

# GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

## BOROUGH OF CARLISLE

May 2014

Issue No. 7

### **NOTICE**

**Public Hearing to Receive  
Public Comment on Initial Draft Charter  
Monday, June 2, 2014  
7:00 p.m.  
Borough Hall**

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.

### **Commission Members**

Ken Womack, Chairman; David Sheridan, Vice Chairman; Robert Winston, Secretary/Treasurer; Bill Berwick; Stephen Hughes; Bert Lennon; John Sacrison; and Blake Wilson

### **Meeting Schedule**

The commission will meet in Borough Hall at 7:00 p.m. on May 20<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup> (both Tuesdays). The commission has scheduled a public hearing for Monday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Borough Hall. The purpose of this hearing is to allow citizens an opportunity to comment on an initial draft charter. The commission plans to make a summary of the initial draft charter, as well as the completed draft, available on the borough web site following its meeting on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

The initial draft charter is the result of over nine months of individual and group research, committee and commission meetings and public hearings. It is the commission's first attempt to provide the citizens of Carlisle a summary of the commission's work thus far and its initial approach to a draft home rule charter. The commission seeks public comments on the content of the initial draft, to include identifying additional issues which citizens believe should be included in the charter, as well as issues in the draft charter they may believe are not needed or appropriate for a home rule charter. In addition, the commission is looking to improve the clarity and readability of its initial draft.

### **Charter Development**

The Charter Development and Compliance Committee is 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. The committee developed an initial format for a draft home rule charter. As the full commission approved items for inclusion in the draft charter, the committee integrated them into a preliminary draft charter. The committee will continue to update the draft charter based on commission input, public hearing comment and legal reviews until a final charter is complete and ready for approval by the commission.

## **Issues included in the initial drafter charter include:**

### **Elections**

Six council members and a mayor who shall be the seventh member of council. Council members are elected at large for a four year term, three in each alternating odd year. The mayor is elected at large for a four year term every other odd year.

Term limits for council (two full terms with a minimum of two years before being elected again) and mayor (two full terms with a minimum of four years before being elected again).  
Abolish the office of elected tax collector.

### **Government Structure**

The Mayor serves as the “president” of the council and chairs all council meetings, and exercises the same authority and responsibility to vote as all other council members. The mayor has no veto. Borough council hires the manager. All department heads, including the chief of police report to the borough manager. The mayor chairs the public safety committee and is an ex officio member of all other borough committees. The mayor is the “face of the Borough” to the public and to other governmental entities.

Council adopts administrative code to include, among other things, a personnel code and purchasing code.

### **Taxation and Tax Collection**

The proposed charter maintains the municipality’s same power to levy and collect taxes and set tax rates as it now has under the Borough Code. Any change to this power would require an amendment to the home rule charter.

The proposed charter abolishes the office of elected tax collector and directs the council to enact ordinances to require that taxes thereafter be collected by:

- Designated Borough of Carlisle department, bureau; or
- Under agreement with another governmental unit, political subdivision or municipality for consolidated collection of local taxes; or
- Appointed individual qualified in accordance with PA Act 25 (2001); or
- Private tax collection firm.

### **Citizen participation**

Specific provisions for initiative and referendum to include number of electors required to commence initiative or referendum, timeline for submission of signatures, timelines for Council to take action and procedures for inclusion on the ballot if council fails to take action. In addition, the charter places limitations on initiative and referendum for certain issues.

### **Purchasing**

Council establishes, by ordinance, a purchasing code for all contracts for supplies, material, labor services or other valuable consideration to include procedures for competitive bidding, definitions, publication and notice requirements, deposit and bond requirements, and other contract specifications. These procedures may be used at the discretion of borough council when not constrained by applicable general law.

**Code of Ethics**

Borough council adopts a code of ethics for elected and appointed officials and a separate a code of ethics for borough employees to be included in the personnel policy as part of the administrative code. Confirms that the PA State Ethics Code applies to all borough elected and appointed officials and employees.

**Public Involvement**

The government study commission continues to seek 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: Robert Winston**

Bob Winston was born and raised in Connecticut, earned his BA at Bates College, and earned his MA PhD in early American literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He and his wife, Deb Fulham-Winston, came to Carlisle in 1979 when Bob accepted a job teaching English at Dickinson College. Although trained as an Americanist, by the time he left the English Department to work as a full-time administrator in the Office of Academic Affairs, Bob had been writing about and teaching detective fiction and contemporary Scottish fiction as well as American literature. He was the first director of the Dickinson Humanities Program at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England (1988-90) and was lucky enough to return for a second time in 1998-2000. Bob and Deb have two sons, Paul and Sam. Bob currently serves on the Carlisle Sewer System Authority.