

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Crime fears greatly exaggerated

The number of major crimes in Pottstown in 2017 was lower than it has been in the previous 24 years, as shown in the chart below.

The peak year for major crimes was 1997, locally, and it is lower now than any time since the 1990s.

As I've frequently written, there's no evidence Pottstown is any more dangerous than the suburbs and rural areas, where there is a greater chance of getting killed or seriously injured in a car accident.

Last year there was one murder in Pottstown, which involved two men, who knew each other, fighting over \$20.

But murders and other violent crimes are endlessly hyped in the media. Type "murder" in The Mercury's website search engine, and you'll

find the word used in 510 articles during the last year in The Mercury and its sister papers in southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Mercury contains a weekly wrap-up of crime in Pottstown — however minor — but omits all the surrounding municipalities.

Pottstown Council is increasing taxes 12 percent this year. It noted the borough's bond rating may be downgraded "if finances don't immediately improve."

By far, the most expensive line item in the general fund is the police department, where salaries and benefits have increased at nearly triple the rate of inflation in recent years.

The question is, with a declining tax base, can Pottstown afford a police force of 46 sworn officers?

The answer is painful, but obvious: It can't.



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Murder/Manslaughter	1	0	1	2	2	1	0	0
Forcible Rape	21	22	22	22	37	20	22	25
Robbery	59	48	49	66	63	61	62	78
Assault	401	341	375	328	294	341	350	477
Burglary	110	122	118	179	219	158	125	165
Larceny-Theft	661	753	917	899	960	768	697	785
Motor Vehicle Theft	46	55	57	63	42	36	39	56
Arson	5	4	4	16	7	13	12	10
<b>Part I Crimes - Total</b>	<b>1304</b>	<b>1345</b>	<b>1543</b>	<b>1575</b>	<b>1624</b>	<b>1398</b>	<b>1307</b>	<b>1596</b>

	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Murder/Manslaughter	0	2	3	2	2	1	1	1
Forcible Rape	10	16	20	18	23	25	27	11
Robbery	64	81	83	74	48	62	58	68
Assault	426	426	434	386	381	400	405	384
Burglary	165	181	192	232	124	154	175	183
Larceny-Theft	773	973	917	912	915	1004	853	879
Motor Vehicle Theft	73	90	84	88	104	94	94	93
Arson	10	17	22	26	16	10	15	14
<b>Part I Crimes - Total</b>	<b>1310</b>	<b>1636</b>	<b>1755</b>	<b>1737</b>	<b>1613</b>	<b>1750</b>	<b>1643</b>	<b>1633</b>

	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994
Murder/Manslaughter	2	1	1	0	3	0	1	1
Forcible Rape	19	7	7	10	8	18	7	8
Robbery	57	56	46	47	46	47	48	44
Assault	339	359	471	499	463	495	554	541
Burglary	145	136	194	233	253	231	227	232
Larceny-Theft	759	675	779	838	1041	915	659	703
Motor Vehicle Theft	82	86	83	62	89	90	66	62
Arson	11	4	17	26	8	7	8	11
<b>Part I Crimes - Total</b>	<b>1414</b>	<b>1324</b>	<b>1598</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>1803</b>	<b>1570</b>	<b>1602</b>

**As the charts show, crime has generally decreased over the last 24 years.**