

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Toughest job in Pottstown

Next week, Pottstown Council will deliberate whether to cut the proposed 2018 budget or raise taxes up to 18.6 percent.

At the same time, Council will also need to appoint an interim borough manager to replace Mark Flanders, who is officially retiring on Christmas Eve.



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

must act.

The borough manager and the superintendent of schools are the two most powerful officials in Pottstown. Together, they manage more than \$100 million in annual spending.

Because council and school board members have only a cursory understanding of budgets, personnel, and departmental structures, they look to these two officials for guidance for virtually all decisions.

The most important decision our councilors make is the appointment of a borough manager.

Because of our rapidly declining tax base, the new borough manager faces a more difficult environment than any predecessor in decades. It's the toughest job in town.

The borough has had five managers in the last 25 years. Bob Jones, a retired Navy admiral, served successfully for eight years. He resigned for family reasons. Jack Layne and Ray Lopez were seen as having difficulty taming an uncooperative, entrenched bureaucracy in borough hall.

### Pottstown Borough Managers

Robert C. Jones	1994-2002
Jack Layne	2002-2006
Ray Lopez	2006-2009
Jason Bobst	2009-2012
Mark Flanders	2012-2017



**Bob Jones**



**Ray Lopez**



**Jack Layne**



**Jason Bobst**

Jason Bobst, who was just 27 when he was appointed borough manager, was widely seen as stressed out when he took a less contentious job as West Norriton Township Manager.

Mark Flanders brought strength and stability to the position, but as retired police chief, it was clear he was not going to be a long-term manager.

The new manager must cut costs as he or she deals with two powerful unions representing most employees.

The manager must also deal with a Council that is not used to doing a lot of homework on the issues.

Above all, the manager must set forth a new vision for Pottstown, because what we are doing now will not bring us a better future.



**Mark Flanders**