

Bethlehem Authority Police Report

APR 2022

Eric Yeakel

1. PA State Rep. Doyle Heffley, 122nd district, is pushing an agenda directed towards the Bethlehem Authority seeking greater oversight. This was posted in a mailer where he states "In Light of the controversial actions by the Bethlehem Water Authority regarding the proposed wind farm project in Penn Forest Township, I have introduced bipartisan legislation that would make a number of changes to the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act that are intended to ensure that municipal authorities benefit the communities they serve."

Applications Available

Forms for the state's Property Tax/Rent Rebate program for the 2021 tax year are now available. Eligible participants can receive a rebate of up to \$650 based on their rent or property taxes paid last year. The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians who are 65 years or older, widows and widowers 50 years or older, and those 18 years or older with disabilities.

Copies of the applications, as well as assistance with filing them, are available at my district offices at no cost. You are reminded that you need not pay a private entity for help in filling out the forms. Applications are due by June 30.

For additional information, please contact one of my district offices or visit www.RepHeffley.com.

Seeking Greater Oversight of Municipal Authorities

In light of the controversial actions by the Bethlehem Water Authority regarding the proposed wind farm project in Penn Forest Township, I have introduced bipartisan legislation that would make a number of changes to the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act that are intended to ensure that municipal authorities benefit the communities they serve. Those proposed changes include:

- Authorities that generate funds using alternative projects such as solar or wind farms would be required to use the money to reduce their rates.
- Government oversight of authorities would move from the Office of Attorney General to the Department of the Auditor General, where it should have been all along. In addition, authorities statewide would be audited annually to ensure they are providing the most benefit to their customers.
- Authorities would be prevented from subleasing land they hold for water rights for alternative projects in order to preserve our water supplies.

I share the same concerns as other Carbon County residents about the impact the wind farm would have on our region's tourism industry. We believe it will damage hundreds of acres of woodlands; threaten the habitats of endangered species; produce noise pollution, making homes uninhabitable for local residents; and destroy the views of our beautiful mountains.

District Office SERVICES

My district offices in Weissport and Albrightsville are here to assist you. Services we can provide include:

- Driver's license and vehicle registration applications and renewals.
- Assistance with PennDOT paperwork (lost cards, changes, corrections, special registration plates, vanity plates, and temporary placards for persons with disabilities).
- Discount vehicle registrations for seniors.
- PACE and PACENET applications for seniors.
- Property Tax and Rent Rebate applications.
- Voter registration forms and absentee ballot applications.
- State tax forms.
- Free state maps, state park information and PA Vacation Guides.
- Do-Not-Call list enrollment.
- Unclaimed property.
- LIHEAP applications (low-income heating assistance program).
- LIHWAP applications (low-income household water assistance program).
- Copies of legislation.
- Tours of the state Capitol.
- Referrals to agencies to help resolve state-related matters.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Weissport Office 701E Bridge St Weissport, PA 19376	Albrightsville Office 7681 State Rte 901	Satellite Office American Legion Building, 118 Bridge St	Capitol Office
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The 122nd district includes Penn Forest and Towamensing Townships.

2. The March 26, 2022 Times News featured an article on Watersheds written by Barry Reed. The article mentioned several area watersheds including The Bethlehem Authority. The article was a plea for local municipalities to protect large forested areas from intrusion such as warehouses, large residential developments, solar and wind farms.

3. I located what could be classified as an IED (*Improvised explosive device; photo below*) lying on Hyspie Gap Rd in the Long Pond area. The device was approximately 7 inches in length by 3 inches in width. The device appeared to have a “low order detonation” (*a malfunction not having the desired effect for which it was designed*) not causing any damage and was not near anything considered critical. Inspection showed the builder attempted to “Daisy Chain” fuses together in order to make three individual explosives into one, which failed. Pocono Mountain Regional PD was notified. A PD supervisor arrived on scene, kicked the device, shrugged his shoulders and smiled. The PD seemed annoyed with “See something; Say something” and was not concerned with safety. This may just be people playing with fireworks, but it is still cause for concern as someone is experimenting with explosives which can have catastrophic results. Maintenance and Deputies were informed to be alert for any such activity.



4. Logging activity has halted in Long Pond as the entire area is extremely soft making road conditions difficult for vehicles to travel. I spoke with the forester who said hopefully everything will be complete in time before the PA Game Commission starts their burn project this summer. The PGC appears to be complete with the prep work for their upcoming prescribed burn project adjacent to our land. If logging is not complete it would require the logger to move his

landing site due to close proximity where the burn will be conducted causing more delay.

5. I received a call from a woman that lives in the Long Pond area whose property borders Authority land. She was concerned that the authority had sold land to a developer as someone was placing survey markers on what she believed to be owned by the Bethlehem Authority. I responded directly to the area and was able to locate the general location of all property lines in the area. A neighboring property is planning some type of construction, but nothing appears to be on our land. The caller was not home so prior to leaving I placed a ribbon on the callers property pin so future checks will be easier to make.

I then spoke with the caller via cell phone and explained my findings. I was informed that she appreciates the Bethlehem Authority. She told her concerned neighbors that "when you call the Bethlehem Authority they check things out." I was given permission, without asking, to use her driveway to gain access to our land and check on things whenever I need.

6. One night I received a call from the president of the Rocky Ridge Hunting Club in Long Pond. Reportedly a few "kids" trespassed onto the clubs lease and put a raft out onto the clubs pond. The individuals were now stranded being stuck on logs or stumps in the pond. The caller was not on scene and did not have any further information. A resident in the community that borders our land had called the club president with this information.

I responded to the area and found that someone had placed a raft belonging to the club on the pond and was now floating on the opposite side of the water. The raft is normally upside down near the pond so it had to be moved deliberately. With the drone I was able to check the entire area and did not find any people in distress or in the area. A closer look with the drone showed a great deal of water in the raft. The water inside suggests it has been out on the pond for several days as we recently had a few days with heavy rain. The club president assured me the raft will be secured better.

7. Falcons have been observed more frequently in the Penn Forest and Long Pond areas. Since February I have started to see them more regularly. Ruffed Grouse have started drumming and can be heard at several locations. West Nile has had a detrimental effect on the Pennsylvania Grouse population over the past few years. This may be a positive sign as the drumming is being heard in more areas than previous years. Bears are also moving around more as a sow and her cubs from last spring have been spotted several times.