

Information About Duties of Mayor, Recorder, and Council Members

Municipal elections for Harpers Ferry will occur this June. If you are interested in running for public office the following information may be helpful to you during your personal deliberative process:

West Virginia has four classes of municipalities based upon population. Class I municipalities are the largest and Class IV municipalities, such as Harpers Ferry, are the smallest. Each municipality in the state functions under a very specific governance plan. Harpers Ferry has a Mayor, Recorder, and five Council members elected separately by the Town's qualified voters.

The Mayor is the chief administrative authority of the municipality and has all the powers as granted within WV Code. The Harpers Ferry Mayor serves as the administrator over all Town employees and is responsible for their daily work. The day-to-day management and oversight of Town employees includes the financial officer, town clerk, water clerk, police clerk, maintenance worker, water department employees, and the police department. These daily oversight responsibilities ensure that the town's administrative functions are being properly managed and supervised according to established management practices. The Mayor conducts regular staff meetings during the work day and regularly monitors progress and takes corrective action when needed. During the work day the Mayor is expected to attend various board meetings such as the Jefferson County Convention and Visitors Bureau, WV Region 9 Development Authority, Jefferson County Emergency Management meetings, and others. The Mayor is also expected to be available to attend various town *ad hoc* and standing committee meetings held during the work day and/or evenings. The Mayor is expected to chair all regular Town Council meetings, special Town Council meetings, and public hearings, and be available to attend Planning Commission, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals meetings when needed. Finally, the Mayor works closely with the Financial Officer and Town Clerk on a daily basis to ensure that all Town tax revenues are being fairly collected and that every commercial entity within Harpers Ferry is properly licensed. The Mayor meets regularly with the Ordinance Compliance Officer to ensure that the Town's ordinances are being fairly and impartially enforced.

The Recorder is elected separately on the ballot. The Recorder has the same voting rights as the Town Council and also exercises the same level of governance as the Town Council. However, the Recorder is set apart from the other members of the Town Council because of some unique responsibilities and authority specified in WV Code. The Recorder is required to keep the journal of the proceedings and is charged with preserving the records of the municipality. In the absence of the Mayor, the Recorder is invested with all of the powers of the Mayor. The Recorder is also an active participant on the Ordinance Review Committee along with two other members of the Town Council. This committee regularly meets to ensure the Town's ordinances are updated and new ordinances are properly developed. During Town election periods, the Recorder functions as the supervisor of elections. Finally, the Recorder is tasked with special assignments from the Mayor or Council when needed.

The five other elected Town Council members share an equal level of governance and administrative authority. They are all voting members of the Council. Each Council member serves on at least two additional committees that meet regularly. Since the Town has a limited paid staff, many of the administrative requirements needed to manage a municipality are assumed by the Town Council. Three Council members are assigned to serve on the Budget & Finance Committee. This committee works closely with the Financial Officer and is responsible for monitoring the Town's financial health to include budget preparation and monitoring. The Office Operations Committee consists of three Council members and is responsible to ensure that all Town office functions are sufficiently staffed and the division of work is fair and equitable. This Committee makes recommendations to the Mayor. The two-person Grants and Special Projects Committee is tasked with researching, developing, and monitoring all municipal grant opportunities. In addition, it is frequently assigned special tasks by the Mayor. Finally, one member of the Town Council also serves on the Planning Commission and one on the Water Commission.

The Mayor, Recorder, and all five regular Town Council members together constitute the executive authority and governing body of the Town's government in accordance with WV Code and ordinances. These seven members collectively compose the Harpers Ferry Town Council. Ultimate authority for approval of the annual budget, staffing and employee concerns, oversight of the various commissions and committees, development of the Town, and other issues of governance lie with the Town Council in its democratic mandate to serve the community.