

Mayor's State of the Municipality Report



June, 2018

Dear Residents,

It is with great pleasure that I present to you my first Mayor's sixth month report. Along with myself we welcomed three new Councilmembers; Toni Brockway, Dayne Dice and Carl Stepanovich in 2018. They have worked well with the four existing Councilmembers, Josh Lorenz, Council President, Loren Kase, Jamie Lee Korn and Tony Spadaro. Together we have worked hard to maintain the high level of municipal services expected by you the resident and have delivered them in the most cost effective manner. I would like to give a special thanks to our dedicated staff who implement the projects and policies that we develop.

What follows is an outline of our accomplishments so far this year. We will continue to work hard to meet your high expectations. Please feel free to contact me at any time throughout the year. I can be reached by phone at 724-327-2100 ext. 107, or email at: rsynan@murrysville.com. I would love to hear from you. We are here to serve you, the residents of this first class community.

Regis Synan, Mayor

Police Department

Thomas Seefeld, Chief of Police

General Initiatives

- MPD received re-accreditation from the PA Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission (PLEAC) on January 11 & 12, 2018. The department attained accreditation status on March 25, 2006.
- Officers worked in conjunction with the Attorney General's Office, DA's office and DANET on several drug investigations and prosecutions.
- Participated in the successful prosecution and sentencing of the suspect in the FRSD stabbing incident of April 9, 2014.
- Chief Seefeld attended several planning meetings for the new Sloan School development initiative.
- Chief Seefeld and Officer Auvil are in the process of creating an emergency service public relations video in conjunction with fire and EMS staff.
- Officer Bethlehem submitted his resignation with an effective date of July 9, 2018. An officer will be hired to fill the vacancy.

Traffic Initiatives

- MCSAP/Commercial Vehicle Inspectors conducted several details on Route 22.
- Several Aggressive Driving, Buckle Up PA, Traffic Safety Interdiction, and DUI traffic details were conducted throughout the community.

Officer Training

- Officer Bethlehem received certification as a department Use of Force/Self-Defense instructor.
- Officer Bethlehem received instructor certification in the use of Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) Aerosol.
- Officer MacIntosh received re-certification as a department Use of Force/Self-Defense instructor.
- Officer Panigal attended the PA Accreditation Conference in his capacity as the department Accreditation Manager.
- Officer Auvil received certification training as a MCSAP/Commercial Vehicle Inspector.
- Officer Auvil received administrator training on the department's new web site.
- Detective Devlin received Opioid Awareness training at WCCC.
- Officer Smith received instructor certification on NRA Law Enforcement Patrol Rifle.

- Officer Dulkis received training on “Characteristics of an Armed Gunman”, DUI Case Law and Juvenile DUI and Underage Drinking, and Vehicle Searches/Traffic stops.
- Detectives Kusinsky and Devlin attended training at the PA Narcotic Officers Association (PNOA) conference. Both detectives also attended an FBI training conference on Mass Casualty Incidents in Nemacolin.
- Captain Tappe attended an FBI roundtable training on Homegrown Violent Extremists.
- Chief Seefeld was a keynote speaker at the FBI training conference in Nemacolin.
- Detective Sergeant Kusinsky attended the Range Master Development training at the Allegheny County Police Academy.
- Officers received training on the use of the utility trail vehicle (UTV) and drone.
- Sergeant Chafin received training on criminal interdiction.
- Officers received monthly on-line roll call training on various subjects.

Community Training

- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) instructors provided training to schools, churches, businesses and to other community stakeholders.
- Detective Devlin provided training to Mother of Sorrows School students and staff on Opioid abuse and education.
- Officers participated in several Reality Tour events at the Murrysville Alliance Church to educate parents and children on the dangers and consequences of illegal drug use.

Community Events

- FRSD and the police department provided a community wide CRASE training event at the Franklin Regional Senior High School.
- Officers provided services at the “Blessing of the Bikes” event at the Murrysville Alliance Church.
- Officers participated in the “Cops on Rooftops” event at Dunkin’ Donuts to raise donations for Special Olympics.
- Officers participated in the “Law Enforcement Torch Run” on Route 22 to raise donations for the Special Olympics.
- Staff participated in the Toys for Tots Program.
- Officers participated in the Sloan Elementary Hero Luncheon event.
- Officers participated in the police tribute, “Strengthening the Thin Blue Line”, at the Murrysville Alliance Church.
- Officer Devlin participated in the “Road to Hope” Opioid Addiction Forum at the Newlonsburg Presbyterian Church.

Equipment Received

- Department acquired a UTV for Westmoreland Heritage Trail patrols.

- Department acquired a drone for public relation and investigative purposes.
- Department received three new police vehicles.

Department of Public Works and Parks

Robert Bell, Director

General Initiatives

- Conducted sell off all old vehicles that have been replaced and that have no future value to the Municipality.
- Conducted safety training for Commercial Driver Awareness (CDL) and Flagger certification.
- Continued an aggressive preventative maintenance program on all equipment to minimize repairs and downtime.

Road Work

- The department continues to work on a very long list of inlet repairs, due to age and storm damages. Some will need minor repairs and some will need major replacement.
- Since the municipality had to use anti-skid this year during the snow season, street sweeping was performed this Spring. This helps the Municipality comply with the MS4 requirements.
- The department has been very active in checking all traffic control signs to make sure they comply with all regulations and to keep all residents safe while traveling our roads.
- Public Works continues to repair soft spots on our roads, to add strength and more life to the road. We also responded to residents' requests for adding curbs and swales to deter storm water runoff on their properties.
- Storm water pipe was installed on Round Top Road, Ketchy Road, Staymates Court and Evans Road.
- This Winter was considered an average snowfall year but with the extreme rains and heavy winds the department experienced significant overtime for downed trees.
- Annual Spring road maintenance included berming, crack sealing, inlet cleaning, roadside mowing, painting of stop bars and warning words, bridge inspection repairs, detention pond maintenance, guide rail maintenance, spraying of guide rails and brushing.

Parks Work

- **MCP Park**
 - Installed an artificial surface in the batting cage areas.
 - Installed memorial benches throughout the park.
 - Began preparation work for the installation of a new playground and spray park.

- Began preparation for the construction of the riparian buffer project at the corner of Wiestertown Road and Farm Road.
- **Bear Hollow Park**
 - Installed new wooden decking in the dugouts at Field #2.
 - Installed new dugout and fencing at Field #2.
 - Installed new outfield fence at Field #1.
 - Repaired cracks and repainted the tennis court.
- **Sardis Park**
 - Replaced new safety surface under the existing swings.
 - Installed a new play structure.
 - Installed a new metal roof on Pavilion #1.
- **Chambers Park**
 - Lined the tennis court for pickleball.
- **Staymates Cabin**
 - Installed smoke, CO detectors and fire extinguishers.
- **Duff Park**
 - Re-surfaced the Funk Bikeway from the parking lot to the second bridge.
 - Installed a new metal roof on pavilion to include new trusses and beams.
- **Pedora Park**
 - Installed new metal roofs on the dugouts.

Buildings and Grounds

- Contracted mowing for the publicly owned open space at Staymates Cabin, Manor Vue Court, Marlee Acres and Summervale Green Area.
- Contracted the landscaping work at the Municipal Building and Community Center.
- Contracted for the replacement of an HVAC rooftop unit at the Municipal Building.
- Completed the changeover of all lights at the Municipal Building, Public Works Building and Community Center to LED lighting.
- The play fields in all the parks were prepared for opening days for FRAA and MASA.

Equipment Received

- Purchased a new Utility Trailer (replacement).
- Purchased a new backhoe (replacement).

Department of Finance and Taxation

Diane Heming, Director

General Initiatives

- The audit fieldwork for the 2017 Financial Audit was completed with no findings or comments.
- Several new bank accounts were opened with Pennsylvania League of Government Investment Trust (PLGIT) to take advantage of the higher interest rates.
- The insurance policy for property, casualty, and automobile, umbrella and professional liability was renewed April 1, 2018. All coverage remained intact.
- Municipal assets such as land, buildings, properties and equipment were revalued for insurance purposes based on current appraisals.
- Assisted staff with paperwork for new hires, retirements, pension issues, benefits and income tax questions.
- Year-end processes, 1099's, W-2's, pension reports, Liquid Fuels year end reports were completed.
- Various reports were completed to maintain compliance with the Affordable Care Act.
- Information was requested for the 2019 – 2023 Capital Improvements Program which will be presented to council on August 1, 2018.
- Fixed asset records were updated to include all purchases and disposals in 2017 in excess of \$10,000. These records were then remitted to the municipal auditing firm to calculate the necessary depreciation for auditing purposes.
- Outstanding parcels currently owned by the Municipality are in the process of having the real estate taxes exonerated through the Westmoreland County Tax Office.
- The responsibilities of personnel issues returned to the department effective June 23, 2017.
- Police negotiations began in May. The current contract ends December 31, 2018.
- Performed the routine payroll and accounts payable functions, monthly and quarterly billings required for police services, accidents, etc.
- Record maintenance, the conversion of paper records to electronic files, continues with emphasis on Public Works and Planning.

Department of Engineering

Scott Hilty, P.E., Director

General Initiatives

- Upgraded the ArcMap software.

- Acquired HydroCad, FlowMaster and CulvertMaster software.

Permits

- The Engineering Department has issued one hundred one (101) Road Occupancy Permits to date this year.
- A total of Five (5) minor subdivision plans, and one (1) site plan have been reviewed so far in 2018.

Projects

- The 2018 Paving Contract was awarded to the Tresco Paving Corporation in the amount of \$1,656,635. This year's project included the following streets: Apple Hill Drive, Ball Park Court, Bartlett Court, Bella Vista Court, Buckingham Court, Burnett Drive, Colonial Drive, Colorado Court, Dakota Street, Delaware Street, Ketchy Court, Logan Ferry Road, Pinecrest Court, Round Top Road, Staymates Court, Tarr Hollow Road and Sardis Road. The repairs on the roads consisted of pavement replacement, milling of old asphalt and adjustment of the existing inlets.
- Murrysville continues to update and improve its MS4 program. MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System and Murrysville is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to obtain a permit for this system. The permit requires Murrysville to maintain records of its entire storm system including inlets, pipes, storm water detention basins, ditches and swales. All storm water outfalls have to be located and inspected on a regular basis. Compilation of this data, mapping of the infrastructure, and maintenance of records is a formidable task that the staff is working on almost daily. The current Individual NPDES permit is set to expire in May 2019. Renewal application must be submitted at least 180 days prior to expiration of the existing permit. As part of the renewal, Murrysville is required to develop a Pollutant Reduction Plan (PRP). The plan has been developed to show how the Municipality will try to reduce the storm water discharges of nutrients and sediment to surface waters in the Commonwealth. This plan is currently available on the municipal website as well as a hard copy at the Municipal office. A public display has been setup at the Municipal building that contains educational material on storm water issues.
- The Engineering Department is currently working on final design and bid documents for two additional projects to be completed this year.
 - Morosini Farm Court Project. This project consists of drainage and roadway improvements to Morosini Farm Court. A portion of this project is being funded through a grant received from the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program administered by the Westmoreland Conservation District.
 - Lyons Run Road Slide Repair. During the heavy rain events that occurred this February a portion of Lyons Run Road near Trafford Road was washed out

affecting the travel lane. Since that time and in conjunction with the bridge replacement project on Trafford Road, Lyons Run Road has been closed to motorists. Currently permitting has been submitted to the Westmoreland Conservation District for this project. Both projects are slated to be bid in the July/August timeframe with construction being completed by years end.

- The Engineering Department is also assisting in the design and layout for three projects that are ongoing at the Murrysville Community Park (MCP).
 - The installation of a playground and spray park near the site of the Miracle Field.
 - The riparian buffer project located adjacent to the dog park on Farm Road.
 - The planning and design of the amphitheater located near the maintenance shed on Wiestertown Road.

Department of Community Development

Hayley Welsh, Community Planner

General Initiatives

- A policy and procedures manual was developed to aid developers and staff with the application process for land development and zoning applications.
- Council passed a property maintenance ordinance to provide tools to code enforcement personnel to aggressively pursue property maintenance issues.
- Council passed an ordinance to establish a rental registration program to implement periodic inspections of rental properties within the Municipality.

- Policies were established and software was upgraded to provide a data base for all properties within the Municipality.
- Five residential properties were demolished.
- The staff continues to scan permanent records to create an electronic file of all zoning and land development activities.

Building Permits

- A total of 132 building permits were issued during the past six months.
 - Twenty-six new home permits;
 - Sixty four permits for pools, additions, decks and sheds; and

- Forty-two permits for non-residential activities.

Planning Commission Activities

- Discussions concerning revisions to the Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.
- A review and forwarding of plans submitted by the Franklin Regional School District for renovation and construction of a school complex at the Sloan School site on Sardis Road.
- An advisory meeting on a proposed new Subdivision, The Acres at Magnolia Farms, located on Sardis Road.
- An advisory meeting on the proposed Villa Ciciano, a planned residential development on Cline Hollow Road.
- Approval of the First Watch Restaurant at the Blue Spruce Shoppes

Department of Recreation

Carley Green, Director

General Initiatives

- Completed inspections and repairs of all playground equipment at the municipally-owned parks.
- Updated the Fee Ordinance for the use of municipal parks and the Community Center.
- Updated the policy governing the use of alcohol in the parks and Community Center.

Programs

- Eighty-five children enjoyed summer programs to include: Art Smart Learn to Draw, Ready Set Run 5K, Safety City, STEAM Adventure Camp, and Pioneer Living Camp.
- The Playground Program for children in 1st through 7th grades began June 11 providing fun at five parks each week (Heritage, Bear Hollow, Murrysville Community Park, Townsend and Sardis Parks) from 10:00 am-2:00 pm for seven weeks.
- The Recreational Swim program, which operates on Saturday evenings at the Franklin Regional Middle School pool September through May, was successful again this year, with birthday parties booked solid throughout the season.

Special Events

- **Egg Hunt for Kids and Dogs**

- A chilly March 23 welcomed our fifth annual Egg Hunt at Murrysville Community Park. Our faithful community sponsors provided all of the prizes, treat bags, and refreshments for several hundred guests while they anxiously awaited their turn to hunt for eggs and meet the Bunny! A separate hunt just for dogs was held at the Dog Park and treat bags were available for the dogs to take home.
- **March for Parks**
 - The fifth annual Westmoreland County March for Parks on March 24 moved locations this year to the Murrysville Community center in order to be able to march on the new Westmoreland Heritage Trail.
- **Geocaching Adventure Program**
 - This year the Murrysville Parks and Recreation Commission is celebrating 50 years of volunteer service to our community. To commemorate this achievement, this dedicated group of volunteers has created a geocache program in our parks, reserves and points of interest throughout the community! According to www.geocaching.com “Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.” Geocache containers are hidden at 14 locations, to be found only by using the GPS coordinates at www.geocaching.com, where a specific account for our Murrysville Parks and Recreation program will be available at a later date. Progress must be tracked online and can also be tracked on the printed passport, available at the Murrysville Visitors’ Center and Municipal Building. When a cache has been found, log it on the website and punch the passport with the paper punch located inside the cache, then move on to find the next one. Commemorative path tags, available from the Recreation Department at the municipal building, will be provided to those who find all the caches.
 - Thirty-five people attended our “Geocaching 101” event on May 5 at the Murrysville Community Center and learned geocaching basics and then hit the trail to find caches in the parks! The geocache program is ongoing throughout the year so it does not have to be completed in one day; visit each location as time permits. Geocaching is family friendly and a great way for all ages to enjoy our parks and visit new places in our community!
- **Murrysville Farmers’ Market**
 - The fifth annual Farmers’ Market began June 7 and will operate every Thursday from 3:00-7:00 p.m. through September 27. With more than 40 vendors registered and hundreds of customers each week, the Market is growing and turning into a community gathering site! Customers can find fresh and organic

produce, baked goods, salsas, plants and flowers, maple syrup, honey, olive oils, jams, wine and spirits, handmade soaps and lemonade. Dinner and snacks are available too, with offerings such as BBQ meats, wood fired pizza, shave ice and kettle corn. Live entertainment, mascots, fresh food, produce, hot foods and so much more make it a wonderful way to visit with friends and family on a beautiful summer afternoon.

- **Farmhouse Kids' Club**

- Children ages 3-12 look forward to Thursdays for the free Farmhouse Kids' Club weekly activities! When members complete weekly educational activities they receive a wooden token valued at \$2.00 with which they can shop at the Market.
- The first month of the Kids' Club hosted 232 children with membership growing each week.
- This introduces the children to new activities, provides a fun space for them while at the Market, increases revenue for the vendors and teaches the very beginning of money management. Our vendors and customers are excited for this fourth season and we hope to continue this event for many years to come. The Farmhouse Kids' Club will operate June 14-August 30 and is sponsored by First Commonwealth Bank, Dollar Bank and Elaine Yarabinec, a realtor with Coldwell Banker.

- **Concert in the Park**

- Our first Concert in the Park in August 2017 was hugely successful with more than 3,000 in attendance to enjoy the five live bands at Murrysville Community Park. This year's event will be held August 11 from 4:00-9:00 pm, ending with FIREWORKS! Guests will enjoy four bands: Erin Burkett with Virgil Waters (jazz favorites), the Doug Edgell Trio (rhythmic, feel-good acoustic music), The Shiners (country bluegrass), and Bon Journey playing the best of Bon Jovi and Journey's hits will lead us right into fireworks! According to their website, "Bon Journey began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2006. Covering the hits of two of the most popular American rock bands in history, the band quickly established itself as one of the premier party bands in the city and found success on the national level touring a variety of east coast cities and venues." We are anxious to have Bon Journey in Murrysville! Guests can enjoy Rivertowne beverages, Kona Ice, face painting, delicious food vendors and food trucks, cornhole, the 3WS Sports Challenge, giant soccer darts, and FIREWORKS! See you at the Park August 11!

Projects

- **Murrysville Community Park Playground and Splash Pad**

- 2018 will see continued improvements at Murrysville Community Park to include a destination playground, splash pad and restrooms. Staff members and Council have selected plans and designs to include play structures for children ages 2-5 and 5-12. Construction will begin in 2017 with a grand opening planned for Fall 2017 or Spring 2018.

Department of Administration

Jim Morrison, Chief Administrator

General Initiatives

- The municipality welcomed two new staff people as a result of retirements;
 - Emily Mallisee, Engineer Technician
 - Haley Welsh, Community Planner
- Upgraded the audio visual equipment in Council chambers and the Channel 19 broadcast equipment.
- Adopted updates to the Emergency Management Plan.
- Ordered a new fire engine for Sardis Volunteer Fire Department.
- Council passed an Ordinance to provide wage tax relief to volunteers in the municipal emergency services organizations.
- Secured grants or financial support for several municipal projects;
 - Murrysville Community Park Playground and Splash Pad \$204,000
 - Steele’s Run Riparian Project \$90,000
 - Morosini Road Improvements \$35,000
 - Various residential demolition projects \$10,000
- Hired Markosky Engineers to complete a transportation study to evaluate alternatives to relieve congestion at the Sardis Road and Logans Ferry intersection.
- Entered into agreement with the Murrysville Historical and Preservation Society for caretaker services at the Staymates Cabin.
- Contracted with Civic Plus to complete a major upgrade to the Municipality’s website. Launch date is scheduled for September, 2018.