

ALTOONA GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2013 – 7:00 P.M.
CITY OF ALTOONA TRAINING FACILITY & COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1320 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ALTOONA, PA

CALL TO ORDER – call to order at 7 p.m. by Chairman Wayne Hippo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL – taken by City Clerk Linda Rickens Schellhammer; Present were Study Commission members: Richard Flarend; Beverly Green; Robert Kutz, and Chairman Wayne Hippo

Absent: Dave Duncan, Heather Eckels and Vice-Chairman Richard Fiore Jr.

ALL PUBLIC COMMENT – there was none given

INTERVIEWS

Phyllis Garhart, Tyrone Borough Manager stated home rule allowed Tyrone to uncap taxes and do their own tax reform; they eliminated the nuisance taxes to include per capita which was expensive to collect and mercantile and business privilege, decreased real estate taxes and increased earned income tax; their tax changes took place beginning in 1996 and in 3 to 4 year increments; they have a large elderly population; wage earners did not leave with the increase in earned income and in fact the EIT was \$300,000 in 1996 and is now \$900,000 in 2013; the Borough of Tyrone is a bedroom community due to its proximity to State College and I-99; they also restructured their budget and have not done a TRAN Note; their millage dropped from 31 mills to 29 and then to 21 when the County changed the valuation to 100%; the Manager is required to have a financial background; the Director of Administration is also required to have a financial background; there is no finance director position; before home rule the residents voted based on wards; they do not have a strong Mayor although the charter requires the Mayor to have an office in the Borough Building; they have fees for permitting and charges for services and assessment fees for sidewalks and street lights which are in the general fund; the Mayor has the right to enforce ordinances; he does this by contacting the department heads; the Mayor is not required to go through the Manager or the Director of Administration/Finance; Tyrone has five full time police officers and a chief and one fill in part time officer and a volunteer fire department that spends \$102,000 per year; Tyrone has service agreements with Snyder Township, Burningham Borough and Grier School; Ms. Garhart stated after her years working with the City she believes the City should keep the professional manager form of government with a home rule charter, restructure and evaluate taxes and how the city wants to tax in the future

DISCUSS ONGOING SCHEDULE FOR STUDY OF HOME RULE – the Commission agreed that they would like to meet with Michael Foreman of DCED at their October 22nd meeting to review the recent home rule

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information which he provided and begin to interview the City of Johnstown, City of Allentown, City of Reading and City of Wilkes Barre; Linda Rickens Schellhammer will email the charters for the above cities to all members of the Commission

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT (TIME PERMITTING) - none

MEDIA QUESTIONS - Media present included Bill Kibler, *Altoona Mirror*, Steve Willett, WRTA

ADJOURNMENT - by Chairman Hippo at 7:45 p.m.

Linda Rickens Schellhammer, City Clerk/Recording
Secretary