



HISTORIC
Bellefonte™
Est. 1795

**OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
IN BELLEFONTE BOROUGH**

INTRODUCTION

Consider Becoming More Involved

Many different Authorities, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) have been formed to support Bellefonte Borough's elected officials and staff. This overview covers the various ABCs and their functions and includes an application form for anyone interested in serving on one of these bodies. Your completed application (please attach a resume to the application) will aid Borough officials in filling vacancies on the ABCs. Those individuals who devote their time, energy, and know-how to the ABCs are a vital part of Bellefonte Borough. We could not function without their expertise and dedication. Please read this overview. Some appointments require borough residency while others do not. Think about how you can help your local officials make your community even better. For more information, call the Bellefonte Borough Administrative Office at (814) 355-1501, or e-mail at boro@bellefontepa.gov.

HISTORY AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT

History

Established in 1795, incorporated in 1806, Bellefonte Borough has a population of approximately 6,200. The Borough was designated as the County Seat for Centre County in 1800. Bellefonte was a hub for innovation, political power, and industrialization throughout the 19th century. The depression and other cultural changes led to a decline in population since that time. Bellefonte is rebounding with a focus on fiscal stability, economic development and historic preservation.

Form of Government

Bellefonte Borough is a Borough operating under the Commonwealth's Borough Code. Bellefonte was incorporated as a Borough in 1806. The Bellefonte Borough Council is the governing and policy making body. It consists of nine elected officials (three from each Ward) who are responsible for setting tax rates, approving an annual budget, and enacting ordinances to carry out policy. The Mayor is elected at-large and is responsible for overseeing the police department. The Borough Council appoints the Borough Manager and solicitor. Borough Council also makes all appointments to the Authorities, Boards and Commissions.

BOROUGH AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, AND COMMISSIONS

Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission

The Bellefonte Borough Planning Commission is an advisory or recommending body to the Borough Council. It consists of five members, each appointed by Council for a four-year term. The Commission works closely with the Zoning Administrator. The Planning Commission meets the fourth Monday of the month, normally at 5 p.m. It considers planning issues such as rezoning requests, transportation, environmental impact, water and sewage issues. This body also reviews all land development and

subdivision plans submitted to the Borough and forwards an advisory opinion to the Borough Council. Reviews are performed to determine compliance with Borough zoning and subdivision regulations as well as with state regulations. The Commission then makes a recommendation to the Council for their ruling on the issue in question.

Zoning Hearing Board

The Bellefonte Borough Zoning Hearing Board consists of five members and one alternate, each appointed by the Borough Council for a five-year term. The Board works closely with the Zoning Administrator. The Board meets once a month, usually in the evening, to review appeals and variance requests as needed.

The Zoning Hearing Board is a quasi-judicial body that works independently of the Borough Council. A solicitor is appointed to serve this body as legal counsel at hearings and to prepare the legal documents that reflect the decisions of the zoning hearing board. The Zoning Hearing Board decides upon the following:

1. Requests for variance from various sections of the Zoning Ordinance and Sign Ordinance.
2. Appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Administrator regarding the granting or denial of a permit, issuance of any cease-and-desist order, and determinations made in administration of the ordinances.

Bellefonte Borough Historical & Architectural Review Board

The purpose of HARB is to make recommendations to Bellefonte Borough Council concerning the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of all or any part of a building or structure located within the boundaries of the Historical District and visible from a public right-of-way. The HARB is composed of seven members and at least one alternate member, with each member serving a four-year term. Of the seven members, one shall be a registered architect, one a licensed real estate broker, one the Borough building official, one a business person whose principal place of business is located within the HARB-regulated historic district, and three additional persons with a knowledge of and interest in historic preservation. Residency is preferred but not required. The HARB's regularly scheduled meetings are at 8:30 A.M. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month unless circumstances warrant a postponement.

Bellefonte Area Industrial Development Authority

The Bellefonte Area Industrial Development Authority (BAIDA) promotes economic development within Bellefonte Borough. This Authority consists of five members, each appointed to a five-year term. Residency is not required. The Authority meets on a monthly basis the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m., and has recently overseen the waterfront redevelopment project. It is currently assisting Council with the redevelopment/re-use of the National Guard Armory property.

Bellefonte Borough Authority

The Bellefonte Borough Authority is a seven-member Authority, all appointed by Council for a five-year term. Residency is required. The Authority transitioned from a fiscal authority to an operating authority around 2003 when Bellefonte Borough and the Authority entered into a management agreement. The Authority sets the policies and rates while the Borough uses its staff to manage the day-to-day activities of both the water and wastewater system.

Bellefonte Civil Service Commission

The Civil Service Commission is a three-member Commission with each member serving a six-year term. The Commission is designed to oversee the hiring and promotional process related to full-time police officers. Residency is required. Candidates for these positions must go through a civil service process where written and oral exams are given and scored. The Commission presents a list of eligible candidates to Council for their consideration. The Commission must meet the first Monday of the new year to re-organize. Other meeting times are on an as-needed basis.

Centre County Library Board

Bellefonte Borough Council appoints a Bellefonte Borough representative to the Library Board, for a four-year term. Residency is not required.

Fire Prevention Task Force

This task force was created by Bellefonte Borough Council to focus on fire prevention. It does not have a specified number of members and currently has representatives from borough council and staff, the fire department, and citizenry. Residency is not required. Bellefonte Borough has a fire department with all labor provided by volunteers. The Council is committed to finding ways to attract and retain volunteer firefighters and to do what it can to be proactive in preventing the loss of property or life through fires.

Nittany Valley Joint Recreation Authority

The Nittany Valley Joint Recreation Authority was created to provide for regional ownership of Kepler Pool at Governors Park. Each participating municipality appoints two citizens to the Authority for five-year terms. To be the Bellefonte Borough representative, residency is required. The Authority is considering options for the future of the pool.

Shade Tree Commission

The Shade Tree Commission is a three-member commission with each member serving a three-year term. The Commission is responsible for regulating trees located in the public street right-of-way. This regulation includes any application to remove a tree or to plant a tree. Applications are generally received by the Borough and forwarded to the Commission members. The Commission members go to the location and provide a recommendation on the request. The volume of applications generally does not exceed ten per year. Residency is required.

Vacancy Board

The Vacancy Board is made up of all of the council members and one citizen of the Borough. If Council does not fill a Council seat vacancy within thirty days, then the filling of that seat is conducted by the Vacancy Board. The Vacancy Board meets on an as-needed basis. The citizen/vacancy board member is appointed by Council at the first meeting of each calendar year and serves as the Board Chair.

Centre County Airport Authority

Borough Council appoints two Bellefonte Borough representatives to the Centre County Airport Authority, a nine-member board, for five-year terms. Residency is required.

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BELLEFONTE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

(but not controlled or appointed by the Borough Council).

For interest in any of these opportunities, please complete the form and we will forward it to the appropriate organization.

- Bellefonte Fire Department
 - Fire Fighter / Fire Police, Undine Fire Co., Logan Fire Co.
- Bellefonte Inter-valley Area Chamber of Commerce (BIACC)
- Union Cemetery Association
- Historic Bellefonte Incorporated (HBI)
- Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA)
- Talleyrand Park Committee
- Downtown Bellefonte Inc. (DBI)