



**MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL AND CITIZENS
OF GREENCASTLE
December 5, 2022**

MONTH OF NOVEMBER: Tree lighting, Christmas parade, Thanksgiving, Shop Small Saturday, Heritage Christmas to name a few. The downtown was full of citizens for these events.

NORFOLK SOUTHERN TRAINS REPORT: Larry (Pittman) reports Norfolk Southern (N/S) engines are again back to idling beginning in mid-November including some running all night. Noises including diesel idling, rattling, and air (drying) brake sounds. Here is my latest electronic message to N/S.

MEMORANDUM TO RUDY HUSBAND OF NORFOLK SOUTHERN
Sunday, 04 December 2022

Greetings Mr. Husband. The warm season was rather quiet as it appears the Norfolk Southern (N/F) engines would be shut down along N. Jefferson Street while sitting in the residential and public park area of downtown Greencastle. Now that the weather is turning colder, citizens have noticed N/F trains stationary and again idling as it appears this remains a rest lay over for crews for significant hours. This again creates significant noise in residential areas and diesel fumes emanating with thermal inversions of weather conditions that causes fumes to be low to the ground.

Please provide a status report for our citizens that may be imparted to them.

GREENCASTLE POLICE FOOD DRIVE: During the month of November, citizens donated a room full of food items that was delivered last Thursday to the Greencastle Food Pantry located in the basement of the Presbyterian Church. A special thanks to all that donated food and supported this effort. Thanks to GPD and public works personnel who assisted with the delivery.

A SPECIAL THANK-YOU TO THOSE WHO WORK ON HOLIDAYS!: To our water and waste water employees who keep these services running properly, THANK-YOU. For our police officers who work the holidays 24/ 7, THANK-YOU. I visited Officer Bradley on Thanksgiving morning. He already assisted a citizen who was having a mental health issue and attempted to harm himself. He was successfully transported to an appropriate facility for assistance. THANK-YOU to Chief Phillippy and Officer Strayer for your dedication to working on Thanksgiving.

RESCUE HOSE COMPANY EMS CALL VOLUME: I recently met with EMS Chief Mark Miller. The call volume is very high right now due to RSV, flu, and COVID patients

along with a high volume of motor vehicle crashes and mutual aid assistance calls in the region.

SPECIAL RESEARCH: REVIEW OF THE 2023 PROPOSED BUDGETS AND HOW TO NEGATE THE NEED FOR A REAL ESTATE TAX INCREASE WHILE BALANCING THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET:

First, thanks to Emilee for providing me with the Budgets (plural) Booklet last Wednesday. Upon review of the October 31, 2023, budgets, I observed revenue and expenditures that changed in the November 30 General Fund report (+ \$42,000 due to a total calculation correction). I've experienced these calculation spreadsheet challenges in prior budgets at my workplace. Therefore, I offer the following recommendations to balance 2023's General Fund budget without the need for a tax increase.

1. Expenditure #01.430.450 (street contracted services) was increased from \$1,300 to \$26,300 (+ \$25,000). This Edwin Bittner bridge maintenance estimate had been previously cut. I recommend this expenditure be transferred to the Highway Aid Fund as the bridge is part of Walter Avenue as shown on the official PennDot map of acceptable streets in Greencastle. Bridge maintenance may be funded by liquid fuels funds and I recommend this be affirmed by Mr. Levan of PennDot (information below). The November, 2022 Greencastle Highway Aid Fund balance is \$778,957 that would support a \$25,000 bridge maintenance project expenditure in 2023.
2. Expenditure #01.411.530 (donation to fire company) was increased from \$40,000 to \$57,000. I recommend the \$17,000 be removed from the General Fund and placed in the COVID RELIEF (American Rescue Plan Act) fund that has a current balance of \$420,727. COVID Relief's original intent was to provide financial relief to municipal revenue losses (which we did not experience) and support public health and safety. The Rescue Hose Company has and continues to assist and transport COVID patients. The current EMS system is experiencing high call volumes of "sick persons" with combined RSV, flu, and COVID illnesses as they continue to be challenged with EMS staffing issues. Funding from Greencastle and Antrim Township greatly assists in making Rescue Hose Company EMS financially viable for the emergency medical technicians and the hiring competition that is being realized around the tri-state area.

The result of these actions would remove the need for a one mill tax increase and balance the General Fund budget with minimal impact to the Highway Aid and COVID RELIEF funds while maintaining a healthy fund balance for 2023. Also, there would be no need for tax ordinance approval in accordance with the Pa. Borough Code.

To our citizens, Council, staff, and your families...MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Respectfully submitted: Ben Thomas, Jr. Mayor