

BY-LAWS
GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

PREAMBLE

RECOGNIZING THAT THE INDIVIDUAL DESTINIES OF THE TOWNSHIPS, BOROUGHs, AND CITY OF BLAIR COUNTY DEPEND TO A LARGE MEASURE ON THE INTERDEPENDENT ACTIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT MAKE UP OUR COUNTY; AND, ALSO RECOGNIZING THAT THE MANY GROWING PROBLEMS WITH WHICH WE ARE FACED TRANSCEND THE BOUNDARIES OF OUR INDIVIDUAL LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES - THERE WAS CREATED A VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN JUNE, 1964 WHICH PROVIDES THE MEANS FOR CLOSER COMMUNICATIONS AND COORDINATION AMONG THE CONSTITUENT MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN BLAIR COUNTY AND THEREBY FORMING THE BASIS FOR SOLUTIONS TO MUTUAL PROBLEMS FOR MUTUAL BENEFITS OF SAID MUNICIPALITIES.

FURTHER, BELIEVING THAT ONE OF OUR MAJOR GOALS SHOULD BE TO RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN "HOME RULE" AND AT THE SAME TIME COMBINE OUR RESOURCES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES OF THE RESPECTIVE MUNICIPALITIES; AND BELIEVING THAT BY COMBINING OUR INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES, WE CAN BETTER SOLVE THE MOUNTING PROBLEMS WITH WHICH OUR VARIOUS MUNICIPALITIES ARE FACED WHILE AT THE SAME TIME PRESERVING OUR LOCAL AUTONOMY AND EXISTING SYSTEM OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, WE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITS OF GOVERNMENT LYING WITHIN BLAIR COUNTY, HEREBY JOIN TOGETHER IN AN ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS THE GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE GENERAL PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING AND STUDYING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS, FUNCTIONS, AND SERVICES OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN AND TO PROVIDE ADVISORY POLICY GUIDANCE TO THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE ALTOONA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION, THE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY OF WHICH IS TO GUIDE THE FUTURE ORDERLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF BLAIR COUNTY. THESE BY-LAWS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE FOR THE ORDERLY CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS AND AFFAIRS OF THE GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND ARE HEREBY SET FORTH AND SPECIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE I NAME.

THE NAME OF THIS ORGANIZATION SHALL BE THE "GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE" ALSO KNOWN AS THE "BLAIR COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS."

ARTICLE II AUTHORIZATION, POWERS, AND DUTIES.

1. THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND CONTINUANCE OF THIS COMMITTEE IS SET FORTH UNDER THE FOLLOWING STATUTES:
 - A. AS TO THE CITY OF ALTOONA; CLAUSE 59 OF SECTION 2403 OF THE ACT OF JUNE 23, 1931 P.L. 932 ARTICLE 24 AS SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED;
 - B. AS TO THE BOROUGHES OF THE COUNTY; CLAUSE 34 OF THE ACT OF FEBRUARY 1, 1966 P.L. 581 SECTION 1202 AS SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED;
 - C. AS TO THE TOWNSHIPS OF THE COUNTY; THE ACT OF MAY 1, 1933 P.L. 103 ARTICLE 7 SECTION 702, CLAUSE XL, AS ADDED BY THE ACT OF JULY 10, 1947 P.L. 1481 SECTION 9 AS SUPPLEMENTED AND AMENDED; AND
 - D. THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION PROVISION FOUND IN SECTION 5 OF ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF PENNSYLVANIA, 1968.
2. THE COMMITTEE SHALL HAVE THE POWERS AND DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THE BY-LAWS AS NOW OR HEREAFTER AMENDED.

ARTICLE III PURPOSE.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHALL BE TO ACT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IN PROVIDING ADVISORY POLICY GUIDANCE TO THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND ALTOONA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION.
2. IN ADDITION, THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHALL BE:
 - A. TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR IDENTIFYING, DISCUSSING, AND SOLVING REGIONAL PROBLEMS;
 - B. TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATIONS AMONG THE CONSTITUENT MUNICIPALITIES OF THE COUNTY THEREBY FORMING THE BASIS FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION;
 - C. TO MAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING MORE EFFECTIVE BY KEYING THE ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICIALS INTO THE RECOMMENDATION-FORMING AND DECISION-MAKING PHASES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS;
 - D. TO PROVIDE A DIRECT LIASON BETWEEN THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, THE ALTOONA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION, AND EACH UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN BLAIR COUNTY;
 - E. TO PROMOTE A PROGRAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN THE OVERALL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY BY ESTABLISHING CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE GENERAL CITIZENRY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY;

- F. TO PROMOTE THE COORDINATION OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE VARIOUS MUNICIPALITIES OF THE COUNTY IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFIT TO BE DERIVED FROM THEM;
- G. TO FACILITATE AGREEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE ACTION PROPOSALS AMONG THE TOWNSHIPS, BOROUGHES, AND CITY OF THE COUNTY FOR MEETING SPECIFIC COMMUNITY NEEDS;
- H. TO MINIMIZE ANY DUPLICATION OF EFFORT THEREBY PROMITING THE MOSET EFFICIENT USE OF EACH TAX DOLLAR;
- I. TO AID THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE ALTOONA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION IN GUIDING THE FUTURE ORDERLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTY BY PROVIDING A DIRECT INPUT OF THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF EACH LOCAL UNIT OF GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE COUNTY; AND
- J. GENERALLY TO MAKE BLAIR COUNTY A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK.

ARTICLE IV MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING POWER

- 1. EACH OF THE UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT BLAIR COUNTY IS ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE COMMITTEE. THE GOVERNING BODY OF EACH UNIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN BLAIR COUNTY SHALL APPOINT ONE REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE. EACH REPRESENTATIVE SHALL BE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY WHICH HE REPRESENTS ON THE COMMITTEE. PREFERABLY THE APPOINTEE WILL HOLD THE HIGHEST ELECTED PUBLIC OFFICE IN THE MUNICIPALITY.
- 2. EACH MEMBER SHALL BE ENTITLED TO ONE VOTE.
- 3. THE PRESIDENT OF THE BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SHALL BE AN EX-OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE AND SHALL NOT HAVE A VOTE.
- 4. THE GOVERNING BODY MAY ALSO APPOINT AN ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND AND ACT IN THE STEAD OF THE REGULARLY APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE IN THAT REPRESENTATIVE'S ABSENCE.
- 5. AS THE NEED OR DESIRE ARISES TO HAVE ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE OF SPECIAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS SUCH AS SCHOOL DISTRICTS, MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES, HEALTH AND WELFARE COUNCILS, OR OTHER FUNCTIONAL AGENCIES OF REGIONAL CONCERN, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE SUCH REPRESENTATION BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE COMMITTEE.
- 6. IN THE EVENT A NEW MUNICIPALITY IS FORMED OR IS OTHERWISE FOUND TO LIE WITHIN BLAIR COUNTY IN WHOLE OR IN PART, THAT MUNICIPALITY SHALL AUTOMATICALLY BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP ON THE COMMITTEE.

ARTICLE V TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

- 1. THE TERM OF EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL BE THE PERIOD OF HIS CURRENT TERM IN OFFICE WITHIN THE MUNICIPALITY.
- 2. SHOULD THE REPRESENTATIVE BECOME INCAPACITATED OR RESIGN DURING HIS TERM, THE GOVERNING BODY SHALL APPOINT ANOTHER REPRESENTATIVE.

3. WHEN THE REPRESENTATIVE'S ELECTED TERM EXPIRES, THE APPOINTING MUNICIPALITY SHALL MAKE A FRESH APPOINTMENT WITHIN THIRTY DAYS OF SUCH EXPIRATION.
4. REPRESENTATIVES MAY FILL SUCCESSIVE TERMS OF OFFICE; THERE ARE NO TERM LIMITS.

ARTICLE VI OFFICERS

1. THE OFFICERS OF THE COMMITTEE SHALL CONSIST OF A CHAIRPERSON, A VICE-CHAIRPERSON, AND A SECRETARY.
2. THE CHAIRPERSON SHALL PRESIDE AT ALL MEETINGS AND HEARING OF THE COMMITTEE AND SHALL HAVE THE DUTIES NORMALLY CONFERRED BY PARLIAMENTARY USAGE UPON SUCH OFFICERS.
3. THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON SHALL PERFORM THE DUTIES OF THE CHAIRMAN IN THE CHAIRPERSON'S ABSENCE.
4. THE SECRETARY SHALL KEEP THE MINUTES AND RECORDS OF THE COMMITTEE AND, WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF AND UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CHAIRPERSON, SHALL PREPARE THE AGENDA OF ALL MEETINGS; PROVIDE NOTICE OF ALL MEETINGS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS, ARRANGE PROPER AND LEGAL NOTICE OF ALL MEETINGS AND HEARINGS; ATTEND TO THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COMMITTEE; MAINTAIN AND KEEP RECORDS OF ALL RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS; AND SUCH OTHER DUTIES GENERALLY CARRIED OUT BY THE SECRETARY.
5. ALL BOOKS, RECORDS, PAPERS, AND DATA SHALL BE STORED AT THE OFFICES OF THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION.
6. IN THE EVENT THE SECRETARY SHOULD HAVE ANY RECEIPTS OR DISBURSEMENTS, THE RECORDS THEREOF SHALL BE AUDITED BY AN AUDITING COMMITTEE OF FIVE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRMAN. THE AUDITING COMMITTEE SHALL ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE TO ANNUALLY AUDIT THE BOOKS OF THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION, WITH A COPY OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT BEING FURNISHED TO EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, THE COMMISSION, STAFF, AND OTHERS AS DIRECTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON.
7. AN ANNUAL ORGANIZATION MEETING SHALL BE HELD BY THE COMMITTEE IN JANUARY OF EACH YEAR.
8. NOMINATIONS SHALL BE MADE FROM THE FLOOR AT THE ANNUAL ORGANIZATION MEETING AND THE ELECTION OF OFFICER SHALL FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER.
9. A CANDIDATE RECEIVING A MAJORITY VOTE OF THOSE PRESENT SHALL BE DECLARED ELECTED AND SHALL SERVE ONE YEAR.
10. VACANCIES IN OFFICE SHALL BE FILLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY REGULAR ELECTION PROCEDURES.
11. A CHAIRPERSON SHALL NOT SERVE SUCCESSIVELY FOR MORE THAN TWO TERMS. THE MEMBERSHIP SHALL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ROTATE THE LEADERSHIP AMONG THE TYPES OF MUNICIPALITIES (CITY, BOROUGH, TOWNSHIP).

ARTICLE VIII ORDER OF BUSINESS

THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE PUBLISHED AGENDA PROVIDED TO THE MEMBERSHIP AND POSTED TO THE PUBLIC. A MOTION FROM THE FLOOR MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO DISCUSSION, AND A VOTE MUST BE TAKEN (OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT MADE, IF APPROPRIATE) TO DISPENSE WITH A MATTER.

ARTICLE IX MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

1. THE COMMITTEE SHALL MEET AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR: PREFERABLY IN JANUARY AND IN JULY. ADDITIONAL MEETINGS MAY BE HELD AS DEEMED NECESSARY.
2. A QUORUM SHALL CONSIST OF AT LEAST TEN MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE. THE NUMBER OF VOTES NECESSARY TO TRANSACT BUSINESS SHALL BE A MAJORITY OF THOSE VOTING.
3. SPECIAL MEETINGS MAY BE CALLED BY THE CHAIRPERSON. IT SHALL BE THE DUTY OF THE CHAIRPERSON TO CALL A SPECIAL MEETING WHEN REQUESTED TO DO SO BY A NUMBER OF MEMBERS EQUAL TO A QUORUM OF THE COMMITTEE. THE SECRETARY SHALL NOTIFY ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE IN WRITING NOT LESS THAN ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE OF SPECIAL MEETINGS. SAID NOTICE SHALL INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE(S) OF THE MEETING.
4. MEETINGS SHALL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC EXCEPT IN THOSE RARE EVENTS WHERE THE COMMITTEE MUST DISCUSS NEGOTIATING STRATEGY, LAWSUITS, OR PERSONNEL ISSUES. ALL VOTING SHALL TAKE PLACE IN OPEN SESSION.
5. UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, THE STANDARD CODE OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE (STURGIS) SHALL GOVERN THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.
6. THE COMMITTEE MAY HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS WHEN IT DECIDES THAT SUCH HEARINGS WILL BE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, UNDER THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES.
 - A. THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE HEARING, NOTICE OF THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE HEARING SHALL BE PUBLISHED IN A NEWSPAPER OF GENERAL CIRCULATION IN THE AREA SUBJECT TO THE PURPOSE OF THE HEARING.
 - B. THE MATTER BEFORE THE COMMITTEE SHALL BE PRESENTED IN SUMMARY BY THE SECRETARY, OR DESIGNEE.
 - C. NO RECORD OR STATEMENT SHALL BE RECORDED OR SWORN IN AS EVIDENCE FOR ANY COURT OF LAW WITHOUT NOTICE TO THE PARTIES.
 - D. A RECORD SHALL BE KEPT OF THOSE SPEAKING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE AT THE HEARING.

ARTICLE X COMMITTEE SUPPORT

1. THE COMMITTEE, BY MAJORITY VOTE, MAY CREATE SUCH SUBCOMMITTEES AS IT MAY DEEM APPROPRIATE. MEMBERSHIP SHALL BE ESTABLISHED BY THE CHAIRMAN, AND NEED NOT BE LIMITED TO THE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP. IN CREATING SUCH SUBCOMMITTEES, THE COMMITTEE SHALL CLEARLY DEFINE THE CHARGE OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE, AND SET FORTH ITS EXPECTATIONS TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE. NO SUBCOMMITTEE SO CREATED SHALL CONTINUE IN EXISTENCE FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS, UNLESS IT IS MADE A STANDING COMMITTEE AND PLACED WITHIN THIS ARTICLE.

2. THERE SHALL BE A STANDING EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE CONSISTING OF THE CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSON AND SECRETARY. IF THESE THREE POSITIONS DO NOT INCLUDE REPRESENTATION FROM ALL THREE TYPES OF MUNICIPALITIES, THOSE NOT REPRESENTED SHALL ALSO HOLD ONE SEAT ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.
3. THERE SHALL BE A STANDING AUDITING SUBCOMMITTEE WITH MEMBERSHIP APPOINTED BY THE CHAIRPERSON. SUCH MEMBERSHIP SHALL INCLUDE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CITY, ONE BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE, ONE TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVE, THE EX-OFFICIO COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE, AND ONE MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE. THE AUDITING SUBCOMMITTEE SHALL BE CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEEING AUDITS OF THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION.
4. THE COMMITTEE SHALL HAVE FULL ACCESS TO THE BLAIR COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF, SUBJECT TO RESOURCE LIMITATIONS, TO CONDUCT SPECIAL STUDIES, UNDERTAKE SPECIAL PROJECTS, AND PROVIDE BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TO THE COMMITTEE.

ADOPTED JANUARY 19, 2011

BY THE

GOVERNMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ATTEST: 

DAVID W. MCFARLAND, III

PLANNING DIRECTOR