

## December 19, 2024

Derry Borough Council met in special session Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 7:00pm. The following members were present. Nathan Bundy, Sara Cowan, Barbara Phillips, Jasen Lentz, Rich Eikenburg, Jim Ritenour and Rob White. Mayor Grant Nicely was present. Joe Wells reporting for the Latrobe Bulletin.

### RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

1. Jerris Weller – Opinion of the DASD Police Agreement is the Derry Area School District should be willing to pay more for the police services and it is unfair that the Borough is subsidizing much of the expense for the services, especially when a majority of the students and the school is located in Derry Township.
2. Donna Showalter – DASD School Board
3. Nancy Findish – DASD School Board

COMMUNICATIONS - None

### SPECIAL BUSINESS

1. **MOTION** by Nathan Bundy to approve an additional \$2,000 expense over 5 years for Motorola plate readers. Motion **SECONDED** by Rich Eikenburg. Six members present voiced “aye” in favor of the motion. Jasen Lentz opposed. Motion passed.

2. **MOTION** by Nathan to approve Fran Plummer for full-time officer for night-shift. Motion **SECONDED** by Jim Ritenour. All members present voiced “aye” in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Sara Cowan read a statement addressing council and the visitors at the meeting.

“I would like to express my opinion on the school contract. While I acknowledge the budgetary pressures and the shortfall in reimbursement from the school district, I believe the continued presence of our police department is important. The safety and well-being of our kids should be of highest priority, and this outweighs the financial considerations. As a parent of children attending both the middle school and Grandview, I can attest to the peace of mind provided by the knowledge that our officers are present on school grounds and I’m sure many other parents would stand with me in this opinion. Our school district is our area’s biggest employer and where the most people congregate at any given time. I welcome my tax dollars being allocated to this, lord knows they have gone to less crucial things.

Maintaining a positive relationship with the school is also incredibly important. I too think the school, our children, teachers and administrators would benefit from an SRO, But our board cannot make that decision for another board. But what we can do, is continue our working relationship with the school, strictly adhering to the guidelines of the MOU and maybe at some point the two boards can revisit the idea of a full- time officer at the school.

I strongly advocate for maintaining the contract, even if it means absorbing some of the costs of our officers pay. The investment in our children's safety is one that I wholeheartedly support and

**December 19, 2024**

anything less than that is a red mark on Derry Borough. God forbid something happens that could have been avoided with police presence and we regret the decision to pull out of this agreement way too late. These kids and teachers are doing active shooter drills, and we are talking about pulling our police contract with them. It's crazy to me honestly."

3. **MOTION** by Nathan Bundy to terminate March 1, 2024 Memorandum of Understanding between the Borough of Derry (Derry Borough Police Department) and the Derry Area School District and document entitled "Contracted Services January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024 (Proposal for Derry Borough Police Department and the Derry Areas School District- Contracted Services) wherein the Borough of Derry will no longer provide police services to the Derry Area School District for payments totaling \$16,800.00 annually". Motion **SECONDED** by Rich Eikenburg. A roll call vote was taken. Nathan Bundy "aye", Rich Eikenburg – "aye", Rob White – "aye", Jim Ritneour- "nay", Jasen Lentz – "aye", Sara Cowan – "nay", and Barbara Phillips – "aye". Motion passed to terminate the agreement with 5 "ayes" and 2 "nays". As of December 31, 2024 the MOU will expire. Derry Borough Police Department offered the services of a School Resource Officer that would work at the school full-time while school was in session.

Nathan Bundy read a statement "Derry Police have been providing services to the school district for \$16,800 per year. It's not possible for the Borough to continue to have an officer handling all of the calls in the borough and provide the services at the schools at the same time.

The Derry Police Department proposed providing a School Resource Officer to the Derry School District. That officer would have been a certified Derry Police Officer who worked at the school full-time while school was in session. The Department would have provided all training, uniforms, and equipment including a police car to be used at the school. The cost to the school would have been \$70,000 for the first year. The Derry Police SRO would not replace the existing security staff at the school. Instead, they would work together to ensure the safety of the students and staff.

The school administration desired to continue the existing police agreement at a rate which put the majority of the burden on the Borough Taxpayer. The Borough desired to continue the relationship with an SRO as it would ease scheduling and increase efficiency at the same time. The School District was not interested in an SRO at Derry Schools and cited there was no need for one. We respect the decision of the Derry Area School District.

The safety of our children is very important to our department. If there is an emergency at the schools, we will still respond. If a call is made through 911 for an emergency at the schools the Derry Police will still respond at the request of the PA State Police.

By not taking a deal where we overwhelmingly lose taxpayer money, we allow the Derry Police Department to continue operating for as long as possible, so that we still have a local police department for emergency response to the school for years to come."

**December 19, 2024**

ADJOURNMENT`

**MOTION** by Nathan Bundy to adjourn meeting. Motion **SECONDED** by Jasen Lentz. All members present voiced “aye” in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori L. Latta  
Secretary

