

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Where does the money go?

Last week, we talked about Council's desire to set goals for 2016.

In January, Council President Dan Weand asked each councilperson to set a goal for 2016. His personal goal was to add 100 jobs in Pottstown.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

The Pottstown School Board hasn't gone through that exercise, but here's my goal: Figure out where all the money goes and publish the results for all to see.

The school district and borough together spend an enormous amount of money — \$114 million annually.

Pottstown has the 12th highest taxes of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts.

There's no such measurement available for the borough, but we do know borough government tax revenues, per capita, are higher than 92 percent of the municipalities in state.

So where does all the money go? Both the borough and the school district publish budgets, but they are too general to be the basis of solid decision-making.

The school district budget, published on its website, tells you two-thirds of the money goes for salaries and benefits.

But it doesn't list any of the district's 520 employees or tell you what they do. (Less than half are classroom teachers.)

The published borough budget is even worse — it doesn't even categorize the basics, as we've done in the chart at right. (You won't find such a chart on the borough website. We had to wade carefully through the budget and add it up ourselves.)

Everyone wants government to be cost-effective, but you can't do that unless you know each service government provides and how much it costs.

Moreover, while it is commendable that Council President Weand wants to set goals, those goals should be published in the budget. Then, the following year, there should be a scorecard on those goals.

For our part, we publish on our website, www.pottstowncitizens.org, a great deal of information you won't find on the official borough and school district website. You need good information to make good decisions.

Pottstown total government spending		
2016		
Pottstown School District	\$57,136,928	50%
Pottstown Borough:		
Sewer capital fund	\$9,553,375	8.4%
Sewer fund	\$9,081,439	7.9%
Water fund	\$6,260,400	5.5%
Police	\$5,902,138	5.2%
Water capital fund	\$4,985,235	4.4%
Grant fund	\$3,623,701	3.2%
Trash fund	\$3,003,080	2.6%
Administration	\$2,700,752	2.4%
Health insurance	\$2,336,974	2.0%
Capital savings fund	\$1,798,801	1.6%
Pensions	\$1,449,004	1.3%
Fire fund	\$1,422,474	1.2%
Parks	\$1,130,885	1%
Public works	\$1,097,543	1%
Codes	\$686,876	.6%
Sewer lines fund	\$569,312	.5%
Street repairs fund	\$565,925	.5%
Debt service fund	\$346,342	.3%
Street lighting fund	\$265,300	.2%
Library	\$180,706	.2%
Airport	\$159,685	.1%
Parking Lots	\$79,212	.1%
TOTAL	\$114,334,000	100%