



OVERVIEW OF THE COUNCIL MEMBER POSITION

Produced by the Morris Plains Democratic Committee

NOTE this is not meant to be an exhaustive Job Description but sufficient to provide a general overview of the role.

The Council's Powers in Governing the Borough of Morris Plains

The Borough Council is the legislative body of the municipality:

- Subject to the law, it is responsible for passing, adopting, amending and repealing any ordinance or, where permitted, any resolution for any purpose required for the government of the municipality or for the accomplishment of any public purpose for which the municipality is authorized to act.
- It controls and regulates the finances of the municipality and raises money by borrowing or taxation.
- It creates such offices and positions as it deems necessary. Generally, these officers shall be residents of the borough and shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.¹ It removes any officer of the municipality, other than those excepted by law.
- It overrides a veto of the mayor by a two-thirds majority of all members of the Council.
- The Council has all the executive responsibilities of the municipality not placed by general law in the office of the Mayor.

SUMMARY OF COUNCIL MEMBER POSITION

To identify and discuss issues impacting the Borough of Morris Plains, receive and consider public input, make appropriate decisions in a manner which encourages full and open discussion, and exercise all the powers that State Statutes and Municipality's Ordinances empower to the municipality, Mayor and Council Members to lawfully govern the community.

- The mayor appoints all Committees, Subcommittees and their respective chairs with such appointments being subject to the advice and consent of a majority of the Council.²
 - The standing committees are: Finance, Public Safety, Public Works, Public Buildings and Grounds, Public Health, Sanitation and Sewers and Ordinance and

¹ Borough attorney, engineer and building inspector do not have to be residents of the town. Clerk, the tax collector and tax assessor serve terms as defined in Chapter 9 of Title 40A of the NJ statutes. The Council may exempt officers from the residency requirements but only pursuant to the adoption of an ordinance to that effect.

² Note the Section 1 of Article V of the Committee By-Laws provide further timing rules on when and how committee appointments have to be proposed and made by the Mayor.

Public Utilities. Special committees may be appointed for purposes other than those included in the duties of the Standing Committee.

- Each Councilperson must chair one of the standing committees and be a member of two others. As chair, the Councilperson has to report to the Mayor and the Council at each regular meeting on the activities and achievements of the committee. The standing committee's role is to:
 - Plan, study, direct and carry on the routine activities for which it has primary responsibility.
 - Perform such acts as may be assigned to it by the Council.
 - Report and make recommendations to the Council regarding its responsibilities and activities.

COUNCIL MEMBER ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Regularly and thoroughly prepare for each Borough Council Meeting.
 - Read and review agenda materials supplied.
 - Participate meaningfully in consideration of agenda items.
 - Participate in discussion of issues, including requesting additional data and/or considering various personal perspective: both from a Council Members/Mayors personal perspective, as well as the town-wide perspective and proposals before the Council.
- Actively listen to ensure a complete appreciation of each proposal and the respective positions of the petitioner, affected parties (businesses, residents, etc.), and the staff.
- As part of the Council respond to constituent requests for information or assistance with problem resolution.
- Act as liaison between the Council and the general public.
- When necessary participate in special study subcommittees or task forces to provide information for Council consideration.
- Assume responsibility for accomplishing necessary research either by talking to appropriate individuals or requesting that the staff undertake appropriate research.
- As part of the Council,
 - Establish and modify goals and objectives for the municipality
 - Set administrative policies.
 - Help establish public policy for the municipality.
 - Ensure the enforcement of municipal ordinances.
- Participate in civic events providing leadership and promoting new ideas and new programs to improve the community and its surrounding area.

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Morris Plains Democrats serving our community

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