



**THE
AUTHORITIES
BOARDS
COMMISSIONS AND
COMMITTEES
(ABCs)**

**of the
State College Borough**

Revised 04/01/16

PREFACE

The *ABCs of Local Government* is prepared and distributed to provide important information about local and regional ABCs (Authorities, Boards, Commissions and Committees.) It is intended to answer questions and provide specific informational requirements to those who have been asked to serve on an ABC or to those who are submitting an application for appointment to one or more of these advisory bodies.

Members of ABCs serve without compensation. Most are advisory to Borough Council but certain authorities are lease-operating boards rather than leaseback or advisory authorities. Some other boards have similar legal standing.

The Borough of State College extends the invitation to volunteer to all citizens, including those with a disability. Special accommodations will be made upon request and whenever possible to assist individuals with disabilities during their tenure.

Other information about ABCs may be obtained by contacting the Borough Manager's Office at 234-7110 or by visiting our website at www.statecollegepa.us. Please note that each ABC sets their meeting schedule in January of each year; however meeting days and times are subject to change.

INTRODUCTION TO How Our Government Works

State College is a home rule municipality, operating under a Council-Manager charter, which determines the structure of and operating procedure to be followed by our government.

Under this Charter, a seven-member Council is the legislative branch of the government. Members are elected at large for four-year, overlapping terms. Council members are not paid. In addition to work sessions, regular meetings are usually held on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building. All meetings are open to the public. A prepared agenda is usually available at the door.

An elected Mayor is the ceremonial head of the government. In addition, he/she serves as the Presiding Officer at Council meetings and has veto power on ordinance actions. On his/her

own volition, the Mayor may act as a community ombudsman for citizen complaints on certain appeals.

An appointed Manager acts on behalf of Council in administrative and non-legislative matters. The Manager is the executive officer of the government.

The Borough is a member of the Centre Region Council of Governments (COG), organized in 1969. Other COG members are the five surrounding Townships of College, Ferguson, Halfmoon, Harris and Patton. COG provides a variety of governmental services for the Centre Region municipalities on a contractual basis. These services include administration, emergency management, code enforcement, recreational programs, short- and long-range regional planning, fire protection and library facilities.

The Borough is a part of Centre County. At the County level of government, Council appoints representatives to the County's Airport Authority, Solid Waste Authority and Community Foundation.

Council receives advice from more than 100 appointed residents. Ad hoc committees and quasi-judicial groups account for approximately 30 other volunteers. Individual ABCs and their duties are outlined in this booklet.

If you are interested in serving on one of our ABCs, please complete the "Application for Membership for our Advisory Board" and mail it to:

**Borough of State College
243 South Allen Street
State College, PA 16801**

Council reviews all applications. If you are not selected to serve immediately, Council may appoint you at some time during the year, when a vacancy occurs. In either case (and prior to your appointment), someone will contact you to determine your continued interest in serving.

ETHICS IN GOVERNMENT

You, As A Member Of An ABC

ABCs were established to provide advice and carry out certain lawful obligations. Residents are appointed to expand citizen involvement in local government and tap the community's expertise in formulating policy. Persons interested in serving on an ABC should be aware that appointment obligates them to certain expectations. Act 93 restricts activities in which you, as a public official, may engage. These restrictions provide the basis upon which ethics rulings are issued, and include:

Public officials may not engage in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest. "Conflict" is defined as the use of the official's authority or office, or any confidential information received through that office, for the private pecuniary benefit of himself, a member of his family, or a business with which he or a member of his immediate family is associated.

Officials may not solicit or accept anything of monetary value including a gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment based on an understanding that the official's vote, official action or judgment will be influenced thereby.

Officials may not accept an honorarium.

Public officials, their family members, and/or their business interests may not enter into a contract valued at \$500 or more with the governmental body with which the official is associated, unless the contract has been awarded through an open, public process--including prior public notice and public disclosure of all proposals considered and awarded.

Former public officials may not represent a person, with promised or actual compensation, on any matter before the governmental body with which they have been associated for one year after he or she leaves that body.

Public officials who would be required to vote on a matter that would result in a conflict of interest must abstain from voting, publicly announce and disclose the nature of the interest as a public record, in writing, and file it with the recorder of the minutes of the meeting at which the vote is taken.

Every public official must file a Statement of Financial Interests for the preceding year no later than May 1 of each

year that he holds such a position and for the year after he leaves such position.

Because the effectiveness of the advisory system is dependent on the trust placed in their recommendations by the public, Council expanded on Act 93 and adopted *The Policy on Service & Conflicts of Interest*, which requires all ABC members to conform to the provisions of Act 93 and requires members to avoid an appearance of a conflict by disqualifying themselves from participation when an appearance of conflict exists. The policy also states, "*No member of an ABC shall use his/her position for the purpose of obtaining or attempting to obtain anything of value from any person or to improperly influence any action on the part of any person. Such activities shall be grounds for removal.*"

The success of the advisory system depends on the willingness of its members to spend the time required in preparing advice. A member who misses three consecutive meetings at which actions may be taken, therefore, is subject to replacement by Council.

Borough of State College ABCs

AUTHORITIES BOARD

In the past, several authorities were created to finance and supervise construction projects. As these projects were completed, several on-going actions are required to be taken during the life of the bond issue to conform to indenture requirements. To reduce the number of inactive authorities, Council combined the Industrial & Commercial Development Authority, Municipal Building Authority, Parking Authority, Sewer Authority, Storm Water Authority and Public Safety Building Authority into this one Authorities Board.

The Authorities Board has five members, all residents of the Borough. The Authorities Board meets infrequently.

BOROUGH WATER AUTHORITY

The Water Authority was created to operate and own the water distribution system for the Borough and other areas that may be authorized by Council to be served. This Authority is charged with planning for the future by developing water resources and encouraging conservation. The Authority is an operating entity with an appointed Manager and staff.

The Water Authority's Board is comprised of seven members appointed for terms of five years, all of whom must be residents of an area served by the Authority. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of each month, with additional meetings scheduled as required.

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health was created to advise on public health issues. The Board consists of five members who are appointed for a term of five years. At least one member of the Board must be a health professional. The Board meets quarterly.

Members of the Board are responsible for enforcing the laws of the Commonwealth, including the regulations of the State Department of Health, and all ordinances of the Borough enacted to prevent the introduction and spread of infectious or contagious diseases and protect the environment. Members also offer advice on the existence and abatement of nuisances and make recommendations to Council on rules and regulations necessary for the preservation of public health.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Design Review Board consists of five residents of the Borough who are appointed by Council for four-year terms. The Board routinely meets twice each month.

Members study and inventory the visual assets and liabilities of the community; make recommendations on plans, activities, and programs which bear upon the appearance of the community; assist in programs to enhance beautification; and prepare plans for the improved appearance of State College, whether it be on private or public property. The Board also works closely with the Planning Commission.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Human Relations Commission was established in 2008 and consists of five residents of the Borough or the Centre Region. Members are appointed by Council to serve three-year terms. The Commission was created to hear and adjudicate complaints filed in relation to the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. The Human Relations Commission meets as needed.

RENTAL HOUSING REVOCATION APPEAL BOARD

The Rental Housing Revocation Appeal Board is made up of three members and one alternate who are residents of the Borough. Members are appointed by Council to serve three-year terms. Members have exclusive jurisdiction to hear and render adjudications from decisions made by the Manager with respect to the revocation of a rental housing permit. Board members meet infrequently, when an appeal is filed.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

The Civil Service Commission consists of three residents of the Borough (or municipalities served by the Borough's police department) and are appointed for terms of six years.

The Commission has the power to prescribe, amend and enforce rules and regulations governing police appointments and promotions. The Commission meets infrequently, when there is a need for their service.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The State College Planning Commission is comprised of seven members, each of whom is appointed for a term of four years. The Commission meets on the first Wednesday at noon and on the third Thursdays at 7 p.m.

The Commission plans for the future development and improvement of the Borough and prepares policies, regulations and programs for consideration by Council. Areas of concern include land use, downtown revitalization, neighborhood conservation, open space, beautification, public facilities and transportation. Duties of the Commission are listed in the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. The Commission also tries to insure that singular interests and the overall public welfare follow the adopted Comprehensive Plan; to this end, one member of the Commission serves as a member of the Centre Regional Planning Commission.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The seven members of the Transportation Commission are residents of the Borough, appointed by Council for four-year terms. Commission members meet seven times per year on the second Tuesday of each month at noon.

Commission members provide advice to Council on strategies for parking and parking rates and for the implementation of relevant portions of the Transportation Policy. Members also discuss and recommend programs that encourage and accommodate the use of alternative transportation programs.

TREE COMMISSION

The Tree Commission consists of five resident members, at least two of which are professionals in forestry, horticulture, plant pathology, entomology, landscape architecture or related fields. Members are appointed for terms of three years. The Commission meets six times each year, usually during the day.

Members advise on the planting, maintenance and removal of trees within the public rights-of-way and on other lands within their jurisdiction and are responsible for a Master Plan for street trees. The Commission holds hearings when new trees are to be planted and hears appeals from property owners concerning decisions to remove or treat trees on public or private property.

HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION

The Historic Resources Commission consists of seven members, each of whom is appointed to a term of four years. The Commission usually meets on the third Tuesday of every month in the evening.

The Commission was established to identify historic resources within the Borough, advise Council on matters related to historic preservation, advocate for the preservation of these resources and serve as a clearinghouse for information and education on historic resources in the community.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CDBG Citizens' Advisory Committee consists of seven members who are residents of the Borough. The Committee usually meets on the first Tuesday of the month at noon.

The Committee's primary role is to create a focal point for resident involvement in the spending of the annual block grants and other activities related to the CDBG and HOME programs. The Committee provides residents of State College with an on-going opportunity to express their views and concerns about neighborhood and community needs that are eligible for CDBG and HOME funding. In performing these tasks, the Committee serves as an advisory body to Council, reviewing and making recommendations on grant proposals and related matters.

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Redevelopment Authority consist of five members appointed by the Mayor to four-year terms. Members must be residents of the Borough. The Authority usually meets at noon on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

The Urban Redevelopment Law was created by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania so that planning and redevelopment of certain areas will promote the general public health, safety, convenience and welfare of citizens and the community as a whole. The Borough wishes to encourage healthful housing stock, a decent living environment and adequate places of employment and commercial activity for the citizens of the Borough and the community at large.

REAL ESTATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Real Estate Advisory Committee was established to assist staff and the Redevelopment Authority with assessing the viability of purchases to promote the Housing Investment Program (HIP). The REAC consists of five members and meets quarterly.

ZONING HEARING BOARD

There are four members of the Zoning Hearing Board (three regular; one alternate), all of whom are appointed for three-year terms. During their tenure, members are not permitted to hold any other municipal office.

The Board is responsible for hearing and deciding appeals where it is alleged the Zoning Officer has erred in applying or interpreting the regulations; hearing and making decisions on special exceptions consistent with the terms of the zoning ordinance; and authorizing variances from the terms of the zoning ordinance as permitted by the Municipalities Planning Code.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ABCs

CENTRE AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (CATA)

CATA is a regional authority, overseen by a five member Board of Directors, which sets policy for its staff. Each of the five member municipalities (including State College) appoints one member to the Board. CATA usually meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 4 p.m.

CATA operates a fixed-route, regional bus service called *Centre Line*. Members also oversee *Centre Ride*, a complimentary, demand-responsive, para-transit service for the elderly and disabled. Fixed-route and para-transit services are also provided to non-member municipalities on a contractual basis. In addition, CATA operates *Loops* and *Link* services. CATA offers Ride Share, a carpool matching service for those who commute from outside CATA's service area.

CENTRE REGION PARKS & RECREATION AUTHORITY

The Centre Region Parks and Recreation Board has six members, two of whom are appointed by Council to represent

State College and the State College Area School District. Members serve for a term of five years. Since some members also serve on ad hoc committees, a typical Board member may attend approximately 15 meetings per year.

The Board acts in an advisory capacity to determine policy and programs for the Parks and Recreation Department and oversees implementation of these policies and programs within the limits established by an approved COG budget.

Board members are also members of the Centre Regional Recreation Authority, established to operate the William L. Welch and Park Forest outdoor swimming pools. The Board and Authority meet in common on the second Thursday at noon.

SCHLOW CENTRE REGION LIBRARY BOARD

The Schlow Centre Region Library Board, established in accordance with the Pennsylvania Library Code, is responsible for making policy for the Library and for overseeing Library operations.

The Library is a regional agency of COG, funded jointly by the Borough of State College and five townships. The nine-member Board of Trustees includes two residents of the Borough, appointed in accordance with the COG Joint Articles of Agreement. Members serve a maximum of two 3-year terms. Library Board members meet on the second Wednesday of each month in the evening.

CENTRE REGION BUILDING & HOUSING CODE BOARD OF APPEALS

The Board of Appeals was established to assure a uniform interpretation of the International building and rental codes. These Codes are administered by the Centre Region Code Administration Agency, a division of COG. Members conduct hearings on appeals from individuals aggrieved by Code interpretations.

The Board is comprised of five core members, each of whom must be a registered architect, professional engineer or general contractor. Additional specialist members are added to hear appeals involving disability access, plumbing, mechanical or electrical systems or existing structure compliance. Members are chosen on the basis of technical training, expertise or

experience. Council endorses appointments to the Board. The Board meets on call, when an appeal has been made.

CENTRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The Centre Regional Planning Commission (CRPC) was established to assist the Region's municipalities with planning activities and to serve as a coordinating agency among the six participating governments for a variety of activities such as comprehensive, wastewater and transportation planning. The CRPC oversees the COG Planning Agency staff and approves their annual work program. The Commission considers planning issues and problems that extend into two or more municipalities and makes recommendations for action.

One member is appointed by Council to represent State College for a two-year term. The CRPC meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

REGIONAL TAX APPEALS BOARD

The Regional Tax Appeals Board was established under Act 50, the Local Taxpayers' Bill of Rights to hear appeals of all local taxes. One member or one alternate member is appointed by Council to serve over a five-year period. The Board meets infrequently, when an appeal is submitted.

OTHER GROUPS HAVING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE STATE COLLEGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Centre County Airport Authority

Council appoints two members for five-year terms

Centre County Community Foundation

Council appoints one member for a four-year term

Centre County Solid Waste Authority

Council recommends the appointment of one member for a five-year term

Centre Network

Council appoints one member and one alternate member; each serve three-year terms

State College Community Land Trust

Council appoints three members for three-year terms

University Area Joint Authority

Council appoints two members for five-year terms

In addition, volunteers are appointed to ad hoc committees, study groups and temporary groups, all as needed.