

Council--Functions and Conduct

The Council has legislative and policy-making powers only. It creates, determines, and defines the powers and duties of such executive and administrative departments, boards, and offices, as it may deem necessary for the proper and efficient conduct of the affairs of Scotch Plains. Any department, board or office continued or created by Council, may at any time be abolished by Council. Other functions include adopting and passing ordinances, adopting the annual budget, appropriating and authorizing the expenditures of Township monies and levying taxes and authorizing bonds. Council appoints and removes the Township attorney. It also appoints and removes the Manager by majority vote, subject to charter law provisions.

The intent of the Optional Municipal Charter Law is that the Council act in all matters as a body. No councilman may seek individually to influence the official acts of the Manager or any other officer, nor is it legal for the Council or any of its members to direct or request the appointment of any person to, or his removal from, office, or for Council to interfere in any way with the officers in the performance of their duties. The Council and its members must deal with the administrative service solely through the Manager, either publicly or privately.

Council may appoint committees and commissions of its own members or of citizens to conduct investigations into the conduct of any officer or department or any matter relating to the welfare of the Scotch Plains Township. The Council may delegate to such committees or commissions such powers of inquiry as may be deemed necessary by the Council.

Manager--Powers and Duties

The Manager is the chief executive and administrative official of Scotch Plains government. He is responsible to the Council for carrying out all policies established by the Council and for the proper administration of all affairs of the Township within the province of the Council.

The Manager's duties and powers include negotiating contracts for the Township subject to Council approval, making recommendations concerning the nature and location of Township improvements, and executing the improvements as determined by the Council. He prepares and submits the budget to Council, participates without vote in the discussions of the Council, advises the Council in the form of recommendations and reports and executes all laws and ordinances of the Township. The appointment of administrative staff and their removal is exclusively the province of the Manager. An exception are the Library and Recreation Department which are operated by independent boards.

He may authorize the head of a department to appoint and remove subordinates in each department; he supervises and controls his appointees and reports all appointments or removals at the Council meeting immediately succeeding such actions. The Manager may investigate at any time the affairs of any officer or department of the Township. His office is in the Municipal Building where he is available during office hours Monday through Friday to residents who want information or wish to offer a suggestion or to register a complaint.

Township Clerk

By law, the clerk

1. is the secretary and clerk of the Township Council, keeps the minutes of all Council meetings, and is custodian of all Township records;
2. prepares official advertisements such as ordinances and budgets, attests contracts, deeds, and certificates of indebtedness; and handles correspondence;
3. has charge of all election matters not specifically handled by the other election officials and is responsible for the transferring and registering of voters;
4. receives and certifies petitions of initiative, referendum, and recall;
5. is responsible for the codification and indexing of all ordinances and resolutions of the Council;