

Job Description – Township Supervisor

“Being a township supervisor is, in my estimation, the purest form of representative democracy we have in the United States—elected citizens representing the best interests of the residents of their township. It is the form of government that is closest to the people it represents, and it is the form of government that has more influence over your daily life than does the county, state, or federal government.”

(Tony Crocarno, former Supervisor, West Hempfield Township.)

Township Supervisors oversee the operation of township government. As far as most residents are concerned that means the garbage gets picked up, the potholes get filled, and the snow is removed, property values maintained, the environment is protected, and streets and homes are safe—all for the all for the lowest possible cost.

The following are excerpts from the Pennsylvania Township Supervisor’s Handbook, published by the Department of Community and Economic Development, at pages 5 & 7:

Qualifications

To serve as a township supervisor, an individual must be a resident and registered voter of the township and just have resided in the township 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 supervisor, an individual must retain residence within the township. 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 township. A person cannot declare a residence inconsistent with the facts of where they actually live.

Term of Office: The term of office for a township supervisor is 6 years.

Compensation: As elected officials, supervisors 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

Supervisors are expected to:

- Attend township meetings as scheduled.
- Attend sub-committee meetings as scheduled.
- Attend executive meetings as needed.
- Vote on ordinances (laws) and resolutions impacting Township policy and procedure, serving as a member of the legislative branch of local government.

- Often, Supervisors must chair at least one sub-committee

The duties of a township supervisor are set forth in the Second Class Township Code, Section 607. Here are typical examples of important functions performed by supervisors:

- Enacting local laws,
- Amending and approving the annual budget of the township,
- Appointing members of township boards and commissions,
- Contracting for refuse removal,
- Hiring members of the road crew,
- 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 setting benefits for such staff members, and
- Voting on such other issues as may be prepared by the township manager and administrative staff,

Supervisors need not be experts in finance, labor relations, engineering, or architecture. A supervisor 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 Board of Supervisors. 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 training sessions offered by the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors.

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.

Thanks to Tony Crocamo (Former Supervisor, W Hempfield Tp) and Kathy Wasong (Lancaster Tp Supervisor) for their contributions to this Job Description.

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