

2022 Local Government Symposium

Looking Forward:
Local Government in an Evolving Landscape

Thursday, October 6, 2022
8:30 am to 4:00 pm

*Join us for the 2nd Annual
Local Government
Symposium*

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

- ◇ Municipal finance
- ◇ Stormwater management
- ◇ Public employment recruiting
- ◇ Municipal liability
- ◇ Public input and feedback
- ◇ Municipal boundaries

Room 8E-A, Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
of the PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Morning Schedule

8:30 – Introductory Comments

Senator Scott Hutchinson, Chair
Local Government Commission

8:45 – Lansdale Borough's 10 Year Strategic Plan

Timothea Kirchner, former Borough Manager
John Ernest, Current Borough Manager
Dan Dunnigan, Borough Parking Authority
Matt West, former Council President
John Mizerak, Consultant

9:45 – Watershed and Stormwater Management Best Practices

William (Ross) Snook

10:15 – Break

10:30 – Importance of Work-Life Balance in Recruitment and Retention of Public Employees

Sara Grove, Ph.D., Michael Moltz, Ph.D., Michael Greenberg, Ph.D., Lisa Schaefer.
Tammy Shearer

11:30 – Act 47 Case Study of the Town of Greenville

Mary Jane Kuffner Hirt, Ph.D.

12:00 – Complementary Lunch (Located in 60EW, catered by Mission Barbeque)

Afternoon Schedule

12:45 – The Use of Deliberative Mini-Publics
in Local Government

Stephen Medvic, Ph.D.

1:15 – Municipal Finance Panel: Tokenized
Municipal Bonds and Local Tax Flexibility

Seth Trott

Lynne Shedlock

Patricia Moorhead

2:15 – Break

2:30 – Recognizing and Preserving a
Municipality's Equity in Local Utility Systems

Jens Damgaard

3:00 – Report on the Limitations of Liability
Under Pennsylvania's Sovereign and
Governmental Immunity Laws

Patricia Berger

Christopher Latta

3:30 – Crossing the Line: Impacts of
Variances Between Municipal Boundary
Mapping Systems

Kris Gazsi

Jaren Bittinger

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.

2021-2022 Commission Members

Sen. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chair	Rep. R. Lee James
Sen. Cris Dush	Rep. Dan Moul
Sen. Judy Ward	Rep. Jerry Knowles
Sen. Judith Schwank	Rep. Bob Freeman
Sen. Timothy Kearney	Rep. Christina Sappey

Welcome to the 2nd 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.

Lansdale Borough's 10 Year Strategic Plan

Local Governments face many complex challenges that require a multi-layered and focused strategy. Learn how Lansdale Borough developed a 10-year strategic plan that transformed the town and its municipal government.

It involved strong bi-partisan leadership from newly elected and veteran officials, experienced and dynamic municipal staff, improved access to data, public & private partnerships and leveraging of public funding. After a new group of elected officials took office, they hired a well-experienced manager who conducted a thorough Operations Study.

Learn how the Borough developed the plan, provided the right technical and financial resources to implement the plan, and the short-term and long-term successes that resulted in the transformation of the Borough through their full team collaborative efforts.

Watershed and Stormwater Management Best Practices

“The Local Government Symposium has given me the opportunity to share my research and Stormwater Knowledge that I have gained by both being a PSU Master Watershed Steward and a Township Supervisor in New Hanover Township, Montgomery County. Since stormwater knows no boundaries, I am looking forward to doing my presentation in the hopes that the knowledge will greatly help your township as it has helped ours, in flood control and land development.”

William (Ross) Snook is a retired Earth Scientist (PSU 79), who joined the Penn State Master-Watershed Program in 2017 and also serves as the Vice Chairman on New Hanover Township’s Board of Supervisors, the Chairman of the Environmental Authority Board, an MCATO Executive Committee Member, and the Associate Director of the Montgomery County Conservation District.

Importance of Work-Life Balance in Recruitment and Retention of Public Employees

State and local governments are experiencing high degrees of employee turnover, with the number of job openings reaching the highest level in decades. This panel will focus on strategies to improve public sector recruitment and retention efforts by discussing the importance of work-life balance to the changing labor market.

Sara Grove, Ph.D. serves as the Chair of the Political Science Department and the Interim Chair of the Criminal Justice Department at Shippensburg University.

Michael Moltz, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Shippensburg University.

Michael Greenberg, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Political Science and the Faculty Liaison to the Career, Mentoring and Professional Development Center at Shippensburg University.

Lisa Schaefer is the Executive Director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania.

Tammy Shearer is the Cumberland County Recorder of Deeds and serves as the President of the PA State Association of Elected County Officials.

Act 47 Case Study of the Town of Greenville

Mary Jane Kuffner Hirt, Professor Emerita, Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), taught graduate and undergraduate political science and public administration courses for 28 years. She also has worked as a city manager (Forest Hills Borough and O'Hara Township) and local government administrator with Allegheny County and councils of government in the Mon and Steel Valleys. Dr. Hirt has a B.A. in Government and Public Service from IUP and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public & International Affairs. Since 2006 she has been the Act 47 Coordinator for Greenville, Mercer County and has worked on behalf of Braddock Borough's Government Study Commission to draft a Home Rule Charter and the borough's Administrative Code. Dr. Hirt currently resides in Harmar Township.

The Use of Deliberative Mini-Publics in Local Government

Deliberative mini-publics are an innovation in democratic practice and institutional design that are increasingly utilized in cities and countries around the world, including the United States, to provide policymakers with informed, considered feedback from the public on questions of public policy.

Stephen K. Medvic, The Honorable and Mrs. John C. Kunkel Professor of Government and Director of the Center for Politics and Public Affairs at Franklin & Marshall College. His research and teaching interests include campaigns and elections, political parties, the media and politics, and public opinion. He has written numerous academic articles and book chapters and is the author or editor of seven books including, most recently, *Are All Politics Nationalized? Evidence from the 2020 Pennsylvania Campaigns* (co-edited with Matthew M. Schousen and Berwood A. Yost; forthcoming from Temple University Press).

Tokenized Municipal Bonds

The use of tokenized municipal bonds - or municipal bonds that exist on a blockchain - can help cities issue bonds in principal amounts that are affordable for middle-income residents. Typically, municipal bonds require a minimum investment of \$5,000 (sometimes \$100,000) due to the high cost of underwriting fees associated with the issuance. Distributing bonds using blockchain technology can reduce underwriting fees and allow cities to offer bonds to local residents with principals as low as \$100.

Seth Trott is a third-year student at Penn State Dickinson Law and Editor-in-Chief of the *Dickinson Law Review*. Prior to attending law school, he developed a technology startup and worked with an Erie-based think tank where he published policy pieces on topics including poverty, inclusive economic development, and green initiatives.

Local Tax Flexibility

The Pennsylvania Economy League will expand on its local government tax flexibility research through municipal case studies that demonstrate the financial challenges and successes faced by urban core communities including the cities of Bradford, Lancaster, Hermitage, Farrell and Sharon.

Lynne Shedlock, PEL Communications Director and Project Manager, works in the roles of project manager, research associate and communications director. In particular, she is responsible for PEL reports completed under the state's Strategic Management Planning (STMP) program for local governments.

Patricia Moorhead, PEL Director of Financial Data and Analytics, conducts research and provides advisory services on municipal management, budgeting and finance; capital budgeting and planning; personnel and labor relations; and related matters. Patty is a key part of PEL's STMP team, providing distressed communities with financial analysis that is used to inform day-to-day fiscal decisions as well as annual budgeting.

Recognizing and Preserving a Municipality's Equity in Local Utility Systems

For most municipalities, the local water and sewer systems are their most valuable assets. In addition to public parking, the revenue generating potential of the local water and sewer systems (especially water) typically make them the most valuable assets of a municipality. The monopoly powers granted to municipalities, in the form of mandatory connection ordinances, were essential to the original creation of such value. Once customers are connected, and on-lot systems abandoned, that value remains even if sold to another entity.

Jens Damgaard, Member at Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, is a public finance lawyer with more than 30 years of experience representing school districts, counties, municipalities, and municipal authorities in tax-exempt and structured financings for a variety of public projects.

Limitations of Liability Under Pennsylvania's Sovereign and Governmental Immunity Laws

The Pennsylvania Legislative and Budget Finance Committee (LBFC) presents their research on the limitations on Commonwealth and local government liability, and their recommendations for the General Assembly.

Patricia A. Berger, J.D., Executive Director of the LBFC, has served as Counsel, Senior Counsel, and Senior Counsel/Project Manager. She also served on the Executive Committee of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society from 2015 through 2021 as the Chair of the Communications Subcommittee.

Christopher Latta was appointed Deputy Executive Director of the LBFC in January 2018. He previously served as a Project Manager with the Committee for three years. Prior to his service with LBFC, Chris held several legislative committee leadership roles.

Crossing the Line: Impacts of Variances Between Municipal Boundary Mapping Systems

What happens when different agencies use different mapping systems to determine municipal boundary lines? The Local Government Commission presents their preliminary research on the multiple mapping systems used throughout the state, and how these systems don't always create uniform boundary lines as it relates to:

- Enhanced Emergency Dispatch with Next Generation 911
- Test Fairness of Subsidies and Grants
- Federal Reporting Requirements
- Electoral Administration
- Tax fairness and compliance
- Land use rights

Kris Gazsi is the Assistant Director and Legal Counsel for the Local Government Commission.

Jaren Bittinger is a Research Analyst at the Local Government Commission.

Thank you for attending our 2nd 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. In addition to next year's Symposium, we plan to offer opportunities for Continuing Legal Education credits as well. 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, October 19, 2022 at 9:00 am in 515 Irvis Office Building. It will also be streamed live through Zoom.

Commission Staff:

David Greene, Executive Director
Kristopher Gazsi, Assistant Director/Legal Counsel
Julia Frey, Research Analyst
Marty Toth, Associate Legal Counsel
Jaren Bittinger, Research Analyst
Karen Bear, Executive Assistant
Sonya Ebersole, Fiscal Administrator