

TEAMSTERS, CHAUFFEURS, WAREHOUSEMEN AND HELPERS
LOCAL UNION NO. 110 - JOHNSTOWN, ALTOONA AND VICINITIES PENNSYLVANIA
Affiliated with
THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD TEAMSTERS

Thomas N. Heider, *President*
Kenneth J. Robison, *Vice President*
Richard L. Keller, *Secretary-Treasurer/Business Agent*
Gerald M. DeBiase, *Recording Secretary/Assistant Business Agent*
Susan A. Ballas, *Trustee*
Daniel J. Helsel, *Trustee*
Kevin G. Maslonik, *Trustee*



P.O. BOX 180, 153 EBONY ROAD
EBENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 15931
(814) 472-6646 OR (800) 223-8937
FAX: (814) 472-6444



**TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION NO. 110
PRESS RELEASE**

Re: Teamsters Local Union No. 110 & Reynoldsville Borough
Borough Proposal to Reduce Police Coverage

Date: December 14, 2020

Richard Keller, Secretary-Treasurer for Teamsters Local 110, issued this Press Release today concerning the Local 110 Members employed as Police Officers at Reynoldsville Borough.

At the start of 2020, the Borough Council raised a claim that the labor contract covering the Police Officers was somehow invalid. We met with the Borough on February 5, 2020 to answer all of their issues.


The very next day, February 6, 2020, Channel 6 did a story concerning the Reynoldsville Borough Council and Mayor's challenge to the validity of the police contract. In the February 12, 2020 meeting, Council abandoned its claim that it had any legitimate legal basis to challenge the enforcement of the police contract, and announced that instead of even attempting to make a legal argument, they were "going to go the budget route" and unilaterally reduce the police department from 2 full time officers to 1 full time and two part-time officers. The Council took this action without even attempting to bargain with the Union. As a result, Local 110 filed a complaint asserting several Unfair Labor Practices with the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. The PLRB has scheduled a trial on these charges for February 26, 2021. The Union has offered to settle the charges by restoring the police coverage going forward, but the Borough has declined every opportunity to resolve this dispute.

Now Local 110 has learned that Borough Council is proposing a 2021 budget that will further reduce the police protection for the Borough's citizens. The proposed budget, which has never been discussed publicly, proposes to run the Police Department with only 1 full time officer. The proposed budget would eliminate the part-time officers entirely and leave most shifts open with the hope that calls during those shifts will be transferred to the State Police. Currently, the State Police have two officers on duty for the entire County for most shifts that would be kept open by the elimination of the part-time officers, so police protection in the Borough will certainly suffer. To make this matter even worse, the move to eliminate these officers won't result in a lower

budget; the Council plans to divert any savings from the elimination of police officers into other expenses.

The citizens of Reynoldsville Borough are circulating a petition to stop Borough Council from eliminating the officers. The petition has gathered over 500 signatures, and there is sure to be serious opposition from the Borough residents who recognize a bad plan when they see one. It also seems that the Council heard of this groundswell of opposition to its scheme, and so last night it announced that the December 16 meeting will not be held publicly, under the pretense of concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19. The Council has not tried to set up online public access to the meeting via Zoom or other service. The Council announced on Facebook that it would limit public speech to one speaker per subject, which seems like a pretty plain violation of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act. Council's announcement did not provide any guidance concerning how speakers who want to comment will find out if they are allowed to speak, nor is there any explanation for how Council would choose which speaker would be permitted to speak on a subject when more than one speaker signs up.

The Police Officers and their Union have the same concern of all the Borough residents who signed the petition and who think this Council move is a terrible idea. At the very least, the Council should not be allowed to stifle public comment on such an important decision that will affect the safety of everyone residing in the Borough. A decision to eliminate the part-time officers and leave numerous shifts uncovered should be debated publicly. This is no time for the Council to ignore the wishes of the Borough's residents. Any budgetary decision reached under these restrictive guidelines will almost certainly be illegal as an unconstitutional restraint on free speech and the right of citizens to petition their elected officials, as well as a violation of the Sunshine Act. The Union expects to monitor this situation very closely, and if the Borough once again acts without bargaining as required under state law, Local 110 is prepared to take further legal actions to force the Borough to live up to its basic legal obligations.

Sincerely,

Richard Keller
Secretary Treasurer

RK:
File