

# GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION NEWSLETTER BOROUGH OF CARLISLE

February 2014

Issue No.4

Welcome to the Borough of Carlisle Government Study Commission Newsletter. The commission will use this monthly newsletter to keep citizens informed about the progress of the commission as well as the schedule for key dates and events. More detailed information on the government study commission process can be found [here](#) on the Borough of Carlisle Web Site.

Please e-mail [CarlislePaHR@gmail.com](mailto:CarlislePaHR@gmail.com) to be added to the e-mail distribution list.

## **Current Status**

Following its decision on October 29, 2013 to proceed with drafting a home rule charter, the commission organized itself into committees focused on general areas identified during the commission's research phase to fully examine and consider key issues. Committees and members are:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Members</b>
Charter Development and Compliance	John Sacrison David Sheridan Blake Wilson	Citizen Participation	Bill Berwick Stephen Hughes Blake Wilson
Government Structure	David Sheridan Bob Winston Ken Womack	Tax Collection	Bert Lennon Phil Shevlin Bob Winston
Elections	Stephen Hughes Bert Lennon Phil Shevlin	Miscellaneous	Bill Berwick John Sacrison Ken Womack

## **Charter Development and Compliance**

The committee has developed a "shell" for a draft home rule charter. As the commission approves items for inclusion in the draft charter, this committee will integrate them into the shell. This committee will be responsible for drafting/coordinating charter input, compliance with the required legal timeline, the legal review of the charter and overseeing the draft of the transition plan.

## **Government Structure**

This committee presented its initial report on January 28<sup>th</sup> (meeting delayed from January 21<sup>st</sup> due to weather). The committee presented a report that calls for a six-member council and an elected mayor. The committee will continue to refine the duties of the mayor and council, their relationship to the borough manager, and election and vacancy procedures (in conjunction with the elections committee). The committee will present another report on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **Elections**

This committee was formed to study key election issues that must be addressed by a home rule charter. After a review of our current borough government, PA home rule laws, PA election laws and the historical experiences of other Pennsylvania home rule municipalities, the committee makes the following recommendations with reference to elected officials, number on council, basis of election, election terms and compensation.

1. The committee recommends that the elected position of local tax collector be discontinued and that this function should be performed as determined by the municipal council.
2. Consistent with the majority of existing home rule charters, the committee recommends continuing to elect the mayor and the council on an at-large basis.
3. The election committee recommends that the terms of office for the mayor be four year terms and the council be four year, overlapping terms.
4. The committee recommends that the compensation for the elected positions of mayor and council members remain as established by current and future borough codes.

### **Citizen participation**

On January 7<sup>th</sup> the committee provided its initial report. The committee recommends adoption of procedures to enable citizens to initiate new ordinances (initiative) and overturn existing ordinances (referendum). The committee identified ranges for the number of signatures required for initiative and referendum and timelines to obtain the signatures. On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the committee will make recommendations to the full commission on these issues for inclusion in the preliminary draft charter.

### **Tax Collection**

On December 17<sup>th</sup> the Tax Collection Committee presented its initial report. The committee plans to recommend that the charter abolish the office of elected tax collector and direct the council to enact such ordinances to require that taxes thereafter be collected by:

- Designated Borough of Carlisle department or bureau.
- Under agreement with another governmental unit, political subdivision or municipality for consolidated collection of local taxes.
- Appointed qualified individual or private firm.

The committee also plans to recommend to the commission that language in the charter about tax rates or ceilings similar to the following:

“In fixing the rate of any municipal tax which may be now or hereafter authorized by law, Council shall abide by the limits established by the General Assembly for Boroughs.”

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, the committee will make recommendations to the full commission on these issues for inclusion in the preliminary draft charter.

### **Miscellaneous**

This committee is responsible for examining those issues which do not specifically fall under the purview of the other committees. These issues include a code of ethics, borough purchasing/contracts and any issues not directly related to other committees. The committee is in the process of developing a matrix of state requirements for contracting and procedures tailored to the needs of the borough. The committee will make its initial report on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **Public Involvement**

The government study commission is seeking public input and comments on the government study commission process. Please contact the commission via e-mail at [CarlislePaHR@gmail.com](mailto:CarlislePaHR@gmail.com) with your comments and suggestions. You can also find the commission on Facebook at Carlisle Home Rule Study Commission. The commission strongly encourages the public to attend its meetings.

**Commission Member Spotlight: Bert Lennon**

Bert Lennon is a retired US Army officer who has lived and worked in the Carlisle area for over 20 years. He grew up on a small ranch in Red River County Texas until he was appointed to the US Military Academy at West Point, NY. Upon graduation from West Point, Bert received a BS degree and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Infantry. He later earned his MS degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California. Bert attended a variety of Army schools earning Army parachutist wings, the Ranger tab and the wings of an Army Aviator. He earned pilot ratings in numerous Army utility, scout and attack helicopters. During his military career, Bert served in command and staff positions within Infantry and Aviation units at numerous Army posts across the United States and in Germany. His two final tours were as a member of the staff and faculty at the Army Command and General Staff College in Kansas and then at the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks.

After retiring from the Army as a Master Army Aviator in the rank of Colonel, Bert worked for over 8 years as a computer programmer/analyst and IT consultant for Computer Aid, Inc. and TecPort Solutions, Inc. in Harrisburg, PA. He is now fully retired but remains active with local military retiree and veterans organizations.