

## Masontown retains new engineer

### *Council ends longstanding relationship with company*

By J. MILES LAYTON  
jmlayton@heraldstandard.com

MASONTOWN – Borough council ended its long relationship with Fayette Engineering Co. Inc.

Council approved retaining Sleighter Engineering of Lemont Furnace as the borough's engineer on Thursday.

Fayette Engineering of Lemont Furnace had served Masontown Borough for more than 46 years.

"It's been a pleasure to have served the borough all these years," Russ Mechling, president of Fayette Engineering, said after the meeting.

Council approved a plan to terminate Fayette Engineering's contract immediately, but then entered into a lengthy executive session. When the

regular meeting resumed, a new motion was adopted to end Fayette Engineering's contract on Wednesday.

Fayette Engineering shepherded the borough through the construction of its \$925,000 municipal complex. Located at the corner of East Church Avenue and Main Street, borough offices moved into the building in early February. The district magisterial judge and police department are also located within the complex.

In June, Art Brower resigned as president of Fayette Engineering to take a job with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Mechling took the helm and the borough continued to retain the firm.

Council raised concerns about Fayette Engineering after a DEP permit that dealt with the water treatment plant had lapsed earlier this year. That permit since has been filed with the DEP.

Now that Fayette

Engineering soon will be out of the picture, the borough will have to contend with loose ends, such as a sludge issue at the sewage and water treatment plants. Fayette Engineering drafted expansive plans and had sought permits from the DEP to deal with the problem.

The engineering company was also involved in smaller projects, such as addressing flooding concerns and a sewer line replacement on Veterans Lane.

"We're confident things can be worked out with the new borough engineer," said council President Harry Lee after the meeting.

In other business, council:

■ Appropriated \$10,000 toward paving a helipad behind Masontown Volunteer Fire Department. The money comes from proceeds of the Act 13 Marcellus shale natural gas drilling impact fee.

■ Opened bids to purchase a backhoe loader and a grader from the borough. The backhoe

contract was awarded to MJV Enterprises in the amount of \$2,000 and the grader contract went to Jeremy Balchak for \$867.

■ Announced a sewer line on Veterans Lane will be replaced as soon as the weather improves. Council Vice President Frank McLaughlin said the job would take about two or three days to complete.

■ Announced that the borough's garbage contract expires on Jan. 22, so council will be discussing whether or not to renew its contract with Advanced Disposal Services Inc.

■ Announced that the borough is working in partnership with German Township to extend a water line 2,300 feet to the Fish and Game Club on West Church Avenue. The borough's cost would be about \$5,000 for parts and pipes associated with the endeavor.

■ Announced that any water customer who is delinquent with their water bill will have their service shut off on Jan. 7.