

BUCKS COUNTY CONSORTIUM

Thursday, October 4, 2012

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order:

A meeting of the Bucks County Consortium was held at the Lower Southampton Township building on October 4, 2012 and called to order by Consortium President Carolyn McCreary.

Roll Call and Introductions:

The following Bucks County communities were represented at the meeting:

Carolyn McCreary, Plumstead Township	Linda McNeill, Tinicum Township
Mark Fournier, Telford Borough	Kyle Seckinger, Warwick Township
John Davis, Doylestown Borough	Andrea Coaxum, Perkasie Borough
Bob Pellegrino, Northampton Township	Marianne Morano, East Rockhill Township
Stephanie Teoli, Middletown Township	Melissa Shafer, Chalfont Borough
Darrell Card, Chalfont Borough	Ted Taylor, Lower Southampton Township
Rick Schnaedter, Hilltown Township	Bob Butts, Lower Southampton Township
Gail Gordon, Bristol Township	Tim Hagey, Warminster Authority
John Boyle, Yardley Borough	Robin Trymbiski, New Britain Borough

Sponsors:

Tom Hough, Hough Associates
Elisabeth Sibley, Hough Associates
Jim Gray, RBC Capital Markets

Approval of Minutes – September 6, 2012:

The meeting minutes from the September 6, 2012 meeting were approved.

Treasurer’s Report and Payment of Bills:

The details of the Treasurer’s Report were reviewed by Vivian Bell. The Report was approved.

Presentation:

President Carolyn McCreary introduced Brian Jeter from Comcast. Mr. Jeter spoke to the members about Comcast's *Internet Essentials* program, which was established to provide a less costly option for internet service to more students by helping households whose children receive free or reduced price school lunches. The website for the program is InternetEssentials.com/partner and any community can obtain more information about it by going to the website or contacting him. Comcast has already reached out to the school districts and the Intermediate Unit. He also suggested posting it on our website.

He also noted the potential cost savings for changing phone service over to Comcast.

Following that presentation was the panel of presenters to discuss municipal budgets. John Davis, the manager with Doylestown Borough, stated that he has a long drawn out process. He has nine board members plus a mayor. Members on each committee review their part of the budget in September, and meetings are heavily advertised but not well attended by the public. They continue to hold budget meetings in September, October, November, and December. In his opinion, the smaller the town, the more detailed the budget review will be.

Comment [CM1]: Please check this.

Stephanie Teoli spoke about her experience as a manager in Hatfield Township and Upper Makefield Township. She stressed the importance of having community meetings and establishing buy-in. She feels that the manager is much more involved in the detail in smaller towns. In larger towns, the detail is handled by other staff members in the finance department. At larger towns, she has only one or two community meetings at a higher level, and will do the budget presentation, but the buy-in isn't as necessary.

Melissa Shafer stated that in her five years at Chalfont Borough, there has been no public participation, despite advertising the meetings. Carolyn McCreary with Plumstead Township said that the economy has changed the process for her. Bob Pellegrino, Northampton Township, tries to do the "30,000 feet" overview during his televised public budget meetings. He tries to tell the residents what they get for their money – statistics on services.

John Davis said that during his budget presentation, he focuses on a few main areas, and the budget presentation message is in the form of a press release. Stephanie Teoli stated that she thinks her executive summary, which is usually 10-20 pages long, is the most important part because it gives the public and board a glimpse of what's going on. She then showed the members her budget slideshow, which was a very polished and professional presentation.

It was noted by several managers that illustrating local vs. county vs. school district tax millage in the form of a pie chart has been useful so that the public understands how small the portion of taxes is that goes to their local government.

Melissa Shafer then showed the group her budget presentation, which highlighted some statistics about Chalfont, notable revenue and expenditures, an actual real estate tax bill, and a neighborhood comparison.

Mark Fournier stated that he uses a budget document from Emmaus Borough that works well as a template for him. Different members of the Consortium then discussed their proposed tax and wage increases for 2013. The high cost of healthcare was also discussed.

Carolyn McCreary handed out an interesting article titled "Avoiding Death by PowerPoint" to help managers with their upcoming budget presentations.

Community Updates:

Other Business:

Tom Hough gave members an update on the Act 101, Section 904 grants.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea L. Coaxum
Consortium Coordinator