



BRISTOL TOWNSHIP POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 721 LEVITTOWN, PA 19058

TIMOTHY J. FUHRMANN - PRESIDENT
JASON MANCUSO - SECRETARY

SEAN COSGROVE - VICE PRESIDENT
PAUL SHALLCROSS - TREASURER

NOVEMBER 18, 2014

COUNCIL PRESIDENT - **BOB LEWIS JR.**
COUNCIL VICE-PRESIDENT - **TROY BRENNAN**
COUNCILMAN - **CRAIG BOWEN**
COUNCILMAN - **JOE GLASSON**
COUNCILWOMAN - **AMBER LONGHITANO**
COUNCILMAN - **JOHN MONAHAN**
COUNCILWOMAN - **CYNTHIA MURPHY**

RE: DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DEAR BRISTOL TOWNSHIP COUNCIL,

I AM WRITING ON BEHALF OF THE BRISTOL TOWNSHIP POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION TO EXPRESS OUR GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE TOWNSHIP'S PLAN TO DIMINISH OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT BY REPLACING THE UNIFORMED POLICE CHIEF WITH A CIVILIAN PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR. IN THE OFFICERS' VIEW, YOUR PLAN CONTINUES A VERY TROUBLING TREND OF REDUCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF BRISTOL TOWNSHIP'S POLICE DEPARTMENT AND JEOPARDIZING THE SAFETY OF OUR CITIZENS.

WE ARE ALSO TROUBLED THAT THE TOWNSHIP HAS CHOSEN TO PURSUE THIS UNPRECEDENTED ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WITHOUT ANY INPUT WHATSOEVER FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICE OFFICERS OF EVERY RANK. IF YOU HAD EXTENDED THIS MOST BASIC COURTESY, YOU WOULD HAVE LEARNED THAT THE OFFICERS ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE CHANGE.

FIRST, UNLIKE POLICE CHIEFS, WHO MUST POSSESS THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS ESTABLISHED BY LAW, THERE ARE NO LAWS OR GUIDELINES SETTING MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTORS. THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR BE A SWORN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. NOR IS THERE ANY REQUIREMENT THAT A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR POSSESS ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE WHATSOEVER. YOUR PROPOSED CHANGE WOULD PERMIT UNQUALIFIED, CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

*"OFFICERS PROTECTING THE CITIZENS OF BRISTOL TOWNSHIP,
AND THE ASSOCIATION ENSURING THE PROTECTION OF THE OFFICERS"*



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SECOND, THE NEW PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL BE AT RISK OF UNDUE POLITICAL INFLUENCE. UNLIKE THE POLICE CHIEF POSITION, THE NEW PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL BE AN APPOINTIVE CIVILIAN POSITION, UNDER CONTRACT, SERVING AT THE WHIM AND WILL OF THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY, AND SUBJECT TO UNDUE INFLUENCE DUE TO THE LACK OF CIVIL SERVICE PROTECTIONS. THIS THREATENS THE INTEGRITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

THIRD, THE APPOINTMENT OF A PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR WILL ADD SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S OPERATING BUDGET BY PROVIDING ANOTHER UNNECESSARY LAYER OF BUREAUCRACY. THE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN REDUCED TO DANGEROUSLY LOW STAFFING LEVELS. WHY NOT INVEST THE NEW PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR'S SALARY AND BENEFITS INTO MORE PATROL ON OUR STREETS?

FINALLY, WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS ILLEGAL. THE TOWNSHIP LACKS AUTHORITY TO ELIMINATE THE POLICE CHIEF POSITION UNDER THE FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP CODE. AND THE TOWNSHIP ALSO MAY NOT AMEND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE IN ORDER TO ESSENTIALLY NULLIFY THE STATUTORY ROLE OF THE POLICE CHIEF IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S OPERATIONS.

BASED ON THESE CONCERNS, THE PBA REQUESTS THAT THE TOWNSHIP DELAY THE PLANNED NOVEMBER 20TH VOTE ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE AMENDMENT RELATED TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR POSITION. INSTEAD, WE REQUEST A MEETING WITH TOWNSHIP COUNCIL AND THE ACTING POLICE CHIEF SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW THE SAFETY, EFFECTIVENESS AND LEGALITY OF THE PROPOSED PLAN. GIVEN THE HIGH STAKES FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, WE DO NOT CONSIDER OUR REQUEST TO BE UNREASONABLE. BE ADVISED, HOWEVER, THAT ABSENT A DELAY IN THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT, THE PBA RESERVES ITS RIGHTS TO CHALLENGE YOUR PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE APPROPRIATE FORUM.

PLEASE CONTACT ME TO SCHEDULE A MEETING. THANK YOU.

TIM FUHRMANN- PRESIDENT
BRISTOL TOWNSHIP PBA