Report of the
Shenango Valley
Intergovernmental Study Committee

Prepared for the:
Governments and Citizens of the Shenango Valley
(Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland, and Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon)
Mercer County, PA

Prepared by the:
Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee

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Final Report
November 14, 2003

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Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter of Transmittal</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVISC Members and Participants</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenango Valley Community</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Municipal Services</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsville</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatland</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Government Model</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of the Sub-Committee on Finance</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Financial Analysis</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Consolidation and Merger</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Resolution for Municipal Consideration and for New Home Rule Charter</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Petition for Citizen Consideration with Existing Home Rule Charter</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Petition for Citizen Consideration for Multi-Municipal Government Study</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft and Adopted Resolutions for Municipalities to Accept Report</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee

November 14, 2003

Dear Governments and Citizens of the Shenango Valley:

The Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group was charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective was to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

The SVISC developed a model for a single, new municipal government. The model calls for a consolidated, home rule municipality with a council-manager form of government.

In order for a single government to be established, the voters of all participating municipalities must approve the same question at the same election. A majority “no” in any defeats the question for all.

The members of the SVISC could arrive at no overall consensus on whether it is, or is not, in the long-term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single municipal government. Therefore we make no recommendation in this report either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipalities. In so doing, we place the issue squarely in the hands of the citizens to consider whether a combined government should be created to help improve the demographic and economic trends toward a more vibrant community. The citizens would also be considering whether a combined government would better assure future coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective services.

If the governments choose to not act on their own authority to enable the citizens to pursue consolidation, the citizens themselves may use the petition initiative and referendum processes defined under the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act. (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731)

The SVISC strongly recommends creating a structure and format to further develop the group’s subcommittee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and local communities. The Committee also recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

We urge all Shenango Valley residents to carefully consider the significant challenges our community faces. Our population is declining and aging; our average annual per capita personal income is declining and low compared to Pennsylvania and United States averages; we are not adding sufficient
numbers or types of jobs to our local economy that allow young families to grow and prosper. Local
municipal government has an important role to play in reversing these trends.

Much information has been collected and analyzed by our Committee. It is our hope that all
community leaders will continue to use this information to develop solutions to the significant
problems we face. There are innovative and creative solutions that can assist us, but they will only be
developed within a sense of community pride, the spirit of cooperation, and the spirit that we must all
help each other to help ourselves.

This report presents demographics of the Valley, descriptions of the present governments and
services, the single government model and financial analysis, and the means for governmental
consideration and citizen initiative of municipal consolidation.

SVISC is pleased to have served and hopes this report will help lead the way to the brightest possible
future for our Shenango Valley community. The full report can be found on the Internet at
“www.mcrpc.com/svisc”.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]
SVISC MEMBERS AND PARTICIPANTS

BOROUGH OF SHARPSVILLE appointees
Robert Donatelli Thomas Lally
Joseph Loeding Jane O’Neill
Kenneth Robertson

BOROUGH OF WHEATLAND appointees
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Tom Lewis Thomas Stanton
Judith Taylor

CITY OF FARRELL appointees
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Martin Henlen Jerome Miller
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David Ryan

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Thomas Kuster Jamie Kirila Joseph Caminiti
Thomas Lally JoAnn Jofery Joseph Loeding
William Madden LaVon Saternow Michael Wilson
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Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee Report
November 14, 2003

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George Gerhart
George Keryan
James DeCapua
JoAnn Jofery
Kenneth Robertson
William Morocco

Fire
Thomas Lally, Chair
George Gerhart
George Kraynak
Joseph Loedding
Pat White
Patricia Woodings
Rudolph Hammond
Thomas Tulip
Tom Lewis

Sewer and Water
Joe Augustine, Chair
Dennis Puko
Gary Hinkson
James Cardamon
Kenneth Robertson
Michael Gasparich
Rudolph Hammond
Thomas Stanton
William Morocco

Streets
George Gerhart, Chair
James DeCapua
Joe Augustine
LaVon Saternow
Mike Wilson
Thomas Stanton
Thomas Tulip

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Executive Summary

Overview

The Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group was charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective is to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

Toward this end, SVISC developed a model for a single, new municipal government. The model calls for a consolidated, home rule municipality with a council-manager form of government.

In undertaking its work, SVISC has been professionally assisted by the Pennsylvania Economy League (PEL). PEL’s efforts were financed through grants to the City of Farrell for SVISC from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and private sources. With PEL’s assistance the SVISC:

- Reviewed Pennsylvania law and practices regarding the services and operations of the governments.
- Learned about the structures, operations, programs and financing of the governments.
- Considered the opportunities, benefits and costs of intergovernmental cooperation and/or structural consolidation or merger as it applies to the governments in terms of strategic operations and services, short and long term community and economic development, and overall fiscal well being of the participating municipalities.
- Formulated findings and implementation strategies for the citizens and the governments.

In addition to the core committee, many other citizens assisted on subcommittees focused on:

- Government Structure and Legal Issues
- Community and Economic Development, and Planning and Zoning
- Finance
- Fire
- Police
- Recreation
- Sewer and Water
- Streets

The sub-committees were charged with envisioning how their particular area of service might be best provided under a single municipal government.
Conclusions

A series of questions helped guide SVISC's work. Through these questions the members of the group strove to “objectively” determined his/her beliefs about the role of local municipal government and the possible “cause and effect” of combining the governments. The reader is strongly encouraged to honestly formulate his/her own answers to these questions.

1. Are the five municipalities distinct communities, or are they a single “community” with sub-localities?

2. Would the present municipalities be more likely to grow, prosper, and provide high quality services throughout the 21st Century if they remain independent, or would they be better able to achieve these objectives joined as one?

3. Would a single municipal government eliminate governmental duplication of administration and services thereby helping achieve economies of scale and potential savings leading to higher quality services throughout the entire area?

4. Would a single municipal government provide more enhanced public safety services, such as police, fire and emergency preparedness, than can take place as separate governments?

5. Is there value in a uniform tax rate structure under a single municipal government?

6. Would a single municipal government help create a more unified community image both internally and to the outside world? If “yes” could this be better leveraged to help retain existing business, attract new business and retain and attract young people and families than the existing communities acting largely alone?

7. Would a single municipal government be better able to leverage more discretionary state and federal dollars coming into the area for sewers, storm water management, roads, community facilities and other needed infrastructure improvements?

8. Would a single municipal government be better able to promote coordinated land use planning and development benefiting the entire area, by helping to ensure the economic vitality of the present urban areas, high quality residential neighborhoods, residential, commercial and industrial development, and desired open space and rural character?

9. Would a single municipal government be better able to ensure community identity and traditional democratic access to government? If the answer is “no” then describe the advantages inherent in the present governments and describe how the present governments use their community identity and democratic access when addressing public issues that cross the current jurisdictional boundaries and impact the larger area.
The SVISC arrived at no overall consensus on whether is it is, or is not, in the long-term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single government. Therefore the Committee makes no recommendation either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipal governments.

At the SVISC meeting on Thursday, September 25, 2003, four motions were approved, two procedural and two recommendations. The Final Report was approved by the full committee by those in attendance at its meeting on November 13, 2003.

SVISC Meeting 9/25/2003
APPROVED MOTIONS

Procedural

A. The SVISC, working through the Coordinating Committee, is to finalize the draft report with the information and materials that have been done to date, and prepare for the report’s dissemination following final approval by the full Committee?  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY AFFIRMATIVELY APPROVED BY THOSE IN ATTENDANCE

B. The SVISC Coordinating Committee is to create a structure and format to further develop the sub-committee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and local communities. This structure and format is to be provided to the municipal governments.  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY AFFIRMATIVELY APPROVED BY THOSE IN ATTENDANCE

Recommendations

A. The SVISC recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.  
MOTION UNANIMOUSLY AFFIRMATIVELY APPROVED BY THOSE IN ATTENDANCE

B. The SVISC makes NO recommendation(s) in the final report either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipal governments?  
MOTION AFFIRMATIVELY APPROVED (vote was not unanimous)

The effect of these approved motions is to place the issue of consolidation squarely in the hands of the citizens to consider whether a combined government should be created to help improve the demographic and economic trends toward a more vibrant community. The voters would also be considering whether a combined government would better assure future coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective services.
If the governments choose to not act on their own authority to enable the citizens to pursue consolidation, the citizens themselves may use the petition initiative and referendum processes defined under the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act. (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731)

In the absence of consolidation, there must be no complacency. Over the past decades the entire area of the Shenango Valley community has experienced declining and aging populations and economic downturns more severe than much of the rest of Pennsylvania and the nation. This situation must be reversed or many of our current business, residents and young people will be forced to leave and very few new people will move into our community. Even Hermitage is doing relatively poorly compared to the reminder of the State and the nation. And even its relative success will not continue if the Valley as a whole continues to decline. “Things are broken” and need to be quickly corrected. Unless younger people begin to stay in the Valley and others move in to create wealth producing employment opportunities for themselves and others there cannot be a positive future. Those who remain will find themselves increasing facing a community of decline. The crisis is at hand and must be reversed. Our local municipal governmental actions must advance economies and entice young people, wealth and productive capacity to grow in our communities.

The Committee urges all Shenango Valley residents to carefully consider the significant challenges our community faces. Our collective population is declining and aging; our average annual per capita personal income is declining and low compared to Pennsylvania and United States averages; we are not adding sufficient numbers or types of jobs to our local economy that allow young families to grow and prosper.

Much information has been collected and analyzed by our Committee. It is our hope that all community leaders will continue to use this information to develop solutions to the significant problems we face. There are innovative and creative solutions that can assist us, but they will only be developed within a sense of community pride, the spirit of cooperation, and the spirit that we must all help each other to help ourselves.

The SVISC strongly believes that additional cooperation is needed among the governments to help assure a vibrant and prosperous Shenango Valley community.

The municipal governments can most help to advance economic opportunity and improve the quality of life by doing well across the Shenango Valley the things that are within their governmental control, such as:

- the provision of coordinated, efficient and cost-effective public services;
- development, maintenance and improvement of community infrastructure; and,
- collective actions that facilitate a dynamic and progressive community.

Local governmental polices, services and structures can dramatically assist with change. In addition to the continued success of the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments, additional and better arrangements are needed in Shenango Valley governance through which the municipalities, public
authorities, school districts and civic organizations and others can better work together to achieve economies of scale, improved public services and an enhanced environment for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life.

As this report was being prepared a significant change was enacted to the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act, creating a new procedure for citizen initiative. The change permits the citizens of multiple adjacent municipalities to conduct a referendum for the election of a joint Government Study Commission. This Commission would be empowered to recommend consolidation of the governments under a new home rule charter. In the event the Commission recommends consolidation and a new home rule charter they have drafted, it would automatically go to the ballot in the effected municipalities.

The new law remedies a serious weakness in the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act that prevents citizens from fully using their initiative rights under the PA Constitution, Article IX, Section 8. This Section states that “the electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge or change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body.” However the prior law required electors to work thorough the existing governing bodies, essentially obtaining their approval, before a new home rule charter could be brought to the ballot upfront.

The new legislation passed both the PA House and Senate by unanimous votes and was signed by Governor Rendell on October 22, 2003. It will become effective by the end of 2003, and will be available to the voters in 2004.

In the event the citizens wish to pursue consolidation in the Shenango Valley they can use the new procedure. Or they could also use other provisions of the law to initiate consolidation specifying the use of the home rule charter of the existing city of Farrell or Hermitage, revised through the petitions for the elections of legislative officials by both ward and at large, consistent with our model.

The remainder of this report presents demographics of the Valley, descriptions of the present governments and services, SVISC’s single government model and financial analysis, and the processes for governmental consideration and citizen initiative of municipal consolidation.
Shenango Valley Community

The five municipalities in the Shenango Valley have a combined year 2000 population of 43,783 persons and a land area of 40.1 square miles.

The table below shows the year 2000 populations and land area of the respective municipalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
<th>Square Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsville Borough</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatland Borough</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Farrell</td>
<td>6,050</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Hermitage</td>
<td>16,157</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Sharon</td>
<td>16,328</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43,783</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A map of the area is shown on the next page.
The following table shows Shenango Valley demographic information with comparisons to Pennsylvania and national averages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Area (Sq. Miles)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>40.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 Pop.</td>
<td>6,841</td>
<td>15,300</td>
<td>17,493</td>
<td>4,729</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>45,129</td>
<td>11,881,643</td>
<td>248,709,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Pop.</td>
<td>6,050</td>
<td>16,157</td>
<td>16,328</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>43,783</td>
<td>12,281,054</td>
<td>281,421,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 Median Age</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>41.2 avg.</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Median Age</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>41.8 avg.</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990 % pop. 65+</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>22.5% avg.</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 % pop. 65+</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>22.6% avg.</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$14,532</td>
<td>$23,227</td>
<td>$15,913</td>
<td>$17,979</td>
<td>$15,365</td>
<td>$17,403 avg.</td>
<td>$20,880</td>
<td>$21,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Median Household Income</td>
<td>$28,935</td>
<td>$39,454</td>
<td>$26,945</td>
<td>$39,468</td>
<td>$34,250</td>
<td>$33,810 avg.</td>
<td>$40,106</td>
<td>$41,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Owner Occupied, Median House Value</td>
<td>$43,700</td>
<td>$97,500</td>
<td>$47,300</td>
<td>$71,900</td>
<td>$41,500</td>
<td>$60,380 avg.</td>
<td>$97,000</td>
<td>$119,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data shows significant trends:

- The population of the United States is growing rapidly, and the population of Pennsylvania is growing slowly. The population of all municipalities in the Shenango Valley is declining, except Hermitage. The overall decline in the Valley is primarily a result of more people moving out than in, and also declining birth rates.

- The median age of both the US and PA is increasing, and the median age of the Shenango Valley is also increasing and far exceeds both the State and the nation, as the remaining Shenango Valley population grows older and life expectancy increases.

- The percentage of those 65 years of age and older in the US is falling. The percent of those 65 years of age and older in PA is increasing slightly. Like PA, the percent of those 65 years of age and older in the Shenango Valley is increasing slightly and continues to far exceed both the State and nation.

- The median household income of all the municipalities in the Shenango Valley is lower than both Pennsylvania and the US.

- The median house value of owner occupied units in all municipalities of the Shenango Valley is much lower than US, and only Hermitage exceeds the Pennsylvania value.
• In summary, the Shenango Valley is aging and declining in population at the very same time as its citizens earn less and have homes of lower values than the averages throughout Pennsylvania and the nation.

Even Hermitage is doing relatively poorly compared to the reminder of the State and the Nation. And even its relative success will not continue if the Valley as a whole continues to decline. “Things are broken” and need to be quickly corrected. Unless younger people begin to stay in the Valley and others move in to create wealth producing employment opportunities for themselves and others, there cannot be a positive future. Those who remain will find themselves increasing facing a community of decline. The crisis is at hand and must be reversed.

The Shenango Valley is much like many other localities in Pennsylvania. All across the State the boundaries of the local municipal governments often do not encompass complete communities. Places such as Erie, Warren, Bradford, Williamsport, Altoona, Johnstown, State College, Harrisburg, Sharon/Farrell and nearly all of the cities, boroughs and towns, are much larger than their namesakes. More often than not communities span several municipalities. The boundaries of the local municipal governments divide interdependent, geographic, social, and economic communities. As a result, especially when citizens and their elected officials fail to recognize the interconnections, there often exists throughout much of the Commonwealth profound lack of intergovernmental communication, duplication of services, needless inefficiencies, lack of cross-boundary visioning and planning, and cumbersome coordination and decision-making.

Unfortunately, there is a definite connection between this type of governmental interdependence and economic performance. Across Pennsylvania, cities and older urban areas are under siege from interconnected patterns of aging and declining populations, falling median incomes after adjusting for inflation, unnecessarily costly services, and eroding tax bases, while the areas immediately surrounding them may appear relatively prosperous. This prosperity however is often only in the eyes of the beholder. Most of even the wealthiest suburbs in Pennsylvania are not keeping pace with the economic performance of the rest of the Nation. Stymied economic performance in our cities and suburbs can be traced directly to the inability to “act as a team” and “get along in the family.”

The municipal governments can most help to advance economic opportunity and improve the quality of life by doing well across the Shenango Valley the things that are within their governmental control, such as:

• the provision of coordinated, efficient and cost-effective public services;
• development, maintenance and improvement of community infrastructure; and,
• collective actions that facilitate a dynamic and progressive community.

Local governmental polices, services and structures can dramatically assist with change. Additional and better arrangements are needed in Shenango Valley governance through which the municipalities, public authorities, school districts and civic organizations and others can better work together to achieve economies of scale, improved public services and an enhanced environment for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life.
Current Municipal Services

Farrell

The City of Farrell is a Third Class City under Pennsylvania Law. It encompasses 2.18 square miles, and had a 1990 population of 6,841 and a 2000 population of 6,050. This population change is a 11.6 percent decrease.

The City of Farrell is currently designated as a financially distressed municipality under PA Act 47 of 1987, the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act.

In November 1987, the Commonwealth declared the City of Farrell as a distressed municipality because it was facing serious financial difficulties caused primarily by the City’s loss of tax and other revenues due to the bankruptcy of Sharon Steel Corp. and additional reductions in real estate assessed valuations of properties located in the City. Since that time, the City has been operating under a financial Recovery Plan and has taken very positive steps necessary to help alleviate the City’s financial difficulties.

The City of Farrell is governed by an Act 62 Home Rule Charter form of government. Under the Charter, City Council is the legislative, policy making body of the municipality and consists of a Mayor and six Council members elected at-large to four year, staggered terms. In all business before Council requiring a vote, the Mayor and six remaining Council members have one vote each.

The Mayor is the presiding officer of Council, and is the ceremonial head and official representative of the municipality. While City Council has the power to establish and prescribe the functions of various City boards, commissions, authorities, departments, offices and agencies, the Mayor makes all appointments to these entities with Council’s consent.

City Council annually elects from among its members a Deputy Mayor to exercise the duties of Mayor in his or her absence or disability.

The City’s home rule charter calls for the election of a City Treasurer to serve a four-year term. Duties of the Treasurer include receiving, depositing and accounting for all moneys (including taxes) payable to the City; appointing and supervising all assistants and employees in his or her department; and countersigning checks or drafts, etc. The treasurer also collects taxes on behalf of Mercer County and the Farrell School District.

Under the home rule charter, Farrell City Council appoints a Manager to act as chief executive and administrative officer of the municipality and be responsible for the government’s day-to-day operations. The Manager is charged with a number of duties, including: appointing and removing employees; preparing and managing (once approved by Council) the municipal budgets; directing and supervising the administration of all departments, offices and agencies of the municipality; enforcing city ordinances and regulations, acting as a purchasing agent, and coordinating intergovernmental arrangements with neighboring communities, etc.
In addition to the Manager, Council also appoints: (1) a City Clerk who is largely responsible for the record keeping-related tasks of the municipality; and (2) a City Attorney who handles legal matters on the City’s behalf.

The City operates under an administrative code outlining the structure and functions of city government. It also uses a merit principle personnel system prescribing rules for employee appointment, promotion and removal, position classification and pay scale, hours of work, and sick and vacation leave, etc.

The City employs 16 full-time and 19 part-time employees and operates several departments including: (1) Administration/Tax Collection; (2) Public Safety (fire, code enforcement and crossing guards); (3) Public Works (streets, wastewater and building maintenance); and (4) Library.

**Administration / Tax Collection Department**
This department, supervised by the City Manager, is responsible for the daily administrative operations of the City and for the collection of City, County and School District real estate taxes and earned income taxes for the City and the School District. In addition to the elected Treasurer, there are two full-time employees of this department, including the Earned Income Tax collector, and the assistant treasurer.

**Public Safety Department**
The public safety department in the City of Farrell includes fire protection, code enforcement and crossing guards. Police protection in the City of Farrell is provided through a regional police department called the “Southwest Mercer County Regional Police” serving Farrell and the Boroughs of Wheatland and West Middlesex. (The police department is overseen through a seven-member regional police commission consisting of the mayor and one council member from each of the three municipalities, and the executive director of the Mercer County Regional Council of Governments.)

Fire prevention and protection services in the City of Farrell are provided by a combination paid/volunteer fire department headed by a full-time chief and staffed by three additional full-time, 10 part-time and 12 active volunteer firefighters. Two paid firefighters are on duty at all times. This department is assisted, when needed, by a complement of seven fire police.

The City employs one full-time Health, Code and Zoning Officer to handle ordinance enforcement in the municipality. In addition, firefighters assist with housing inspections as necessary. The City, in cooperation with Farrell School District, provides two part-time crossing guards to assist school-age children to and from school.

**Public Works Department**
The Public Works department in the City of Farrell provides streets, wastewater treatment and municipal building maintenance services in the municipality. Three full-time and two part-time streets employees, three full-time wastewater treatment employees, and three part-time building maintenance employees staff the department.
City streets employees handle most street maintenance, repair and snow plowing responsibilities in the municipality. Larger jobs, such as street paving, are contracted out to private providers.

The wastewater treatment employees operate the city’s Waste Water Treatment Plant that serves the City of Farrell and the Borough of Wheatland. The plant’s capacity is 3.57 million gallons per day.

The building maintenance employees provide maintenance and repair services for the City’s municipal building(s).

Library
The City of Farrell owns and operates Stey-Nevant Library, which provides free public library services to city residents. A full-time librarian, two part-time clerks and several volunteers staff the library. City funding of the library is supplemented by grants and private contributions.

In addition to the aforementioned public services, the City of Farrell, through the city manager, undertakes community and economic development activities with the assistance of private consultants and additional resources such as Penn Northwest, etc. Recreational activities (mainly the summer playground) are provided in conjunction with the Farrell School District through the Farrell Recreation Commission (see below). Water service provision takes place through a private company, Consumers of Pennsylvania. Solid waste pickup is undertaken by Waste Management, a private company, through a contract negotiated by the Mercer County Regional COG. Street Lighting is provided through a contract with Penn Power.

Authorities, Boards and Commissions
The City also maintains a number of appointed authorities, boards and commissions, including:

- Redevelopment Authority
- Code Review Board
- Fire Pension Board
- Board of Health
- Library Board
- Non-uniformed Pension Board
- Police Pension Board
- Zoning Hearing Board
- Civil Service Commission
- Human Relations Commission
- Planning Commission
- Economic Development Partnership Committee
- Housing Rehabilitation Committee
- Revolving Loan Committee

The municipality also has representation on a number of regional authorities, boards and commissions. These include:
• Mercer County Solid Waste Authority  
• Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (COG)  
• Farrell Area Recreation Commission (in conjunction with the Farrell School District)  
• Mercer County Regional Planning Commission  
• Northwest PA Regional Planning and Development Commission  
• Southwest Mercer County Regional Police Commission (see above)  
• Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone Committee  

Hermitage  

The City of Hermitage is a Third Class City under Pennsylvania law. It encompasses 32 square miles and had a 1990 population of 15,300 and a 2000 population of 16,157. This change in population is a 5.6 percent increase.

The City of Hermitage is an Act 62 home rule charter municipality operating under a “commissioner-manager” form of government. The legislative, policy-making responsibility of the municipality rests with a five-member Board of Commissioners, elected at-large to four year terms, except that the individual receiving the lowest number of votes at each election serves a two-year term. There is no elected mayor in the City of Hermitage.

The citizens of Hermitage also elect a Treasurer at large to a four-year term. The Board of Commissioners fixes the Treasurer’s compensation. Duties of the Treasurer include collecting real estate taxes for the City, Hermitage School District and Mercer County; collecting per capita taxes for the City and the School District; supervising employees in the tax collection office; having charge of and depositing all municipal moneys; and other duties assigned by the Commissioners.

Under the charter, the Commissioners appoint a Manager to act as chief administrative officer of the municipality and be responsible for the government’s day-to-day operations. The Manager sees that all City laws are properly executed, has employee appointment and removal responsibility, prepares and manages the budget (once approved by the Commissioners), and directs and supervises the administration of all departments, offices and agencies of the municipality. All department heads and other selected management staff report to the City Manager.

The Commissioners also appoint the members of various authorities, boards and commissions operating under the city government.

City solicitor services, auditor services, and solicitors for city authorities, boards and commissions are provided through contracts with outside providers.

The City has a total of 100 employees (95 full-time and 5 part-time) and operates through a number of departments including: (1) administration and finance; (2) recreation; (3) fire; (4) police; (5) planning and development (including building and zoning and community development offices); and
(6) public works (including inspection/code enforcement/health; streets; and water pollution control). A department head supervises each department, and most departments have an assistant head.

The City utilizes a personnel system prescribing rules for employee appointment, promotion and removal, position classification and pay scale, hours of work, and sick and vacation leave, etc.

Administration and Finance Department
This department includes the City Manager, who oversees daily City operations; an Administrative Secretary, who serves as the Manager’s secretary and administers benefit programs and maintains administrative files; an Administrative Assistant, who supervises the maintenance/janitorial crew; a Finance Director, who supervises the Receiver of Taxes and employees in payroll, accounting, sewer rental and accounts receivable; and the Receiver of Taxes, who supervises employees in the Wage Tax Office that is responsible for collecting the earned income tax for the City and the School District. (The City and the School District share the costs of operating the Wage Tax Office.)

Parks and Recreation Department
This department, headed by a full-time Recreation Director, oversees the scheduling, operation and maintenance of all City recreation facilities, and provides year-round educational, athletic, and arts enrichment activities and programs for individuals of all ages.

The Parks and Recreation Department’s largest program is the summer program, a cooperative program with the Hermitage School District, which offers activities for all Hermitage students.

The department hires instructors and program directors for each program, and uses City and School District facilities whenever possible. Minimal fees are charged for some programs to offset the costs of the instructors, supplies and equipment, and many programs are nearly self-supportive through the use of these fees. The Director works closely in providing programs and sharing facilities with other recreation providers in the area, including the Hermitage School District, F.H. Buhl Club, YMCA, Little League and other youth sports organizations, and the Mercer County Regional COG. The Director’s salary is split between the City and Hermitage School District.

Fire Department
Hermitage is served by a combination paid/volunteer fire department headed by a full-time paid Fire Chief and staffed by a full-time Deputy Chief, public safety clerk, laborer, part-time clerk and 40 volunteers. The department provides full fire prevention, protection, and rescue services, handles fire inspections, reviews development plans for new and renovated non-residential structures in the City, and provides education programs to the public.

The fire department has one central and two satellite stations for response to all emergencies. Emergency calls for the fire department are answered and dispatched through Mercer County 9-1-1.

Police Department
Police protection in Hermitage is provided by the Hermitage Police Department, a full-time, full-service department staffed by 28 full-time officers, including a Chief of Police, Deputy Chief, Criminal Investigator, Juvenile Officer, patrol sergeants and corporals. The department provides a wide array
of professional police services, including patrol, enforcement and investigative, etc. services, participates in the community-oriented policing program, assigns a D.A.R.E. officer to the schools during the school year, and maintains a fully-computerized records section staffed by three full-time and one part-time clerical employees.

Planning and Development Department
The Planning and Development Department is headed by a Director and staffed by an Engineering Assistant, Planning Technician, Building & Zoning Administrator and clerical personnel. The department administers the zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances of the City; issues building and sign permits; enforces zoning violations; works with the zoning hearing board on appeal actions; creates and maintains City maps; undertakes various other planning and/or development-related tasks; and assists other city departments as needed.

The Office of Community Development falls under the Planning and Development Department. It is headed by a Community Development Administrator and staffed by a Community Development Specialist and Housing Rehabilitation Specialist, and shares clerical personnel with the planning and development office. Among other things, the Office of Community Development administers Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects, the Hermitage Revolving Loan Fund Program for industrial projects, and works closely with economic development agencies to promote economic growth in Hermitage and the surrounding area.

The Planning and Development Department works closely with PennDOT, the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission and others on specific projects and to ensure that the City’s comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, etc. are in order.

Public Works Department
The Public Works Department falls under the supervision of a Director (currently the City Manager) and consists of the following functions: streets; water pollution control; inspection/code enforcement; and engineering.

The Streets Department is headed by a Superintendent, assisted by a Foreman, and is staffed by 15 employees including mechanics, equipment operators, laborers and a full-time clerk. This department performs all but the most major mechanical work on City vehicles; maintains a large fleet of street equipment; undertakes various storm-water related jobs; makes, repairs and installs street signs and pavement markings; and handles all street maintenance, repair, snow removal and mowing tasks in the municipality.

The Water Pollution Control department, under the direction of a Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, operates and maintains the City’s sanitary sewer system which is owned by the Hermitage Municipal Authority. The department is staffed by an additional 11 employees, including an Environmental Operations Coordinator who oversees compliance with the city’s on-lot regulation and pre-treatment ordinances for commercial and industrial businesses; a laboratory technician; clerical personnel; and plant and collection system operators and laborers.
The Water Pollution Control department maintains a sanitary sewer system that has a treatment plant rated at 5,000,000 gallons per day, and currently operates at 3,500,000 gallons per day. The system consists of fourteen pump stations and about 130 miles of main sewer line. The department also reviews development plans, provides long-range planning for the expansion and renovation of the sanitary sewer system, and does necessary laboratory testing.

The Inspection/Code Enforcement Department is staffed by two city inspectors responsible for inspecting all new construction work in the City to assure compliance with city codes and regulations. (This also includes inspection of street constructions for new development and sanitary sewer construction.) The department is also responsible for all code enforcement in the City, including property maintenance and nuisance violations.

One of the two inspectors is a certified health officer who handles all plan reviews, inspections and licensing of the approximately 95 food establishments in the City.

A private company, Hickory Engineering, performs the City’s engineering services. The City does not maintain an on-staff engineer.

In addition to the aforementioned public services, the City of Hermitage also makes an annual contribution to the Shenango Valley Community Library in exchange for free library service for Hermitage residents (this is a joint venture with the City of Sharon). Water service provision takes place through a private company, Consumers of Pennsylvania. Solid waste pickup is undertaken by Waste Management, a private company, through a contract negotiated by the Mercer County Regional COG. Street lighting is provided through a contract with Penn Power. Traffic signals are maintained through an outside vendor.

Authorities, Boards and Commissions

The City also maintains a number of appointed boards, commissions and authorities including:

- Board of Appeals
- Board of Health
- Parks and Recreation Board
- Personnel Board
- Zoning Hearing Board
- Civil Service Commission
- Economic Development Commission
- Human Relations Commission
- Planning Commission
- Postal Service Commission
- Police Pension Fund Committee
- Municipal (sewer) Authority
- Municipal Water Authority
The municipality also has representation on a number of regional authorities, boards and commissions. These include:

- Mercer County Solid Waste Authority
- Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority
- Shenango Valley Library Board
- Mercer County Regional COG
  - COG Mass Transit Board
  - COG Softball Complex Board
  - Shenango Valley Animal Shelter Board (COG Committee)
- Northwest PA Regional Planning Commission
- Mercer County Complete Count Committee
- Shenango Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordinating Committee
- Shenango Valley MPO Technical Committee
- Shenango Valley Enterprise Development Zone Committee

Sharon

The City of Sharon is a Third Class City that encompasses 3.7 square miles and had a 1990 population of 17,493 and a 2000 population of 16,328. This change is a 6.7 percent decrease.

The City operates under a strong mayor/council form of government authorized by the Optional Third Class City Charter Law, PA Act 399 of 1957. This means that the government is comprised of a citywide elected Mayor as the chief executive officer and a five member legislative Council elected at-large. In addition to the elected Mayor and Council there is an elected Treasurer and an elected Controller. All of these officials are elected to four-year terms.

City Council exercises the legislative power of the municipality. Collectively the members determine the types and levels of municipal services, the amount of taxes to be levied to support the services, the municipal departments to function within City government, and any other matters pertaining to their legislative role.

The Mayor performs the executive and administrative functions of municipal government. This includes enforcing all ordinances enacted by the City; making recommendations for action by Council; planning and managing the activities of municipal staff in carrying out public policy; providing guidance, direction, and supervision to municipal departments; proposing and monitoring the budget; and, with the Controller, executing all bonds, notes, contracts and written obligations.

The City Treasurer is responsible for the collection, receiving, safekeeping, and payment of all moneys owed to the City, and undertakes other duties as are designated to his/her office by Council.

Council provides by ordinance for control of the City’s finances by the City Controller. This function includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that an encumbrance form of budgeting is in operation and
that expenditures are made only upon written requisition, and provides for pre-audit of all claims against the City.

Under Act 399, Council is required to appoint a city clerk to serve as clerk of the council, keeping minutes and records of council actions, compiling ordinances and resolutions, and performing other duties as required by law.

The City has a total of 107 full-time employees and 29 part-time employees (including 13 crossing guards). The City operates through a number of departments including: (1) finance; (2) public affairs (police); (3) public safety (fire and code enforcement/health); (4) public works (engineering, sewage disposal, streets and city garage); and (5) community development. A department head supervises each department.

**Department of Finance**
This department is responsible for the financial operations of the City (with the exception of the treasurer’s department responsibilities) and for the collection of earned income taxes for the City and the Sharon School District. There are 9 full-time employees of this department, including a finance director, receiver of wage taxes, confidential clerk, chief clerk, bookkeeper, sewer finance clerk, two tax clerks, and a clerk floater.

In addition to the Department of Finance, there is a separate department headed by the elected treasurer. The treasurer is responsible for collection of City, County and School District real estate taxes and City and School District per capita taxes. In addition to the treasurer, there are 2.5 employees of the treasurer’s department including the deputy treasurer and 1.5 tax clerks.

**Department of Public Affairs**
The Public Affairs Department in the City of Sharon is the Sharon Police Department. The Department consists of 37 full-time police officers, 4.5 police clerks, and 14 special school police. Full-time police officers include a chief of police, operations officer, four detectives, four sergeants, 26 patrolmen and one resource officer.

The Sharon Police Department is a full-time department that provides a wide array of professional police services including patrol, enforcement and investigative, etc. services.

The City also provides, in conjunction with Sharon School District, nine school crossing guards to assist children to and from school.

**Department of Public Safety**
This department consists of the fire department and the bureau of code enforcement/health.

The City of Sharon is served by a full-time, paid fire department of 19 firefighters that provides full fire prevention and protection services in the City. There are between three and five firefighters on duty at all times.
The Bureau of Code Enforcement/Health employs 2 individuals, a code zoning administrator and a code enforcement officer. This bureau is responsible for inspecting all new construction work in the City to assure compliance with city codes and regulations and is also responsible for all code enforcement in the City, including property maintenance and nuisance violations.

**Department of Public Works**
The Department of Public Works includes the City of Sharon’s engineering office, bureau of sewage disposal, bureau of streets and bureau of city garage.

The engineering office provides the City with professional engineering services. The office consists of 2.5 employees, including the city engineer, deputy director and a part-time draftsman.

The bureau of sewage disposal operates the wastewater treatment plant located in the City of Sharon. The plant’s reserve capacity is jointly owned by the City of Sharon (2/3 ownership) and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority representing Hermitage, Sharpsville and South Pymatuning (1/3 ownership). The bureau employs 15 individuals, including a superintendent, wastewater collection coordinator, assistant superintendent, six operators, a sewage finance clerk, sewer leader, two laborers, a maintenance man and a lab technician.

The bureau of streets employs 12 individuals, including eight equipment operators, a sign man, laborer, laborer-custodian and an assistant mechanic. The streets bureau performs most street and road building, maintenance, repair and snow-removal functions, with larger jobs such as milling and paving contracted out to private vendors.

The bureau of city garage consists of one mechanic who repairs and maintains the City’s equipment.

**Department of Community Development**
The City’s Department of Community Development employs six individuals including an executive director, assistant executive director, finance/personnel manager, rehabilitation specialist, secretary/rehabilitation assistant, and rehabilitation inspector. This department administers CDBG and state grant funds and all related programs.

In addition to the aforementioned departmental services, the City of Sharon also provides economic development through the Mayor’s office, the community development department, the Shenango Valley Industrial Development Corporation and Penn Northwest. Free library service for residents is provided through the Shenango Valley Community Library (a joint venture with the City of Hermitage). Recreation and Parks services are provided through the Sharon Recreation Board in conjunction with the Sharon School District (see below). Water service provision is through a private company, Consumers of Pennsylvania. Solid waste pickup is undertaken by Waste Management, a private company, through a contract negotiated by the Mercer County Regional COG. Street lighting is provided through a contract with Penn Power. Traffic signals are maintained through an outside vendor.
Authorities, Boards and Commissions
The City also maintains a number of appointed boards, commissions and authorities including:

- Code Appeals Board
- Shenango Valley Library Board
- Sharon Planning Commission
- Board of Health
- Recreation Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Civil Service Commission
- Human Relations Commission
- Police Pension Fund Committee
- Fire Pension Fund Committee

The municipality also has representation on a number of regional boards and commissions. These include:

- Mercer County Solid Waste Authority
- Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority
- Mercer County Regional Council of Governments
  - COG Mass Transit
  - COG Softball Field
  - Shenango Valley Animal Shelter
- Mercer County Complete County Committee
- Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
- Northwest PA Regional Planning Commission
- Sharon Recreation Board (in conjunction with the Sharon School District)
- Shenango Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordinating Committee
- Shenango Valley MPO Technical Committee
- Shenango Valley Enterprise Development Zone Committee

Sharpsville

The Borough of Sharpsville encompasses 1.38 square miles, and had a 1990 population of 4,729 and a 2000 population of 4,500. This population change is a 4.8 percent decrease.

Sharpsville is a borough operating under The Borough Code with a “weak mayor” form of government in which all legislative power and duties reside in a seven-member Council, elected at large to four year, staggered terms. Borough Council enacts all laws in the municipality and provides for their enforcement, appoints all commission and authority members, and adopts a budget for the operation of the Borough.
The Mayor of Sharpsville is elected at-large to a four-year term. He or she has control over the police department and is responsible for enforcement of Borough ordinances and regulations in that way. The Mayor is also charged with executing documents on behalf of the Borough as required by law. The Mayor does not have a regular vote in matters before council, but may vote to break ties.

There is one additional elected official in Sharpsville Borough, the Tax Collector, who is elected to a four-year term and is responsible for collection of the Borough’s real estate taxes.

In addition to the Borough’s elected officials, there are also a number of appointed officials designated by Council. First of these is the Manager who oversees all administrative offices and departments of the Borough and conducts the day-to-day business of the municipality. The Manager prepares, for approval by Council, the budget and administers that budget throughout the year.

Other officials appointed by Council include: (1) an Auditor, who audits, adjusts and settles the accounts of the Borough; (2) the Secretary, who keeps record of all Borough actions; (3) a Solicitor, who handles legal matters on the Borough’s behalf; (4) a Tax Collector who is responsible to collect all taxes authorized by PA Act 511 of 1965, the Local Tax Enabling Act; (5) an Emergency Management Director who coordinates efforts in the event of any emergency or disaster; (6) a Zoning and Subdivision Administrator who handles the administration of the Borough’s zoning and subdivision ordinance (currently the Borough Manager); (7) a Code Enforcement Officer who administers and enforces housing and building codes adopted by the Borough (currently the Borough Manager); and (8) a Health Officer.

The Borough has a total of 25 employees (21 full-time and 4 part-time) and operates through a number of departments including: (1) police; (2) sewer and water; and (3) public works (including streets, parks and municipal building).

Police Department
Police protection in Sharpsville is provided by the Sharpsville Police Department, a full-time department staffed by a Chief of Police, five patrolmen and a police clerk. The department maintains three police vehicles with standard equipment. Supplemental personnel, equipment and service needs are obtainable through mutual aid agreements with other municipalities.

Sewer and Water Department
The Sewer and Water Department is responsible for the operation of the Borough of Sharpsville Sewerage System and Water Distribution Systems.

The Borough of Sharpsville owns and operates its sewerage collection system, which is 75 years old. Sewage generated in Sharpsville is treated at the sewage treatment plant in Sharon. The Borough of Sharpsville has representation on the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control (joint) Authority, which is part owner of the reserve capacity of the Sharon sewage treatment plant.

The Borough’s water system presently serves a 2.0 square mile area with a population of approximately 5,500 persons through 23.5 miles of transmission and distribution mains. The source
of water supply is the Shenango River. The Borough system also supplies water to a portion of South Pymatuning Township.

The Borough’s water supply storage and distribution system was constructed circa 1895. Many improvements have been made regarding treatment expansions, service and supply, however few improvements have been made to the original distribution lines in the older sections of the Borough.

Public Works Department
The Public Works Department consists of eleven personnel (four of which are water plant operators). This department is responsible for: maintaining and repairing streets, maintaining and installing storm and sanitary sewers, traffic signal maintenance; street cleaning; snow removal; ditching; and lawn maintenance. Larger jobs are contracted out.

In addition to the aforementioned departmental services, Sharpsville Borough receives fire prevention and protection services from the Sharpsville Volunteer Fire Department, which is supported through a dedicated tax collected from Borough residents. Community and economic development services are provided by Borough employees and through the use of outside consultant(s). Library service is provided by the Shenango Valley Community Library (residents are reimbursed by the Borough for ½ the cost of their library cards). Planning, zoning and code enforcement is provided through Borough employees and the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission. Recreation and Parks services are provided through Borough employees. Refuse collection and disposal is provided through a private contractor. Street lighting services are contracted through Penn Power.

The Borough maintains a number of appointed boards and commissions including:

- Code of Appeals Board
- Vacancy Board
- Zoning Hearing Board
- Civil Service Commission
- Planning Commission
- Educational Service Agency (for crossing guards)

The municipality also has representation on a number of regional boards, commissions and authorities. These include:

- Mercer County Regional COG
- Shenango Valley Animal Shelter
- Shenango Valley Shuttle Service
- Mercer County Housing Commission
- Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
- Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone Committee
- Shenango Valley MPO
- Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority
Wheatland

The Borough of Wheatland encompasses 0.83 square miles, and had a 1990 population of 766 and a 2000 population of 748. This population change is 2.3 percent decrease.

Wheatland is a borough operating under The Borough Code with a “weak mayor” form of government in which all legislative power and duties reside in a seven-member Council, elected at-large to four year, staggered terms. Borough Council enacts all laws in the municipality and provides for their enforcement, appoints all committee, commission, board and authority members, and adopts a budget for the operation of the Borough.

The Mayor of Wheatland is elected at-large to a four-year term. He or she is the official representative of the municipality. The mayor is also charged with executing documents on behalf of the Borough as authorized by Council and required by law. The Mayor does not have a regular vote in matters before council, but may vote in the case of a tie.

There is one additional elected official in Wheatland Borough. The Tax Collector is elected to a four-year term, and is responsible for collection of the Borough’s real estate taxes.

In addition to the Borough’s elected officials, there are also a number of appointed officials designated by Council: (1) the Secretary/Treasurer who conducts the day-to-day business of the municipality, keeps record of all Borough actions, and administers the finances of the municipality; (2) a Solicitor, who handles legal matters on the Borough’s behalf; (3) a Tax Collector responsible to collect taxes authorized by PA Act 511 of 1965, the Local Tax Enabling Act; and (4) a Code Enforcement Officer who administers and enforces housing and building codes adopted by the Borough. Auditing services are provided by an auditing firm.

In addition to the secretary/treasurer, the Borough has a total of two full-time employees, a foreman and an operator in the streets department. (The Borough also retains one individual to act as liaison between Borough government and the Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department).

Police protection in Wheatland is provided by the Southwest Mercer County Regional Police. Fire protection is provided by the Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department. Sewage treatment is provided by the City of Farrell. Street and road repair, maintenance and snow removal is provided through the Borough’s street department, which also maintains a small playground located in the Borough. (Larger streets and roads jobs are contracted out to private providers.) Water service provision takes place through a private company, Consumers of Pennsylvania. Library services are provided through Stey-Nevant Library in Farrell. Garbage collection is provided by Waste Management, a private company, through a contract negotiated by the Mercer County Regional COG. Street lighting services are contracted through Penn Power.

The Borough also makes available to its residents Community Hall, a Little League field, a parking lot and a gazebo.
The Borough maintains a number of appointed boards and commissions including:

- Recreation Board
- Zoning Hearing Board
- Wheatland Planning Commission

The municipality also has representation on a number of regional boards, commissions and authorities. These include:

- Mercer County Regional COG
- Mercer County Regional Planning Commission
- Mercer County Redevelopment Authority
- Mercer County MPO
- Southwest Mercer County Regional Police Commission
- Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone Committee
The following is the above information in tabular form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>City of Farrell</th>
<th>City of Hermitage</th>
<th>City of Sharon</th>
<th>Borough of Sharpsville</th>
<th>Borough of Wheatland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third Class City</td>
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<td>Borough Code</td>
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<td>Fiscally distressed status under PA Act 47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form of Government</td>
<td>Council/Manager (Elected council is legislative, policymaking body and consists of the Mayor and six council members. Mayor is official representative of municipality. Appointed manager is chief executive and administrative officer.)</td>
<td>Commissioner/Manager (Elected Board of Commissioners is legislative, policymaking body and consists of five members. Appointed manager is chief executive and administrative officer.)</td>
<td>Strong Mayor/Council (Elected mayor is chief executive and administrative officer. Elected council is legislative, policymaking body and consists of five members. No appointed manager.)</td>
<td>Weak Mayor/Council (Elected mayor is official representative of municipality; elected seven-member council is legislative, policymaking body. Appointed manager is chief administrative officer.)</td>
<td>Weak Mayor/Council (Elected mayor is official representative of municipality; elected seven-member council is legislative, policymaking body. No appointed manager.)</td>
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<td>Additional Elected Officials *</td>
<td>City Treasurer</td>
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<td>Treasurer; Controller</td>
<td>Real Estate Tax Collector</td>
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<td>Appointed Officials</td>
<td>Manager; City Clerk; City Attorney</td>
<td>Manager; City Solicitor</td>
<td>City Clerk; City Attorney; Emergency Mgmt Director; Health Officer</td>
<td>Manager; Auditor; Secretary; Solicitor; Wage Tax Collector; Emergency Management Director; Zoning and Subdivision Administrator; Code Enforcement Officer; Health Officer</td>
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<td>Number of Employees*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Some of these positions may be included in the total number of employees.

^ Some governments handle various functions that could be included in this category through municipal “line employees” or through contracts with outside providers; they do not list them as “appointed officials.”

▲ Does not include police personnel of the Southwest Mercer County Regional Police, which serves Farrell, Wheatland and West Middlesex. Also does not include seasonal employees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Departments</th>
<th>City of Farrell</th>
<th>City of Hermitage</th>
<th>City of Sharon</th>
<th>Borough of Sharpsville</th>
<th>Borough of Wheatland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tax Collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public Safety (fire</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(combination paid/volunteer), code enforcement and crossing guards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public Works</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stey-Nevant Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participant in Southwest Mercer County Regional Police for police protection.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Authorities, Boards and Commissions</th>
<th>City of Farrell</th>
<th>City of Hermitage</th>
<th>City of Sharon</th>
<th>Borough of Sharpsville</th>
<th>Borough of Wheatland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Code Review Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fire Pension Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Board of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Library Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Non-Uniform Pension Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Police Pension Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Zoning Hearing Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Civil Service Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human Relations Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Planning Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Econ. Dev. Partner. Comm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Housing Rehabilitation Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Revolving Loan Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Redevelopment Authority</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Codes of Appeals Board                         |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Recreational Board                           |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Parks & Rec. Board                           |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Personnel Board                              |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Police Pension Fund Committee                |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Zoning Hearing Board                         |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Civil Service Comm.                          |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Human Relations Comm.                        |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Planning Comm.                               |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Econ. Dev. Comm.                             |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Municipal (sewer) Authority                  |                |                  |               |                        |                     |
| • Municipal Water Authority                   |                |                  |               |                        |                     |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough of Sharpsville</th>
<th>Borough of Wheatland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Zoning Board of Appeals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Civil Service Comm.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Human Relations Comm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Planning Comm.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Redevelopment Authority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Authorities, Boards and Commissions</td>
<td>City of Farrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mercer Co. Solid Waste Authority</td>
<td>• Mercer Co. Solid Waste Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mercer County Regional COG (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>• MCRCOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Farrell Area Rec. Comm.</td>
<td>• Shenango Valley Library Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)</td>
<td>• MCRPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Northwest PA Regional Planning &amp; Dev. Comm.</td>
<td>• Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Auth. (USVWPCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Southwest Mercer County Regional Police Commission</td>
<td>• MCRPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone Committee</td>
<td>• Shenango Valley Enterprise Zone Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Operations</td>
<td>City of Farrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three City employees (City Manager, City Clerk and Administrative Assistant) in the Administration/Tax Collection Department. In addition, tax collection functions are conducted by the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Earned Income Tax Collector. Also related municipal authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>City employees in the Administration and Finance Department. (There are 15 full-time and 3 part-time employees who handle administrative operations.) Tax collection functions are conducted by the Treasurer, appointed Receiver of Taxes, and several additional employees. Also related municipal authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Community Development | City Manager and outside resources, in addition to related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions. | City employees in the Office of Community Development (Planning and Development Department), and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions. (There are four full-time employees who work in Community/Economic Development.) | City employees in the Department of Community Development and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. | Borough employees and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. | Borough elected officials and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. |

| Economic Development | City Manager and outside resources, in addition to related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions. | City employees in the Office of Community Development (Planning and Development Department), related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions. (There are four full-time employees who work in this department. | City employees in the Mayor’s office, the Department of Community Development and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. | Borough employees and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. | Borough elected officials and outside resources, and related regional authorities, boards and commissions. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engineering Services</strong></td>
<td>Contracted out to private providers.</td>
<td>Contracted out to private providers.</td>
<td>City employees through the Dept. of Public Works Engineering Office.</td>
<td>Contracted out to private providers.</td>
<td>Contracted out to private providers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Protection</strong></td>
<td>City Public Safety Department – combination paid / volunteer firefighters. (1 full-time chief, 2 full-time firefighters, 10 part-time firefighters and volunteers.)</td>
<td>City Fire Department – combination paid / volunteer firefighters. (There are four full-time firefighters and 40 volunteers.)</td>
<td>City Department of Public Safety – full-time, paid fire department.</td>
<td>Sharpsville Volunteer Fire Department supported through a dedicated fire real estate tax.</td>
<td>Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department. Borough retains one individual to act as liaison to dept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Library Service</strong></td>
<td>City owned and operated Stey-Nevant Library advised by a volunteer Library Board. (1 full-time librarian and two part-time aides).</td>
<td>Shenango Valley Community Library located in Sharon. Representation on the Shenango Valley Library Board.</td>
<td>Shenango Valley Community Library located in Sharon. Representation on the Shenango Valley Library Board.</td>
<td>Shenango Valley Community Library located in Sharon. No municipal financial contribution made directly to the library, and therefore no representation on the Shenango Valley Library Board.</td>
<td>Stey-Nevant Library. No municipal contribution made directly to the library, and no representation on the Stey-Nevant Library board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Planning and Zoning</strong></td>
<td>Local Zoning (code enforcement) Officer (see below) and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Local Zoning Four full-time city employees under the Planning and Development Department, and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Local Zoning Administrator under the Dept. of Public Safety Bureau of Code Enforcement/Health, and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Local Zoning Part-time responsibility of Borough manager, and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Local Zoning Related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Code Enforcement/ Health</strong></td>
<td>Code Enforcement Officer (under the Public Safety Department) and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Two full-time city employees under the Public Works Dept. Inspection/Code Enforcement Division. Also related municipal authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Code Enforcement Officer under the Department of Public Safety Bureau of Code Enforcement/Health. Also related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Responsibility of three part-time positions, and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
<td>Part-time Borough code enforcement officer, and related municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police Protection</strong></td>
<td>Full-time Southwest Mercer County Regional Police governed by the Southwest Mercer County Regional Police Commission.</td>
<td>Full-time Hermitage Police Department that consists of 31 full-time (including 28 officers) and 1 part-time employee.</td>
<td>Department of Public Affairs is the city’s full-time police department and falls under the control of the Mayor.</td>
<td>Full-time Sharpsville Police Department that falls under the control of the Mayor. There are 6 full-time (including 5 officers) and 4 part-time police personnel.</td>
<td>Full-time Southwest Mercer County Regional Police governed by the Southwest Mercer County Regional Police Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>City of Farrell</td>
<td>City of Hermitage</td>
<td>City of Sharon</td>
<td>Borough of Sharpsville</td>
<td>Borough of Wheatland</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Parks</td>
<td>Farrell Recreation Commission (joint body of City and Farrell Area School District.) City Public Works Department employees maintain the parks.</td>
<td>One full-time City employee under the Parks and Recreation Department. Much cooperation with the Hermitage School District and other area recreation providers. Also municipal Parks &amp; Recreation Board.</td>
<td>Sharon Recreation Board (joint body of the City and Sharon School District.)</td>
<td>Borough employees through Public Works Department.</td>
<td>Borough employees through the Street department. Also, various municipal and regional authorities, boards and commissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewage Collection and Treatment</td>
<td>City employees through the Public Works Department. Also provides service to the Borough of Wheatland.</td>
<td>Thirteen full-time City employees under the Public Works Dept. (Water Pollution Control Division) operate the sanitary sewer system which is owned by the Hermitage Municipal Authority. Also participate in the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority (USVWPCA) because part of Hermitage’s effluent is treated at Sharon’s plant.</td>
<td>City employees through the Department of Public Works. Bureau of Sewage Disposal. City of Sharon owns the collection system. Treatment plant is jointly owned by the City and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority (USVWPCA) representing Hermitage, Sharpsville and South Pymatuning.</td>
<td>Borough employees through the Sewer and Water Department operate the sewage collection system. Sharpsville participates in Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority (USVWPCA) because the effluent is treated at the Sharon plant.</td>
<td>Two full-time borough employees through the Street Department maintain the Borough’s collection system. Wheatland has two pump stations. Residential and commercial effluent is treated at Farrell’s treatment plant. Industrial effluent is treated at the Hermitage plant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street and Road Building, Maintenance, Repair &amp; Snow Removal</td>
<td>Three full-time and two part-time city employees under the Public Works Department. Larger jobs are contracted out. (In addition, there are three part-time employees who do building and ground maintenance at city building and library.)</td>
<td>Nineteen full-time City employees under the Public Works Dept. (Streets Division). Larger jobs are contracted out.</td>
<td>City employees through the Public Works Department. Larger jobs are contracted out.</td>
<td>Seven full-time borough employees through Public Works Department. Larger jobs are contracted out.</td>
<td>Two full-time borough employees through the Street Department, with larger jobs contracted out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Treatment and Distribution</td>
<td>Private company.</td>
<td>Private company.</td>
<td>Private company.</td>
<td>Municipally provided service. Five full-time borough employees through the Sewer and Water Department.</td>
<td>Private company.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cooperative Service Provision

The Shenango Valley governments currently cooperate in a number of service areas. The table below shows the participation in programs of the Mercer County Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC) and Mercer County Regional Council of Governments (MCRCOG).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General planning (MCRPC)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodent Control (MCRPC)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenango Valley Shuttle Service (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer County Community Transit (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Mercer County Public Bus Service (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chestnut Run Public Swim Beach Facility (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenango Valley Softball Recreational Complex (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenango Valley Animal Shelter and Animal Control Program (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shenango Valley Regional Lock-up (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant writing for police/criminal justice technology (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Municipal Purchasing Program (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Municipal Cable TV Regulatory Advisory Board (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Municipal Closed Circuit Television Sewer Line Inspection and High Pressure Sewer-Jet Sewer-line Cleaning Program (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring of Shared (a) Regional Parks and Recreation Specialist and (b) Regional Computer Systems Technician (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Insect Spraying and Weed Control Program (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding/Joint Purchase of Tax Collector and Public Official Fidelity Bonds (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding/Contracting of Joint Municipal Solid Waste and Recycling Collection and Disposal Service (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding/Contracting of Joint Municipal Traffic Signal Maintenance and Repair Service (MCRCOG)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding/Contracting of Joint Municipal Sewage Sludge De-Watering and Disposal Service</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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</table>
### Single Government Model

#### SVISC Combined Government Model

| Classification and Type of Government | The model calls for a single new municipal government for the Shenango Valley. The five current governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon would be combined into a single municipality and an entirely new municipal government would be established. The single government would be a home rule municipality operating under a locally developed and approved home rule charter. During a three-year transition period during which the existing governments would continue, an Administrative Code would be developed for the new municipality. Under the new government, taxes, codes and ordinances would be made uniform for the whole. The classification of the new government would be a Home Rule, Third Class City under PA law. |
| Form of Government | The single government would operate under a Home Rule Charter developed prior to the vote and included as part of the vote on consolidation. Approval of the vote would also approve the Charter. The proposal is that the Charter specifies a “council-manager” form of government. The proposal is that legislative body (Council) consists of nine (9) part-time members, each serving four-year terms. At the primary and general elections in the year prior to the actual beginning operations of the new government, one representative would be elected from the area of each of the five former municipalities. Four additional members of Council would be elected at-large from across the entire area of the new municipality. The members of Council would determine the President of Council through election from within Council. This person would chair and preside at the meetings of Council and generally represent the new municipality. This person would be a voting member of Council. This person would carry the title of Mayor. They would serve a two-year term in this position. The Mayor position would be part-time. The Mayor would not have veto power. The Home Rule Charter would initially maintain as election districts the borders of the five existing governments, but since this would deny future “equal representation” under federal and state laws, the districts will need to be adjusted for future elections to achieve districts of equal populations. The proposal is that the Home Rule Charter specify that within three years following the formal seating of the initial Council, that Council establish a “reapportionment plan” -- whereby the single municipality will be divided into five wards of equal population. The Home Rule Charter would also specify that at the next primary and general election, a nine member part-time Council would be elected, with one (1) City Council representative elected from each of the five “wards”; and four City Council representatives elected “at large” from throughout the entire area. There would also be an elected City Treasurer, whose duties would be defined in the Charter. The Council-Manager form is one of the options available under the PA Home Rule Charter and Optional Plan law. Specifically the council-manager form means that a professional, paid municipal manager be hired by the legislative body and report to that body. The manager would to be the chief executive and administrative officer for the day to day affairs of the municipality. He/she would have the authority to: • appoint and remove department heads; • negotiate contracts with the approval of council; • prepare the agenda for all meetings of council; • make recommendations to council pertaining to policies; • prepare with council an annual budget; • perform other duties required by council and be responsible to council. Once the manager is appointed, a majority of council can remove him/her from office at any time. This is done through passage of a municipal resolution following a review and hearing process if requested by the manager. |
If the voters in each area approve consolidation, the law requires that the officials of the five governments meet within sixty days after certification of the vote and begin formation of a Consolidation agreement. This agreement is to establish a plan to bring the new government into existence consistent with the approved question.

The terms of all the elected officials in the present governments will be terminated and elections for the new officers will be held.

Since the Home Rule Charter would be specific about the council-manager form of government and size of Council, the agreement and transition into the new government would revolve primarily around the timing and means to combine the services, ordinances, assets, budgets and other items to assure a smooth transition. One of these will be the specific election schedule for the new officers.

An important question for the officials in forming the joint agreement will be one of timing for the new municipality to assume full operations. Assuming a positive vote in 2004, the most likely timing would be that the current governments would continue to function through 2007. Elections of the new officers would take place in 2007 and the new government would commence full operations on the first Monday of January 2008.

### Adoption Procedures

If the existing municipal governments proceed toward a vote on consolidation they will follow the procedures in the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act by:

- Adopting resolutions of intent to move forward with the planning tasks.
- Establishing a home rule charter drafting process.
- Obtaining additional financing commitments from the Commonwealth to support Home Rule Charter Development, possible Transition and infrastructure improvements.
- Enacting joint agreements and ordinances to place a question of consolidation on the election ballot.
- If questions of consolidation were to be passed by the electorate, the transition and implementation process in the joint agreements, Home Rule Charter, and PA law would be followed.

In the event the governments do not follow the procedures to place a referendum question on the election ballot, the citizens have the right to do so through initiative provisions under the Pennsylvania Constitution and the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731).

The Pennsylvania Constitution, Article IX, Section 8, states that:

"... The electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge and change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body." (Underlining added)

The Pennsylvania Constitution requires that a petition containing a proposal for referendum be signed by electors comprising at least five percent of the number of electors voting for the office of governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality.

The signed petitions must contain the following:

1. The name of the municipality from which the signers of the petition were obtained. (Sharpsville, or Wheatland, or Farrell, or Hermitage, or Sharon)
2. The names of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged. (Possibly, Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon)
3. The name of the consolidated or merged municipality. (Possibly, City of Shenango)
4. The type and class of the consolidated or merged municipality. (Possibly, Third Class City.)
5. Whether a consolidated or merged municipality shall be governed solely by the code
and other general laws applicable to the kind and class of the consolidated or merged municipality; whether it shall be governed by a home rule charter or optional plan of government previously adopted pursuant to the act of April 13, 1972 (P.L. 184, No. 62), known as the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law, [fn1] by one of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged… (Possibly, the Home Rule Charter of the existing City of Farrell or Hermitage.)

(7) The number of districts or wards, if any, into which the consolidated or merged municipality will be divided for the purpose of electing all or some members of its governing body. (Possibly with five wards.)

A possible citizen initiated ballot question is: “Shall the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon consolidate as a home rule, third class city under the existing Home Rule Charter of the City of (Farrell or Hermitage), and with a nine member legislative body, elected five by wards and four at large, and to be known as the ("insert name")?”

In order for the referendum question to pass, a majority of the citizens voting in each municipality must vote “yes” to the same question at the same election. A majority “no” vote in any municipality would defeat the question.

November 2004 is the soonest such a referendum vote could reasonably be expected to take place. Prior to that time there would be ample opportunity for developing the Home Rule Charter document, intelligent and objective community-wide discussion and consideration, and addressing other issues.

A possible timeline follows for municipal consideration with a new home rule charter, or petition for citizen consideration with an existing home rule charter.

- SVISC Report: Fall 2003
- Citizen and governmental consideration: Fall 2003 and Winter 2004
- Joint Governmental Resolution: Fall 2003 or Winter 2004
- Home Rule Charter Preparation: Winter and Spring 2004
- Governmental Joint Agreement for Vote: Summer 2004
- Citizen Petitions (if used) Summer 2004
- Referendum Vote: November 2004
- If vote approved, existing governments remain in place: 2005, 2006, 2007
  - Administrative Code
  - Coordination with Existing Governments
  - Comprehensive Plan
  - Recreation Plan
  - Facilities Plan
  - Operational and Staffing Plan
  - Election Schedule
  - Budget Preparation
  - Other Tasks
- Infrastructure improvements: 2006, 2007 and Beyond
- Elections of Officers: Primary and General Election 2007
- New government commences operations: January 2008
• Continued Transition: 2008 and Beyond

A possible timeline follows under the new approach for petition for citizen consideration of multi-municipal government study and a new home rule charter.

• SVISC Report: Fall 2003
• Citizen consideration of multi-municipal Gov. Study: Winter and Spring 2004
• Circulation of Citizen Petitions for Gov. Study Summer 2004
• Referendum Vote on Government Study: November 2004
• If approved, Multi-municipal Gov. Study takes place: 2005 and 2006
• If Commission recommends consolidation and new Charter
  Referendum Vote on consolidation: November 2006
• If approved, existing governments remain in place: 2007, 2008, 2009
• Transition Planning and Implementation: 2007, 2008, 2009
  - Administrative Code
  - Coordination with Existing Governments
  - Comprehensive Plan
  - Recreation Plan
  - Facilities Plan
  - Operational and Staffing Plan
  - Election Schedule
  - Budget Preparation
  - Other Tasks
• Infrastructure improvements: 2007, 2008, 2009 and Beyond
• Elections of Offices: Primary and General Election 2009
• New government commences operations: January 2010

### Appointed Officials
An appointed Manager and others specified in the Home Rule Charter and Administrative Code.

Department heads may include:
- Assistant Manager & Director of Governmental Services;
- Director of Finance & Tax Collections;
- Director of Community & Economic Development;
- Director of Planning & Zoning, Code Enforcement and Health;
- Police Chief;
- Fire Service Coordinator;
- Superintendent of the Public Works/Streets Department;
- Superintendent of the Sewage/Waste Water Treatment Department;
- Director of Parks & Recreation;

### Employees
All employees of the present governments at the time of transfer of responsibility to the new government would retain their jobs and be carried into the new municipality. All union contracts and other contracts in place under the former governments would be binding on the new government until they naturally expire and/or are renegotiated.

After that time, the new government officials may choose to make changes in numbers of employees, responsibilities, etc., consistent with the need and restrictions or opportunities under union contracts, laws, etc.
Prior to that time, the existing governments will continue to provide services much as they do now with perhaps some adjustments as the transition unfolds. The expectation is that there would not be significant changes in municipal employment levels during the transition but that perhaps through retirement and other natural attrition overall employment levels of the five governments may fall slightly. This would be to the advantage of the new government because it would enable greater flexibility to make any desired changes during the first few years.

**Administrative and Departmental Operations**

An Administrative Code would be developed as part of the transition. A facilities analysis would also be conducted. An operational analysis and staffing plan would also be made along with a comprehensive plan, recreation plan and other tasks pertaining to administrative and departmental operations.

The City Manager, being the city’s chief administrative official, would be empowered to hire and/or fire (with the concurrence of Council) all department heads.

**Community Development**

The proposal is to create in the new municipality a department of Community and Economic Development that would be responsible for community and economic development, planning, zoning and code and health enforcement.

A single municipality would have access to community and economic development funding that is greater for some programs and less for others than the existing governments.

- **CDBG funding** – The five municipalities separately access about $1.9 million annually (based on 2002 funding levels) via Sharon as a federal entitlement, Hermitage, Farrell & Sharpsville as state entitlements, and Wheatland as an occasional benefactor of Mercer County CDBG funds. A single consolidated municipality would be a federal entitlement. State CDBG funding would no longer be available.

  The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), at the urging of the local Congressional delegation led by Senator Rick Santorum, estimated the amount of the FY 2002 entitlement that hypothetically would be allocated to a single consolidated municipality (including the 5 now separate municipalities) – $1,677,000. This is less than the roughly $1.9 million combined total accessed by the five municipalities separately, despite the higher funding allocations experienced by other PA municipalities of similar size and character.

- **HOME funding** – Currently, the Shenango Valley municipalities occasionally apply for and receive HOME funding for affordable housing improvements from a statewide competitive program. Larger cities can qualify for annual HOME allocations from the federal government. 2001 HOME allocations for comparable cities include: Altoona – $556,000, Wilkes-Barre – $441,000, York – $574,000.

- **ESG funding** – Currently, the Shenango Valley municipalities occasionally apply for and receive ESG (Emergency Shelter Grant) funding from a statewide competitive program. Larger CDBG entitlement cities can qualify for annual ESG allocations from the federal government. 2001 ESG allocations for comparable cities include: Altoona – $90,000, Wilkes-Barre – $84,000.

- **Other funding** – From a standpoint of funding program rules, a consolidated municipality will not likely gain advantage or disadvantage for other funding programs. However, enhanced political clout can provide benefits in terms of funding results.

The Commonwealth is likely to assist with financing a significant portion of the pre-vote and post-vote transition costs. These costs could include preparation of the joint governmental agreement, preparation of the Home Rule Charter, new comprehensive plan, administrative code development, facilities planning, ordinance drafting and codification, budget preparation for the new government and general consulting and facilitation.

The newly consolidated municipality would also receive considerable attention throughout Pennsylvania and beyond. The new elected officials would be able to leverage that attention into substantial sums of public and private funding investments to support infrastructure and other needs in the community. This could result in considerable future savings of tax dollars in the future for the citizens of the Valley.

**Economic Development**

Existing LERTA districts and Keystone Opportunity Zones would continue. The new government may create additional districts.
Additional help with infrastructure funding is likely to be available to the new municipality from the State and Federal government as a direct result of attention derived from combining the governments.

A new Comprehensive Plan for the entire area would be created. This plan would identify the areas to be targeted for industrial, commercial and residential development.

**Fire Protection**

Initially, the present, separate volunteer and paid fire departments would each continue to serve their present land areas, but the new municipality may choose to create a single volunteer service supplemented with paid personnel. The change to a single volunteer department supplemented with paid members could be completed as rapidly as the first four years of the new government.

The fire sub-committee recommended that the present, separate paid and volunteer fire departments each continue to exist as separate and distinct entities serving their present land areas. It further recommends that the new city create a single Volunteer/Paid service. SVISC concurs with these recommendations and believes that the goal of change to a single volunteer department supplemented with paid members be completed rapidly during the first four year transition into the new government.

**Planning and Zoning**

*Comprehensive plan* – The consolidated municipality would prepare a new comprehensive plan. A comprehensive plan will determine future development priorities, land use patterns, and housing, transportation, and infrastructure needs, all within the framework of the new single municipality. Pennsylvania currently provides funding in amounts that may be sufficient to meet up to 50% of this need. The Mercer County Regional Planning Commission can provide staff resources to help offset some cost. (The individual municipalities, absent a consolidation, do periodically conduct their own comprehensive planning. The coming years will be an opportune time to do so with all existing plans being dated 1992 or older. A plan for a consolidated municipality can likely be prepared at less cost than 5 individual plans.)

*Zoning and subdivision ordinances* – The consolidated municipality should prepare a new zoning ordinance and subdivision and land development ordinance, each covering the entire consolidated municipality and designed to implement the new comprehensive plan. Pennsylvania provides funding currently in amounts which may be sufficient to meet this need. The Mercer County Regional Planning Commission can provide staff resources to help offset some cost. (The individual municipalities, absent a consolidation, do periodically prepare their own updated zoning and subdivision ordinances. New ordinances for a consolidated municipality can likely be prepared at no greater and possibly less cost than ordinance updates in 5 individual municipalities.)

**Police Protection**

A new full-time, municipality wide police department would be established and service would be maintained or improved in the areas of each of the present municipalities.

The department would initially consist of approximately the same number of officers as current (police sub-committee’s model I), and a reduced number may be achieved as soon as possible under the new government (police sub-committee’s model II).

Dispatch services would be provided by the Mercer County 9-1-1 center.

Budgeted upgrades for employees not currently working in the highest paid department would be made over a period of a few years so that comparable position employees would be paid at the same rates.

**Recreation and Libraries**

**RECREATION**

- A comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan would be undertaken to include (1) an inventory and analysis of what currently exists regarding parks and recreation administration, financing and programming, (2) the cost to bring recreation areas up to specifications and the cost of additional equipment (if necessary), and (3) a vision, goals and implementation strategies, including potential sources of funding (grants, programs, etc.).

- Municipalities currently in the process of rehabilitating their playgrounds should follow through with those efforts; additional improvements needed at the parks and recreation facilities should be made following the comprehensive recreation plan.

- The new government should seek to maintain current levels of service in the areas of the municipality
Initially, and immediately begin to move toward bringing all areas of the municipality up to year-round programmatic standards. This implies the addition of new programs in areas that currently do not have them, or the ability for all residents to partake of programs currently offered in one or more of the municipalities. This will most likely require changes in staffing levels, and will require coordination with the school districts, private providers and others. In the near term, the staffing levels should include at a minimum, one director and two assistants (one for programming and one for facility operations.) All of these issues could, and should be addressed through the comprehensive recreation, park and open space plan.

- The new municipality should seek to implement additional programs as it becomes feasible including additional programs for senior citizens, rollerblading areas, skate park(s), a bike path, and development of a multi-purpose sports complex. In adding these programs and facilities, attempts should be made to equalize them throughout the geographic. The goal, into the future, would be for the new municipality to implement a comprehensive parks and recreation program similar in scope to that currently offered by the City of York.

- The new municipality should explore ways to increase interaction among existing service providers including municipalities, school districts, private providers, etc. and programs in order to enhance services where possible.

**LIBRARY**

- The current two libraries (Stey-Nevant Library and Shenango Valley Community Library) should be merged into one main library and one (or more) branches. The libraries would follow uniform policies and procedures and implement uniform position titles, job descriptions, salary ranges and union status.

- The new library should be a department of the new municipality, and be designated it to be the agent for providing library service for the municipality.

- Ownership of the library buildings should be transferred to the new municipality, which will be responsible for their upkeep and maintenance.

- A new seven-member library advisory board should be formed to represent the new community.

**Refuse Collection and Disposal**

Would continue to be done by private contractor(s).

**Sewage Collection and Treatment**

The Sewer Sub-committee is currently undertaking a project to determine the best arrangements for municipally provided sewage system management and infrastructure improvements for the entire Shenango Valley.

**Streets (Public Works)**

Establish a single streets department. The scope of responsibilities of the department under a single consolidated government would remain the same as currently assigned within the existing municipalities. The employees in place at the time of consolidation would retain their employment, although some changes in organizational structure and in the responsibilities of some employees would occur. The streets department could be aligned with other municipal services under a single department of public works.

While the current municipalities are operating adequately with the equipment on hand, significant needs exist for paving and street repairs that have been deferred due to lack of funds for new up-to-date equipment and for the maintenance of equipment that still has viable life. The new municipality should seek funds from as many state and federal sources possible for both the completion of deferred projects and the acquisition of new equipment.

**Water Treatment and Distribution**

No immediate change in the provision of water services.
Report of the Sub-committee on Finance

The Finance Sub-committee was charged with preparing a budget for a consolidated community. Based on the work of all sub-committees, a budget using a zero base approach was not possible to develop, as the sub-committees recommendations were not in sufficient detail to allow this approach. In order to develop a credible analysis of the financial effects of consolidating the five Shenango Valley communities, the sub-committee has taken an approach of analyzing the financial impacts of the sub-committee reports on the 2003 general fund budgets, consolidated for all communities.

REVENUE

The primary sources of all five communities’ revenues are real estate and earned income taxes. However, there are significant differences in the communities’ taxation structures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Real Estate Millage Rates</th>
<th>Earned Income Tax Rates</th>
<th>Act 47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Non-residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>.50%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsville</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>.50%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatland</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>.50%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the five communities, Hermitage is the one that has land available for future growth and has consistently generated a surplus of revenues over expenditures.

The population of Hermitage is 37% of the total population of all five communities. However, Hermitage accounts for a disproportionately larger amount of the real estate tax assessment base (54.2%) and also of the taxable earned income base (50%) of the five communities combined.

If Hermitage’s real estate and earned income tax rates are applied to all, then a reduction in tax revenues of approximately $2,100,000 will result. Without a commensurate reduction in expenditures, it is not possible to generate sufficient tax revenues to meet the needs of a consolidated community without increasing the amount of taxes currently paid by Hermitage taxpayers.

EXPENSES

The functional areas of sub-committee study included the following:

- Government structure
- Community and economic development
Government Structure

The proposed form of government is a “council-manager” form with a legislative body of nine part-time members. The council would elect one of its members to serve as president, who would also carry the title of mayor.

The consolidation of the five governments under the proposed structure would allow a reduction of general fund expenditures. For example, a consolidated government would require fewer facilities, employ one manager, have fewer elected council members (nine total), have one treasurer, and be able to achieve other economics. Analysis of the general government budgets of the communities indicates that savings in excess of $675,000 could be achieved through consolidation.

Police

There are five police departments providing protection services to the five Shenango Valley communities. The sub-committee prepared three budgets based on alternative staffing levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer Staffing</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 1A</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current aggregate budgeted amounts for police protection approximate $5,900,000. The full Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee recommended Model 1 be initially used, which would result in increased expenditures in excess of $1,000,000 per year.

Fire

Since the fire sub-committee recommended no change in the structure of fire protection, there are no budget effects assumed.

The full committee has had some discussion concerning a separate fire service fee, levied in lieu of funding fire protection services from general fund tax revenues.
The operating budgets of the fire departments, the estimate number of occupied housing units, and the computed household fire service fee is reflected as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Occupied Housing Units</th>
<th>Budgeted Amount Per Housing Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>$305,000*</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>390,000*</td>
<td>6,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>1,055,000*</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsville</td>
<td>57,000</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatland</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,826,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,150</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2003 budget amounts increased for estimated costs of employee benefits, payroll taxes, and insurance.

Although the above table shows the effect per housing unit, is likely that non-residential, business, commercial, and institutional units would also be charged fire protection fees, which would considerably reduce the above computed amounts per housing unit.

Public Works, Recreation and Libraries, Planning and Zoning, Community and Economic Development

The various sub-committee reports indicated that consolidated departments would have no significant budgetary impacts. It is likely, however, that the five communities spend less than communities of comparable size on recreation, libraries, and community development projects. In all cases, there are sources of funds other than general fund tax revenues that could be generated to meet increased budget requirements.

Summary

The effects of the above are as follows:

- Reduction in tax revenue using Hermitage tax structure: -$2,100,000
- Reduction in general government expenses: + 675,000
- Increase in police expenses: -1,000,000
- Budget shortfall: -$2,425,000

In order to close the budget gap, Model 1A of the police department sub-committee report could be adopted, generating a savings from Model 1 of $385,000, and the fire department expenses could be removed from the general fund budget, resulting in savings of $1,826,000. The total of these two moves results in savings of $2,211,000, still $214,000 less than needed. In addition, Farrell,
Sharpsville and Wheatland have planned 2003 general fund deficits of $365,000. Accordingly, tax revenues would need to increase by at least $579,000 over taxes generated by Hermitage’s taxation structure. Even this increase would not produce budget surpluses recommended by municipal finance experts and additional tax revenues would be needed.

Further reducing police expenses to those of Model 2 would result in reduced budget expenses of approximately $1,400,000, which would generate the type of savings needed to achieve budgetary solvency. This is summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in tax revenue</td>
<td>-$2,100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in general government expenses</td>
<td>+ 675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in police expenses</td>
<td>+ 700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund fire protection through user fees</td>
<td>+ 1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,075,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to justify the fire protection fees, the consolidated community could reduce tax revenues collected from these computed using Hermitage’s tax structure.

Although the above analysis of putting a consolidated budget in balance is reported, it should be noted that the full committee is not in agreement with recommending police department budget Model 2 or with the imposition of a fire protection service fee. Accordingly, there are significant issues to be resolved before an acceptable consolidated budget can be formulated.
Additional Financial Analysis

This section presents projected general fund revenues, expenditures and tax rates of a single municipality in the Shenango Valley as if it existed in 2003.

All five municipalities levy real estate taxes for general purposes. In addition, they collect taxes under authority of the Pennsylvania Local Tax Enabling Act (Act 511 of 1965) and they receive revenues through a wide variety of non-tax sources.

Table I shows the budgeted tax revenues for the existing five municipalities in 2003. The total amount of real estate tax budgeted to be collected in 2003 is $6,861,000 and the earned income tax is $6,608,000. In addition, the five municipalities show revenues of $1,051,660 from other taxes. The total budgeted tax revenues for 2003 are $14,520,660.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Tax Mill Rate</th>
<th>Real Estate Value</th>
<th>Budgeted Real Estate Tax</th>
<th>Earned Income Tax Rate</th>
<th>Budgeted Earned Income Tax</th>
<th>Budgeted Other Tax Revenues</th>
<th>Total Budgeted Tax Revenues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>$41,482,000</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>1.3%/1.0% &amp; 1.4%</td>
<td>$705,000</td>
<td>$106,500</td>
<td>$1,511,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>$231,018,900</td>
<td>$1,118,000</td>
<td>1.75%/1.0%</td>
<td>$4,400,000</td>
<td>712,000</td>
<td>6,230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>$110,376,650</td>
<td>$4,446,000</td>
<td>0.5%/1.0%</td>
<td>$1,105,000</td>
<td>183,060</td>
<td>5,734,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsville</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>$31,215,150</td>
<td>$424,000</td>
<td>0.5%/1.0%</td>
<td>$285,000</td>
<td>50,100</td>
<td>759,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatland</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>$12,237,350</td>
<td>$173,000</td>
<td>0.5%/1.0%</td>
<td>$113,000</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>226,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$426,330,050</td>
<td>$6,861,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>$6,608,000</td>
<td>$1,051,660</td>
<td>$14,520,660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II is a listing of the general-purpose expenditures that are budgeted by the five municipalities in 2003, and an estimate of expenditures for a single municipality if it existed that year.

Three possibilities for expenditures are presented.

1. Single Government I uses the police sub-committee model I at a cost of $6,926,358. The total tax revenue needed is $15,761,329. ($1,240,669 more than current)

2. Single Government II retains the police sub-committee model I and removes fire service costs out of the general fund in order that those costs may be handled through revenues derived from special district fees under the new municipality’s Home Rule Charter. The total tax revenue needed is $14,247,547. ($273,113 less than current)

3. Single Government III uses the police sub-committee model II at a cost of $5,164,163, removes the fire service costs to a district arrangement, removes the Sharon and Farrell debt service that is currently financed through tax dollars in the general fund, and eliminates an
additional 1,593,626 from other expenses. The total tax revenue needed is $8,827,684. ($5,592,976 less than current)

**TABLE II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Single Gov. I (Police I)</th>
<th>Single Gov. II (Police 1 &amp; Fire District)</th>
<th>Single Gov. III (Police 2 &amp; Fire District, minus Sharon Debt, others)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>$290,462</td>
<td>$1,014,150</td>
<td>$695,804</td>
<td>$284,836</td>
<td>$77,547</td>
<td>$2,362,799</td>
<td>$1,687,799</td>
<td>$1,687,799</td>
<td>$1,687,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC SAFETY</td>
<td>1,097,692</td>
<td>2,254,858</td>
<td>2,552,121</td>
<td>513,424</td>
<td>106,376</td>
<td>6,524,471</td>
<td>6,926,358</td>
<td>6,926,358</td>
<td>5,154,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>849,592</td>
<td>1,937,336</td>
<td>1,671,352</td>
<td>465,000</td>
<td>87,502</td>
<td>5,010,782</td>
<td>6,926,358</td>
<td>6,926,358</td>
<td>5,154,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>248,100</td>
<td>317,522</td>
<td>880,769</td>
<td>48,424</td>
<td>18,874</td>
<td>1,513,689</td>
<td>1,513,689</td>
<td>1,513,782</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC WORKS</td>
<td>267,510</td>
<td>1,966,913</td>
<td>681,820</td>
<td>369,589</td>
<td>93,170</td>
<td>3,790,100</td>
<td>3,790,100</td>
<td>3,790,100</td>
<td>3,790,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC. and LIB</td>
<td>84,500</td>
<td>238,974</td>
<td>312,337</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>635,811</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>635,811</td>
<td>635,811</td>
<td>635,811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEBT SERVICE</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2,050,444</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2,054,044</td>
<td>2,054,044</td>
<td>2,054,044</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER (primarily employee benefits)</td>
<td>341,509</td>
<td>1,565,760</td>
<td>1,688,544</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78,996</td>
<td>3,674,809</td>
<td>3,674,809</td>
<td>3,674,809</td>
<td>2,081,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>$2,085,173</td>
<td>$7,040,655</td>
<td>$7,981,170</td>
<td>$1,167,848</td>
<td>$356,099</td>
<td>$18,630,944</td>
<td>$19,871,613</td>
<td>$18,357,831</td>
<td>$12,937,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>$1,240,669</td>
<td>($273,113)</td>
<td>($5,592,976)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
<td>($5,627,008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Rev. Needed</td>
<td>$15,761,329</td>
<td>$14,247,547</td>
<td>$8,827,684</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Tax Rates Under A Single Municipality**

The lowest cost to the general fund is found in Single Government III. The Single Government III model is the only one of the three in which the residents of all five municipalities receive a general fund tax break.

The Single Government model III would need to produce $8,827,684 for general purposes through current year real estate, earned income and other taxes. Of this amount, $7,776,024 would be raised from the Real Estate Tax and from the Earned Income Tax. To produce this amount of money, the respective tax rates for each could be 5.26 mills for Real Estate and 1.0 percent for Earned Income. In figuring real estate taxes, one mill would generate approximately $405,000 at a 95 percent collection rate.

If this level of expenditures and revenues were achieved it would reduce taxes throughout the Valley for nearly every taxpayer. It would also reduce the overall cost of government in the Valley by more than three million dollars.

###

This analysis supports the conclusion of the Finance Sub-committee that there are significant issues to be resolved before an acceptable consolidated budget can be formulated. These issues revolve around policy decisions about the size of the police department, the means to finance fire service costs, the handling of debt service, and the ability to produce other savings in general government expenditures. These questions would be among those dealt with by the elected officials of a combined government.
The tables below show outcomes to the respective municipalities under various real estate and earned income tax rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT 2003</th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003 Real Estate Tax</td>
<td>$4,446,000</td>
<td>$1,118,000</td>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>$424,000</td>
<td>$173,000</td>
<td>$6,861,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed valuation</td>
<td>$110,376,650</td>
<td>$231,018,900</td>
<td>$41,482,000</td>
<td>$31,215,150</td>
<td>$12,237,350</td>
<td>$426,330,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current ret Millage rate</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned Income Tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>$745,000</td>
<td>$4,100,000</td>
<td>$420,000</td>
<td>$245,000</td>
<td>$33,000</td>
<td>$5,543,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residents</td>
<td>$360,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 47 non-residents</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$155,000</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$155,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>$1,105,000</td>
<td>$4,400,000</td>
<td>$705,000</td>
<td>$285,000</td>
<td>$113,000</td>
<td>$6,608,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate and earned income tax</td>
<td>$5,551,000</td>
<td>$5,518,000</td>
<td>$1,405,000</td>
<td>$709,000</td>
<td>$286,000</td>
<td>$13,469,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current eit rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>1.75%</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 47 non-residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change to 5 mills and 1.75% eit rate (current Hermitage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax (ret)</td>
<td>524,289</td>
<td>1,097,340</td>
<td>197,040</td>
<td>148,272</td>
<td>58,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned income tax (eit)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>2,607,500</td>
<td>4,100,000</td>
<td>565,385</td>
<td>857,500</td>
<td>115,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2,967,500</td>
<td>4,400,000</td>
<td>695,385</td>
<td>897,500</td>
<td>195,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate and earned income tax</td>
<td>3,491,789</td>
<td>5,518,000</td>
<td>1,405,000</td>
<td>709,000</td>
<td>286,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(2,059,211)</td>
<td>(20,660)</td>
<td>(512,576)</td>
<td>336,772</td>
<td>(32,373)</td>
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</table>

Change to 5.26 mills and 1.0% eit rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax</td>
<td>551,883</td>
<td>1,155,094</td>
<td>207,410</td>
<td>156,076</td>
<td>61,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned income tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>1,497,096</td>
<td>2,354,015</td>
<td>324,616</td>
<td>492,334</td>
<td>66,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>1,857,096</td>
<td>2,654,015</td>
<td>454,616</td>
<td>532,334</td>
<td>146,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate and earned income tax</td>
<td>2,408,979</td>
<td>3,809,109</td>
<td>662,026</td>
<td>688,409</td>
<td>207,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(3,142,021)</td>
<td>(1,708,891)</td>
<td>(742,974)</td>
<td>(20,591)</td>
<td>(78,499)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sharon | Hermitage | Farrell | Sharpsville | Wheatland | Total  |
### Change to 20 mills and 1.5% 
et rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax</td>
<td>2,097,156</td>
<td>4,389,359</td>
<td>788,158</td>
<td>593,088</td>
<td>232,510</td>
<td>8,100,271</td>
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<td>Earned income tax</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>2,235,000</td>
<td>3,514,286</td>
<td>484,615</td>
<td>735,000</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>7,067,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2,595,000</td>
<td>3,814,286</td>
<td>614,615</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>179,000</td>
<td>7,977,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate</td>
<td>4,692,156</td>
<td>8,203,645</td>
<td>1,402,773</td>
<td>1,368,088</td>
<td>411,510</td>
<td>16,078,172</td>
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<tr>
<td>and earned income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(858,844)</td>
<td>2,685,645</td>
<td>(2,227)</td>
<td>659,088</td>
<td>125,510</td>
<td>2,609,172</td>
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</table>

### Change to 15 mills and 1.5% 
et rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sharon</th>
<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax</td>
<td>1,572,867</td>
<td>3,292,019</td>
<td>591,119</td>
<td>444,816</td>
<td>174,382</td>
<td>6,075,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned income tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>2,235,000</td>
<td>3,514,286</td>
<td>484,615</td>
<td>735,000</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>7,067,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2,595,000</td>
<td>3,814,286</td>
<td>614,615</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>179,000</td>
<td>7,977,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate</td>
<td>4,167,867</td>
<td>7,106,305</td>
<td>1,205,734</td>
<td>1,219,816</td>
<td>353,382</td>
<td>14,053,104</td>
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<tr>
<td>and earned income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(1,383,133)</td>
<td>1,588,305</td>
<td>(199,266)</td>
<td>510,816</td>
<td>67,382</td>
<td>584,104</td>
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### Change to 10 mills and 1.5% 
et rate

<table>
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<th>Hermitage</th>
<th>Farrell</th>
<th>Sharpsville</th>
<th>Wheatland</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax</td>
<td>1,048,578</td>
<td>2,194,680</td>
<td>394,079</td>
<td>296,544</td>
<td>116,255</td>
<td>4,050,135</td>
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<td>Earned income tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>2,235,000</td>
<td>3,514,286</td>
<td>484,615</td>
<td>735,000</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>7,067,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2,595,000</td>
<td>3,814,286</td>
<td>614,615</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>179,000</td>
<td>7,977,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate</td>
<td>3,643,578</td>
<td>6,008,965</td>
<td>1,008,694</td>
<td>1,071,544</td>
<td>295,255</td>
<td>12,028,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and earned income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(1,907,422)</td>
<td>490,965</td>
<td>(396,306)</td>
<td>362,544</td>
<td>9,255</td>
<td>(1,440,963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>Hermitage</td>
<td>Farrell</td>
<td>Sharpsville</td>
<td>Wheatland</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to 13.54 mills and 1.5% eit rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate tax</td>
<td>1,419,775</td>
<td>2,971,596</td>
<td>533,583</td>
<td>401,520</td>
<td>157,409</td>
<td>5,483,883</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earned income tax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>2,235,000</td>
<td>3,514,286</td>
<td>484,615</td>
<td>735,000</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>7,067,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non residents</td>
<td>360,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>130,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>910,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>2,595,000</td>
<td>3,814,286</td>
<td>614,615</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>179,000</td>
<td>7,977,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total real estate and earned income tax</td>
<td>4,014,775</td>
<td>6,785,882</td>
<td>1,148,198</td>
<td>1,176,520</td>
<td>336,409</td>
<td>13,461,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change from Current</td>
<td>(1,536,225)</td>
<td>1,267,882</td>
<td>(256,802)</td>
<td>467,520</td>
<td>50,409</td>
<td>(7,215)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Municipal Consolidation and Merger

Governments operate under law. The Pennsylvania Constitution and many State laws and regulations establish the existence of county and municipal governments. All land area in Pennsylvania is part of a county government and is also “incorporated” under a municipality.

There are three primary types, or classifications, of municipal governments: Boroughs, Townships of the First or Second Class (First Class based on density at the time of formation), and Cities of the First Class (Philadelphia), Second Class (Pittsburgh), Second Class A (Scranton) and Third Class (all other PA cities). City classifications have been determined primarily on the basis of population.

There are 2,566 municipalities in the Commonwealth.

All municipal governments operate under the respective codes applicable to their classification and form of government. The Borough Code, and various township codes and city codes define the basic forms of municipal government and the “may” and “shall” which they must follow.

Municipal Government Services

Municipal governments are the principal providers of direct public services to communities. Municipal services often include, among others:

- Police protection;
- Fire protection (paid and volunteer);
- Water treatment and distribution;
- Sewage collection and treatment;
- Storm water management;
- Refuse collection and disposal;
- Street lighting;
- Construction and maintenance of roadways and bridges;
- Administration of parks and recreation facilities and programs;
- Administration and enforcement of building and inspection codes; and
- Planning and zoning.

These services, and many others provided by municipal governments, are indispensable to the well being of communities.
Intergovernmental Cooperation

Municipal governments can most help to advance economic growth, community development and general prosperity by doing well the basic things that are within governmental control, including the provision of coordinated, efficient and cost-effective public services.

To achieve these ends, public accountability requires that governments employ the best methods of service delivery at reasonable costs. Governments may do this alone, or they may cooperate with one another in providing services. The principal means to work together is through “Intergovernmental Cooperation.”

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Law, PA Act 180 of 1972 (as amended) (53 Pa. C.S.A. § 2301) is the enabling legislation for intergovernmental cooperation in Pennsylvania. This law makes operational Article IX, Section 5 of the PA Constitution, and allows municipalities to cooperate with one another in any action or service that the governments have the power under law to do alone. For the purpose of this Act, the term “municipality” is defined as “…a county, city of the second class, second class A and third class, borough, incorporated town, township, school district or any other similar general purpose unit of government which shall hereafter be created by the General Assembly.”

There are two general methods of intergovernmental cooperation authorized by Act 180. These include: (1) formal Act 180 agreements and (2) councils of governments. (In addition, there are a number of “handshake agreements” in effect throughout the Commonwealth. Handshake agreements include unwritten working arrangements between municipalities, and any written agreements not formally adopted under Act 180.)

Act 180 agreements are legal contracts among two or more municipalities. They are usually single purpose agreements for the joint provision of a specific service. Act 180 agreements can be generally structured in two ways: (1) a provider/purchaser structure whereby one municipality sells a service or program to another, and (2) a joint program structure whereby two or more municipalities implement a joint program, sharing ownership and control of the program.

Councils of Governments (COGs) are a special kind of organization formed under Act 180. A COG is a voluntary organization of member governments whose purpose is to discuss, plan and undertake joint, intergovernmental activities agreed to by its member governments. The purpose of a COG is further defined in its bylaws. A COG formed for general purposes may:

- Serve as a forum for the identification, discussion, and examination of intergovernmental issues and concerns;
- Facilitate agreements and cooperative actions for specific purposes and programs agreed to by the member governments; and,
- Administer, undertake, and execute projects and programs assigned to the COG as agreed to by the member governments.
COGs may be comprised of any combination of municipalities that is allowable under Act 180. COG activities, like all other intergovernmental arrangements, are governed by Act 180 and the particular codes or laws applicable to the participating governments.

**Consolidation and Merger**

In addition to intergovernmental cooperation, citizens can change the structures of their municipal governments to in order to achieve service and economic efficiencies, provide a more conducive climate for business attraction and retention, improve overall quality of life for the citizens, and portray their communities to the outside world as dynamic places to live, work and raise families. This can be done through municipal consolidation or merger.

Municipal “consolidation” is the combination of two or more municipalities that results in the termination of the existence of each municipality and creates a new municipality that assumes jurisdiction over all of the municipalities that have been terminated.

Municipal “merger” is the combination of two or more municipalities that results in the termination of the existence of all but one of the municipalities to be merged, with the surviving municipality assuming jurisdiction over the municipalities that have been terminated.

The end result of municipal consolidation and merger is a single government spanning the entire area of the formerly separate municipalities.

Pennsylvania law provides the means by which citizens may restructure their governments through consolidation or merger.

Municipal consolidation and merger requires citizen referendum.

The means to have a question of municipal consolidation placed on an election ballot is defined under Pennsylvania law. The applicable laws are the **Pennsylvania Constitution**, **The Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act, PA Act 90 of 1994 (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731)**, and the **Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law, PA Act 62 of 1972 (53 Pa. C.S.A. § 2901)**.

Pennsylvania Constitution, Article IX, Section 8, states that “the electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge or change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body.” The Constitution does not provide guidance for many questions that arise when citizens attempt to consider and implement municipal consolidation or merger. For instance, the Constitution is silent on form of government and transition procedures, and it does not provide for governmental officials to place a consolidation question on a ballot. Additionally, the Constitution does not address consideration of home rule or optional plan forms of government.
It is the questions of form of government and transition that cloud consideration of consolidation by citizens in local communities. To help remedy this, in 1994, the General Assembly enacted the Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act, Act 90 of 1994 (53 Pa.C.S.A. § 731).

Act 90 states that two or more municipalities may be consolidated or merged into a single municipality if each of the municipalities is contiguous to at least one of the other municipalities.

Consolidation or merger may be commenced by either:

- a joint agreement of the governing bodies of the municipalities approved by ordinance; or
- initiative of electors.

In accordance with the Constitution, both options require citizen referendum to take effect.

If the consolidation or merger is originated through joint agreement of the governing bodies, the new municipality may be governed by:

- the municipal code and other general laws for its kind and class of municipality,
- an Act 62 home rule charter or optional plan already in place in one of the existing municipalities, or
- a newly written home rule charter or new optional plan under Act 62 approved by each governing body of the existing municipalities.

If the consolidation or merger is originated through citizen initiative procedures, the new municipality may be governed by:

- the municipal code and other general laws for its kind and class of municipality,
- an Act 62 home rule charter or optional plan already in place in one of the existing municipalities,
- a new optional plan under Act 62 that is identified in the petitions. (Under Act 90, if the consolidation or merger is originated solely through citizen initiative, it appears that the petition process wholly alone may not include a newly-written home rule charter.)

Act 90 also addresses conduct of referenda, consolidation or merger agreements, effectuation of consolidation or merger, the effect of transition on employees of consolidated or merged municipalities, procedures following consolidation or merger, and court review of transitional plans.

In summary, the PA Constitution, Act 90, and Act 62, play the following lead roles in the consolidation process:
• The Constitution permits the electors of any municipality by initiative and referendum to consolidate by a majority vote of those voting in each municipality.

• Act 90 permits citizens to include in the initial referendum question an optional plan form of government under Act 62 or an existing Home Rule Charter of one of the participating municipalities. Under Act 90, if the consolidation or merger is originated solely through citizen initiative, it appears that the petition process wholly alone may not include a newly-written home rule charter. (SEE HB 77 BELOW)

• Act 90 permits municipal officials to place a question of consolidation directly on the referendum ballot through joint agreement and ordinance of two or more contiguous municipalities without citizen initiated petition;

• Act 90 permits municipal officials to place an existing or new home rule charter or optional plan form of government directly on the ballot with the initial joint ordinance approved question;

• Act 90 calls for establishment of a consolidation agreement among the participating municipalities following approval of a citizen initiated vote.

• Act 62 defines the home rule and optional plan forms of government that may be included in the ballot question.

House Bill 77 of 2003

A change to the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act law was enacted in the fall of 2003 that creates an additional procedure for citizen use. It overcomes the present legal obstacle preventing citizen initiative of a new home rule charter. The change applies in the event that the Shenango Valley governments choose to not place a referendum question on the election ballot.

The former PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act did not permit citizen initiative of a consolidation vote with a new home rule charter drafted for that vote. House Bill 77 of 2003 (printer’s number 2634) amends the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act to permit the citizens of multiple adjacent municipalities to conduct a referendum for the election of a joint Government Study Commission that would be empowered to recommend consolidation of the governments under a new home rule charter created by the Commission. In the event the Commission recommends consolidation and a new home rule charter they have drafted, this would automatically go to ballot in the effected municipalities.

This legislation remedies a serious weakness in the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act that prevents citizens from fully using their initiative rights under the PA Constitution, Article IX, Section 8. This Section states that “the electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge or change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body.” However the prior law required
electors to work thorough the existing governing bodies, essentially obtaining their approval, before a new home rule charter can be brought to the ballot. This is because present law does not allow the electors the same powers as the elected officials to put forth a newly developed home rule charter to establish the form of government for a proposed consolidation.

This legislation passed both the PA House and Senate by unanimous votes and was signed by Governor Rendell on October 22, 2003. It will become effective by the end of 2003, and will be available to the voters in 2004.

In this case, the petition question would read as follows:
“Shall a Government Study Commission of (seven, nine or eleven) members be elected to study the issue of consolidation or merger of (municipalities to be consolidated or merged); to provide a recommendation on consolidation or merger; to consider the advisability of the adoption of a new home rule charter; and to draft a new home rule charter, if recommended in the report of the commission?”

There have been eight approved and 11 rejected boundary change proposals in Pennsylvania since 1990. Many others have not made it to vote.

**Approved:**

1991, City of St. Marys, Elk Co.
   Approved consolidation of St. Marys Borough and Benzinger Township.

   Approved merger of Elkland Township into Nelson Township.

1992, Black Lick Township, Indiana Co.
   Approved merger of Jacksonville Borough into Black Lick Township.

1994, Fairview Township, Erie Co.
   Approved consolidation of Fairview Borough and Fairview Township.

1997, Northern Cambria Borough, Cambria Co.
   Approved consolidation of Barnesboro Borough and Spangler Borough.

1997, East Pennsboro Township, Cumberland Co.
   Approved merger of West Fairview Borough into East Pennsboro Township.

1998, Muhlenberg Township, Berks Co.
   Approved merger of Temple Borough into Muhlenberg Township.

2001, Wyomissing Borough, Berks Co.
   Approved merger of Wyomissing Hills Borough into Wyomssing Borough.
Rejected:

1991, Rejected consolidation of East Stroudsburg Borough, Hamilton Township, Middle Smithfield Township, Price Township, Smithfield Township and Stroud Township, Monroe Co.

1991 Rejected consolidation of Casandra Borough, Portage Borough and Portage Township, Cambria Co.

1993, Rejected merger of Seven Fields Borough into Cranberry Township, Butler County)

1994, Rejected consolidation of State College Borough, College Township and Patton Township, Centre County

1994, Rejected consolidation of East Rochester, Rochester Borough and Rochester Township, Beaver County


1995, Rejected consolidation of Tower City Borough and Porter Township, Schuylkill Co.

1995, Rejected merger of South Renovo Borough into Renovo Borough, Clinton Co.

2001, Rejected consolidation of Susquehanna Borough and Oakland Borough, Susquehanna Co.

2001, Rejected merger of Cassandra Borough and Portage Township, Cambria Co.
Draft Resolution for Shenango Valley Municipalities, New Home Rule Charter

The existing municipal governments can follow the procedures in the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731). The following is a draft resolution for consideration by the Shenango Valley municipalities:

Whereas, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group is generally charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective is to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

Toward this end, SVISC has completed development of a model for a single new municipal government in the Shenango Valley.

Whereas, the (insert name of municipality) believes that every citizen should be permitted to cast his/her vote on whether they believe a combined government should be created. The voters would also be considering whether a combined government would best assure coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective services in the future.

Now therefore be it Resolved, that (insert name of municipality) agrees to join with the other municipalities to follow the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731) to develop a Home Rule Charter and place a referendum question on the election ballot for joining into a single, new municipal government.

Now therefore be it also Resolved, that (insert name of municipality) agrees to join with the other municipalities to reappoint the present Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee to be the Voter Preparation / Home Rule Charter Drafting Committee and that this group’s new charge is to assume the leadership role to draft a Home Rule Charter and prepare the community for the coming vote. The group is also to obtain additional financing from the Commonwealth and others to support the citizen information program, home rule charter development, and transition and infrastructure improvement funding for work to take place during the transition period and thereafter in the event a consolidation vote is approved.
Draft Petition for the Citizens, Existing Home Rule Charter

In the event the governments do not follow the procedures under PA laws to place a referendum question on the election ballot, the citizens have the right to do so through initiative provisions under the Pennsylvania Constitution and the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731).

The Pennsylvania Constitution, Article IX, Section 8, states that:

"... The electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge and change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body." (Underlining added)

The Pennsylvania Constitution requires that a petition containing a proposal for referendum be signed by electors comprising at least five percent of the number of electors voting for the office of governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality.

The signed petitions must contain the following:

(1) The name of the municipality from which the signers of the petition were obtained. (Sharpsville, or Wheatland, or Farrell, or Hermitage, or Sharon)

(2) The names of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged. (Possibly, Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon)

(3) The name of the consolidated or merged municipality. (Possibly, City of Shenango)

(4) The type and class of the consolidated or merged municipality. (Possibly, Third Class City.)

(5) Whether a consolidated or merged municipality shall be governed solely by the code and other general laws applicable to the kind and class of the consolidated or merged municipality; whether it shall be governed by a home rule charter or optional plan of government previously adopted pursuant to the act of April 13, 1972 (P.L. 184, No. 62), known as the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law,[fn1] by one of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged… (Possibly, the Home Rule Charter of the existing City of Farrell or Hermitage.)

(7) The number of districts or wards, if any, into which the consolidated or merged municipality will be divided for the purpose of electing all or some members of its governing body. (Possibly with five wards.)

A possible citizen initiated ballot question is: “Shall the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon consolidate as a home rule, third class city under the
existing Home Rule Charter of the City of (insert Farrell or Hermitage), and with a nine member legislative body, elected five by wards and four at large, and to be known as the (“insert name”)?”

In order for the referendum question to pass, a majority of the citizens voting in each municipality must vote “yes” to the same question at the same election. A majority “no” vote in any municipality would defeat the question.

Below is a draft petition for possible use by citizens under the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act.

DRAFT PETITION FOR A REFERENDUM VOTE IN THE (insert municipality)

The Pennsylvania Constitution, Article IX, Section 8, states that:

"The electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge and change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body." (Underlining added)

Under this authority, and the authority of the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act, (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731), this is an initiative petition for a referendum question on the consolidation of the municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon, Mercer County, PA.

The petition contains signatures of at least 5% of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged and shall be filed with the county board of elections.

We, the undersigned registered voters of the (insert municipality), Mercer County, Pennsylvania, hereby petition the Mercer County Board of Elections to place a Referendum Question on the ballot in (insert municipality) to be held on Tuesday, (insert date). The proposed question is this:

“Shall the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon consolidate as a home rule, third class city under the existing Home Rule Charter of the City of (insert Farrell or Hermitage), and with a nine member legislative body, elected five by wards and four at large, and to be known as the (“insert name”)?”

In the event the question is approved in all five municipalities by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, the following shall apply to establish the single, new municipal government:
1. The new municipality shall come into legal existence upon certification by the Mercer County Board of Elections that a majority of those voting thereon in each municipality approved the referendum.

2. The new municipality shall be classified as a home rule municipality and operate under authority of the provisions of the Home Rule Charter specified in the ballot question, but with a nine member legislative body, elected five by wards and four at large.

3. Upon certification of the approved consolidation vote, the governing body of (insert municipality) shall join with the governing bodies of the other governments to follow the procedures and requirements of the Pennsylvania Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731) to develop and execute all activities necessary to effectuate consolidation.

A change to the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act law was enacted in the fall of 2003 that creates an additional procedure for citizen use. It overcomes the prior legal obstacle preventing citizen initiative of a new home rule charter. The change applies in the event that the Shenango Valley governments choose to not place a referendum question on the election ballot and the citizens choose to not use the initiative process for using the existing Farrell or Hermitage home rule charter.

DRAFT PETITION FOR A REFERENDUM VOTE IN THE (insert municipality)

The Pennsylvania Constitution, Article IX, Section 8, states that:
"The electors of any municipality shall have the right, by initiative and referendum, to consolidate, merge and change boundaries by a majority vote of those voting thereon in each municipality, without the approval of any governing body." (Underlining added)

Under the authority of the PA Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act, (53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731) this is an initiative petition for a referendum to establish an elected, multi-municipal Government Study Commission that would be empowered to recommend consolidation of the governments under a new home rule charter created by the Commission, for the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon, Mercer County, PA.

The petition contains signatures of at least 5% of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged and shall be filed with the county board of elections. The petition to place the question of a Government Study Commission on the ballot must be filed with the County Board of Elections prior to the thirteenth Tuesday before the next primary, municipal or general election, except that no referendum petition shall be signed or circulated prior to the 20th Tuesday before the election, nor later than the 13th Tuesday before the election.

We, the undersigned registered voters of the (insert municipality), Mercer County, Pennsylvania, hereby petition the Mercer County Board of Elections to place a Referendum Question on the ballot in (insert municipality) to be held on Tuesday, (insert date). The proposed question is this:

“Shall a Government Study Commission of (seven, nine or eleven) members be elected to study the issue of consolidation or merger of (municipalities to be consolidated or merged); to provide a recommendation on consolidation or merger; to consider the advisability of the adoption of a new home rule charter; and to draft a new home rule charter, if recommended in the report of the commission?”

Note: In the event this question is on the ballot, a minimum number of persons must be elected to positions on the Commission. For additional information, refer to Section 735.1 of the Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act below.
Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act

Combined Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act and HB 77 of 2003 (pn 2634)
HB 77 CHANGES SHOWN IN BOLD

53 Pa.C.S.A.§ 731. Short title of subchapter

This subchapter shall be known and may be cited as the Municipal Consolidation or Merger Act.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 732. Definitions

The following words and phrases when used in this subchapter shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"Commission." A board of members elected under the provisions of section 735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter) to consider the advisability of the adoption of a new home rule charter for the proposed consolidated or merged municipality and, if advisable, to draft and recommend a new home rule charter to the electorate.

"Consolidated or merged municipality." A municipal entity resulting from successful consolidation or merger proceedings under this subchapter.

"Consolidation." The combination of two or more municipalities which results in the termination of the existence of each of the municipalities to be consolidated and the creation of a new municipality which assumes jurisdiction over all of the municipalities which have been terminated.

"Contiguous territory." A territory of which a portion abuts the boundary of another municipality, including territory separated from the exact boundary of another municipality by a street, road, railroad or highway or by a river or other natural or artificial stream of water.

"Electors." The registered voters of a municipality involved in proceedings relating to the adoption and repeal of optional forms of government.

"Election officials." The county boards of election.

"Governing body." The council in cities, boroughs and incorporated towns; the board of commissioners in counties and townships of the first class; the board of supervisors in townships of the second class; or the legislative
policymaking body in home rule municipalities.

"Initiative." The filing with applicable election officials of a petition containing a proposal for a referendum to be placed on the ballot of the next election. The petition shall be:

(1) Filed not later than the 13th Tuesday prior to the next election in which it will appear on the ballot.

(2) Signed by voters comprising 5% of the persons of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in the municipality where the proposal will appear on the ballot.

(3) Placed on the ballot by election officials in a manner fairly representing the content of the petition for decision by referendum at the election.

(4) Submitted not more than once in five years.

"Merger." The combination of two or more municipalities which results in the termination of the existence of all but one of the municipalities to be merged with the surviving municipality absorbing and assuming jurisdiction over the municipalities which have been terminated.

"Municipality." Every county other than a county of the first class, every city other than a city of the first or second class, and every borough, incorporated town, township and home rule municipality other than a home rule municipality which would otherwise be a city of the first or second class.

"New home rule charter." A written document that defines the powers, structure, privileges, rights and duties of the proposed consolidated or merged municipality, the limitations thereon and that provides for the composition and election of the governing body chosen by popular elections.

"Referendum." A vote seeking approval by a majority of electors voting on a question of consolidation or merger placed on the ballot by initiative or otherwise.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 733. Procedure for consolidation or merger

Two or more municipalities may be consolidated or merged into a single municipality, whether within the same or different counties, if each of the municipalities is contiguous to at least one of the other consolidating or merging municipalities and if together the municipalities would form a consolidated or merged municipality. Consolidation or merger may be
commenced by one of the following:

(1) Joint agreement of the governing bodies of the municipalities proposed for consolidation or merger approved by ordinance.

(2) Initiative of electors.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 734. Joint agreement of governing bodies

(a) General rule. - The governing body of each municipality to be consolidated or merged shall enter into a joint agreement under the official seal of each municipality to consolidate or merge into one municipality.

(b) Elements. - The joint agreement shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) The name of each municipality that is a party to the agreement.

(2) The name and the territorial boundaries of the consolidated or merged municipality.

(3) The type and class of the consolidated or merged municipality.

(4) Whether a consolidated or merged municipality shall be governed solely by the code and other general laws applicable to the kind and class of the consolidated or merged municipality; whether it shall be governed by a home rule charter or optional plan of government previously adopted pursuant to [the act of April 13, 1972 (P.L.184, No.62), known as the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans OR Subpart E of Part III (relating to home rule and optional plan government), by one of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged; or whether it shall be governed by a home rule charter or optional plan of government that has not been previously adopted in accordance with [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] OR Subpart E of Part III by any of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged, but which, in the case of an optional plan of government, has been selected and approved by the governing body of each of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged from among the options provided for in [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] Subpart E of Part III or, in the case of a home rule charter, has been formulated and approved by the governing body of each of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged; provided, however, that nothing in this subchapter shall be construed as authorizing a municipality adopting a home rule charter or optional plan of government pursuant to this subchapter to exercise powers not granted to a municipality adopting a home rule charter or an optional plan of government pursuant to [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] Subpart E of Part III.

(5) The number of districts or wards, if any, into which the consolidated or merged municipality will be divided for the purpose of electing all or some members of its governing body, and the boundaries of wards or districts
shall be established to achieve substantially equal representation.

(6) In the case of a merger, where the surviving municipality is a city which had previously adopted an optional charter pursuant to the act of July 15, 1957 (P.L. 901, No. 399), known as the Optional Third Class City Charter Law,[fn2] whether the resulting merged municipality will continue to operate under the optional charter.

(7) Terms for:

(i) The disposition of existing assets of each municipality.

(ii) The liquidation of existing indebtedness of each municipality.

(iii) The assumption, assignment or disposition of existing liabilities of each municipality, either jointly, separately or in certain defined proportions, by separate rates of taxation within each of the constituent municipalities until consolidation or merger becomes effective pursuant to section 738 (relating to effectuation of consolidation or merger).

(iv) The implementation of a legally consistent uniform tax system throughout the consolidated or merged municipality which provides the revenue necessary to fund required municipal services.

(8) The governmental organization of the consolidated or merged municipality insofar as it concerns elected officers.

(9) A transitional plan and schedule applicable to elected officers.

(10) The common administration and enforcement of ordinances enforced uniformly within the consolidated or merged municipality.

735. Initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger without new home rule charter.

(a) General rule.--In order for consolidation or merger proceedings to be initiated by petition of electors, petitions containing signatures of at least 5% of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged shall be filed with the county board of elections of the county in which the municipality, or the greater portion of its territory, is located.

(b) Notice to governing bodies affected.--When election officials find that a petition is in proper order, they shall send copies of the initiative petition without the signatures thereon...
to the governing bodies of each of the municipalities affected by the proposed consolidation or merger.

(c) Contents.--A petition shall set forth:

(1) The name of the municipality from which the signers of the petition were obtained.

(2) The names of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged.

(3) The name of the consolidated or merged municipality.

(4) The type and class of the consolidated or merged municipality.

(5) Whether a consolidated or merged municipality shall be governed solely by the code and other general laws applicable to the kind and class of the consolidated or merged municipality; whether it shall be governed by a home rule charter or optional plan of government previously adopted pursuant to the act of April 13, 1972 (P.L.184, No.62), known as the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law, OR Subpart E of Part III (relating to home rule and optional plan government), by one of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged; or whether it shall be governed by an optional plan of government that has not been previously adopted in accordance with [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] OR Subpart E of Part III by any of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged, but which has been selected from among the options provided for in [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] Subpart E of Part III and is identified in the petition; provided, however, that nothing in this subchapter shall be construed as authorizing a municipality adopting an optional plan of government pursuant to this subchapter to exercise powers not granted to a municipality adopting an optional plan of government pursuant to [the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law] Subpart E of Part III.

(6) In the case of a merger, where the surviving municipality is a city which had previously adopted an optional charter pursuant to the act of July 15, 1957 (P.L.901, No.399), known as the Optional Third Class City Charter Law, whether the resulting merged municipality will continue to operate under the optional charter.

(7) The number of districts or wards, if any, into which the consolidated or merged municipality will be divided for the purpose of electing all or some members of its governing body.

(d) Filing of petition.--The consolidation or merger petition shall be filed with the election officials not later than the 13th Tuesday prior to the next primary, municipal or general election. The petition and proceedings on the petition shall be conducted in the manner and
subject to the provisions of the election laws which relate to the signing, filing and adjudication of nomination petitions insofar as the provisions are applicable, except that no referendum petition shall be signed or circulated prior to the 20th Tuesday before the election, nor later than the 13th Tuesday before the election.

735.1. Initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter.

(a) General rule.--In order for a commission and consolidation or merger proceedings to be initiated by petition of electors, petitions containing signatures of at least 5% of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged shall be filed with the county board of elections of the county in which the municipality, or the greater portion of its territory, is located.

(b) Notice to governing bodies affected.--When election officials find that a petition is in proper order, they shall send copies of the initiative petition without the signatures thereon to the governing bodies of each of the municipalities affected by the proposed consolidation or merger.

(c) Contents.--A petition shall set forth:

(1) The name of the municipality from which the signers of the petition were obtained.

(2) The names of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged.

(3) The number of persons to compose the commission.

(4) The petition question which shall read as follows: Shall a Government Study Commission of (seven, nine or eleven) members be elected to study the issue of consolidation or merger of (municipalities to be consolidated or merged); to provide a recommendation on consolidation or merger; to consider the advisability of the adoption of a new home rule charter; and to draft a new home rule charter, if recommended in the report of the commission?

(d) Filing of petition and duty of election board.

(1) A commission and consolidation or merger proceedings petition under this section shall be filed with the election officials not later than the 13th Tuesday prior to the next primary, municipal or general election.

(2) The petition and proceedings on the petition shall be conducted in the manner and subject to the provisions of the election laws which relate to the signing, filing and adjudication of nomination petitions insofar as the provisions are applicable, except that no referendum
petition shall be signed or circulated prior to the 20th Tuesday before the election, nor later than the 13th Tuesday before the election.

(3) At the next general, municipal or primary election occurring not less than the 13th Tuesday after the filing of the petition with the county board of elections, it shall cause the appropriate question to be submitted to the electors of each of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged in the same manner as other questions are submitted under the act of June 3, 1937 (P.L.1333, No.320), known as the Pennsylvania Election Code.

(e) Election of members of commission.--

(1) A commission of seven, nine or eleven members, as designated in the question, shall be elected by the qualified voters at the same election the question is submitted to the electors.

(2) Each candidate for the office of member of the commission shall be nominated and placed upon the ballot containing the question in the manner provided by and subject to the provisions of the Pennsylvania Election Code, which relate to the nomination of a candidate nominated by nomination papers filed for other offices elective by the voters. Each candidate shall be nominated and listed without any political designation or slogan and no nomination paper shall be signed or circulated prior to the 13th Tuesday before the election nor later than the tenth Tuesday before the election. No signature shall be counted unless it bears a date within this period.

(3) Each elector shall be instructed to vote on the question and, regardless of the manner of his vote on the question, to vote for the designated number of members of the commission who shall serve if the question is or has been determined in the affirmative.

(4) If an insufficient number of nominating papers is filed to fill all of the designated positions on the commission, the question of establishing the commission shall be placed on the ballot and, unless a sufficient number of commission members are elected by receiving at least as many votes as signatures are required to file a nominating petition, then the question of creating the commission shall be deemed to have been rejected.

(f) Nomination of candidates.--

(1) All candidates for a commission shall be electors. Each candidate shall be nominated from the area of the proposed consolidated or merged municipality by nomination papers signed by a number of electors equal at least to 2% of the number of electors voting for the office of Governor in the last gubernatorial general election in each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged or 200 electors from each municipality, whichever is less, and filed with the county board of elections of the county in which the municipality, or the greater portion of its territory, is located not later than the tenth Tuesday prior to the date of the election.
(2) Each nomination paper shall set forth the name, place of residence and post office address of the candidate thereby nominated, that the nomination is for the office of commissioner and that the signers are legally qualified to vote for the candidate. An elector may not sign nomination papers for more candidates for the commission than he could vote for at the election. Every elector signing a nomination paper shall write his place of residence, post office address and street number, if any, on the petition.

(3) Each nomination paper shall, before it may be filed with the county board of elections, contain under oath of the candidate an acceptance of the nomination in writing, signed by the candidate therein nominated, upon or annexed to the paper, or, if the same person be named in more than one paper, upon or annexed to one of the papers. The acceptance shall certify that the candidate is an elector, that the nominee consents to run as a candidate at the election and that, if elected, the candidate agrees to take office and serve.

(4) Each nomination paper shall be verified by an oath of one or more of the signers, taken and subscribed before a person qualified under the laws of this Commonwealth to administer an oath, to the effect that the paper was signed by each of the signers in his proper handwriting, that the signers are, to the best knowledge and belief of the affiant, electors and that the nomination paper is prepared and filed in good faith for the sole purpose of endorsing the person named therein for election as stated in the paper.

(g) Results of election.--

(1) The result of the votes cast for and against the question as to the election of a commission and consolidation and merger proceedings shall be returned by the election officers, and a canvass of the election had, as is provided by law in the case of other public questions put to the electors. The votes cast for members of the commission shall be counted and the result returned by the county board of electors of the county in which the municipality, or the greater portion of its territory, is located, and a canvass of the election had, as is provided by law in the case of election of members of municipal councils or boards. The designated number of candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be elected and shall constitute the commission. If a majority of those voting on the question vote against the election of the commission, none of the candidates shall be elected. If two or more candidates for the last seat shall be equal in number of votes, they shall draw lots to determine which one shall be elected.

(2) If, in accordance with subsection (e)(4), there has been an insufficient number of nominating papers filed to fill all of the designated positions on the commission and a sufficient number of commission members are not elected by receiving at least as many votes as signatures are required to file a nominating petition, the question as to the election of a commission and consolidation and merger proceedings shall be deemed to have been rejected and shall fail and none of the candidates shall be elected.
(h) Oath of office of members of commission.--

(1) As soon as possible and in any event no later than ten days after its certification of election, the members of a commission elected on a countywide basis shall, before a judge of a court of common pleas, make oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Pennsylvania and to perform the duties of the office with fidelity.

(2) As soon as possible and in any event no later than ten days after its certification of election, the members of a commission elected on other than a countywide basis shall, before a judge or a district justice, make oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of Pennsylvania and to perform the duties of the office with fidelity.

(i) First meeting of commission.--

(1) As soon as possible and in any event no later than 15 days after its certification of election, a commission shall organize and hold its first meeting and elect one of its members chairman and another member vice chairman, fix its hours and place of meeting and adopt rules for the conduct of business it deems necessary and advisable.

(2) A majority of the members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but no recommendation of the commission shall have any legal effect unless adopted by a majority of the whole number of the members of the commission.

(j) Vacancies.--In case of a vacancy in a commission, the remaining members of the commission shall fill it by appointing thereto some other properly qualified elector.

(k) Function and duty of commission.--

(1) A commission shall study the issue of consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

(2) The commission shall study the advisability of a new home rule charter form of government for the proposed consolidated or merged municipality and compare it with other available forms under the laws of this Commonwealth and determine in its judgment which form of government is more clearly responsible or accountable to the people and its operation more economical and efficient.

(3) If a new home rule charter is found to be the most advisable form of government for the proposed consolidated or merged municipality, the commission shall:

(i) Draft and recommend to the electorate a new home rule charter for the proposed consolidated or merged municipality containing a transitional plan and schedule applicable to
elected officers; Provided, However, That nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing a consolidated or merged municipality adopting a new home rule charter pursuant to this section to exercise powers not granted to a municipality adopting a home rule charter pursuant to Part III, Subpt. E (relating to home rule and optional plan government).

(ii) If the new home rule charter calls for all or any part of the governing body of the consolidated or merged municipality to be elected on a district or ward basis, prepare and set forth, as an appendix to the new home rule charter:

(A) The district or ward boundaries established to achieve substantially equal representation.

(B) The district or ward designation by number.

(C) The number of members of the municipal governing body to be elected from each district or ward.

(iii) Prepare and suggest for adoption by the governing body of the newly consolidated or merged municipality recommendations concerning:

(A) The disposition of assets that may be surplus or unneeded as a result of the consolidation or merger.

(B) The liquidation, assumption or other disposition of existing indebtedness of the consolidated or merged municipalities.

(C) A legally consistent uniform tax system to be implemented throughout the consolidated or merged municipality which provides the revenue necessary to fund required municipal services.

(D) Ordinances to be uniformly enforced throughout the consolidated or merged municipality, which may be adopted by the new governing body of the consolidated or merged municipality at its organizational meeting; Provided, That codification of all ordinances shall be completed as specified in section 740 (relating to procedures).

(l) Compensation, personnel and commission budget.--

(1) Members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed by the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged for their necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(2) The commission may appoint one or more consultants and clerical and other assistants to serve at the pleasure of the commission and may fix reasonable compensation therefore to be paid the consultants and clerical and other assistants.
(3) In accordance with this subsection, the commission shall prepare and submit to the governing body of each of the municipalities being considered for consolidation or merger, budget estimates of the amount of money necessary to meet the expenditures to be incurred by the commission in the carrying out of its functions in accordance with this section, including, but not limited to, reasonable estimations of the necessary expenses of commission members, compensation of consultants, clerical personnel and other assistants and other expenditures incident to work of the commission.

(4) The commission shall prepare and submit an initial budget submission that estimates expenses for the first nine-month phase of the commission's work. The initial budget estimate shall be submitted as soon as possible and in any event no later than 45 days after the commission's certification of election.

(5) If, during the first nine-month phase of its work, the commission elects to prepare and submit a new home rule charter for the proposed consolidated or merged municipality, a final budget shall be submitted to the governing body of each of the municipalities being considered for consolidation or merger that estimates expenses to be incurred in the completion of the commission's work.

(6) No later than 15 days after the submission of a budget in accordance with paragraphs (4) or (5), a joint public hearing of the commission and the governing bodies of the municipalities shall be held. The governing bodies of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged may, by agreement, modify any budget submitted by the commission. A governing body of a municipality to be consolidated or merged may approve appropriations to the commission in conformity with its share of the modified budget, as determined in accordance with paragraph (7). Any unreasonable modification of the budget may be subject to an action as provided in paragraph (8) in the court of common pleas of any county wherein a municipality to be consolidated or merged lies.

(7) The municipalities to be consolidated or merged may, by agreement, determine the share that each municipality shall appropriate to fund the estimated budget of the commission. If no agreement as to the respective amount that each municipality shall appropriate is reached, each municipality shall appropriate funds equal to its pro rata share of the total estimated budget of the commission based upon its share of population to the total population of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged.

(8) The commission may bring an action in the court of common pleas of the county where a municipality is located requesting that the court determine whether the municipality has failed to reasonably modify an estimated budget or to appropriate moneys in accordance with this subsection. The court may provide appropriate relief, including, but not limited to, ordering appropriation of funds in accordance with the budget:

(i) as submitted by the commission or as modified by the municipalities; or
(ii) as modified by the court.

(9) In all cases, the costs and fees of any action brought by the commission under this subsection shall be paid by the municipality or municipalities named as defendants.

(10) A municipality shall be entitled to a proportionate reimbursement or offset of its share of the budget by any publicly or privately contributed funds or services made available to the commission.

(m) Hearings and public forums.--A commission shall hold one or more public hearings and sponsor public forums and generally shall provide for the widest possible public information and discussion respecting the purposes and progress of its work.

(n) Report of findings and recommendations.--

(1) A commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the citizens of the proposed consolidated or merged municipalities within nine months from the date of its election except that it shall be permitted an additional nine months if it elects to prepare and submit a proposed new home rule charter and an additional two months if it chooses to provide for the election of its governing body by districts. It shall publish or cause to be published sufficient copies of its final report for public study and information and shall deliver to the municipal clerk or secretary of each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged sufficient copies of the report to supply it to any interested citizen upon request. If the commission recommends the adoption of a new home rule charter, the report shall contain the complete plan as recommended.

(2) There shall be attached to each copy of the report of the commission, as a part thereof, a statement sworn to by the members of the commission listing in detail the funds, goods, materials and services, both public and private, used by the commission in the performance of its work and the preparation and filing of the report and identifying specifically the supplier of each item thereon.

(3) A copy of the final report of the commission with its findings and recommendations shall be filed with the Department of Community and Economic Development.

(4) All the records, reports, tapes, minutes of meetings and written discussions of the commission shall, upon its discharge, be turned over to the municipal clerk or secretary of each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged for permanent safekeeping and made available for public inspection at any time during regular business hours.

(o) Discharge of petition and amended reports.--
(1) A commission shall be discharged upon the filing of its report, but, if the commission's recommendations require further procedure in the form of a referendum on the part of the electors, the commission shall not be discharged until the procedure has been concluded. At any time prior to 60 days before the date of the referendum, the commission may modify or change any recommendation set forth in the final report by publishing an amended report.

(2) Whenever the commission issues an amended report pursuant to paragraph (1), the amended report shall supersede the final report and the final report shall cease to have any legal effect.

(3) The procedure to be taken under the amended report shall be governed by the provisions of this subpart applicable to the final report of the commission submitted pursuant to subsection (n).

(p) Types of action recommended.--A commission shall report and recommend in accordance with this section:

(1) That a referendum shall be held that submits to the electors the question of consolidating or merging the named municipalities under a new home rule charter as prepared by the commission.

(2) That no referendum shall be held because consolidation or merger of the named municipalities under a new home rule charter is not recommended by the commission.

(3) That the named municipalities consider such other action as the commission recommends and deems advisable consistent with its functions as set forth in this section.

(q) Specificity of recommendations.--

(1) If a commission recommends the adoption of a new home rule charter, it shall specify the number of members to be on the governing body, all offices to be filled by election and whether elections shall be on an at-large, district or combination district and at-large basis.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this subpart, if an approved new home rule charter adopted pursuant to the provisions of this subpart specifies that the election of the governing body should be on an at-large, district or combination district and at-large basis and the basis recommended differs from the existing basis and therefore requires the elimination of districts or the establishment of revised or new districts, then election of municipal officials shall not take place on the new basis until the municipal election following the next primary election taking place more than 180 days after the election at which the referendum on the question of a consolidation or merger and new home rule charter has been approved by the electorate. The consolidation or merger and new home rule charter shall not go into effect until the first Monday in January following the election of municipal officials on the new basis as
provided in section 738 (relating to effectuation of consolidation or merger). New or revised districts shall be established by the commission and included in the proposed charter.

(r) Form of question on consolidation or merger and new home rule charter.--If a commission recommends consolidation or merger and the adoption of a new home rule charter for the municipalities to be consolidated or merged, the question to be submitted to the voters for the adoption of consolidation or merger and a new home rule charter shall be submitted in the following form or such part as shall be applicable. Shall the municipalities of (insert names of municipalities consolidating or merging) be (insert consolidated or merged) to become (insert name of new municipality, type and class of municipality) under a new home rule charter contained in the report, dated (insert date), of the commission?

(s) Submission of question on consolidation or merger and new home rule charter.--If a commission recommends that the question of adopting consolidation or merger and a new home rule charter authorized by this subpart should be submitted to the electors, the municipal clerk or secretary of each municipality proposed to be consolidated or merged shall, within five days thereafter, certify a copy of the commission's report to the county board of elections of the county in which the municipality, or the greater portion of its territory, is located, which shall cause the question of adoption or rejection to be placed upon the ballot or voting machines at the time as the commission specifies in its report. The commission may cause the question to be submitted to the electors at the next primary, municipal or general election occurring not less than 60 days following the filing of a copy of the commission's report with the county board of elections, at the time the commission's report directs. At the election, the question of adopting consolidation or merger and a new home rule charter recommended by the commission shall be submitted to the electors by the county board of elections in the same manner as other questions are submitted to the electors under the Pennsylvania Election Code. The commission shall frame the question to be placed upon the ballot as provided for in subsection (r) and, if it deems appropriate, an interpretative statement to accompany the question.

(t) Amendment of new home rule charter.--The procedure for amending the new home rule charter of the consolidated or merged municipality created under this subpart shall be through the initiative procedure and referendum or ordinance of the governing body as provided for in Subchapter C of Chapter 29 (relating to amendment of existing charter or optional plan).

(u) General powers and limitation of consolidated or merged municipality under new home rule charter.--Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing a consolidated or merged municipality adopting a new home rule charter to exercise powers not granted to a municipality adopting a home rule charter pursuant to Subpart E of Part III.

(V) DEFINITION.--AS USED IN THIS SECTION, THE TERM “MUNICIPALITY” SHALL NOT INCLUDE A COUNTY OF ANY CLASS.
53 Pa.C.S.A. § 736. Conduct of referenda

(a) Duty to place on ballot.--Following initiation of proceedings for consolidation or merger by the procedures set forth either in section 734 (relating to joint agreement of governing bodies) or 735 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger without new home rule charter), the question of consolidation or merger as set forth in the joint agreement or initiative petition shall be placed before the electors of each of the municipalities proposed to be consolidated or merged. A referendum shall be held at the first primary, municipal or general election occurring at least 13 weeks after either:

(1) the date of the general agreement entered into under the provisions of section 734; or

(2) the date of filing of the petition filed under the provisions of section 735. a.1)

Referenda under section 735.1.--Referenda authorized under section 735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter) shall be placed on the ballot in accordance with section 735.1(d)(3) and (s).

(b) Approval.--[Consolidation] Pursuant to sections 734, 735 and 735.1 consolidation or merger shall not be effective unless the referendum question is approved by a majority of the electors voting in each of the municipalities in which the referendum is held. If in any one of the municipalities in which the referendum is held a majority vote in favor of consolidation or merger does not result, the referendum shall fail and consolidation or merger shall not take place. The same question in accordance with sections 734 or 735, or the same question described in the proposal for consolidation or merger with a new home rule charter in accordance with section 735.1 described in the consolidation or merger proposal shall not be voted on again for a period of five years.

(c) Subsequent referenda.--The five-year moratorium on voting the same consolidation or merger question as provided in subsection (b) shall be deemed not to apply to any subsequent referendum question involving a consolidation or merger of any combination of two or more contiguous municipalities if the referendum question differs or is dissimilar in any way from a previous referendum question which was not approved as provided for in subsection (b).

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 737. Consolidation or merger agreement

(a) Form.--Upon favorable action by the electorate on consolidation or merger, in cases where consolidation or merger was initiated by petition of electors under section 735 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger without new home rule charter), the governing bodies of the municipalities to be consolidated or merged shall meet within 60 days after the certification of the favorable vote and shall within a reasonable time after certification make a consolidation or merger agreement as follows:
(1) If the governing body, or part of the governing body, of the consolidated or merged municipality is to be elected on a district or ward basis, the agreement shall set forth the district or ward boundaries and the district or ward designation, by number, and the number of members of the municipal governing body to be elected from each district or ward. The boundaries of the districts or wards shall be established to achieve substantially equal representation.

(2) The agreement shall set forth terms for:

(i) The disposition of the existing assets of each municipality.

(ii) The liquidation of the existing indebtedness of each municipality.

(iii) The assumption, assignment and disposition of the existing liabilities of each municipality, either jointly, separately or in certain defined proportions, by separate rates of taxation within each of the constituent municipalities until consolidation or merger becomes effective pursuant to section 738 (relating to effectuation of consolidation or merger).

(3) The agreement shall set forth the governmental organization of the consolidated or merged municipality as it concerns elected officers and shall contain a transitional plan and schedule applicable to elected officers.

(4) The agreement shall provide for common administration and uniform enforcement of ordinances within the consolidated or merged municipality.

(5) The agreement shall also provide, consistent with existing law, for the implementation of a uniform tax system throughout the consolidated or merged municipality which shall provide the revenue necessary to fund required municipal services.

(b) Filing.--A copy of the consolidation or merger agreement under this section or the joint agreement under section 734 (relating to joint agreement of governing bodies) after approval by the electorate shall be filed with the Department of Community Affairs and Economic Development, the Department of Transportation, the Governor's Office of Policy Development or its successor, the Department of Education, the State Tax Equalization Board and the Legislative Data Processing Committee. A copy shall also be filed with the court of common pleas and the board of county commissioners of the county or counties in which municipalities affected are located.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 738. Effectuation of consolidation or merger

Municipalities consolidated or merged shall continue to be governed as before consolidation or merger until the date stipulated in the transitional plan and schedule provided for in sections 734 (relating to joint agreement of governing bodies) and 737 (relating to consolidation or
merger agreement), or the transitional plan provided for by a study commission pursuant to section 735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter). Subject to the provisions of section 735.1(q), new officials required to be elected shall take office on the first Monday of January following the municipal election designated in the transitional plan and schedule. At that municipal election, the necessary officials of the consolidated or merged municipality shall be elected in accordance with the terms of the general law affecting municipalities of the kind or class of the consolidated or merged municipality or, in case of a consolidated or merged municipality operating under a home rule charter or optional plan of government, in accordance with the charter or optional plan or with general law affecting home rule or optional plan municipalities, as applicable. The officers elected at that municipal election shall be elected for terms of office under the plan and schedule set forth in the consolidation or merger agreement authorized by section 734 or 737, or the transitional plan provided for by a commission pursuant to section 735.1, as the case may be. They shall take office as officers of the consolidated or merged municipality on the first Monday of January following the municipal election at which they were elected, and upon assumption of office, the consolidated or merged municipality shall begin to function and the former municipalities consolidated or merged into it shall be abolished.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 739. Effect of transition on employees of consolidated or merged municipality

(a) Transition.--As of the date when a consolidated or merged municipality shall begin to function, except for those officers and employees which are protected by any tenure of office, civil service provisions or collective bargaining agreement, all appointive offices and positions then existing in all former municipalities involved in the consolidation or merger shall be subject to the terms of the consolidation or merger agreement or transitional plan as provided for in section 735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter). Provisions shall be made for instances in which there is duplication of positions, including, but not limited to, chief of police or manager, and for other matters such as varying length of employee contracts, different civil service regulations in the constituent municipalities and differing ranks and position classifications for similar positions.

(b) Exception. - Nothing in this section shall be deemed to apply to a consolidated or merged municipality if one or more of the consolidating or merging municipalities has been declared distressed under the act of July 10, 1987 (P.L. 246, No. 47), known as the Municipalities Financial Recovery Act. In such case, the provisions of section 408 of that act shall control.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 740. Procedures

(a) Ordinance book.--After consolidation becomes effective, a new ordinance book shall be used by the municipality, and, except for a municipality consolidated or merged under section
735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter), the first document to be recorded in it shall be the consolidation agreement.

(b) Ordinance codification. - No later than two years after consolidation goes into effect, codification of all the ordinances of the municipality shall be completed. The codification shall include tabulation or indexing of those ordinances of the component municipalities that are of permanent effect in the consolidated municipality.

(c) Vesting of rights, privileges, property and obligations. - All rights, privileges and franchises of each component municipality and all property belonging to each component municipality shall be vested in the consolidated or merged municipality. The title to real estate vested in any of those municipalities shall not revert or be in any way impaired by reason of the consolidation or merger. All liens and rights of creditors shall be preserved. Agreements and contracts shall remain in force. Debts, liabilities and duties of each of the municipalities shall be attached to the consolidated or merged municipality and may be enforced against it.

53 Pa.C.S.A. § 741. Court review of transitional plan

(a) General rule.--Except as provided in subsection(b), after the approval of a referendum pursuant to section 736 (relating to conduct of referenda), any person who is a resident of a municipality to be consolidated or merged may petition the court of common pleas to order the appropriate municipal governing bodies to:

(1) implement the terms of a transitional plan and schedule adopted pursuant to section 734 (relating to joint agreement of governing bodies) or 737 (relating to consolidation or merger agreement); or

(2) adopt or amend a transitional plan or schedule if the court finds that the failure to do so will result in the unreasonable perpetuation of the separate forms and classifications of government existing in the affected municipalities prior to the approval of the referendum.

(b) Exception.--After consolidation or merger pursuant to section 735.1 (relating to initiative of electors seeking consolidation or merger with new home rule charter), any person who is a resident of the newly consolidated or merged municipality may petition the court of common pleas to order the governing body of that municipality to act to accept or provide alternatives to the recommendations of the commission in accordance with section 735.1(k)(3)(iii).

This act shall take effect in 60 days.
Draft Resolution for Shenango Valley Municipalities to Accept Report

The following is a draft resolution for consideration by the Shenango Valley municipalities to accept the SVISC report and to implement the SVISC recommendations:

Whereas, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group was generally charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective was to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

Whereas, the SVISC arrived at no consensus on whether is it is, or is not, in the long-term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single government. Therefore the Committee made no recommendation either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipal governments.

Whereas, the SVISC adopted a recommendation to create a structure and format to further develop the group’s sub-committee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and communities.

Whereas, The SVISC also recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

Now therefore be it also Resolved, that (insert name of municipality) agrees to join with the other municipalities to accept the report of the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee and work closely with the SVISC Coordinating Committee, SVISC Sub-committee Chairs, and others designated by this group, to implement the above recommendations.

###
CITY OF FARRELL
MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. R-15-2003

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF FARRELL, MERCER
COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA OFFICIALLY ACCEPTING
THE REPORT OF THE SHENANGO VALLEY
INTERGOVERNMENTAL STUDY COMMITTEE AND
CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE
REPORT.

WHEREAS, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC)
consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal
governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell,
Hermitage and Sharon; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC was charged with obtaining information on the structure,
operation and funding of the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve
future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services and to improve the climate for
private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic
opportunities for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC had a specific objective to assess structural consolidation
or merger of the municipalities and on this subject arrived at no consensus on whether it
is, or is not, in the long term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be
united under a single local municipal government, and made no recommendation either in
support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the existing municipal
governments; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC adopted a recommendation to create a structure and
format to further develop the group’s sub-committee reports and determine if more
sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the
respective governments and communities; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC also recommends that each municipality and the Upper
Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the
present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by Council of the City of Farrell as
follows:
SECTION 1. The City Council of the City of Farrell hereby accepts the report of the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee as submitted.

SECTION 2. The City Council of the City of Farrell hereby agrees to work with other municipalities in the Shenango Valley to determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperative efforts may be beneficial.

SECTION 3. The City Council of the City of Farrell hereby agrees to join with the other municipalities to seek a non-binding study of the present sanitary sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

ADOPTED by Council of the City of Farrell this 22nd day of December, 2003.

CITY OF FARRELL
By: 
Mayor & President of Council

ATTEST: 

City Clerk
CITY OF HERMITAGE
MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

RESOLUTION NO. 39 - 2003

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF HERMITAGE, MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, OFFICIALLY ACCEPTING THE REPORT OF THE SHENANGO VALLEY INTERGOVERNMENTAL STUDY COMMITTEE AND CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT.

WHEREAS, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage, and Sharon; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC was charged with obtaining information on the structure, operation, and funding of the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services and to improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC had a specific objective to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities and on this subject arrived at no consensus on whether it is, or is not, in the long term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single local municipal government, and made no recommendation either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the existing municipal governments; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC adopted a recommendation to create a structure and format to further develop the group’s sub-committee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and communities; and

WHEREAS, the SVISC also recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF HERMITAGE, MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, AND THE CITY OF HERMITAGE RESOLVES THROUGH THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAME AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Board of Commissioners of the City of Hermitage hereby accepts the report of the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee as submitted.
SECTION 2. The Board of Commissioners of the City of Hermitage hereby agrees to work with other municipalities in the Shenango Valley to determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperative efforts may be beneficial.

SECTION 3. The Board of Commissioners of the City of Hermitage hereby agrees to join with the other municipalities to seek a non-binding study of the present sanitary sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF HERMITAGE, MERCER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, THIS 25th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2003

ATTEST:                   CITY OF HERMITAGE
                           BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

[Signature]               By [Signature]
Gary F. Hlakson, City Secretary       William E. Scanlon, President
CITY OF SHARON, PENNSYLVANIA
RESOLUTION NO. 204-03

Introduced by: Mr. Lucas

Adopted: December 18, 2003

WHEREAS, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group is generally charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective is to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

WHEREAS, the SVISC arrived at no consensus on whether it is, or is not, in the long-term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single government. Therefore the Committee made no recommendation either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipal governments.

WHEREAS, the SVISC adopted a recommendation to create a structure and format to further develop the group’s sub-committee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and communities.

WHEREAS, the SVISC also recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the City of Sharon agrees to join with the other municipalities to accept the report of the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee and work closely with the SVISC Coordinating Committee, SVISC Sub-committee Chairs, and others designated by this group, to implement the above recommendations.

ADOPTEO IN COUNCIL this 18th day of December, A.D., 2003.

FRED HOFFMAN, PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

ATTEST:

SHARRONDA L. FABER, CITY CLERK
RESOLUTION-1863

Draft Resolution for Shenango Valley Municipalities to Accept Report

The following is a draft resolution for consideration by the Shenango Valley municipalities to accept the SVISC report and to implement the SVISC recommendations:

WHEREAS, the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee (SVISC) consists of 25 citizens and a elected officials appointed by the Mercer County municipal governments of the Boroughs of Sharpsville and Wheatland and the Cities of Farrell, Hermitage and Sharon. The group was generally charged with learning about the five governments and to consider opportunities to improve future efficiency and effectiveness of municipal services, and improve the climate for private and public investment supporting a high quality of life and economic opportunities for all citizens. SVISC’s specific objective was to assess structural consolidation or merger of the municipalities.

WHEREAS, the SVISC arrived at no consensus on whether is it is, or is not, in the long-term best interest of the citizens of the Shenango Valley to be united under a single government. Therefore the Committee made no recommendation either in support of or against the consolidation or merger of any or all of the municipal governments.

WHEREAS, the SVISC adopted a recommendation to create a structure and format to further develop the group’s sub-committee reports and determine if more sharing of services and additional intergovernmental cooperation may be beneficial to the respective governments and communities.

WHEREAS, The SVISC also recommends that each municipality and the Upper Shenango Valley Water Pollution Control Authority seek a non-binding study of the present sewage systems for the purpose of consideration of privatizing those systems.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Borough of Sharpsville agrees to join with the other municipalities to accept the report of the Shenango Valley Intergovernmental Study Committee and work closely with the SVISC Coordinating Committee, SVISC Subcommittee Chairs, and others designated by this group, to implement the above recommendations.

Passed and approved this tenth day of December, 2003.

ATTEST:

President of Council

Borough Manager/Secretary