

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Plenty of information online

After a last-minute review this week, Pottstown Council is expected to pass a 12 percent tax increase next Monday.

Borough manager Justin Keller and finance director Janice Lee made an excellent Power Point presentation on the borough's financial situation at Council's committee of the whole meeting Oct. 9.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

You can view that presentation — and the entire Council meeting — on the borough's website, Pottstown.org. A detailed budget is also available on the borough website.

Online information

Thanks to the internet and enlightened public policies, we can easily access a wealth of public information about our county, school district, and borough. Local government has never been more easily accessible.

For example, tomorrow night's Council agenda is published on the borough website, complete with digital copies of every document Council will review at its meeting.



There's a letter from Pottstown Police Chief Michael Markovich requesting Council's blessing to place a police substation at the Beech Street Factory.

There's an application from Jay and Tracy Purdy to open a bed and breakfast on High Street.

There's an application from the Sly Fox Track Club to close off borough streets for a 5K road race through Pottstown on New Year's Day.

There are many other documents as well, all at the click of a mouse.

Dramatic change

You'd probably have to be a thirty-something or older to re-

member how difficult and time consuming it was to get the most basic government information in the past.

Assessment information

For example, if I wanted to know who owned a particular property in Pottstown, I would need to go to the codes department at borough hall and flip through a loose-leaf binder which contained only minimal information of ownership listed by address.

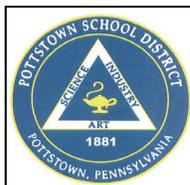


Now, of course, you can access information about every property in the county from its website, at any time of day or night, including the past sales history, dimensions, and photos of each property. You can search by property owner name as well as by address.

Agendas and minutes

At one time it was difficult and time consuming to get the minutes of public meetings. You'd have to physically go to borough hall or the school administration building and request paper copies to be made.

Now the minutes of all Council and School Board meetings, going back five years, are available online. The same goes for agendas, complete with proposals, contracts, and reports, which can be viewed by clicking hyperlinks in the online agendas.



In the case of the borough, the agendas and minutes are also available online for the Historical Architectural Review Board, the Planning Commission, and the Pottstown Borough (water and sewer) Authority.

School board policies, borough ordinances, forms and permit applications are all available online.

That's transparency!

Progress taken for granted

But it's in the nature of progress that it erases its tracks. We easily forget how far we have come.