

Job Description – Borough Council Member

Borough Council Members oversee the operation of borough municipal government. Section 1202 of the Borough Code places general super-vision of the affairs of the borough in the hands of council. The elected members of a borough council represent the citizens of their community as the borough provides services for its residents. They are responsible for writing and passing ordinances effective in their borough and setting the policies of the borough. They oversee and supervise the management of the borough’s employees, including, often, a “borough manager” who, in fact, directs and oversees the every-day operation of the Borough.

The following are excerpts from the Pennsylvania Borough Council Handbook, published by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development:

Qualifications

To serve on Borough Council member, an individual must be a resident and registered voter of the Borough and must have resided in the Boro continuously for at least one year before their election. To qualify as a voter, a person must be 18 years of age and a resident of the election district. To continue serving as a boro council member, an individual must retain residence within the borough. Legal residence includes not only a person’s intention, but also a physical presence. Intention or voter registration is not enough; an individual must actually physically reside in the Borough. A person cannot declare a residence inconsistent with the facts of where they actually live. In boroughs where the Council Member is elected from a designated ward, the Member must be and remain a resident of that ward.

Compensation: As elected officials, Council Members may receive a salary as fixed by ordinance. The salary cannot exceed the maximums set for the following population groups, as determined by the latest official census.

Maximum Township Population Compensation

Under 4,999	- \$1,875
5,000-9,999	- \$2,500
10,000-14,999	- \$3,250
15,000-24,999	- \$4,125
25,000-34,999	- \$4,375
35,000 and over	- \$5,000

Council Members are expected to:

- Attend council meetings as scheduled, usually monthly or bi-monthly
- Attend budget annual meetings and set spending and revenue policies
- Serve on sub-committees established by the Council
- Attend executive meetings as needed
- Vote on ordinances (laws) and resolutions impacting Borough policy and procedure, serving as a member of the legislative branch of local government

The duties of a township supervisor are set forth in Pennsylvania's Borough Code, such as:

- Enacting local laws,
- Amending and approving the annual budget of the Borough,
- Appointing members of boards and commissions,
- Contracting for refuse removal,
- Approving police and fire department contracts (where appropriate) ,
- Authorizing the sale, purchase and maintenance of municipal buildings, equipment, land and other facilities,
- Voting on building, zoning, subdivision, land development and historic preservation issues,
- Making decisions about the maintenance of roadways and bridges,
- Passing on storm water and flood plains regulations,
- Approving township taxation policy, including setting tax rates,
- Addressing public safety and neighborhood issues, etc.,
- Administering sewer authorities, water authorities, ambulance and rescue services, emergency management services, parks and recreation commissions, and libraries,
- Hiring staff and road crew, and setting benefits for such employees, and
- Voting on such other issues as may be prepared by the Borough manager and administrative staff,

Council members need not be experts in finance, labor relations, engineering, or architecture. He or she does not have to run a snow plow or memorize, for example, the entire zoning ordinance. These tasks are handled by administrative personnel and other experts hired by the Borough. There are many other resources available to all supervisors as well, including written guidelines prepared by the Governor's Center for Local Government Services and the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs.

Other Expectations: Supervisors are also expected to serve as stewards of the community by participating in events such as non-profit fundraisers, local award ceremonies, community events, volunteer opportunities, as well as other proceedings.

Supervisors are also expected to be accessible and responsive to the public. They should be able to effectively communicate with the Borough residents their positions on any matter coming before Borough Council or affecting the health and welfare of the Borough's residents.

Thanks to Phil Lastowski (Millersville Borough Council for his contributions to this Job Description.

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