

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Borough of Patterson Heights, located in Beaver County, Pennsylvania received approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for a Peer Assistance Program Review. The consultant engaged by DCED and author of this review is Kevin M. Flannery. The purpose of the review is to provide an independent, third party review of the Borough's operations and to provide recommendations, if needed.

The review began in August of 2008 with the consultant relying on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission's *Standards for Effective Local Government*, 3rd Edition. The standards focus on smaller Pennsylvania communities and set minimum operating standards for thirteen functional areas including general government, records management, financial management, personnel management, police, fire, emergency management, public works, waste water treatment, planning, zoning and development, building and code enforcement, and parks and recreation.

The Borough of Patterson Heights does not provide a delivery of service in all thirteen functional areas. The review was done from discussions with borough staff and officials, site visits to the borough, observations and interactions with some officials and staff, and a review of borough records and documents.

This review is being shared with the Borough of Patterson Heights Council on Monday, November 24, 2008 at a Public Session. The input of Council will be included in the preparation of the final report.

The following recommendations are not in any particular order of need. The Council and staff of the Borough need to prioritize the recommendations. The consultant is available to assist in the prioritizing of the recommendations.

General Government

1. The Borough should undertake a review of the current utilization of space for compliance with the new guidelines of the American with Disabilities Act and what minor renovations would support implementation of better record management.
2. The Borough needs to establish a record management policy in compliance with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Guidelines. The Borough should make application to the Local Government Academy for a summer intern to assist in this project. The Local Government Academy takes application in January of each year.
3. The Borough Council needs to review with the Borough Secretary a succession plan for the Borough. The current Borough Secretary is a valuable asset of information on the operations of the municipality. What is the Borough's plan if and when he decides to retire?

Financial Management

1. The Borough needs to facilitate the establishment of a sound and effective computerized financial accounting system. The Borough may wish to include this function and training as part of the application for a Local Government Academy summer intern.
2. The Borough needs to establish the Sewer Rental Charges and Sewer Fees for Service as an Enterprise Fund and not include the revenue and expenditures as part of the General Fund Budget. It should be a separate Sewer Fund Budget and a separate Sewer Fund monthly report.
3. The Borough needs to provide a monthly report on the General Fund and Sewer Fund which details current year budget, amount spent in current month and remaining balance for the year with the percentage of current to the total provided.
4. The Borough should review its Investment Policy to maximize interest earnings.
5. The Borough should review with the Real Estate Tax Collector all outstanding real estate taxes for total amount owed, possible payment plans and review steps for delinquent real estate tax collection procedures.
6. The Borough should initiate a Capital Budget as part of the annual operating Budget process. This would provide clear expectation of needs for current and future years. This would include all municipal equipment, facilities and infrastructure. The infrastructure analysis component should include a detailed study of the all Borough roads and sanitary sewers and storm water

sewers. This should include a video component of all underground lines as well as a complete inventory of pipes, catch basins and inlets.

Public Safety

1. The current Police Agreement expires with Patterson Township as of December 31, 2008. A new agreement is being considered. The Borough should attempt to negotiate a five year agreement.
2. The Borough, in conjunction with the development of a Capital Budget, should review with the volunteer fire department functional coordination, and even consolidation, with the surrounding municipalities in regard to personnel and equipment.
3. The Borough should advertise and interview third party services for building and code enforcement with the establishment of fees to pay for the services provided.

Public Works

1. The Borough should account for public works functions and sanitary sewer functions separately. This will require some minor training of all staff members.
2. The Borough needs to fund a detailed study of the Borough's infrastructure including roads, alleys, storm water sewers, sanitary sewers and all items within the roadways. The study should rate the infrastructure items to a PennDOT standard and then prioritize the work needed. The study should

also include a probable cost estimate for each road. This study can be done by the Borough's Engineers. It should be updated every 6 to 7 years.

Sewer Fund

1. The Borough needs to establish a separate Sewer Fund Budget and monthly report.
2. The Borough needs to negotiate a new Billing Agreement with the Beaver Falls Municipal Authority by April of 2009. The current agreement expires on April 4th, 2009.