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City News

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Messages from the Mayor

Hello from Mayor Callender,

The first year of my tenure has come to a close and it has been a steep growing and learning curve. A lot of important things have happened in the City, and I would like to summarize some of them for you.

At the beginning of the year, we analyzed a possible expansion of city hall to address various safety and logistical problems. After due diligence, it was determined that due to the cost of the project the expansion will be put on hold. However, we are moving forward on making the necessary safety and storage improvements. This does not mean that an expansion is not needed and may happen in the future when it is deemed more fiscally viable to the taxpayers.

We are also in the middle of a consent decree from DEP/EPA to eliminate all SSO's (Sanitation System Overflows) from our system. A long term control plan (LTCP) has been submitted and approved to DEP that will, along with New Kensington, Arnold and parts of Plum, eliminate the problems. It comes with a significant cost of over \$30 million. You may have already noticed the increase in your sewer bill in the last quarter of 2016. We will be working diligently to keep the cost down but be aware that this is an unfunded mandate that is required to be done by DEP.

You may have noticed the terrible condition of Leechburg Road. We have worked with PennDOT during the past year and they have agreed to a complete road reclamation project in the summer of 2017! The project will be from Craigdell Road to Route 56 and include total replacement of the surface, road base improvements, signal replacement and upgrades, storm water pipe replacement and added drainage inlets and damaged curb repairs. We are hoping that improving Leechburg Road which is our main business route, will attract new businesses and encourage all property

owners along the corridor to maintain their upkeep. This is a multi-million dollar project that comes at no cost to the city. Construction is slated to begin in June or July and scheduled to last four months. I thank everyone in advance for their patience during the construction period.

The city along with the school district have signed a three-year agreement to retain Officer Marhefka as the School Resource Officer (SRO). All parties worked together to ensure the safety of our students and to maintain our commitment to providing updated training and education for the staff and students alike.

We are in the process of finalizing a multi year contract with the City's police force. I believe that the dedicated people of our force are some of the best in our region and deserve to be shown the kindness and respect that the people of Lower Burrell are known for.

We have secured several grants for the City of Lower Burrell. These will be used to improve our parks, replace the entrance and handicap ramp at Fisher Hall, and purchase a police vehicle. We are chasing more grants this year to help beautify our City, improve our alternate transportation options, and improve our infrastructure.

We have been working to find tenants for the J.C. Penney/Montgomery Ward property. As of this time there has been no progress on this front. We are exploring all options to get this property occupied.

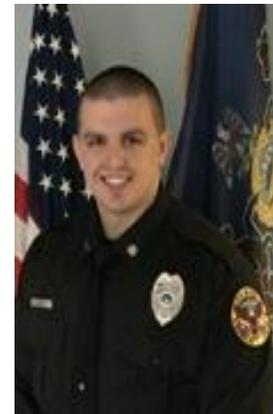
We have joined the Westmoreland County Land Bank. They are an organization who helps communities eliminate blighted properties and return them to the tax rolls. They have had success in other communities, and we look forward to working with them.

I can announce that with everything that has taken place, we did not increase taxes this past year.

Lower Burrell Police Department

The City of Lower Burrell will be utilizing the Nixle-Connect text messaging system to quickly and efficiently send important information to subscribers' mobile devices when the mass sharing of information is needed. This initiative is spearheaded by the police department and will be used primarily for public safety related broadcasts, however, other city related information such as street closures and updates on city-sponsored events may be broadcast as well. Registering your mobile device to Nixle is free and there is no maintenance fee. However, individual message and data rates may apply. You can register by texting zip code **15068** to **888-777**. The Lower Burrell Police Department website will also be updated with the Nixle registration link. Other municipalities that share our zip code also have Nixle accounts so not all information received will come from the City of Lower Burrell.

New Police Officer



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the city residents to our newest Patrol Officer Scott Wright.

Officer Wright joined the department

in April of 2016. Wright is a 2012 graduate of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Police Academy. Prior to joining the Lower Burrell Police Department Wright worked as a police officer for Oakmont Borough for 2.5 years.

Prior to the start of his police career Patrolman Wright attended The

Pennsylvania State University and pursued an engineering degree.

I am extremely happy we had the opportunity to bring Patrolman Wright on as a member of our team. I have noticed that Patrolman Wright approaches his duties with a strong sense of public service and is very professional in his dealings with the citizens he serves. 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

Public Works
Councilman Christopher Fabry
W. Scott Johnson, Foreman

Public Works Department

Street Department

The Street Department is presently in the "Winter Mode" by concentrating on snow removal and performing preventative maintenance on the equipment between snow storms. We are currently running a split shift in order to provide 24 hour coverage upon any heavy snow events. This is a great time to let everyone know that our crew does salt and plow some sections of the Penn Dot roads within our City limits, as per a yearly Winter Agreement. (The list of these roads will be on our website for review.) When it is not snowing, the night shift will also be performing work on our summer equipment, along with performing evaluations of our street signs throughout the City to ensure signs are at proper reflectivity levels as required by an unfunded mandate.

Prior to a snow event, 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 can 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 system throughout the City limits. This unfunded

program is referred to as the "MS4", which is simply an acronym for **Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System**. Any municipality is now being required to map all of their storm pipes, creeks, streams, etc. and monitor for any pollutants. The City has already started this process and is currently working on reviewing the Ordinance being recommended to make sure we are in compliance with the mandate. Around April the City intends to provide a public informational meeting on the requirements of the MS4 program.

Please keep in mind that it is a violation to dump grass, leaves, or any foreign matter into catch basins/inlets or into the outfall of any storm pipe (throughout the years our Department has been placing stickers at each inlet to further remind residents of this violation). When cutting lawns, please refrain from directing the grass out into the street, or dumping over a hill where there is a stream, 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 performing camera evaluations of the sanitary system during rain events. 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, Arnold, and Plum in establishing a Long Term Control Plan as required by the DEP/EPA in the form of an Agreement of Consent. The Plan developed by these communities was officially accepted in December of 2016. This Agreement of Consent is another unfunded mandate by the state to help clean our waterways and provide a cleaner,

healthier environment in general. The City has been working with several engineering firms in the evaluation and monitoring of flow levels throughout the sanitary system in our City. The private sector of the sanitary system (laterals and house drains) is a vital part of the sanitary system and any infiltration found will need to be corrected as well. 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 City of Lower Burrell is currently arranging low interest funding for several projects that have been identified throughout portions of the public sanitary system. These projects have a tentative start date in the Spring of 2017.

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. **IT IS NOW A REQUIREMENT TO HAVE A DYE TEST AND CAMERA EVALUATION OF THE ENTIRE PRIVATE SANITARY SYSTEM PRIOR TO THE SALE OF A HOME.** If the public and private sector of the sanitary system works 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. More information can be found on the City's web site.

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.

ATTENTION RESIDENTS:

There is now available additional helpful information/instructions to help residents with understanding the procedures of the Dye and Camera Tests. Please review this information on the City's Website at www.Cityoflowerburrell.com. For those who do not have internet access, they will also be available at the front desk.

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

Happy New Year! Like many of us I'd like to say goodbye to the snow and cold weather, however it may be with us for awhile. As we say goodbye to the snow and cold weather and we welcome all the fresh signs of spring, I would like to ask the residents to please make a concentrated effort and not put up any signs on any telephone poles or street signs to advertise their events such as 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'd like to welcome aboard Richard Deblasio to the Appeals Board, Allan Lingenfelter to the Planning Commission, and John Kamarados to the Zoning Hearing Board.

In closing, I'd like to take time to thank Ben King for his many years of service to the City of Lower Burrell as a member of the Zoning Hearing Board. I would like to wish Ben and his wife, Minnie many happy years of retirement.

**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 & 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. 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).

Attention Residents if you recently have changed mortgage companies, please notify our office so we may make that change to our records for your property tax bills. Also, when sending in payments by mail, please double check before mailing that the amount due corresponds with the due dates on the bill. Any underpayment for Per Capita or Property taxes will be mailed back to the resident.

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**

Good Luck to Lori Rocchi, tax office clerk who recently moved with her husband Jerry to the Robinson Township area. Lori worked in the tax office since June 2013. **And Welcome** to Amber Santucci who recently took over Lori's part-time position in the tax office. Amber resides in Lower Burrell with her husband Sam and daughters, Kayla, Ava, and Emma. Welcome Amber!

**K-9 OFFICER DEREK KOTECKI
MEMORIAL PARK**

November 19, 2016 marked a landmark moment at Officer Kotecki Memorial Park where the numerous volunteers who gave their time, effort, passion, and labor to the entrance were invited for an unveiling of the mostly-complete project. The letters "Officer Kotecki Memorial Park" line the archway overhead as you enter the park. At the center of the name is the badge to commemorate Officer Kotecki. At the center of the entrance itself, is "Odin." Odin is Officer Kotecki's K-9 partner who is still a part of the Kotecki family.



There are a few more items that will line the archway as well as some landscaping and concrete work for the roadway and curbs. The main entrance will remain closed until completion, but please stop by the park to see this magnificent memorial that has been put together by so many passionate and driven volunteers. This is not only a memorial to Officer Kotecki's sacrifice for our City's safety, but also how one person can continue to have an impact on so many lives!

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Detective John Marhefka, a full-time Lower Burrell police officer, will continue to patrol schools in the Burrell School District. The school district will continue to cover 70 percent of the costs to have a police officer patrol, mostly in Burrell High School, throughout the school year. It's part of a new agreement approved by the school district. The agreement covers the rest of this school year through June 2019.

The school district will pay about \$98,000 of the \$140,000 annual costs of having a police officer patrol the district's four buildings. The City of Lower Burrell will pay the remainder of the costs, including workers' compensation and pension costs, which the school district no longer will pick up. During the summer when school isn't in session, Marhefka returns to normal police duties with the city.

The City administration will seek grants to cover as much of the officer's cost as possible. Lower Burrell police Chief Tim Weitzel told the school board that grants must be pursued through the City.

Besides providing security, Marhefka's duties will include presenting crime prevention programs to the students, mentoring at-risk youths, and working with juvenile probation officers assigned to the schools.

The pact also calls for one officer, Marhefka, to be assigned to the school district, as opposed to a rotating set of police officers.

Lower Burrell Citizens Police Academy

In March of 2017, the Police Department will begin its annual Citizens Police Academy. Exact dates are March 2nd 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30st, April 6th, 20th, 27th, May 4th, 11th, and 18th. 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 application

available on our website and return to Officer Marhefka. The deadline for applying to the Citizens Police Academy is February 24, 2017. Space is limited.

MILITARY TRIBUTE BANNERS

The City of Lower Burrell has always taken great pride in the men and women who have served our Country in its times of need. Now we'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to help us honor your friends and family who have served our great country.

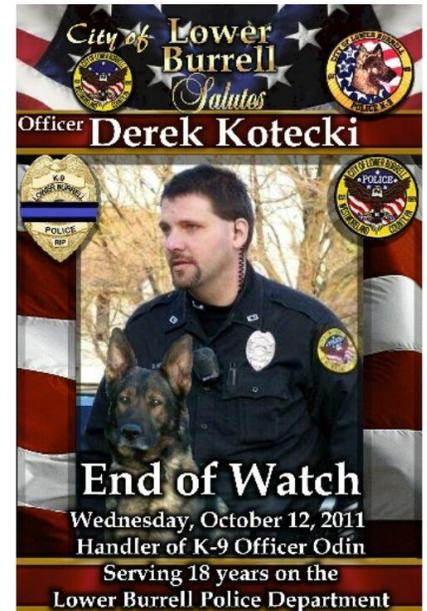
The Military Banner Program salutes our brave men and women who are currently serving and those who have served in the military by creating and displaying a 24" x 36" military banner to be exhibited in Lower Burrell between Memorial Day and Veteran's Day for years to come. Please check out our website and follow the links to have your Lower Burrell Veteran proudly displayed along Leechburg Road.

Applications can be completed at Lower Burrell City Hall, the American Legion, and the VFW located in Lower Burrell. Applications can also be downloaded on the site troopbanners.com and submitted to any of the three locations. The cost is \$80 and includes a banner for the family along with a banner to be installed and displayed along the typical parade route on Leechburg Road. A picture (that will be returned) needs to be submitted along with the payment.

The City of Lower Burrell would like to take this time to thank Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy Enciso for their time and efforts in this program. If not for their support, this program would not be possible. Thank you for your hard work in bringing the Veterans Banner Program to the City of Lower Burrell.

Please share with family and friends that have a Veteran that they would like to honor with the banner program!

A special thank you to Jeremy Enciso for making a tribute banner to honor Officer Derek Kotecki and presenting it to the City of Lower Burrell and the Kotecki family. It will be hung during the summer to honor Derek for his ultimate sacrifice.



One of the banners will be displayed at Kotecki Park and the other one will proudly be displayed on our telephone poles with our Veterans.

RECYCLING

Along with glass, plastic, and aluminum, did you know that paper such as newspaper, phone books, magazines, and catalogs can be put in your curb side recycling bin? Cardboard such as from a cracker or cereal box is also recyclable; however corrugated cardboard is not acceptable. For a complete list of recyclable items, please check out our web site.

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 Detective John Marhefka at the Lower Burrell Police Department at 724-339-4287, extension 262.

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.

**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.

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.

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.



**City of Lower Burrell 2800
2800 Bethel Street
Lower Burrell, PA
15068-3227**

**PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEW KENSINGTON, PA
15068
PERMIT NO. 331**