

# Lehigh Valley Ramblings

Conservative or Liberal, Deist or Pagan, Jersey transplant or Lehigh Valley native, we're all in this mess together. Let's talk. Let us do no harm. Today's one-liner: "The shortest way to the distinguishing excellence of any writer is through his hostile critics."  
Richard LeGallienne

## About Me



**Bernie O'Hare**

Nazareth, Pa., United States

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## FT: Fire Trachta

Tuesday, August 26, 2014

## A Microcosm of Northampton County at a Gaming Board Hearing?

Last night, Northampton County's nine-member Gaming Board met for the latest round of grant applications for casino slots revenue. A few months ago, they approved grants limited to the municipalities that surround the Sands Casino in Bethlehem. This latest round is for everyone; all 38 boroughs, townships and cities within the County. The maximum grant is \$50,000, and only one application per municipality is accepted.



Palmer Police Chief Larry Palmer

Thirty-five applications were reviewed, so it was a long meeting. Board members are going to rate them individually before they meet again on September 22. So in a way, nothing happened. But in another way, everything happened. That meeting was in many ways a microcosm of the entire County. It told me what's working, and where improvement is needed. It also provided small tidbits about our local communities. Let's start.

**1. West Easton and Upper Mount Bethel Failed To Seek Grants.** - These two municipalities passed up an opportunity to apply for free money. Neither one of them is rolling in the dough. Both could use new road equipment, or might have other, more pressing, needs. Their failure to take the time to apply is an indication that both of them are in trouble.

**2. Many Smaller Municipalities Failed to Send Grant Advocates.** - Thirteen municipalities, most of them boroughs and smaller townships, failed to send advocates to pitch their projects. I was particularly shocked that Chapman Borough's delegation was missing.

"If you need the money, come here and talk to us about it," advised Board Chair Jay Finnigan.

These smaller communities need more active involvement from the County.

**3. News reporters are becoming extinct.** - Neither daily newspaper sent a reporter to cover a meeting concerning \$1.5 million in grant money. When the fourth estate is absent from these kinds of decisions, mischief becomes possible.

### Fire Nazareth Police Chief Thomas Trachta

We are requesting that Nazareth Police Chief Thomas Trachta be dismissed for abusing the civil rights of ordinary citizens, abuse of office, failure to supervise and blackballing a police applicant with false information.

Sign the  
Petition!

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### My Verdict v. Mezzacappa: 6% Legal Interest

\$67,140.00 on 3/28/14  
\$68,817.58 on 8/27/14

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Roseto Boro Council member Jenn Newland

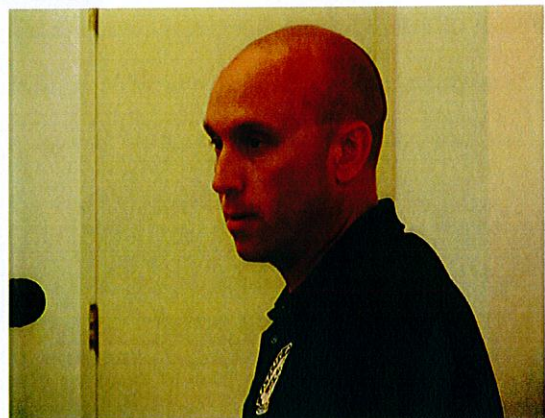
and Council for their approach to the Gaming Board. They both send liaisons, in the form of Bob Mateff (Exec) and Ken Kraft (Council). Both provide a lot of background information. Last night, Council members Scott Parsons and Bob Werner were in the peanut gallery as well. I told Parsons he could not speak unless he could prove his residency.

**6. Municipalities See Wisdom in Regional Police Forces.** - Plainfield Township, along with Wind Gap and Pen Argyl Boroughs, have come together with a joint application to help with the start-up costs of a regional police department. Scott Parsons, a former Wind Gap Council member who said the process started 15 years ago, said it's "finally moving forward." Based at the Plainfield Township station, the new department is slated to start in January.

### 7. Bangor's New Police Chief Wants to Get His Force Accredited.

- Scott Felchock, Bangor's new police chief, is trying to get his force accredited. He told Commissioners that they provide 24-hour coverage.

**8. Lehigh U Does Work With Bethlehem to Protect Students.** - Thanks to Lehigh University, Bethlehem already has 28 surveillance cameras along the Third and Fourth Street corridors. Bethlehem wants three more along Fourth, and Lehigh will help with the cost.



Tatamy Police Sgt Keith Snyder

**9. East Bangor Wants to Convert Municipal Building Into Emergency Shelter.** - Because you never know.

**10. Freemansburg Officials Go Extra Mile.** - Freemansburg has only 2,700 residents, and those are largely seniors or people of very modest means. But yesterday, Borough manager Judy Danko and two Borough Council members made sure they were present to advocate for their grant, even though Mayor Gerald Yob is on the Board. That's exceptional. Of course, it helps that Council member Jim Smith is originally a cracker from Shenandoah, where there's a bar and church at every corner so you can get drunk, but go to confession so you can get drunk again.

You're stuck with me.

**4. Northampton County has a dedicated corps of volunteers.** - A nine-member board meeting in the middle of the Summer to review 35 grant applications for \$1.5 million, and none of them gets a dime? Not only did they meet, but they paid attention and asked pertinent questions.

**5. Both Council and The Exec Are Paying Attention.** - I have to compliment both the Exec

and Council for their approach to the Gaming Board. They both send liaisons, in the form of Bob Mateff (Exec) and Ken Kraft (Council). Both provide a lot of background information. Last night, Council members Scott Parsons and Bob Werner were in the peanut gallery as well. I told Parsons he could not speak unless he could prove his residency.

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**11. Radar Speed Signs Are Popular.** - Admit it, you love them. That's what Hanover Township's Ryan Kish claims, and I admit I do love to drive at exactly one mph below whatever limit is on the sign.

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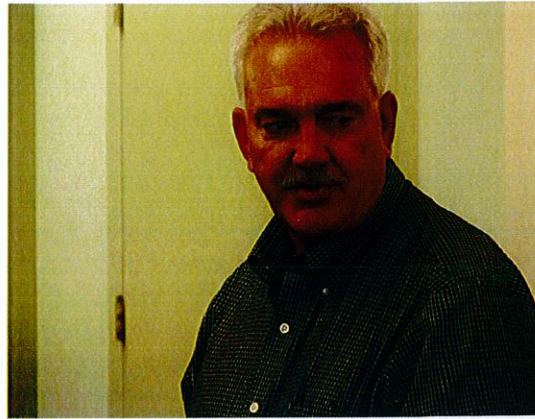
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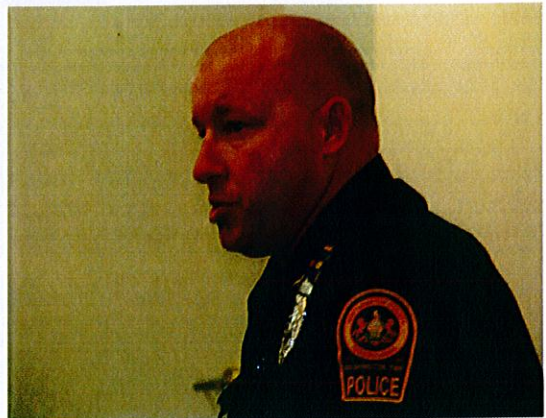


Upper Nazareth Police Chief Alan Siegfried

Pennsylvania Dutch, but they are all on a different radio frequencies. That's a problem because Lehigh Township borders both of these counties. Bob Mateff had an answer, but lost me about three seconds after he said "multiband."

**14. Lower Mount Bethel Still Using a 1986 GMAC Truck.** - I think last Winter did it in, but maybe they should try to get two or three more years out of it. See, the sludge must improve its lifespan!

**15. Crime and Accident Scene Software a Must.** - Chief Larry Palmer, whose police department has just been accredited, would like that software and gave a pretty good reason. Not long ago, a well-liked woman was unfortunately struck by a vehicle and killed while crossing 25th Street to go to her job at Giant. Five lanes on 25th Street were closed for an entire evening while officers did their accident reconstruction with tape measures and camera. If they had software, their job would be done in two hours. That saves them time and makes road safe.



Washington Tp Officer Scott Miller

**16. Six Tatamy Police officers share one computer work station.** - With the Chrin Interchange coming closer to reality, Sgt. Keith Snyder thinks it's time for an upgrade. D'you think? I wonder who sets the screen saver.

Board member Tony Pristash admitted he kind of likes them, too. "I understand you have the top score on one," Finnigan wisecracked.

**12. Lehigh Township Owns Three Bridges.** - Lehigh Township owns three bridges on its own, including the Ash Road Bridge.

**13. Lehigh Tp. Police Cant's Talk to Lehigh County, Carbon County Cops.** - Sure, they all speak English or

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17. A Thermal Imaging Device Could Save Lives.

Upper Nazareth Police Chief Alan Siegfried is no cupcake. He'd like a thermal imaging device, and let me explain why. Numerous Nazareth Schools, as well as Gracedale and the 911 Center are located in Upper Nazareth. In addition, there are one helluva' lot of cornfields. What if a

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Freemansburg's Judy Danko

mentally unstable person walks out of Gracedale and into a cornfield, or some child runs away and gets lost in those fields? That person can be found easily with a thermal imaging device. What's more, Upper Nazareth is centrally located, and Chief Siegfried will make the device available to other departments.

**18. Washington Tp Police Used Zoning Vehicle Last Winter.** - Scott Miller, Officer-in-Charge in Washington

Township was asked why he wants a Ford Expedition for his police department instead of some less expensive model. He told everyone that there are thirty miles of roadways, some of them dirt, and the Expedition has a lock-in four-wheel drive. Things were so bad last Winter they were using a zoning vehicle to patrol. Washington Township has a mutual aid agreement with seven municipalities, and 11% of its calls are mutual aid requests.

**19. Charlie Chrin Still Donating to Williams Township?** - This township is in the process of acquiring property across the street from its park, which it wants to turn into additional park space and temporary parking. The township hopes to put GeoGrow under the grass, and Chrin is the name mentioned as a possible source of matching funds.

Posted by [Bernie O'Hare](#) at 12:00 AM

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)



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## 38 comments:

**Anonymous said...**

Excellent article Bernie. Thanks for covering it. West Easton and UMBT have unfit governments if they didn't apply for this money. West Easton's mayor moans how their citizens are their tax base, because there is no industry. West Easton is faced with having to buy a large (ie expensive) truck for snow removal, and here they don't even apply for \$50,000. LOSERS. Their citizens should be outraged at this incompetent leadership. Are they paying attention?

1:03 AM



**Bernie O'Hare said...**

Facts are facts. I believe a lot of these smaller governments miss out at the grant table bc they lack the staff to know what is out there, let alone apply. WE really needs to evaluate whether they are doing right by the people they represent. They have some great people like Tom Nodoline, and even Mayor Gross is a good person, but they've been distracted, and it is affecting them.

UMB lost a twp manager. Bob Cartwright was plugged in there and needed a little time to acclimate, but I think he'll be fine.

Numerous smaller municipalities, including Nazareth, didn't show up.

This is the problem of these small governments. The County should make an effort to work with them, even if it means lending some manpower to complete applications. That is community and economic development.