

Miller and Bigley Campaign Corner – October 15, 2009

Rick Miller and Ginny Bigley will restore common sense to town council, so that the people of Lawrence get the quality of local government they deserve.

This past summer, Rick Miller and his council colleague, Bob Bostock, successfully negotiated with the trustees of the Lawrence Township First Aid Squad to turn over their headquarters building to the town for \$1.00. The building was needed to house the new 24/7 township Emergency Medical Service. The full-time EMS was created so that no one in Lawrence Township would ever again have to worry about whether they could afford an ambulance when they needed one.

It's hard to believe, but when this deal was presented to the current council majority, they objected to it. As reported in a local paper, Mayor Pam Mount said she wanted to know whether the volunteer squad (which stopped providing ambulance service two years earlier) was going to change its name or disband before she made up her mind. Councilman Greg Puliti said he felt we should also demand two vacant lots the squad also owned across the street so we could put a picnic table there for when the EMS squad had down time.

"I was in the audience when the council discussed this transaction and I couldn't believe it," Mrs. Bigley recalls. "Didn't these people understand they were being given, for just a dollar, a building it would cost as much as \$750,000 to build new?"

"As I said at the time, you don't look a gift horse in the mouth," Rick Miller added. "The squad trustees felt they had been treated poorly when Mayor Puliti told them in 2007 that their services were no longer needed. These additional demands had nothing to do with providing a headquarters for the EMS. They could have jeopardized the entire deal."

Another recent example of a lack of common sense involves the most recent appointment to a 5-year term on the Ewing-Lawrence Sewerage Authority.

Two Lawrence residents were interested in the position. One was a waste and drinking water infrastructure expert, currently serving in a senior management position at the state agency that funds wastewater facility improvements. He doesn't belong to either party. The other was the former local Democratic Party chair, whose only experience in sewerage issues was what he picked up from previous service on the board.

"When we interviewed the two candidates, I thought for sure the entire council would go for the person whose experience and expertise would have obviously been a valuable addition to the ELSA Board," Mr. Miller recalled. "But no, they put their political loyalties first. As a result, the town lost the services of a highly qualified individual who would have made a real difference."

“This is exactly the sort of thing we need to put a stop to,” Mrs. Bigley concluded. “Common sense means when you have two or more people willing to serve, and one is clearly more qualified, that’s who you pick.”