



To: Petersburg Borough Assembly

Over the past 10 months, the Petersburg Borough Assembly has debated the necessity of filling a vacant position in the Police Department. Assembly member Meucci has asked for a discussion multiple times but the Assembly has not wanted to discuss this important issue. This position became open when an existing Sergeant was promoted to fill the open Captain position when Captain Hamilton retired in late 2018. While we in the Police Department understand the concern over the budget, our overriding mission is the safety and support of the community. The failure to fill this position is impacting this mission.

The Petersburg Borough Assembly on July 18, 2019 voted 3-1 not to fill the open Police Sergeant position. Mayor Mark Jensen and Assembly Members Brandi Marohl & Bob Lynn voted "no" to filling the position. Assembly Member Jeff Meucci was the "yes" vote.

The Petersburg Police Department has been awaiting authorization fill the position since October 25, 2018. Not allowing the police department to operate at full staffing has led to the Petersburg Borough paying \$138,045.53 in overtime during FY 18-19.

The Petersburg Police Department is not trying to add any new positions to the department. The Petersburg Police Department is only asking to operate within our means. This position is funded and has been funded for years. Only recently was the position frozen. This position was advertised on Thursday October 25, 2018 and by Monday October 29, 2018, the Petersburg Police Department had four qualified Officers interested in applying with two having turned in applications for the position.

As a result of the prolonged drawn out process of filling the Sgt. Position the Petersburg Police Department is at the point of reducing coverage to the community. As Chief of Police I regret to inform you that starting in late August, or possibly the first part of September through the end of November the Petersburg Police Department will not be able to provide 24/7 coverage. This is a direct result of the Borough Assembly not addressing the issues of the community they represent and talking about what services the tax paying citizens of Service Area 1 want.

The decision to cut 24/7 coverage is one that haunts the entire Police Department. The members of the Petersburg Police Department swore an oath to protect the Citizens of Petersburg and preserve the quality of life. Working understaffed and long hours has had a negative effect on the members of the Police Department who have struggled to balance the needs of the community they protect and their families.

**Petersburg Borough Police Department**

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I am requesting that the Petersburg Community address the Petersburg Borough Assembly and let them know you support Public Safety. The Sergeant's Position is only one of the decisions the Borough Assembly has made that influences Public Safety. The EMS position in the budget also has a direct effect on this community. With the aging community and increased EMS calls it makes sense to add a position to the Fire Department/EMS.

I am requesting the Borough Assembly consider rethinking the decision and support Public Safety. Assembly members, Norheim, Stanton-Gregor, Meucci and Wohlhueter have been supportive in the past, and with their support, the Assembly could authorize us to fill the open position.

This community expects exceptional results from Police/Fire and EMS, please voice your support to the Borough Assembly publicly at meetings or in letters to be read at assembly meetings.

We have built a great team, and with your help we can continue this process. If you want more information regarding this decision, my door is always open to speak with you.

Respectively,



07-22-19

James Kerr  
Chief of Police  
Petersburg Police Department

CC: Petersburg Community

Petersburg Borough Police Department

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