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June 14, 2017

The Honorable Randy Vulakovich, Senator
Senate Box 203038
168 Main Capital Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Senator Vulakovich;

My name is Gary Hoffman and I am the Director of Communications for the Monroe County Control Center, Monroe County's 9-1-1 Center. I am writing to you today in reference to the After Action Hearing regarding the Eric Frein case. Unfortunately, I found out a little too late that this After Action Hearing was being held and unfortunately, I could not be in attendance. Please accept this letter as my testimony, and I ask that you include it as part of the record.

My intent is not to complain about the cost, because two Pennsylvania State Police Officers, Corporal Bryan Dickson and Trooper Alex Douglass paid a serious cost that no one could ever repay. No amount of money can replace the loss of one's husband or a child's father.

No one will ever repay Trooper Alex Dickson for the loss of a career due to an incapacitating injury that he has endured and will continue to endure probably for the rest of his life.

I will try to be brief and to the point and explain what resulted in the events which began with the first pull of the trigger by Eric Frein, and why people responded the way they did.

Our 9-1-1 center over the course of the manhunt documented over 1,033 incidents or calls from the public and our public safety providers as the direct result of the cold-blooded murder of Corporal Bryan Dickson and the attempted murder of Trooper Alex Douglas, two of our own Pennsylvania State Police Officers.

There were tens of thousands of radio transmissions dispatching possible "sightings" of Frein. Residents and members of the traveling public who were literally scared for their lives not knowing how close evil was to them. We fielded calls from people who did not even live in our area or Pike County for that matter. They read or saw on national television about the event and manhunt each day in the media.

One didn't have to stand back very long, it was almost immediately that you saw a community grow out of nothing and spring to action where everyday people stood up and began working together. What started as a horrible event changed people from focusing on fear that was in their neighborhood to

surface and pull together to help support an "army" of law enforcement personnel. Police personnel came from all over the United States, not just the surrounding area.

It started in Barrett Township with the local Barrett Township Volunteer Fire Company, who opened their firehouse to literally hundreds of law enforcement officers as well as hundreds of volunteers from all over. It began with the Barrett Township neighbors, a typical response for their community and public safety folks. It quickly turned into a countywide response, people from all over came to help feed and take care of their "army" who was scouring literally hundreds of square miles during this manhunt.

This "manhunt" was not just carried out during the daylight hours. It was a massive search effort, which went on 24 hours per day, 7 seven days per week for 48 long, raining, cold days and nights.

People brought food, all kinds of food. If they did not have it or make it, they bought it and delivered it to the Barrett Fire House. One day a tractor-trailer from a local Walmart distribution center appeared with water, cases upon cases of water to help keep those in the field hydrated.

One woman brought food every day to the firehouse. When you walked into the fire station you could see hundreds of cases of crackers and candy, all to benefit those in the field.

Volunteers cooked hot meals for each shift that came in. Local businesses donated food and supplies and a volunteer church group came to feed the searchers.

A field hospital was set up to treat the injured that searched through the Pocono Mountains.

Even though the residents were cognizant of the evil lurking around them, their fear of the unknown was offset in a way because of their spirit for community, which was raised beyond anyone's expectations.

Many organizations helped because they wanted to, not because they had to.

The staff of the 911 center helped the local Barrett Township Police Chief, Steve Williams, in any way we could. To name just a few, we supplied him with one of our 911 secretaries to help answer phones and collate information. We also set up our mobile communications unit so he had a "field office" which provided him with an immediate location next to the searchers. In addition, our staff worked various shifts serving meals to the search team before or after their regularly scheduled shifts.

A community tied ribbons and posted signs showing their support for those that were searching for Eric Frien. T-shirts emerged with "Barrett Proud" and "PSP Strong", they were seen everywhere. They were sold not only as a fundraiser to help the families of the two troopers but also to show the nation that we were one.

Eric Frien set his destiny when he fired the first shot. What he did not realize at the time is that he set off a chain of events in a community named "Barrett Township" which would never be matched anywhere else. This small rural community with a population of well over 4,200 people came to life on September 13th.

Eric Frien forever changed the lives of the families of Cpl Bryan Dickson and Trooper Alex Douglass; they will never be the same. Their plans prior to this horrible event will be changed forever.

The question that remains is why did all of these people do what they did to support the law enforcement agencies; State Police, US Marshalls, Border Patrol Agents and many more, why?

The volunteers did what they did because the law enforcement folks - searchers were there for the residents to keep them safe, and yes through diligence and an unwavering commitment to both Corporal Dickson and Trooper Douglass, they were successful.

If you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Yours,

Gary A. Hoffman
Director of Communications
Monroe County Control Center

Cc: The Honorable Lisa Baker, Senator
The Honorable Mario Scavello, Senator
The Honorable Jack Rader, State Representative
The Barrett Township Board of Supervisors