



Adult Local Government Workshop

- I. Welcome – Introduction to the Workshops – facilitator (5 minutes)
- II. Introduction to Local Government (10 minutes)
 - a. Various local government structures – LWV 12 forms of municipal government
 - b. Key players in local government
 - i. Roles and responsibilities
 1. Mayor
 2. Council
 3. County Commissioners
 4. Administrator, etc.
 - c. How changes in local government happen
 - i. Process – steps from beginning to end
 - ii. Results
- III. Introduction to case studies (5 minutes)
 - a. Case studies are designed to help workshop participants understand how to navigate **different forms of municipal government in Monmouth County**. Each one includes:
 - i. An explanation of the town’s political structure
 - ii. Unique rules for advocacy within that structure
 - iii. A real-world-inspired scenario
 - b. Each group will determine how to resolve the issue. More specifically, they will:
 - i. Outline each step in the process
 - ii. Determine who to consult within the government to resolve the issue
 - iii. Determine relevant documents needed and how to make them work
 1. Letters
 2. Petitions



Local Government Structure Example - Borough

Freehold Borough: Governed under the Borough form of New Jersey Municipal Government. This form of government consists of a Mayor and six Council Members. Here are some key details about the Freehold Borough government structure:

Governing Body: Mayor and Council.

Mayor: Kevin A. Kane, elected for a four-year term. His current term ends December 31, 2027.

Council Members: Six members, each elected for a three-year term. The current Council members and their term end dates are:

- Adam Reich (Council President) – 12/31/25
- Sharon Shutzer - 12/31/27
- Michael DiBenedetto – 12/31/26
- Jeffrey Friedman – 12/31/26
- Annette Jordan – 12/31/27
- Margaret Rogers – 12/31/25

Responsibilities of the Governing Body: The Mayor and Council are empowered to adopt local ordinances and pass resolutions, and they conduct business during monthly public meetings.

Specific Roles:

- The Mayor presides over Council meetings and votes in case of a tie. He also appoints subordinate officers with the Council's consent.
- The Council is the legislative body responsible for all executive duties not given to the Mayor by law.
- The Borough Clerk serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of elections and manages licenses and permits. They also coordinate the Mayor's activities and are the "keeper" of public records, processing requests for information.

The Borough form is a popular type of local government in New Jersey. It is sometimes described as a "weak mayor-strong council" form, with the Mayor holding some executive responsibilities while the Council holds most legislative and administrative power. Boroughs can also choose to hire an administrator to take on some executive duties.



Local Government Structure Example - Borough

The structure of the **Atlantic Highlands Borough Council** is based on the Borough form of government used in New Jersey. This form is often described as a "weak mayor-strong council" government.

Here's a breakdown of the structure:

Mayor:

- Elected for a four-year term.
- Presides over Council meetings and votes in case of a tie.
- Can veto ordinances, which can be overridden by a two-thirds Council vote.
- Assigns committees and liaisons and makes most appointments with Council consent.
- As of 2025, the Mayor is Lori Hohenleitner.

Borough Council:

- Consists of six members elected at-large for staggered three-year terms.
- Two seats are up for election annually in a three-year cycle.
- Serves as the legislative body.
- Holds executive responsibilities not assigned to the Mayor by law.
- Can appoint an administrator to delegate executive duties.
- Current members (as of 2025) include Council President Brian Dougherty, Vito Colasurdo, Jon Crowley, Eileen Cusack, Alyson Forbes, and Jose Pujols.

Borough Administrator:

- An appointed official who acts as the Chief Executive Officer.
- Responsible for executing Governing Body policies and managing daily operations.
- The current Administrator is Robert Ferragina.

This structure provides a balance of power between the elected Mayor and the Council, with the Council primarily holding legislative power. The option to appoint a Borough Administrator allows for the delegation of executive responsibilities.



Local Government Structure Example – Township A

Freehold Township is governed by a five-member Township Committee, which is the legislative body. The committee members are elected to staggered three-year terms. They are responsible for enacting ordinances, resolutions, and proclamations. The committee also appoints a Township Administrator, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the township and is responsible to the committee. Here's a more detailed breakdown:

Township Committee:

The Township Committee is the governing body and holds all legislative powers.

Elections:

Committee members are elected to three-year terms, with elections staggered so that not all seats are up for election at the same time.

Meetings:

The Township Committee holds regular public meetings, typically two or three times per month.

Township Administrator:

The Township Administrator is appointed by the Committee and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the township. They also serve as the Township Personnel Officer and coordinate the preparation and implementation of the municipal budget.

Departments:

Freehold Township has various departments, including Administration, Clerk's Office, Construction, Zoning & Housing Enforcement, Engineering, Finance, and more.



Local Government Structure Example – Township B

Neptune Township, New Jersey operates under a Township Committee form of government. Here's a breakdown of the governing structure:

Township Committee: This is the governing body of Neptune Township. It is constituted and elected according to law. The Committee has the power to legislate, including making, amending, repealing, and enforcing ordinances.

Mayor: The Mayor serves as the chairman of the Township Committee and the head of the municipal government. The Mayor presides over Committee meetings and has the right to debate and vote on all questions. The Mayor's powers include signing documents, making proclamations, and exercising ceremonial duties.

Township Administrator: The Business Administrator (also referred to as the Township Administrator) is the Chief Administrative Officer of the Township. They are responsible to the Township Committee and oversee administrative duties, including recommending the annual operating budget. An Assistant Business Administrator serves as the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer.

Departments and Boards: The Township government also includes various departments and boards responsible for specific areas. For example:

- **Planning Board:** Reviews land development plans, guides zoning amendments, and is responsible for the Master Plan.
- **Housing Authority:** Established to manage housing matters, it consists of seven commissioners.
- **Municipal Court:** Handles judicial matters within the township.
- **Police Committee:** Consists of two Township Committee members, the Township Administrator, and other members, possibly including professionals like the Township Attorney or CFO, to assist with its functions.

Federal and State Representation: Neptune Township is part of the 11th legislative district of the New Jersey Legislature, represented by a State Senator and members of the General Assembly.

County Government: Monmouth County, where Neptune Township is located, is governed by a Board of County Commissioners. These five members are elected at-large for staggered three-year terms.

This structure outlines the general framework of the Neptune Township government, with specific roles and responsibilities assigned to different elected officials, administrators, and appointed boards.



Local Government Structure Example – City/Council-Manager

Asbury Park operates under a **Council-Manager** form of government. This means the **city** is governed by an elected City Council, and the day-to-day operations are managed by an appointed City Manager. Here's a more detailed breakdown:

1. City Council:

The City Council is the governing body, comprised of elected officials. They are responsible for enacting ordinances, setting policy, and overseeing the overall direction of the city. The Council appoints the City Manager and other key personnel.

2. City Manager:

The City Manager is an appointed professional administrator who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city. They oversee the various city departments and ensure that the policies and directives of the City Council are carried out.

3. Mayor:

The Mayor is elected by the voters and serves as the head of the City Council. The Mayor presides over Council meetings and may have specific duties as defined by ordinance. In Asbury Park, the Mayor is also a member of the City Council.

4. City Clerk:

The City Clerk is another key appointed official. They serve as the Secretary to the City Council, manage public records, and administer elections. They also act as a liaison between the governing officials and the public.

5. Other Boards and Commissions:

The City Council may establish various boards and commissions to advise them on specific areas of city business (e.g., Planning Board, Zoning Board).

6. Departments:

The City of Asbury Park has numerous departments that provide essential services to residents and businesses, including:

- Police and Fire Departments
- Public Works
- Community Development
- Finance



Case Study A – “Stoplight at Summit & Bay”

Mock Town Name: *Borough of Brooklyn Cove*

Political Structure: *Borough*

Example NJ Towns: Freehold Borough, Borough of Atlantic Highlands

How the Town Functions: (include organization chart or description)

- **Elected Mayor** holds executive power; oversees departments like public safety and public works
 - The Mayor of Brooklyn Cove is Mr. John Singleton; he’s a life long resident of the town and a former high school football star. He owns a local construction business and won the election for mayor in a landslide. The residents of Brooklyn Cove find him easy to work with.
- **Elected Council** passes ordinances and can override vetoes with a supermajority.
 - The elected council can be difficult for the mayor to work with. A few of the members wanted the other mayoral candidate to win, and make things hard for Mr. Singleton. However, they are dedicated to the borough and want what’s best for the residents. The council member with the most influence is Mr. Jones, a 3 term council member.
- City departments (police, engineering) are under the **Mayor’s sole control**
- **Notes about the Borough:** Citizens may not approach departments directly—must go through elected officials. Mayor Singleton is not an easy person to work with, so if you approach him, you have to have your ducks in a row.

Scenario:

Brooklyn Cove is a small borough in Monmouth County, NJ, founded in 1785, two years after the Revolutionary War ended. Named after a great general of the war, Brooklyn was built on the coast of Brooklyn Bay. Key thoroughfares in Brooklyn include Summit Avenue which is the main street that leads directly to the Riverwalk - a picturesque boardwalk with boat slips, shopping and eateries; and Bay Avenue, which runs parallel to the coast. Everyone comes to the river to enjoy the boats, shops and fresh seafood from local restaurants using Summit Avenue. Bay Avenue lined with parking spots, allows people to drive from one part of the bay to the other. For the residents, it is a small quaint sleepy town for most of the year. But after Memorial Day, things heat up quickly. With all the rental property throughout Brooklyn, tourists flock to the Riverwalk, day and night. The intersection where Summit Avenue and Bay Avenue meet is a stop sign for Summit Avenue only. Because of the constant flow of traffic, pedestrians and impatient motorists, there have been a number of close calls and fender benders over the years. The traffic is continuing to increase and the accidents and close calls more frequent. During the off season, residents normally don't have an issue with the intersection. However, as Brooklyn becomes more popular, the tourist accidents cause a lot of bumper-to-bumper traffic and keeps potential customers from reaching the businesses on the Riverwalk.

Local resident Devin Smart, a resident for over 25 years, wants a traffic light installed at the intersection of Summit Avenue and Bay Avenue to improve safety, free up traffic jams and improve the flow of traffic. Since this is the first time Devin has tried to make any changes within his community, he needs help to make this stoplight happen. Therefore, he has asked you, his like-minded neighbors, to help him get the stoplight at the corner of Summit and Bay Avenues. More specifically, he needs to:

1. Determine who to talk to in the town and find out the process of getting a new stoplight
2. Determine what documents are needed to make the case for the stoplight
3. Create the argument for the stoplight; what should be said to "move the needle."

Workshop Task:

1. Write out the process you would use to get the traffic light completed
2. Write the speech that Devin and his fellow citizens will give. Include background information, the problem and how the stoplight will create a win-win for Brooklyn Cove.



Brooklyn Cove Stop Light Process Form

As you determine your best plan of action, consider the answers to these questions:

1. What specific steps must you take to appear on the Brooklyn Cove Council Meeting agenda to discuss the stop light at Summit and Bay.
2. Which elected officials will you contact and why?
3. Of the information you received, what other information would be helpful and where will you get it?
4. What else would you need to do to persuade the Council to put up a stoplight?

Tip: Remember to consider any counter arguments that could be made against the garden and answers for those arguments.