

2023 Local Government Symposium

Looking Forward:
Local Government in an Evolving Landscape

Thursday, October 19, 2023
9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Welcome to the 3rd Annual Local Government Symposium

Hear from researchers, policy makers, and practitioners on issues facing local government today and into the future:

- ◇ Emerging Technology
- ◇ Municipal Merger & Consolidation
- ◇ Legal Updates
- ◇ Land Use Best Practices
- ◇ Emergency Services

*Be sure to join us at 4:00 pm for
a networking reception!*

Room 8E-B, Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
of the PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Welcome to the 3rd Annual Local Government Symposium

Local governments are facing new challenges that are inherently different than 20, 10 or even 5 years ago – advances in technology, new demands for government transparency, increases in local government service expectations, and most recently, responses to a worldwide pandemic, just to name a few. How have local governments adapted to these changes? What challenges do they still face? This year's Symposium aims to answer such questions.

Much like the overall mission of the Commission itself, today's event aims to provide a platform where practitioners, policymakers, and researchers can gather to connect, share research and policy proposals, spread awareness of local government issues and successes, and work towards increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of local government in Pennsylvania.

We're excited to have you here and look forward to a great day!

Local Government Commission

The Local Government Commission is a bicameral, bipartisan legislative service agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, serving as a specialized local government resource for Legislators, caucus staff, committee staff and constituents on inquiries, issues and legislation, providing objective expertise in many facets of local government.

Commission Members, with the aid of staff, identify, draft and sponsor legislation to address local government issues, and review certain intergovernmental cooperation agreements as required by law.

2022-2023 Commission Members

Sen. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chair

Sen. Cris Dush

Sen. Rosemary Brown

Sen. Timothy Kearney

Sen. Carolyn Comitta

Rep. Bob Freeman

Rep. Christina Sappey

Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade-El

Rep. R. Lee James

Rep. Dan Moul

Today's Schedule

- 9:00** *Opening Remarks*
Senator Scott Hutchinson, Chair, Local Government Commission
- 9:30** *Emerging Technology in Local Government*
Morgan Gray, Esq., Graduate Research Assistant, University of Pittsburgh
Kevin Ashley, Ph.D., Professor, University of Pittsburgh
Cory Fregm, Chief Executive Officer, Teleosoft Inc.
Jason Henry-Ruhl, Senior Product Manager, Teleosoft Inc.
- 10:45** *Merger of Wheatland Borough and City of Hermitage*
Lynne Shedlock, Acting Executive Director, Pennsylvania Economy League
Terri Cunkle, Local Government Policy Specialist, PA Department of Community & Economic Development
- 12:00** *Complimentary Lunch (Located in 60 EW)*
- 12:45** *Municipal Legal Update*
Samuel Wiser, Esq., Salzmann Hughes, P.C.
- 1:45** *Land Use Best Practices*
Brigitte Meyer, Esq., Staff Attorney, PennFuture
Eric Brown, Esq., Partner, Siana Law
Michael Crotty, Esq., Partner, Siana Law
- 3:00** *Emergency Services Providers*
Peter Hiryak, Manager, Douglass Township
Joshua Stouch, Chairman, Douglass Township Board of Supervisors
Andrew Duncan, Emergency Management Coordinator, Douglass Township
- 4:00** *Networking Reception*

*** There will be a 15-minute break at 10:30 am and 2:45 pm ***

Emerging Technology in Local Government

How can local governments better harness the power of new technologies? This panel will discuss machine learning and artificial intelligence as training tools and introduce innovative software solutions to increase county efficiency.

Morgan Gray, Esq., is currently pursuing his Ph.D. in Intelligent Systems at the University of Pittsburgh and is an adjunct professor at the Thomas R. Kline School of Law of Duquesne University.

Kevin Ashley, Ph.D., is a Professor of Law and Intelligent Systems at the University of Pittsburgh, a Senior Scientist at the Learning Research and Development Center, and a faculty member of the Graduate Program in Intelligent Systems.

Cory Fregm, CEO of Teleosoft Inc., has a diverse background in technical sales, strategic account management, and business operations, and has focused on helping county governments since 2014.

Jason Henry-Ruhl is the Senior Product Manager for Teleosoft's CountySuite Courts team, demonstrating a unique ability to create positive outcomes for county government stakeholders.

Merger of Wheatland Borough and City of Hermitage

Municipal merger and consolidation is a complex process. The recent merger of Wheatland Brough, a small, initially financially distressed borough, with the City of Hermitage, a fiscally health city, was no exception. Lynne Shedlock and Terri Cunkle discuss their experience helping to guide these municipalities, through Pennsylvania's Strategic Management Planning Program, through the merger process, focusing on both short- and long-term goals and impacts, ultimately resulting in an approval vote in both communities.

Lynne Shedlock is the current acting executive director of the Pennsylvania Economy League. She is responsible for PEL reports completed under the state's Strategic Management Planning (STMP) program for local governments and for similar technical assistance projects.

Terri Cunkle, who has over 15 years' experience in local government, serves as the Northwest Local Government Policy Specialist with the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, Governor's Center for Local Government Services. Terri formerly served as administrator for a second-class township and as a DCED peer-to-peer.

Municipal Legal Update

The legal environment is constantly changing, and the field of municipal law is certainly not immune to such changes. Municipal solicitors and officials alike need to stay current on legal trends, new legislation, and court cases impacting municipal practice. Sam Wiser discusses recent legal updates that impact municipalities and “hot topic” areas for local government officials and solicitors to keep an eye on.

Samuel Wiser, Esq., has provided comprehensive legal services in the areas of municipal law, zoning and land use, environmental law, and general litigation for 17 years, and serves as the chair of Salzman Hughes, P.C.’s municipal practice group, which represents over 100 municipalities throughout the Commonwealth. In addition to serving as solicitor and special counsel to many municipalities and authorities, Sam also frequently serves as a guest speaker and presents for various municipal associations.

Sam earned his undergraduate degree from Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania in 2003 and his J.D. from Widener University of Commonwealth in 2006.

Land Use Best Practices

Growth and development are paramount to the health of a municipality. However, managing community development requires a delicate balance by the municipality. This panel will discuss current trends in land use, including logistics and warehouse zoning as presented in PennFuture's report and accompanying model logistics use zoning ordinance.

Brigitte Meyer, Esq., the lead author of PennFuture's *Living with Logistics* report, is a Staff Attorney in PennFuture's Pocono Office, where her work focuses on land use, water quality and watershed protection, special protection waters, and stormwater management.

Eric Brown, Esq., is a Partner in the law firm of Siana Law, where he serves in the Firm's Solicitor, Employment & Labor Law, and Litigation Practice Groups. As part of his work, he counsels municipalities and municipal officials on a broad range of legal issues confronting the daily management of local governments.

Michael Crotty, Esq., is a Partner in the law firm of Siana Law, LLP. He serves in the Firm's Litigation and Solicitor Departments, representing municipalities and public officials throughout the Commonwealth.

Emergency Services Providers

Douglass Township was chosen as a winner of the 2023 Governor's Award for Local Government Excellence, for Innovative Community/Governmental Initiatives. With a combined 75+ years of experience in local government, Peter Hiryak, Joshua Stouch, and Andrew Duncan discuss their award-winning Emergency Services Building project.

Peter Hiryak, Douglass Township manager, has 33 years' experience in local government operations and administration including serving as a Zoning Officer, Building Inspector, and holding positions in Public Works.

Joshua Stouch, chairman of Douglass Township Board of Supervisors, brings 23 years' experience in emergency services, and was a founding member of both the New Hanover Township Emergency Services Board and the Douglass Township Emergency Services Board

Andrew Duncan, Douglass Township's Emergency Management Coordinator, has 20 years' experience in emergency services and local government operations and administration.

Thank you for attending the 3rd Annual Local Government Symposium

Today's presentations will be made available on our website, lgc.state.pa.us, for review. Be on the lookout for follow up emails to all presenters and attendees to garner feedback and suggestions for future events. To stay informed on our work, you can subscribe to our email list via our website.

The next Monthly Business Meeting of the Local Government Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 9:00 am in 515 Irvis Office Building. It will also be streamed live through Zoom.

Commission Staff:

David Greene, Esq., Executive Director

Kristopher Gazsi, Esq., Assistant Director/Legal Counsel

Martin Toth, Esq., Associate Legal Counsel

Julia Frey, MPA, Research Analyst

Jaren Bittinger, MPA, Research Analyst

Karen Bear, Executive Assistant

Sonya Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator