



Minutes - Final

Public Safety Committee

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

6:15 PM

Council Chambers

Roll Call: Chair Affa, Zucal, Mota

[15-7544](#)

Bill 19

Amending the 2025 Fire Department budget to provide for a supplemental appropriation of Eighteen Thousand Dollars (\$18,000.00) from the Norfolk Southern Rail, Safety-First grant. These funds will be used to purchase hazardous materials-related equipment for incidents that may occur as a result of a railway incident along the Norfolk Southern railway that runs through the City of Allentown.

Sponsors: Administration

Attachments: [Bill 19 Norfolk Southern Grant Appropriation](#)
[Ordinance #16109.pdf](#)

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated before we start, she would like to make a note that Ms. Affa is on the phone and Mr. Zucal.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that he is absent.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated ok, let's start.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated good evening Council and this is again, a grant that was issued to us by Norfolk Southern. He repeated what was stated there to purchase hazardous materials. This is no different than what they received last year. Only a few thousand dollars more.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any comments from the dais.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she would like to make a comment and asked if this is because of the train that goes through the city of Allentown in case anything would happen like in Ohio or whatever. She asked is this what we are using it for.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that it is basically to get equipment that is going to be able to assist us just in case of a rail incident and have to train. He stated that this actually outfits the hazardous materials team also what some meters or what with some foam and other items that will be

applicable to an incident down at the rail yard.

Ms. Candida Affa stated not just the rail yard, could it be used for anything else, like a truck with hazardous materials.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated something that goes on a Hazmat truck and can actually be used out on a highway or with any of the responses from the city that may be labeled as a hazard material incident.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that is good to have. Thank you.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Ms. Affa. She asked if there were any other comments from the dais. She asked if there were any comments from the public. She stated that she needs a recommendation. She stated that she needs a second.

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated you are the only second.

A motion was made by Candida Affa, seconded by Cynthia Mota, that this Bill be forwarded to the full Council.

Yes: 2 - Candida Affa and Cynthia Mota

Absent: 1 - Ed Zucal

Enactment No: 16109

Discussion of R35. This is scheduled to be considered at the full council meeting that follows.

[15-7582](#)

R35

Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Municipal Adoption Resolution.

Attachments: [R35 - Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Adoption](#)

[2024-Lehigh-Valley-Multijurisdictional-Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-updated-10-11-2024 Resolution #31029.pdf](#)

Mr. Michael Hanlon stated that R35 is to be voted on tonight and the chair thought you might want to take a look at it at this committee meeting beforehand to see if you have any questions. He stated that the Resolution basically adopts the Lehigh Valley 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there are any comments from the dais.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that he can have the Deputy Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator speak to this hazardous mitigation.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Chief Efrain Agosto.

Deputy Fire Chief Matt Eharth stated that this Plan has been adopted since 2008. It is nothing new. It is just updated every five years. The last time we did it, here in the city was 2019. In 2024, the county represented or brought out the new one and it is just time for them to adopt it. He stated that it is a key part of grant funding. It is a check box essentially, we are going to play nice and if we adopt this, it will just continue the relationships between the city, the county, PEMA, FEMA, and all the way up.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there are any changes, anything new.

Deputy Fire Chief Matt Eharth stated that it is basically small stuff. It is basically more case study stuff. Any incidents that happened between 2019 to 2024 would be in there. He stated that it is a long-winded document. He stated that he understands. It would be like if it was a flooding event, or droughting.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated what to do.

Deputy Fire Chief Matt Eharth stated that would be in there. Just as a case study.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated oh, ok.

Deputy Fire Chief Matt Eharth stated that it is not much changes. It is just legality to keep it up to date.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she has no questions.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she understands. She asked if there were any comments from the dais.

Ms. Candida Affa stated no, she has none.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any comments from the public. She stated thank you and asked if there was anything else he would like to talk about or inform them.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that they have nothing else. He stated that there was a fire earlier this morning and two firefighters were injured. They were seen and were released.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked where was it at.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated 119 N. 13th Street. It remained in one structure, but it was a little bit of a headache on how it continued to flow from the basement to the upper roof areas. It just took a little bit to contain so they called it a third alarm. They kept it to the one structure. The fire itself with the two adjoining structures and absolute amount of smoke and water damage. The displacement was not a large amount of people. It was maybe one or two. He stated two individuals that were displaced in the fire.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated correct her if she is wrong. She has noticed that they have been having more fires, lately.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she was just going to mention that Cynthia. It seems like 2024, they really had a lot of rashes and going into 2025 now.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated basically if you look at the record and the reports that the Fire Department put out, it is not much more than last year then any other year. It ebbs and flows and sometimes it appears. He stated that last year they had more larger scale fires that was deemed as third line, but you have to remember that sometimes three alarm fires aren't necessary called because of the severity of fires sometimes. It ends up being that we need more manpower to assist. Today, the guys were beaten down to an extent. They had two injuries, along with that they have several incidents that occurred that created that environment so a third alarm a lot of the time is called just to assist for manpower. Fires occur and if they look at it historically and it is still between the last four or five years, it hasn't changed much, but it seems to be larger because of the displacement in the few that they had.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she got it.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that is more to that story and that is something to be discussed once they do the critiques on the fires themselves and start looking at it. He stated that it is more the housing environment, more of the individuals that are in the structures. Sometimes it is just more people living in one residential structure that was meant to be for one family and they have been split up to multiple units so they have multiple families within a structure so it seems that it is larger. It is not necessarily larger. It is just larger on the displacement end.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she also feels that way because it is so close to each other. She stated you know what she means. She stated when you hear of a fire and three weeks goes by and you hear about another one, it is like wow. She stated that is why it feels that way.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated again, the media publicizes it and purses it out a little bit quicker and then it becomes a little bit more of a news story during that period of time. It becomes for everyone to see, but the city has fires and sometimes you will never hear about them because they are labeled as a working fire and they do not get beyond the second or third alarm. A lot of times, you don't even hear about them. As far as the numbers go, it hasn't been much more than what they typically are on a yearly basis. Right now, it is quick early in the year then sometimes it will settle down a little bit and then go up again. He stated that there are no rhyme or reasons, the fires. He stated that is just the reality of it. Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Chief Agosto.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that one of the major ones that took out almost the whole block was arson. It was domestic, wasn't? She stated that got a lot of publicity. She stated that it set four to five homes, didn't it.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated yes it did. That it did.

Ms. Candida Affa stated she guesses that is what it was. More major ones this year or more that they are aware of than any other year.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that is correct.

Dr. Cynthia Mota asked if there were any other comments from the dais.

Ms. Candida Affa stated how important it is to pay attention to the budget and what the Chief needs and what the Fire Department needs, whether it be the trucks because as far as she is concerned, they are doing one hell of a job. They are containing these huge fires with the four and five. She stated so many families living in one and it is congested areas and she thinks as Council people who can help out with a budget, she thinks they really have to pay attention to firefighters and all the equipment and pay attention to the Chief and what they really need to keep our city safe. She thanked them for everything that they do. It is one hell of a job.

Dr. Cynthia Mota stated that she shares the same sentiment. They do a wonderful job. They take a lot of pride in what they do, definitely.

Ms. Candida Affa stated that she doesn't think it is ever wasted money when they put money into something like the fire department. She stated Chief, hopefully, Council has your back.

Dr. Cynthia Mota thanked Ms. Affa.

Chief Efrain Agosto stated that they appreciate that and stated thank you very much.

Enactment No: 31029

Adjournment: 6:27 PM