Kinosz good luck in his retirement. It has been a pleasure working together with you for the past ten years.

Janet Ryan was recently recognized at a Council meeting for her achievement. Mrs. Ryan has been a member of the Lower Burrell Planning Commission for 30 years. Thank you, Janet, for your dedication to this position in helping Lower Burrell grow and prosper.

In closing, I'd like to take this time to thank the residents for the outpouring of affection during the time of losing my wife, Barbara. All the cards, the phone calls, and any donations made in her memory were deeply moving and I thank you from the bottom of my heart, with all of my love.

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#### **A Message from Councilman Christopher Fabry Parks and Public Property**

2015 has been an exciting year for the Parks Department in Lower Burrell. The biggest development was the new playground equipment for Burrell Lake Park. Thanks in part to a Revitalization Grant and a generous donation left to us by the late Mr. Ray Andrews, we were able to replace the old playground structure at Burrell Lake with a brand new, larger play

unit as well as several surrounding pieces, including a structure designed specifically for younger children.

This year also showed what community involvement was all about. The employees of Alcoa came together and spent a day giving back by doing multiple, much needed projects at Burrell Lake Park. The Girl Scouts did the same at Veteran's Park and are again offering to help out before the end of this year. The Boy Scouts are, once again, volunteering their time including a Chimney Swift Tower Eagle Scout project currently underway at Burrell Lake Park. The Burrell High School Environmental Club and the Lower Burrell Recycling Task Force completed two successful recycling events. The Ladies Auxiliary from the VFW and State Rep Eli Evankovich's office also donated new flags for all our parks.

There were also several community activities to participate in this year. The Farmer's Market completed another productive year with several additions and will look to build upon its success in 2016. The Family Fishing Festival and Easter Egg hunts were both incredibly successful as well. Bark in the Park, BEAT's first Movies in the Park night, was on its way to being a success until the rain came in. Though the weather dampened the grass, it did not dampen the spirits of those trying to make Lower Burrell a better place to live.

Speaking of B.E.A.T., if you are unaware, Lower Burrell has a group of residents (Burrell Entertainment and Activities Team) who come together once a month to put on various events in the city including the Easter Egg Hunt, Movies in Park, Cookies with Santa, etc. This eager group is in need of help so if you are interested in being a full time member or simply someone who is willing to help out when needed, please contact me. If you are interested in knowing more about their upcoming activities, visit [www.facebook.com/LBBEAT](http://www.facebook.com/LBBEAT). Their next event will be Cookies with Santa in mid-December.

Lastly, though the year is coming to a close, the future looks bright for Lower Burrell and the Parks Department. Next year we will begin work on the entrance to Kotecki Park, thanks in part to the same grant that helped fund the Burrell Lake Park playground equipment. In addition you will see the return of the Farmer's Market, Family Fishing Festival, Easter

Egg Hunt and many more events. Stay tuned.

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Behind City Hall, there is a Paper Retriever container for recycling of magazines, catalogs, newspapers, junk mail, and office or school papers. No cardboard, phone books, fiberboard/cereal boxes, or text books are allowed. A Planet Aid container for clothing donations is also behind City Hall. The distribution of the items collected will help people in natural disasters.

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**A Message from**  
**Lower Burrell Treasurer's Office**  
**Brian Eshbaugh, Treasurer**  
**724-337-4381**

**Credit Card Payments** may now be made in the tax office and also online through our website under the **Treasurer and Tax Office** tab on the left hand side of the home page. Accepted payments for city, county, school property taxes, sewer and recycling bills, and per capita tax can be made online. All the previous items may be made in our office along with smoke and dye and occupancy inspections. There will be a 2.95% service fee with a minimum fee of \$2.50 per transaction.

**Business Privilege Tax** is required by any business or individual who is using a Lower Burrell address to conduct business within the city. All businesses need to register with the tax office. For more information please call 724-337-4381.

**Online Banking Payments** have become a common way for residents to pay bills. Please include your account number, account name, and what bill the payment is to be applied to. This will alleviate any payments being not credited to your proper account. Also, please leave enough time for the check to reach us, the date you submit to your financial institution is not the date our office receives your payment.

**Lower Burrell Tax forms** can be found on the city's web site at [www.cityoflowerburrell.com](http://www.cityoflowerburrell.com). Forms included on the web are Occupancy Permits, New Resident, Landlord Tenant, Business Registration, LST Refund Request, LST Exemption, and Business Privilege Tax.

**Residents Requesting Receipts**, please mail or bring in the entire bill to our office. We will receipt all copies of the bill and

you will receive back your receipted copy (residents must include a self-addressed stamped envelope when paying by mail).

**After Hours Drop Boxes** are located outside the drive thru window and on the right side of the back entrance. All Tax payments and sewage/ recycling payments may be made after hours and will be credited the next business day. **Please No Cash in Drop Boxes**

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**Lower Burrell Citizens Police Academy**

In March of 2016, the Police Department will begin its annual Citizens Police Academy. Exact dates are March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>. The Academy is based on the theory that the more we know about one another, the more we can help one another. This community service program is designed to promote "Partnerships through Education." During the Academy's nine weekly sessions, you will be provided a wide range of information intended to help you better understand the goals and objectives, rules and responsibilities and legal parameters under which the Police Department functions. If interested in attending the Citizens Police Academy, complete the enclosed application and return to Officer Marhefka. The deadline for applying to the Citizens Police Academy is February 23, 2016. Space is limited.

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**Youth Commission Members Needed**

The City of Lower Burrell and Upper Burrell Township are participating members of the Westmoreland County Youth Commission.

The purpose of the Youth Commission is to allow communities the opportunity to help young people involved with the Court to solve problems within their own communities. It is believed that the Youth Commission can provide the community with a local diversionary program that would more closely supervise a young person. The Youth Commission is comprised of dedicated community volunteers who provide better opportunities for learning, readjusting, and conforming to the laws of our society. It is also charged with helping the youth take responsibility for his/her actions and repair the harm caused to the victims and/or community.

The commission acts as a branch of the Juvenile Court System. All members of the Commission must be aware of the confidential relationship between the court, juvenile, and Commission.

The jurisdiction of the Youth Commission will be confined to the summary offenses, criminal charges not involving force and dependent charges filed by parents or the school district.

All prospective members shall be of good character and community standing. The Juvenile Probation Office will complete a criminal history check. All prospective members will be required to obtain a Child Abuse Clearance. New members shall be sworn in by either a Juvenile Court Judge or the local Magisterial District Judge.

All new members are required to attend orientation training. The training is offered twice a year and is free.

If anyone is interested, please contact Det. Sgt. Scott Cardenas at the Lower Burrell Police Department at 724-339-4287, extension 254.

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### HOW DID THEY KNOW?

Did you ever wonder how someone was privy to events occurring in the city prior to any public announcement? The answer is simple. They subscribe to the city's electronic distribution of the newsletter. Join in and be better informed by receiving the newsletter before it goes to print.

To enroll, go to our web site: [www.cityoflowerburrell.com](http://www.cityoflowerburrell.com) and click on "Register to receive email updates" to get the latest news and information on what is happening in Lower Burrell. Once you have signed up, you will begin receiving news and information electronically from the City. You may unsubscribe from this list at any time.

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### A Message From Chief Weitzel:

I want to thank all of the students from the area who drew the wonderful cards for the Officers of the Lower Burrell Police Department for "National Thank A Police Officer Day" in September. The cards and letters were delivered to the station on September 19th and the officers enjoyed reading them and seeing all of your creative pictures.



They were very cool! I personally read every card and poem and looked at every picture that was drawn for us. As you can see, K-9 Dax enjoyed seeing them as well. Thank you all very much for the time and thought you put into making the cards and thank you for making the day special for all of our officers!

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### COMMERCIAL RECYCLING

According to state regulations, all commercial businesses are required to submit recycling tonnage numbers that are provided by their hauler to city hall. If the business is not in compliance with the regulation, they will be subject to penalties and fines. For more information, contact Kelly Biddle-Cook, City Clerk, at 724-335-9875, extension 201.

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The Lower Burrell Police Department along with The City of Lower Burrell would like to send a big THANK YOU to Lower Burrell's very own HILLCREST VOLKSWAGEN for providing the "NO PILL POPPING PASSAT"! (Don't you all just love the name!!!)



This is the second time that they have provided a D.A.R.E. car to the department FREE of charge to the city. The "Drug Bug" has been retired and this new vehicle will be used by our School Resource Officer, John Marhefka to travel between schools. Thanks Again To HILLCREST VW, your owners and employees are awesome in your extreme generosity and willingness to help the City of Lower Burrell and our residents!

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### DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Lower Burrell Police Department is now a collection site for both prescription and non-prescription medications. Anyone wishing to dispose of any of these items can bring them to the station for disposal. All medications must be in the original container or a sealed plastic bag. No liquid pharmaceuticals, syringes, needles, or lancets will be accepted. If possible please bring items for disposal between the hours on 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays, though this is not required.

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### CHECK US OUT

For current updates of City news and events, "like" our Facebook page at The City of Lower Burrell. Also, check out our web site at [www.cityoflowerburrell.com](http://www.cityoflowerburrell.com).

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### PLEASE NOTE:

January's Agenda meeting will be held on Monday, January 4, 2016 at 7 PM. Newly elected City officials will be sworn in prior to the meeting.

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