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### Local Governmental Structures And Its Effects On Public Services

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Local Governmental Structures and Its Effects on Public Services

A Dissertation Project

Presented to the Faculty of the

Department of Public Policy and Administration

West Chester University

West Chester, Pennsylvania

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

By

Quiana N. Pettiford

May 2021

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## Abstract

This study examined organizational models/structures within two municipalities within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania in order to determine if one organizational model/structure yielded better results of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on a third-class city that is commission formed and a second-class township that is council-manager formed. The researcher conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with ten public professionals in order to understand the processes that take place within each municipality. The researcher sought to understand the internal processes of the organization, as well as the external processes. The internal processes included those aspects related to personnel and the operations of the organization. The external processes included those aspects related to the council-constituent relationship through interaction, engagement, and communication. It was found that while the council-manager form of government is most ideal within the literature, there were no real differences found between the two organizational models in these two cases. The city and the township were very similar in the way in which they operate, despite their given models. While the city and the township are similar in several ways, the city faces more complex issues due to its size, budget, and financially distressed status. This study showed several implications for future research, including, but not limited to: the use of a new research design that will expound upon the current findings of this study; and the need for the continuous evaluation of municipal leadership, management, and governance.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

There is a need to evaluate different organizational structures within local governments throughout the United States. There is research that exists about the topic, but it dates back decades. The idea to evaluate governments today is important because each organizational structure has its strengths and weaknesses. There is a need to determine what structure works best in different environments because some structures are not suitable for certain geographical locations. The type of organizational structure utilized can either assist in gaining governmental results or diminish them. The type of organizational structure is also important due to the exercise of political power. Some structures have a separation of power embedded within them, while others do not. The exercise of political power and authority has even been seen at the federal level. Former President Donald Trump used his political power and authority to hire his friends and family in key government positions although they were not qualified for those positions. Those practices ultimately diminished governmental results.

This dissertation project is a comparative analysis of two municipalities in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine if one organizational model yields better results of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services. One municipality a part of this study is a city that has a commission form of government, and the other municipality is a township that has a council-manager form of government. The commission form of government allows councilmembers to serve dually as councilors and directors of municipal departments. The commission form of government is one that is severely outdated. The commission form of government welcomes inefficient practices such as corruption, patronage, and incompetence due to the lack of a



separation of power between politics and administration. These practices often lead to inefficient and ineffective public services.

The literature outlines the heavy use of the council-manager form of government because it is more effective in managing public business practices within complex settings. The council-manager form of government supports a separation of power between politics and administration. The council-manager form of government was introduced in the early 1900s as a result of the progressive eras commitment to efficient operations that could put an end to political corruption. The idea was that a professional manager appointed by council to handle the day-to-day operations of a municipality would be more efficient than council members motivated and influenced by political gain. In theory the council-manager form of government is most ideal; however, in practice it is found to be complex. The challenges associated with the council-manager form of government developed because practically it is difficult to isolate a professional manager from politics. While there is a need to have a separation of power, that idea is often tough to execute. The council-manager form of government is also challenging because professional managers work at the direction of elected council members who have the power of deciding their fate. With that, professional managers can be negatively influenced by council-members, which ultimately affect results and productivity. The council-manager form of government does not often operate as the literature suggests.

As a result of direct experience, I have witnessed the effects of an organizational structure in municipal government that lacks a separation of power. Ten years ago, I began my journey within the local governmental paradigm of public administration as a human resource professional. Over the years as I assumed my role, I experienced the complexities of municipal government. I saw firsthand the outcome of government inefficiency as a result of patronage,

leadership, incompetency, and internal structure failure. As both a human resource professional and public administrator, there was an urge to explore other local governments, similarly structured as my organization, to determine if similarities existed.

In conjunction with the inefficiencies stated above, my organization also lacked sufficient written policies and procedures that hindered accountability and transparency throughout all levels of the organization. Coupled with the lack of skilled management professionals, the dual roles of legislature and executive by mayor and council created an atmosphere of politics first, and effective business administrative practices later. To complicate matters more, where written policies and procedures existed, consistent application did not occur because of external relationships, often fueled by patronage. Because of these discoveries, it became obvious that the overall culture within the organization needed to shift.

It was my thought that without these barriers in place, and the absence of politics in the day-to-day operations of the organization, that the organization could become more efficient and effective with reference to its public services. I also believed that the city could become more efficient and effective in terms of its public services had a little attention be made to the development of its workforce. The exposure to such occurrences piqued my interest to conduct research to determine the type of organizational structure/model utilized by my organization. Once research was conducted, and information was gathered, I wanted to understand how other municipalities operated in hopes to determine if one structure yielded better results over another.

The functions of my organization as described above are concrete concerns within the public administration literature for the need of a separation of powers. Within the literature, there is discussion of whether politics should be kept separate from administration, and whether politics could be kept separate from administration. This discussion has resulted in the politics-

administration dichotomy within public administration literature. The politics-administration dichotomy has been present in political history for decades. In fact, there is a great amount of controversy surrounding the topic. There are some theorists who believe that politics and administration should be kept separate from one another in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental services, and there are other theorists who believe that politics and administration should not, and could not be separated. Some would argue that Woodrow Wilson was the originator of this debate with his 1887 essay. Woodrow Wilson (1887) argued in favor of the separation between politics and administration. Wilson (1887) said, “The field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics. Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics” (Wilson, p.18). On the other hand, Dwight Waldo argued against the idea of politics and administration being separated. Waldo said, “our objective should not be to keep administrators out of policy and political matters but to encourage cooperation between the political and administrative domains and to discover ways in which we can benefit from the creative potential and substantive contributions of administrative officials” (As cited in Fry & Raadschelders, 2014, p. 393).

Politics and administration should be kept separate in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental services. With that, elected government officials should legislate, while professional administrators execute those laws and handle the day-to-day operations of the organization. This study will examine organizational structures within government, and how their use can either enhance or diminish governmental services. It is my hypothesis that the council-manager form of government will yield better results.

There is empirical evidence that supports this study and the need for one organizational structure over another (Chang & Hayes, 1990 & Svara, 2008). The literature also discusses the

politics-administration dichotomy in relationship to some of the organizational structures. The literature explores the politics-administration dichotomy, questioning whether politics and administration should be separate in certain structures, or whether politics and administration should merge together within certain structures (Svara, 1985 & Svara, 1999). While this literature exists, there is not much recent research present to assess this problem. The bulk of the literature found dates back to the early 1900s, the mid 80s, and the early 90s. With that, this study is important because it can add a new perspective to the field of public administration. This study can also add practical knowledge to the field of public administration, which is missing from the current literature. This study can be used to assist top political leaders in determining which organizational model best suits their organizational needs and geographical locations and apply it accordingly.

There are four organizational models used within local governments around the United States: commission formed; mayor-council formed; council-manager formed; and weak-mayor council formed. An organizational model classified as *commission formed* is one where residents elect five commissioners (also known as council members to serve four overlapping terms), one being the mayor, to head five departments. The mayor is the head of public affairs, which includes the police department, the planning department, and sometimes the redevelopment authority. The mayor as the commissioner has full authority over the operations of those departments. Under this type of model, the mayor has full power over the conduct of council meetings and has the control necessary to execute laws. While the above is true, the mayor has an equal vote to that of the other council members and has no veto rights. The mayor is considered weak in this type of model. Most third-class cities in Pennsylvania utilize this type of model (Reporter's Guide to Pennsylvania Local Government, April 26, 2010).

In the commission form of government, the remaining elected officials become heads of the remaining municipal departments. In Pennsylvania those departments include: the department of accounts and finance, the department of streets and public improvement, the department of health and public safety, and the department of parks and public property. The city controller and city treasurer are also elected by the residents for a four-term period and must be accountants. The city controller is responsible to audit the city's accounts and expenditures while the city treasurer is responsible to collect taxes. Council appoints all the city clerk, city solicitor, and city engineer. The city clerk acts as the city manager in some cities. The city solicitor provides the council with his/her legal advice, and the city engineer uses his/her expertise to ensure that construction, redevelopment, and the repairs of streets, bridges, pavements, etcetera are handled properly (Reporter's Guide to Pennsylvania Local Government, April 26, 2010).

An organizational model classified as *mayor-council formed* consists of five, seven, or nine council members elected for four overlapping years. There is also a mayor, treasurer, and controller elected for four years. One difference between this model and the commission formed model outlined above is that the mayor acts as the chief executive of the city and enforces the city's ordinances set by council. Another difference between this model and the commission formed model is that the mayor appoints department heads, but supervises all city departments. Finally, another difference between this model and the commission formed model is that the mayor prepares and submits the annual budget to council. In the commission formed model, the head of the department of accounts and finance would do the budget. In this type of model, the city controller, city treasurer, city clerk, city solicitor and city engineer follow the same

procedures as those followed in the commission formed model (Reporter's Guide to Pennsylvania Local Government, April 26, 2010).

An organizational model classified as *council-manager formed* is one where five, seven or nine council members (a mayor can be selected from these individuals) are elected for four overlapping terms. In this type of model, all authority related to the city belongs to these individuals. In this type of model, the council hires what is called a city manager (or administrator) as the chief administration officer responsible to execute council's ordinances. The city manager is also charged with hiring and firing department heads as well as subordinates. In this type of model, the city controller, city treasurer, city clerk, city solicitor and city engineer follow the same procedures as those followed in the commission formed model (Reporter's Guide to Pennsylvania Local Government, April 26, 2010).

An organizational model classified as *weak-mayor council formed* is one where the mayor possesses little to no executive power. In this type of model, the council members have strong policy and administrative authority (Reporter's Guide to Pennsylvania Local Government, April 26, 2010).

While there are four organizational models used within government as outlined above, the focus of this study will be on two. This study will examine a city within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania with a commission form of government, and a township within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania with a council-manager form of government. As outlined above within the description of each model, the commission form of government is a form where councilors serve as elected members as well as managers of municipal departments. Council members within the council-manager form of government divert to a city manager for all municipal activities, and serve more on the legislative side to vote on certain resolutions and

ordinances related to governmental business. These councilors therefore are not involved in the day-to-day operations of the government. The purpose of comparing these two organizational models is to determine if having a city manager, rather than council members serving in dual roles, increases the results of governmental services.

In this study, I conducted in-depth interviews with five (5) public professionals within the city and five (5) public professionals within the township. The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the processes that take place within each governmental organization. I was seeking specific information with reference to the internal and external processes of the organization. I was interested in understanding the organization from an employee's perspective as well as from a constituent perspective. The interview questions were structured around employee and job-related processes, services provided, employee accountability, council's accountability to its constituency, responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, communication, and transparency.

In chapter two of this study, there will be a discussion regarding the most popular forms of government currently used throughout the United States. While there are forms of government heavily utilized in municipalities around the United States, the city that is part of this study continues to use a form of government that is not very popular in use. This form of government, the commission form of government, is severely outdated. There is a need for municipalities to utilize a form of government that is results driven, a form of government that increases the efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability of public services. The commission form of government as outlined above is not effective because there is no separation of power between politics and administration. This form of government welcomes error and inefficiencies through practices such as patronage and incompetence.

Chapter two will also discuss the literature related to this topic and address the history related to the organizational models outlined above. As stated above, this chapter will also address the organizational models that are popular in use throughout the United States. Chapter two will also discuss the drawbacks to some of the models, and outline the differences between two models. Finally, chapter two will describe the most recent shift within the field of public administration with reference to the most popular form of government.

Chapter three will discuss pertinent background information about each municipality a part of this study. This chapter will provide in depth information about the organizational structure of each municipality, the services that they provide, and how they operate on a daily basis. This chapter will also discuss the transparency of each municipality, and how they communicate and interact with their constituency.

Chapter four of this dissertation project will outline the methods utilized in this study to gain and secure participation. Chapter five will discuss the findings of this study and the themes that were identified through the data collection process. The themes include: education, patronage, incompetence, nepotism, the non-uniformity of policies and procedures, the lack of accountability, and the lack of resources. In closing, this chapter will end by discussing the efficiency and effectiveness of each municipality as determined through the data collection process.

Chapter six will discuss the conclusion. The conclusion will finalize the dissertation project by stating closing statements, and re-iterating the results of the study. Additionally, the limitations, the implications for future research, and the internal and external validity will be addressed.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the literature related to this topic, and address the history related to some of the organizational models referenced within this project. The organizational models that will be discussed include: the commission form of government, the mayor-council form of government, and the council-manager form of government. This chapter will also address the organizational models that are popular in use throughout the United States, and the drawbacks to those models. This chapter will describe the differences between the council-manager form of government and the mayor-council form of government. Finally, this chapter will also describe the most recent shift within the field of public administration with reference to the most popular form of government.

#### **Organizational Models Popular in Use**

There are two very popular forms of government heavily discussed in the public administration literature: the mayor-council form of government and the council-manager form of government. These two forms of government are also very popular in use throughout municipalities in the United States. “A 1986 survey, as reported in the 1988 issue of the *Municipal Year Book* [14.8], indicates that 43.5 percent of cities had a mayor-council form, 53.5 percent had a city manager form, and the remaining 3 percent had a commission form of government” (Chang & Hayes, 1990, p. 167).

The traditional, more popular form of government was the mayor-council form. In practice, the mayor-council form of government has several different variations. There could be a strong mayor, a strong mayor with a chief administrative officer, or a weak mayor. In the strong mayor form of government, the mayor serves as the chief executive officer. In the weak

mayor form of government, the mayor serves as a figurehead, and therefore is equal to that of other councilmembers. “Over the years, some very powerful mayors completely controlled city hall. They won votes by promising positions in city government to supporters. Many voters saw them as corrupt and wanted better checks and balances” (Embrey, 2009, p. 291).

Because of the threat of corruption within the mayor-council form of government, municipalities began to make a shift. During the twentieth century the council-manager form of government became popular as a system producing better results (Embrey, 2009). The council-manager form of government is the most popular form of government currently used within the United States among municipal governments with a population of 10,000 or more (as cited in Wheeland, 1994, p. 153). The system was chosen due to the high demand of federal, state, and local regulations, causing city life to become more complex. The thought was professionals possessing a certain skill set were needed to manage these complexities. In order to address these concerns, city managers were brought on in strong mayor cities, or mayor-council cities, to manage the day-to-day operations of those organizations (Embrey, 2009, p. 291).

### **The Council-Manager Form of Government**

A gentleman by the name of Richard Childs from New York City influenced the council-manager form of government in the early 1900s. Childs’ eagerness to establish a different structure within government stemmed from the political corruption he found in New York City. It was Childs’ belief that a new structure could weed out corrupt mayors and politicians. The Progressive Era, and its commitment to efficient operations intrigued Richard Childs. With that Childs “envisioned a city running like a company with a CEO-the manager-and a board-the council. He favored an elected, part-time council that passed ordinances and an appointed, full-time manager who handled all administrative decisions” (Embrey, 2009, p. 291).

No one knows who exactly to attribute the city manager idea to, but some believe that in addition to Richard S. Childs, Woodrow Wilson may have influenced the idea through the public administration literature. Woodrow Wilson was among many theorists who believed that politics and administration should be kept separate from one another in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of governmental services. Woodrow Wilson (1887) argued, as outlined above, “the field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics. Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics” (p.18).

While the above was Wilson’s belief, there were other theorists who believed that politics and administration should not, and could not be separated. As stated above, Dwight Waldo argued, “our objective should not be to keep administrators out of policy and political matters but to encourage cooperation between the political and administrative domains and to discover ways in which we can benefit from the creative potential and substantive contributions of administrative officials” (as cited in Fry & Raadschelders, 2014, p. 393).

The manager in the council-manager form of government is charged with advising and directing council on public policy issues and administrative issues. In other words, city managers work at the direction of elected council members. As one city manager interviewed for a study stated, “I regard myself as the hired hand of the city council. I don’t work for the public; I don’t work for the individual citizens of the city; I work for the council” (Carrell, 1962, p. 203).

While managers work at the direction of elected council members, they exercise substantial discretion. Managers oversee and supervise employees who possess a certain level of expertise within their respective fields. Managers also have the authority to hire and fire those individuals. Additionally, managers prepare council meeting agendas and annual budgets, make

council aware of issues requiring their attention, make policy recommendations, and authorize and approve the reports that employees would like to present to council (as cited in Pynes & Spina, 2009, p. 209). “Efficiency, representation, social equity, and individual rights are values that constitute political responsiveness on the part of administrators” (as cited in Pynes & Spina, 2009, p. 209). Although the above is true, managers still work at the direction of elected council members. Because of this, there are times when managers can be controlled, minimizing and stagnating their contributions to policy and administrative decisions.

In 1985, James Svava examined the politics-administration dichotomy in relation to the council-manager form of government. In this study Svava interviewed mayors, councilors, administrators, and citizen leaders in five cities in North Carolina with a population size greater than 10,000. The five cities that were part of this study included: Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem (p. 221). During the interviews, the participants described their roles both in agreement with the dichotomy (separation of powers) and against the dichotomy (shared responsibilities between the city manager and council members). This description led Svava to believe that there is separation and a mixture simultaneously (Svava, 1985, p. 222).

Svava proposes a model that can be used within council-manager cities to aid in this discovery. Svava (1985) says, “deciding what to do entails determining mission and detailed policy, on the one hand, and getting the work done involves administration and management, on the other” (p. 224). Svava’s model suggests that there are four functions to the governmental process: mission, policy, administration, and management. Those presiding on council have total control over the mission formulation process, while the manager assists in an advisory role. The policy making process is largely dominated by city managers due to the amount of policy advise

involved. While managers dominate this process, council share in this responsibility as they ultimately oversee all policy. The administration process is largely handled by staff hired and appointed by council although council does have a role within this process as well. The management process is largely dominated by managers (Svara, 1985, p. 227).

Svara (1985) believed that there was a separation of mission and management within these cities that could be supported empirically; however, he believed that policy and administration intermixed, and therefore were inseparable due to their importance in the development and delivery of governmental services and programs (p. 227). In the study's conclusion, Svara (1985) found that there is not a complete separation of powers between policy and administration as advocated by Woodrow Wilson. There also is not complete intermingling of policy and administration resulting in a division of responsibilities. (p. 231).

While the roles of city managers and council members have traditionally been strictly separate and distinct, James Svara (1999) states that the line between the two officials are increasingly blurred and shifting, specifically, in large cities utilizing the council-manager form of government. This means that council members are more involved in management and administration, and city managers are more involved in mission formulation. This study is an extension to the study conducted by Svara in 1985. This study examined the relationship between council members and city managers in council-manager forms of government in 31 cities in the United States with populations over 200,000 (Svara, 1999, p. 44). Svara decided to target this particular group because the problems and conflicts are more complex in large cities with populations over 200,000. The level of complexity causes officials to act in different capacities. In these cities the question constantly arises as to whether the council-manager form of government, with its challenges in large cities, is even viable and sustainable.

Prior to beginning this study, Svvara (1999) assumed that elected officials have indirect involvement in governmental services. Elected officials, therefore, approve policies, but oversee the implementation and delivery of those policies. It is the city manager that is more directly involved in the delivery of governmental services, and advises council on the direction of the city and the policies that will assist them in reaching their goals (p. 44).

Although these were Svvara's (1999) assumptions beginning this study, he found that the dichotomy, with its distinct roles for officials, is not supported empirically in council-manager relationships in large cities (p. 50). Svvara's findings support his ideas from his 1985 study that politics and administration cannot be separated. Svvara (1999) states that the sharing of roles between councilors and managers:

Suggests that the relationship is best understood as a complementarity-a model of interaction in which administrators respect the control of elected officials, and at the same time there is interdependency and reciprocal influence between elected officials and administrators who fill distinct but overlapping roles in policy and administration (p. 50). The concept of complementarity within the council-manager form of government can be found between a board of governors responsible for policy direction and oversight and a chief operating officer charged with guiding policy formation as well as organizational supervision to ensure the execution of said policies (Svvara, 1999, p. 50).

Svvara (1999) states that some managers have fallen into the ideology of the politics-administration dichotomy and the thought that a separation of powers is the norm; however, Svvara believes that if politics and administration were kept separate, the democratic process would be affected (p. 51). Svvara (1999) believes that without the intermingling of politics and administration, that policymaking would be much more different. Svvara (1999) believes that in

order for policymaking to be effective, the city manager cannot exclusively manage; they also have to initiate policy discussions and stimulate the council (p. 51).

### **Drawbacks to the Council-Manager Form of Government**

Although the council-manager form of government flourished and became very popular, it came with its own set of challenges. While managers ran the day-to-day operations, elected council members set the laws. Elected council members had the power and authority to hire and fire managers. The cities that found the council-manager form of government to be ineffective, resulting in their elimination, did so due to one of two reasons. One of those reasons was due to personality clashes between managers and council members. Another reason was due to the thought that managers possessed too much power and control (Embrey, 2009, p. 292). However, per John A. Perkins (1961), “efficiency for good requires a basic legal framework that gives professional public administrators a fair chance to perform” (p. 180).

As a result of the above, the literature on the city management dynamic began to suggest the importance of conflict resolution and management skills as relevant qualifications within the city administrator profession. City managers are there to limit the conflict that often presents itself in local governance and increase the combined efforts of the executive and the legislature as they serve within their communities; however, they often found themselves entangled in said conflict. Often times this conflict led to manager turnover within cities utilizing the council-manager form of government.

In 1991, Gordon P. Whitaker and Ruth Hoogland DeHoog explored conflict within council-manager forms of government. In this study, the authors first discuss the reasons why conflicts may arise within governments. In political environments, there are times when elected council members, and sometimes managers, are motivated by personal agendas. Often times

hidden agendas can cause conflicts. For instance, an elected council member trying to win re-election, may make promises to their constituency, and as a result reallocate city resources or fail to impose an increase in taxes in an attempt to respond to voters (Whitaker & DeHoog, 1991, p. 156). Another type of conflict can arise due to petty quarrels between the city manager and the elected council members. The elected council members may decide to “fire competent, public-spirited managers because they refuse to violate laws or professional ethics, or because of petty jealousies, resulting in the loss of the effective executive leadership which that manager provided for the city” (Whitaker & DeHoog, 1991, p. 156). These types of conflicts cause inefficiencies within cities, and ultimately impact the constituency being served.

The study conducted by Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) reported on 33 city managers in Florida who left their city manager jobs. Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) found that:

21 of the 33 managers studied experienced considerable conflict among members of their councils before they left office. Unfortunately, that conflict appears to have been the reason for the manager’s departure in over half of the cases. Eleven managers, who experienced council conflict, were fired, forced to resign, or fled office. Ten other managers, who experienced council conflict, stayed in office until they found more attractive positions, retired, or had family problems, which required their resignation (p. 161).

In the study’s conclusion, Whitaker and DeHoog (1991), recommends that city managers receive the proper professional training and education around conflict resolution and management.

Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) believe that this professional development will equip and prepare city managers to be more effective in their roles. In addition, Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) recommends that elected council members take special care in the recruitment process by vetting



and screening city managers who are most capable and qualified for the city manager position. Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) also recommend the use of regular performance reviews by elected council members on the city manager to make clear of performance progress and expectations of the job (p. 164).

Whitaker and DeHoog (1991) understood that council members wanting to implement policies that are illegal would challenge managers. Whitaker and DeHoog recommend city managers use those opportunities to educate council members about the laws that they are suggesting to violate. Additionally, city managers can plan regular meetings and work sessions so that the two parties can get together to discuss their differences, and collectively work towards a resolution to conflicts that are more constructive (p. 164). Conflict will more than likely present itself in local governance; however, conflicts have to be handled constructively by the executive and the legislature in order for city manager turnover to be reduced.

In support of the research conducted by Whitaker and DeHoog (1991), William J. Pammer et al (1999) outlined additional conflict resolution and management strategies that could serve as useful for city managers faced with such difficulties. Pammer et al (1999) understood that while there is a need for conflict resolution and management skills, most city management professionals lack training in these areas. City managers failing to exhibit such skills can exacerbate conflict. To be clear, there will not be one single strategy that can be used to handle and resolve conflicts within council-manager governments because each of these jurisdictions are different. These places vary by population size, geographical location, council member size, and public policy complexity. While the above is true, a resolution strategy and/or framework specific to that jurisdiction is still required that involves key players. Those key players include the mayor and council members, as well as the city manager and staff (p. 204).

In order to build an effective resolution framework, it should “identify commonalities among policymakers, despite their differences, and describe for staff policy implementation issues that affect the council’s policy orientations” (Pammer et. al, 1999, p. 204). This strategy has two benefits. First, it serves as a great way for council members and city managers to get on the same page, communicate, and develop a more effective working relationship. Second, it serves as a way for council members to be transparent and clear about their expectations of staff on policy priorities and how they will be addressed. This is also a great way for council members to hear staff policy concerns and work together in developing an action plan (Pammer, et. al, 1999, p. 204).

Above outlines the start to building a resolution framework; however, in order to maintain this framework and continue to experience positive results, follow-up policy collaboration is required. These sessions do not have to happen frequently, but can occur quarterly or annually as a way to keep council members, city managers, and staff on target and accountable in meeting priorities. This follow-up session can also be used to assess the working relationship between all parties (Pammer et. al, 1999, p. 211). The results of this study show that these types of strategies helped towards conflict resolution; however, there is not enough data to support the impact of such practices long-term. Future research is needed to determine how often community’s follow-up on their resolution plans (Pammer et. al, 1999, pp. 211-212).

In addition to incorporating conflict resolution strategies and training in order to decrease city manager turnover, performance evaluations also need to be conducted regularly by elected council members. This process ensures that city managers are aware of council’s expectations of them. Elected council members have the power and ability to hire and/or fire city managers. As such, council members act as supervisors over city managers, and therefore should conduct

regular performance reviews similar to any manager overseeing employees. A study conducted by Craig M. Wheeland (1994) evaluated the method used by council members to evaluate city managers. At the time of this study, the literature was absent of this type of knowledge. All the literature on the council manager relationship focused solely on councils' supervisory power to hire and/or fire city managers, rather than how they were evaluated (p. 153).

In order to conduct this research study Wheeland (1994) utilized data from a previous survey completed on city managers within Pennsylvania. Wheeland (1994) tested hypotheses to get a better understanding of "the city managers knowledge about council expectations regarding performance, the effectiveness of council communication about its expectations regarding performance, and the comprehensiveness of the council's evaluation of the city manager's performance" (Wheeland, 1994, p. 154). Wheeland (1994) looked at 80 Pennsylvania municipalities with population sizes between 2,500 and 59,000. (p. 154). Performance evaluations for city managers a part of this study typically measured "personal qualities/leadership style, planning/organization, fiscal management/budgeting, execution of policies/programs, and council communication" (Wheeland, 1994, p. 156).

Wheeland (1994) found that only 26 percent of municipalities conducted performance evaluations, and only 10 percent of councilors were trained on the proper way to evaluate city managers (p. 154). Wheeland (1994) also found that the municipalities that were a part of the study utilize a less formal, structured performance evaluation process (p. 155). Because of the relaxed measures in place for evaluations, city managers are often unclear of council's expectations of them. After all, these evaluations are designed to assist council members in communicating their performance expectations to city managers. These evaluations could

ultimately decrease turnover within the city manager profession, allowing municipalities to hold on to talented individuals who possess a certain level of expertise.

While there may be areas of improvement discovered through the performance evaluation process by council for city managers, Wheeland (1994) states that city managers are not the only group requiring improvement. Wheeland (1994) states that council members could improve their performance as well in this council-manager relationship. Wheeland (1994) says:

The 48 percent of the councils not reporting a council perspective to the manager could begin to do so, and the 18 percent of the councils offering a perspective on less than a majority of subjects covering the nature of the manager's work could increase the comprehensiveness of their evaluation (p. 157).

In this study's conclusion, Wheeland (1994) recommends formalizing the performance evaluation process because he believes that it could strengthen the relationship between city managers and council members. Further, Wheeland believes that this newly developed process could strengthen the performance and supervisory skills of councilors overseeing city managers within council-manager forms of government. Ultimately, the development of these processes could decrease city manager turnover.

### **The Council-Manager Form of Government vs. The Mayor-Council Form of Government**

A study conducted by Semoon Chang and Kathy Hayes (1990) evaluated whether the council-manager form of government was more efficient than the mayor-council form of government, and discussed the difference between each form of government. It was noted that the manager in the council-manager form has an incentive to perform the same way as a manager of a profit maximizing organization. The manager in the council-manager form of government

therefore is concerned with high efficiency and lower costs. The authors in this study suggested that while managers in council-manager forms of government have incentives to perform, they are accountable to council, whereas in the mayor-council form of government, the mayor is accountable to the public. Because the council group is smaller than the public, it makes the judgment of performance and productivity far easier. Some argue that city managers are professionally trained to execute their duties as administrators, while elected mayors may not be trained (Chang & Hayes, 1990, pp. 167-168).

The authors make a very interesting point in this article by stating that while managers may be better trained and more committed to performance and results, both parties, managers and mayors, are responsible to the public. Mayors want to do well and be efficient to increase their chances of re-election, and managers are accountable to council, who in turn are accountable to the public. The city council in the later scenario will hold the manager accountable. "Both the city manager and mayor-council forms of government have incentives to be responsive to voters' demand" (Chang & Hayes, 1990, p. 168). If we apply a principal agent approach where the voters are the principals and mayor-council/city managers are the agents, it shows that both have a need to satisfy the principal (Chang & Hayes, 1990, p. 168).

After testing an efficiency model, the authors found that there is really no difference between the two efficiency levels within the two models. An explanation for the results may be the idea that city managers may not be any more trained in administration than a mayor chief administrative officer. Another explanation for the results may be the idea that there is no incentive for city managers to over perform in the area of efficiency. If compensation is not tied to performance and high efficiency levels, the city manager may not be any more efficient than the mayor and his/her chief administrative officer (Chang & Hayes, 1990, p. 176).

A further study conducted by James H. Svara (2008) discussed the council-manager form of government in relation to the mayor-council form of government in an attempt to re-examine and update the goals of the Winter Commission report of 1993. The Winter Commission report of 1993 was geared towards large cities using the mayor-council form of government. The commission encouraged these cities to remove any barriers related to executive authority (S37). Svara (2008) conducted this study as a way to determine how to strengthen leadership and performance within the local government (S37). Svara (2008) believed that there was a need for an enhancement in leadership due to the new challenges experienced within the local government (S37).

By 2003, cities began to redevelop and make use of reforms associated with the reinvention of government as introduced by Osborne and Gaebler in 1992. At this point, at least two of the three cities over 10,000 in population started to adopt other strategies around outsourcing and partnering with other organizations in the delivery of services. These cities also began to train their employees on customer service, increase fees rather than taxes, and utilize other e-government initiatives (as cited in Svara, 2008, p. S44). Cities began adopting such practices as a result of their socioeconomic status and other factors such as; “population, economic health level, per capita income, city size, population growth, absence of labor unions, levels of employment, and form of government” (as cited in Svara, 2008, p. S44).

These new approaches associated with reinventing government practices have been incited through the development of information technology. When you have a top-level manager who supports innovation, these types of practices and approaches are inevitable to be incorporated. As of 2004, it was noted, by way of survey, that governments were utilizing e-government initiatives. It was found that more governments were making services accessible on-

line. Constituents had the ability to download forms, review ordinances and codes, access council meeting minutes and agendas, and request municipal services. In some instances, constituents also had the ability to view electronic newsletters and GIS mapping, and access on-line payment methods for certain services (Svara, 2008, p. S44).

In addition to the above, Svara (2008) discussed the difference between the council-manager form of government and the mayor-council form of government. Svara (2008) states that in mayor-council form of government, the executive, who is the mayor, has different powers than that of the council. This offset in power causes conflict in these forms of government between the mayor and the city council (p. 38). The mayor, or chief executive, has the power to “appoint personnel, develop and control the executive budget, direct the administrative organization, and exercise the veto” (Svara, 2008, p. S38). The city manager has the same authority of that of the mayor, except the manager is appointed by mayor and council (instead of being elected), and does not have any veto rights or capabilities.

The mayor-council form of government has advanced since the model was reviewed in the 1993 Winter Commission report, and really since its introduction. The mayors in these cities have made it a point to improve performance and management. With that, mayors are more likely to utilize Chief Administrative Officers to increase the administrative capacities of municipal government (as cited in Svara, 2008, p. S40). Chief Administrative Officers “typically have professional background and organizational experience, and 65 percent have a graduate degree” (as cited in Svara, 2008, p. S40). Chief Administrative Officers have less local government experience, but they do have experience in business, and more have experience in state and federal governmental practices.

### **The Shift from the Council-Manager Form of Government**

While the council-manager form of government was found to be in heavy use within governments around the United States, as of 2007, that idea began to shift. Governments are beginning to change their form. There have been nine cities to switch from the council-manager form to the mayor-council form, and three that have switched from the mayor-council form to the council form (Svara, 2008, p. S41). Although the numbers above are not very high, there seems to be something happening, and a reason for the shift, requiring further investigation. There are some who argue that the council-manager form of government is not suitable for use in large cities.

### **The Commission Form of Government**

The commission form of government began around the same time that the council-manager form of government began, although it was not as popular in use. The commission form of government got its start in 1901 as a result of a hurricane that hit Galveston, Texas in 1900. The hurricane killed six thousand people and created property loss in the number of millions of dollars. In order to respond to this crisis and begin rebuilding efforts, influential business leaders within the community prepared a plan and approached the governor requesting that he appoint a commission to govern the city as they were not confident in the existing form of government. The governor began the process as requested, but the process had to be approved by the courts. After a few court challenges of the commission form of government and its partially appointed nature, the court ruled to make the office of the five commissioners elective. After the court ruling, the commission form of government started being used in Texas and other parts of the country (Morgan et. al, p. 280).



Business-oriented reformers viewed the commission form of government as the form of government that was the most ideal in getting things done efficiently, effectively, and rapidly. The commission form of government became heavily utilized by 1918. At that time, five hundred cities had adopted the form of government; however, by 1984, the form of government had begun to see a decline, and only 177 cities were using it within their organizations (Morgan et. al, p, 280).

### **Drawbacks to the Commission Form of Government**

The cities who initially utilized the commission form of government started to transition to city-manager forms of government. The city-manager form was becoming more popular as a more effective model that could aid in the complex issues found within local government. The thought was that a manager trained in public administration could lead local governments to results in such a complex environment. In 1960, even Galveston, Texas adopted the city-manager form of government (Morgan et. al, p. 280).

The commission form of government was challenged, and ultimately replaced for several reasons. The first challenge of the commission form of government was its lack of professionalism. For instance, there may be a commissioner serving within government who has a great amount of private sector experience in financial management, and because commissioners double over as managers of departments, may also be assigned to manage the department of streets and public improvement. While the commissioner has a great amount of experience in finance, he/she does not have the proper experience to lead within the department he/she has been assigned (Morgan et.al, pp. 280-281). The city manager idea was advanced aggressively because it was believed that there was a need for a professional who was adequately

trained and possessed modern management skills in order to handle the public's business, creating the efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services (Morgan et. al, p. 281).

Another challenge of the commission form of government was the thought that commissioners were simply ineffective. It was believed that a city manager was better for the job. The commission system, ran by commissioners who acted independently, began to be seen as severely ineffective in coordinating diverse city functions (Morgan et. al, p. 281).

Per an article written by Charles Holly (1911), there are additional drawbacks to the commission form of government. The commission form of government has centralized power, and therefore, the appointive power lies with the city commission. The commission form of government gives city commissions other powers as well. The commission also has the power to assess and levy taxes, set their own salaries, set the terms for their office, and appoint public officials. There are issues associated with appointive power which include the idea that:

Appointive power is one of the most vicious and dangerous of all political agencies.

There are numerous instances in recent history where the appointive power of a president has been used to secure political results, and at the behest of personal ends and aims. If the president of the United States cannot be trusted with the power to appoint public officials, such appointment being investigated and confirmed or rejected by the Senate, what right have we to believe that John Doe, acting as a member of a city commission, will be free from abuse of his power in appointing public officials (Holly, 1911, pp. 204 – 205)?

Holly (1911) believes that in order to fix this problem and reduce corruption, the citizens should elect public officials. While citizens may do things with prejudice and not with the best interest,

Holly believes that if municipalities are going to be corrupt, it should be the people who correct them. (p. 205).

Holly discusses in this article how patronage is associated with appointing power. Holly believes that the idea of appointing power was brought on heavily by President Jackson who believed that “to the victor “belongs the spoils” (as cited in Holly, 1911, p. 205). Holly (1911) states that after President Jackson’s declaration, federal patronage was in heavy use, taking over elections, and when enacting laws. Holly (1911) states, “Patronage is and always has been, to a greater or less extent an insidious form of bribery. It means a debauching of the public service; it means extravagance and a wasteful use of money” (p. 205). If presidents have made use of federal patronage, then there is no doubt that the city commission will use the same, especially considering the type of power they possess. (Holly, 1911, p. 206).

Another article written by Walter G. Cooper (1911) further discusses the complexities within the commission form of government. Cooper (1911) writes this article from a different perspective, specifically around the separation of powers. Cooper (1911) believes that the commission form of government has no such separation of power between the legislative and the executive. It is Cooper’s belief that this separation is necessary for effective government. Per Cooper (1911), the legislative is supposed to make appropriations, enact ordinances, and levy taxes, while the executive is supposed to act on those appropriations, execute said ordinances, and handle the business operations of the government. Although this is what Cooper (1911) believes should happen, the commission form of government does not practice this way. The legislative and executive are the same person in the commission form of government. Cooper (1911) believes that there will always be trouble when men have dual power as a legislator and executive.

When the commission form of government was adopted, it was believed that this form would eliminate politics from municipal government and establish a business administration. From history, the judicial branch, the legislative branch, and the executive branch has been understood and experienced as all separate within the federal government. If these branches overlap, there would be extreme problems. It was believed that the reason the commission form of government was successful in Galveston, Texas was because the five commissioners were businessmen. Prior to becoming commissioners, each man had succeeded within the business field. With that, it was noted that the success of government is dependent on the experience of the men placed within office. (Cooper, 1911, pp. 184-186).

Because of its lack of a separation of powers, the commission form of government has no checks and balances. Instead of checks and balances, there is:

Absolute power in the hands of five men, the power to control life, liberty and property, make the law, execute it, and judge of it, through the men they appoint; to levy the taxes; regulate the scale of values in the assessment of property; make the appropriations; spend the money, and control the auditors who check and report on the expenditures (Cooper, 1911, p. 187).

In order to increase the checks and balances, Cooper (1911) believes that the functions of the legislative and the executive need to be kept separate.

## CHAPTER 3

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT EACH MUNICIPALITY

This dissertation project focused on a third-class city within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, comparing its organizational model to that of a second-class township within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to determine if one model yields better results of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services. The city and the township outlined above falls within one of the following four organizational models: commission formed; mayor-council formed; council-manager formed; and/or weak-mayor council formed. The city is commissioned formed, and the township is council-manger formed.

There are a number of municipalities (which includes cities, townships, and boroughs) throughout Pennsylvania; however, the focus will be on one city and one township as stated above. There are 2,565 municipalities throughout Pennsylvania. They are each given what is called a “class,” ranging from one to three, based on their population size. Most municipalities are third-class cities with the exception of Philadelphia (the only first-class municipality in Pennsylvania), Pittsburgh (the only second-class municipality in Pennsylvania) and Scranton (second-class A). Each municipality has a set of rules that must be adhered to in order to operate. Some of these municipalities (generally third-class) have established a home rule charter, while others follow third class city codes to govern their operations. In order to qualify as a third-class city, the population must be less than 250,000. Townships are generally small towns, and usually given Class 1 or Class 2 powers.

The term “home rule,” or “home rule charter” has been referenced above and will be referenced throughout this paper. The term “home rule” is when a state grants a city,

municipality or county the authority to pass their own laws in order to govern themselves. These laws amend the states constitution. The “home rule charter” is “a written document defining the powers, structure, privileges, rights and duties of the municipal government and limitations thereon. The charter shall also provide for the composition and election of the governing body, which in all cases shall be chosen by popular elections” (Title 53 Subchapter A of PA General Assembly).

### **Background: The City (Commission Form of Government)**

The city in this study is identified by the state of Pennsylvania as a third-class city with a home rule charter that is commission formed. Based on the 2010 census, the city had a population size of approximately 33,972. Of that population, 70.2% were made up of Blacks or African Americans. Another 11.9% of the population was Hispanic or Latino. The median household income was \$30,949, 33.6% of the population were below the poverty line, and 65% of the homes were occupied by renters (U.S. Census 2010).

The city has five council members who are elected at large for four overlapping terms, and one city Controller. The elected council members must reside within the city during their term, and at the time of nomination. The five council members of the city include the mayor, who has an equal vote to that of the other council members. The mayor and councilors serve dual roles as elected officials and directors of departments. Per the home rule charter, the mayor is responsible to direct and manage the department of public affairs. The mayor appoints one of the four remaining councilors to one of the remaining city departments, which include: accounts and finance, public safety, parks and recreation, and streets and highways. The mayor and council appoint all other officers and employees.

The five city departments have sub-departments within each of them. The department of public affairs includes the police department, the communications department, the zoning and planning department, the legal department, and the department of veteran's affairs, the community liaison office, and the workforce development office. The department of public safety includes the fire department, the bureau of health, the office of the building code officials, license and inspection, food inspection, and the housing division. The department of streets and highways includes the engineering department, the recycling department, bulk waste, and other public works such as the lighting of city streets and highways. The department of accounts and finance includes the department of purchasing, the department of human resources, the payroll department, the pension department, the grants department, the accounting department, the tax office, and the assessor's office. The department of parks and recreation includes public property (which in some cases can be rented out to the constituency for a fee), all municipal parks, and all recreational activities for adults and youth.

Most of the departments within the city overlap with one another and therefore, work very closely together. For example, the streets department works closely with the public safety department with reference to residential homes. The streets department is not permitted to go on a person's personal property to clean debris and trash. It is the homeowner's responsibility to do so, and if they do not keep their property up to code per the city's ordinance, the code officials within the public safety department may cite them. The two departments have to work together and interact with one another often, as there are times where the streets department will notice more violations as they are riding throughout the city on a daily basis. With that, it is imperative that the two departments communicate regularly to ensure that issues are handled in the most efficient manner. Many departments within the city work hand in hand in a similar way.

The city provides a vast amount of services to its constituency. The city is responsible to provide police services and fire services. Additionally, the city provides crossing guard services for the school district. The city provides zoning and planning services for those residents and businesses looking to develop properties within the city. The city provides workforce development services for its constituency seeking employment opportunities within the city and outside of the city. The city also provides services to those constituents who are veterans. The city's community liaison office serves as an in-between for constituents who have concerns, and the government. The community liaison office facilitates a positive working relationship between the two parties. The communications office ensures that the constituents are always kept up to date on the things that the government is doing, the services that it provides, and the programs and events that are taking place.

The city provides services that ensure the cleanliness and beautification of the municipality. The city parks and public property are manicured and maintained by city workers. Additionally, city workers also maintain city streets and highways. The city is responsible for providing lighting, street signage, and roadwork such as curb repairs, sidewalk repairs, bridge repairs, and potholes. The city is also responsible for trash collection (regular trash, recycle, and bulk waste), leaf collection, and snow removal. Through the city's recreation department, the city provides outreach and programs for city youth and seniors.

The city provides services that ensure the health and safety of city residents through the department of public safety. The city ensures that constituents' homes, both inside and outside, are kept up to code. Under the city's purview also are food inspections prior to the sale of any food. Those individuals doing updates to their homes must obtain the proper insurances and licenses from the city before beginning such work. In an attempt to maintain a healthy



community, the city provides health workshops for its residents around healthy living, eating, and other activities. The city prepares and collects taxes in house, and conducts home assessments on residential properties. There are civil services provided to police and fire candidates looking to begin careers within those departments within the city. The city has a paid fire department, which is rare; most municipalities within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania have volunteer fire departments.

While the city employs a great number of employees to ensure that the above services are provided, the city also partners with other entities to assist them in providing some of its public services. The city utilizes a contractor for its refuse collection services (including regular trash and recycle). In addition to the above contractor, the city partners with utility companies within and around the city for bridge repairs, curb repairs, sidewalk repairs, and pot holes. The city also utilizes quasi-governmental entities to provide some of its services.

Quasi-governmental entities are entities that the elected body has the ability to appoint board members. These board members' responsibility is to oversee the functions of a component unit of government. An example of a quasi-governmental entity that exists within the city is the economic development authority. This authority is charged with overseeing the city's community and economic development block grant funding that comes directly from H.U.D. (The Department of Housing and Urban Development). This authority is the fiduciary for the city to implement H.U.D. programs, and award grants. Every year the city enters into a cooperation agreement with the authority and appoints a compliance monitor from the city to ensure that the authority is doing its due diligence and what is expected of them. H.U.D. ensures that the organizations receiving funds are in fact city organizations, or the funds are going towards city services. The city can use H.U.D. funding to repave streets or to purchase a fire

truck. Some other quasi-governmental entities that the city has include: the parking authority, the storm water authority, the housing authority, and the water authority.

The city is identified by the state of Pennsylvania as an Act 47 municipality. The city has had this designation since 1995. This designation by the state of Pennsylvania means that the city faces severe financial difficulties. In order to oversee and assist Act 47 municipalities in reaching financial solvency, the state of Pennsylvania appoints The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

The purpose of the Department of Community and Economic Development is to ensure that Act 47 municipalities:

Foster fiscal integrity so that they provide for the health, safety and welfare of their citizens; pay principal and interest on their debt obligations when due; meet financial obligations to their employees, vendors and suppliers; and provide for proper financial accounting procedures, budgeting and taxing practices. The failure of a municipality to do so is hereby determined to affect adversely the health, safety and welfare not only of the citizens of the municipality, but also of other citizens in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Municipalities Financial Recovery Act, June 2013, p. 1).

In order to be declared an Act 47 municipality, an evaluation of a municipality's financial stability must first take place. One of many factors has to be identified through this evaluation for the state of Pennsylvania to declare a municipality financially distressed. Once a municipality is determined to be financially distressed, there is intense monitoring ensued by the state of Pennsylvania. The intense monitoring by the state of Pennsylvania is executed through what is referred to as a coordinator. The coordinator must, no later than 30 days following a financially distressed status, prepare a plan (a recovery plan) that will address the municipality's

financial issues/concerns. This plan is designed to relieve the municipality from any financial issues/concerns that they may be facing, and ultimately remove them from the financially distressed status placed upon them. Once the plan is developed, the legislative body that it will impact must adopt it by way of ordinance. The coordinator may employ a team of experts to assist in the quest towards good financial footing on behalf of the municipality; however, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) consume the compensation of those individuals, along with the coordinators’.

There are some benefits provided to a municipality that has been deemed financially distressed by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Municipalities with this status are prioritized to receive grants and interest free loans by the state. The loans are paid back using a comfortable and convenient repayment schedule and the monies granted through these measures (grants and loans) must only be used for the payment of current municipal expenses. A municipality’s distressed status may terminate when the municipality is absent of the conditions causing them to be deemed financially distressed during the evaluation phase of the Department of Community and Economic Development’s assessment.

In April of 2020, the city was determined to be in a state of fiscal emergency by the Governor of Pennsylvania due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which added pressure to the city’s budget, and already established Act 47 status. This updated status resulted in the appointment of a receiver and the city being placed in receivership for the next two years. After the governing body is notified of its receivership status, the receiver has to be appointed by the commonwealth court. Once the court has appointed a receiver, that individual has to prepare a recovery plan for the distressed city that can be presented to the court within 30 days. This plan is a different plan than that prepared by the coordinator.

The receivership is due to expire two years after the receiver has been appointed; however, the secretary may petition the court for an extension of two additional years. This extension could be granted a few times as long as the secretary can show evidence that the plan requires further implementation in order for the distressed city to end its fiscal emergency (Municipalities Financial Recovery Act, June 2013).

The city employs close to 400 employees (including any seasonal or part-time employees), and is also responsible for the administration of post-employment benefits (medical and pension) for about 150 – 175 retirees (the majority police and fire personnel, the minority non-uniformed personnel). About 80% of the city's workforce is covered by a collective bargaining agreement. There are three unions within the city, but four contracts. The police personnel have organized and have a collective bargaining agreement, the fire personnel have organized and have a collective bargaining agreement, the city workers (laborers, drivers, equipment operators, inspectors, clerks, and secretaries) have organized and have a collective bargaining agreement, and finally, the crossing guards have organized and have a collective bargaining agreement. The collective bargaining agreements for each classification outlines the rules and regulations each employee within that classification must follow. This agreement also outlines other perks and benefits due to employees covered by a contract.

The small percentage of city employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement (about 20%) has an employee handbook that outlines the rules and regulations that they must follow. The city does not have a universal employee handbook for all of its employees to follow. Each city employee is rehired every year by way of an ordinance. Because the city is 80 percent unionized, raises are contractual. The raises go into effect at the beginning of the calendar year.

The raises for those non-uniformed personnel are given based on the city's budget. The city does not conduct performance reviews, or use any other measures to determine pay raises.

The city is very transparent, which will be explained in the coming sentences below. In order to maintain city transparency, the legislative body holds several meetings per month. On the second and fourth Monday they have a deliberative meeting that is open to the public. Although the mayor and council do not entertain any questions from the public, they openly discuss any resolution and/or ordinance that will be presented to them in their second and fourth Wednesday council meeting. During the council meeting, the public is free to ask questions on items that were discussed in Monday's deliberative meeting prior to council taking a vote on a particular measure, as well as any other general questions or concerns that they may have. The council meetings are streamed live for those residents who may not be able to attend. There are also a number of community meetings that the mayor and council can host or attend in order to update residents on upcoming events and discuss different city issues/concerns.

In addition to the city being transparent with the public through various meetings, the mayor also has an open-door policy. The mayor takes delight in the idea of having an open-door policy and often openly acknowledges its existence. The mayor welcomes the public to express their concerns directly with him via appointment or phone call. The objective of this open-door policy is to allow constituents an opportunity to privately voice their concerns, and collectively brainstorm a resolution with the mayor's support and assistance.

In addition to the meetings held by the mayor and city council to inform the public, and the mayor's open-door policy, the city utilizes other methods to communicate with its residents and get the word out about the different things that are happening. The city utilizes several social media platforms to communicate: Facebook, twitter, and Instagram. The city also

communicates with the public through its website and its TV channel. There are often things that require public notification; therefore, the city utilizes its local newspaper to get those notifications out. The city will also communicate with residents via letters and flyers, it all depends on the message that needs to be conveyed.

If city residents have complaints that they would like to lodge with the municipality they may do so by voicing their concerns during a public meeting. They may also contact the mayor for a meeting, as he has an open-door policy. They may also call different complaint hotlines within the city in order to lodge their complaints.

**Background: The Township (Council-Manager Form of Government)**

The township in this study is identified by the state of Pennsylvania as a second-class township with a home rule charter that is council-manager formed. Based on data from the 2000 and 2010 census, the township had a population size of approximately 3,940. Of that population, 78.3% were made up of Blacks or African Americans. Another 3.9% of the population was Hispanic or Latino. The median household income was \$32,576, and 17.1% of the population were below the poverty line (U.S. Census 2000 & 2010).

The township has five council members who are elected at large for six overlapping terms. The elected council member must be a resident of the township throughout his/her term, and at the time of nomination. In addition to the five elected members of council, the home rule charter states that the township auditors (a total of three) are elected as well as the township tax collector. The township auditors shall be elected at large at six-year intervals, and the township tax collector shall be elected for four-year intervals.

The township does not have a mayor, but instead has a chairman. Per the township's home rule charter, the chairman presides at all meetings and serves as the township's ceremonial

officer. The chairman acts as the chief executive officer of the township and administers oaths and affirmations in all matters pertaining to the township. The chairman is responsible to appoint a councilor to one of the five administrative committees (or departments) within the township. In addition to the chairman, there is also a vice chairman.

There are five administrative committees (or departments) within the township. Each councilor serves as commissioner of one of the five administrative committees. A commissioner is responsible to manage and oversee an administrative committee within the township to ensure the proper internal functions and operations of said committee. The chairman oversees the administrative committee of public safety, but has the ability to sit on all committees. The remaining administrative committees include: The public works committee, the community development committee, the fiscal committee, and the administrative committee. While each councilor serves as the commissioner over one committee, they also serve as commissioners on other administrative committees. For example, the commissioner over public works also serves as the commissioner over community development and vice versa.

Per the township's administrative code, the public safety committee is responsible for the administration of the police department and the volunteer fire department. The public safety committee is also responsible to oversee the activities of the fire marshal and the health officer. The public works committee is responsible for the "administration of the highway department; all public works projects; operation and maintenance of those physical structures and facilities that are owned and maintained by the municipality to house governmental or public functions; waste disposal; and recycling and recreation" (Township Administration of Government Administrative Code, p. 14). The community development committee is responsible for "development of planning matters; environmental and related matters; code enforcement; parks;

playgrounds; lots; use of all municipal owned buildings and all municipal owned land” (Township Administration of Government Administrative Code, p. 14). The administrative committee is responsible for the “administration office and oversees the activities of the township manager, the township secretary, the township solicitor, and the township engineer” (Township Administration of Government Administrative Code, p. 14). The fiscal committee is responsible for “all matters pertaining to the budget and financial matters” (Township Administration of Government Administrative Code, p. 14).

The township provides a vast amount of services to its constituency. The township provides recreational activities for the youth and the seniors within the township. The township residents also have the opportunity, for a fee, to utilize the townships community center. The township provides police services; however, its fire department is a volunteer department. The police department engages the community by doing fundraisers, and hosting annual Christmas parties for the residents. The police department also has a coat drive for township residents. The township provides cleanliness and beautification within the municipality by maintaining the land of streets, highways, parks and other public property. Although outsourced, the township also ensures that trash, recycle, and bulk waste are collected. The township also ensures that residents are complying with council’s ordinances by appointing a code enforcer and building inspector. The township prepares and collects residential taxes in house.

The township partners with a few other organizations in order to deliver some of its public services. The township partners with the city a part of this study, and different cities, boroughs and towns throughout the commonwealth of Pennsylvania for police support and fire support. The township has mutual aid agreements with these entities to provide this support. The city a part of this study, as outlined above, has one of the only paid fire departments within



the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. With that, the township relies heavily on the city for fire support needed within the township due to the emergent nature of some of the calls that are received. Often times it's too difficult to locate a volunteer fire fighter who may be at a full-time job during an emergent situation. The township also partners with the education foundation in order to provide funding assistance for its summer internship program. In addition, the township utilizes contractors for its trash collection (regular trash, recycle, and bulk waste), and its grass cutting services (the larger fields).

While each councilor has an administrative committee that he/she is responsible of managing, the home rule charter allows council to create, by resolution, the office of township manager. Currently the township has a township manager to handle all of its non-legislative powers and duties. The township manager enforces the rules and regulations within the administrative code/employee handbook. The township manager assists council with hiring and firing non-uniformed employees within the township. The uniformed employees follow the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission's (MPOETC) standards for hiring and firing within the township.

The township manager also administers policies and procedures to non-uniformed employees, administers paid time off to non-uniformed employees and other township benefits (such as medical insurance), begins the process to handle non-uniformed employee complaints, begins the process for non-uniformed employee discipline (decision ultimately made by council), and processes payroll. The township manager doubles over as council's secretary for council meetings. The township manager is involved in the processes for uniformed personnel with the aid of the police chief. The rules and regulations for uniformed personnel can be found within

the collective bargaining agreement. The township manager does not assist council members with any policy formulation efforts.

The township employs about 32 – 35 employees annually (including any part time employees). That number does not include the 5 elected council members. The police within the township once were the only group of employees represented by a collective bargaining agreement; however, as of late, the township laborers and secretary have organized and joined a union. With that, the majority of the township's workforce are covered by a collective bargaining agreement; however, those newly organized members do not have a contract as of yet. Every year the township rehires its employees. If employees are receiving raises, it is done by way of resolution in January. The township does not conduct performance reviews for the purpose of pay raises; therefore, raises would either be contractual, or given based off of the townships budget.

The township is transparent with its residents. The township has council meetings, planning meetings and agenda meetings where the public can ask questions of the councilors for a response as long as they honor the decorum of the meeting. There are no impactful decisions made outside of a public setting. All public meetings have to be published within the local newspaper so residents are properly informed. In addition to communicating with the public within the local newspaper, the township communicates with its residents through its website. Additionally, the township utilizes an app called savvy citizen to keep its residents informed. The township also has a Facebook page and a twitter account. The township also communicates with its residents via flyers and letters when necessary. If township residents have complaints that they would like to lodge with the municipality, they may do so in writing using a complaint

form, or at a public meeting. Additionally, each council member has a cell phone and laptop supplied to them by the township to allow them to be accessible to residents at any time.

This dissertation project will determine how public services are affected, if at all, by the type of organizational model utilized. The purpose of this dissertation project is to explore the following research question: How is the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services affected when considering the type of organizational model used within a city and a township within Pennsylvania? The next chapter will discuss the methods and data utilized towards answering this research question.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODS AND DATA**

This research focused on the comparison between the city's organizational model and the township's organizational model in a quest to determine which model yielded the best results with reference to the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services. I conducted in depth interviews with ten (10) public professionals (5 from each municipality) who have direct experience working within the city and the township. The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to gain a better understanding of the processes that take place in each municipality. I believed that the only way to identify the process-oriented details was by sitting down with each participant for a minimum of an hour. Hesse-Biber (2017) states, "Typically, researchers who conduct in-depth interviews are looking for patterns that emerge from the thick descriptions of social life recounted by their participants. In this sense, qualitative interviews are designed to get at deep information or knowledge" (p. 106). In some instances, the interviews would extent over an hour depending on the person, their position, their years of service, and the amount of knowledge that they held.

A public professional was defined as a person having extensive knowledge and expertise (preferably 2-5 years) working within the identified municipality and could include: city managers/administrators, chiefs of staff, chief financial officers, directors/managers of departments, city officials, etc. In order to obtain participants for this study, I utilized professionals within the city that I already had a trusting, working relationship with. I gained access to the township professionals through city workers who serve dual roles working at the city and serving within the township as councilors. Because the township professionals already trusted these individuals, they knew that these individuals would not have them sit with someone

for an interview that would compromise their character or their position in any way, not to mention these individuals had already gone through the interview process themselves. With that, the participants felt safe and comfortable coming into the interview.

The informed consent process was reviewed, explained, and executed prior to the start of each interview. Each participant signed the informed consent form, and there were no interviews cancelled due to a participants' unwillingness to sign and participate. I interviewed the following individuals:

- City Interviewees: The Chief Financial Officer and former Councilor and Director of Accounts, Finance and Human Resources; the Councilor and Director of Accounts and Finance and Human Resources (also serves as the Deputy Mayor for the city); the City Clerk; the Councilor and Director of Streets, Highways and Public Improvement; and the Benefits Administrator.
- Township Interviewees: The Commissioner of Public Works; the Commissioner of Public Safety; the Commissioner of Finance & Administration; the Police Chief; and the Township Manager.

This was a qualitative methods research design where in depth in-person interviews were conducted. Each interview varied in time, but no interview was under an hour in length. The interview questions for this research study were semi-structured. While the list of interview questions were used as a guide to remain on task with the overall goals of the research, there were times when I asked follow-up questions to participants' responses. There were also instances where participants' wanted to gain additional knowledge about me as an interviewer following a brief introduction. This mainly occurred with the township participants since they were more unfamiliar with my background.

Each interview was recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed using a compatible foot pedal. I transcribed the entire interview session for all interviews. I transcribed all data collected, including all non-verbal cues such as laughter, pauses, and other gestures. The non-verbal cues were done so using bold text and italics within the transcription. There were times during the interview/s where I could sense when a question may have been uncomfortable for a participant. When this behavior was observed, I paid close attention to the participant/s body language and noted it within the transcription. A participant may have answered an uncomfortable question; however, I transcribed what was being said without actually being verbalized by the participant.

The interview questions for this study can be found in the appendix section of this dissertation (see Appendix A). The idea surrounding the development of the interview questions was to gauge deep information from each participant regarding their respective organizations, in an attempt to answer the research question: How is the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and responsiveness of public services affected when considering the type of organizational model used within a city and a township within Pennsylvania. I was seeking information regarding the processes of each organization. With that, I had to ask questions that were detail oriented. Not only was I interested in the organizations internal processes, and how they handle the day-to-day operations with reference to their workforce, I was also interested in their external processes, and how they interact, engage, and communicate with their constituency.

I wanted to determine how responsive and transparent the organizations operated. I wanted to determine the services that they provided in order to determine the connection between the delivery of those services and those that they employ. I needed to understand what it was like to work for each organization, and what the onboarding process looked like in order to

establish if there was an issue of patronage. I needed to understand how employees were treated, because often times low morale leads to low productivity, so I explored whether each organization provided incentive programs for its employees. I also explored other ways that each organization motivated its workforce. I wanted to understand the process for performance reviews, and whether pay raises were tied to performance outcomes. Finally, I wanted to understand the overall culture of each organization, and how satisfied employees were to work at each place.

I needed to understand the resources that each organization had at their fingertips, as well as the resources that they did not have at their fingertips. I needed to understand each organization's struggle. I wanted to determine the efficiency and effectiveness rates defined by each participant. It was not one's position in this study to determine this on behalf of each municipality, rather, I needed to hear this concept outlined by each participant, and allow him or her to freely discuss why he or she believed those rates were the way that they described. Additionally, I needed the participants to think about how their resources, or lack thereof, affected (positively or negatively) those rates of efficiency and effectiveness. There were also questions asked about accountability. Accountability was measured both internally and externally. Internally accountability was measured by determining how employees were held accountable within the workplace. External accountability was measured by determining how accountable the councilors were to their constituency by asking questions about complaint methods, communication methods, and transparency.

In order to analyze the data of this research design, I compared the interview data and found trends and common themes and ideas among them. In addition, I found the differences among the interviews and noted them. The themes and trends were marked up/highlighted using

different colored highlighters in an attempt to enhance my understanding of the processes that took place within each municipality. Interpretive code words were then assigned to each segment of the data. Through this coding process, I was able to identify specific areas or topics that required more information. A grounded theory approach to coding was eventually used. “Grounded theory is a form of analysis developed initially by Glaser and Strauss (1967). This analysis perspective starts from an engagement with the data and ends with a theory that is generated from or grounded in the data” (Hesse-Biber, p. 316). The grounded theory model was chosen to analyze the research data due to the comparative analysis that needed to take place between the city and the township. It was the hope that this analysis would allow the researcher to discover the theory that was grounded within the data that was collected. The research data produced a pattern of themes that informed the theory. The themes outlined the processes that take place, or do not take place, within each organization using different organizational models.

The municipalities that were a part of the study will remain as deidentified as possible by using the terms “city” and “township.” Additionally, participants who were a part of the study will also remain deidentified by using their titles only to identify them.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Through research of each municipality and data collected through in-depth interviews, a few discoveries were made. For the purpose of this study, there was a list of common themes identified. The themes that will be discussed in this chapter include: education, patronage, incompetence, nepotism, the non-uniformity of policies and procedures, the lack of accountability, and the lack of resources. The *major* themes that will be discussed in this chapter include: patronage, and the lack of resources. An in-depth discussion about each municipality's efficiency and effectiveness will also take place in this chapter. In addition to the themes that will be outlined herein, additional information that was revealed through the data collection process will be discussed. Some of this information is concerning, and some of it is more positive and shows the progression of the city and/or the township.

#### **Theme: Education**

One of the common themes found within the data was that of education. The idea of education came up for both constituents as well as council members. The thought was that constituents could use additional education on those aspects within the municipality falling under the government's purview, and council members could benefit from training that equips them to serve as both councilors and managers. Within the city, a participant believed that the city could become more efficient and perhaps more effective if they educated their constituency. The participant had this to say:

Being in a financially distressed city with the type of population that we have, and I'm from that population, it's a lot of elements that the government is not responsible for, and

we are lacking in other areas, not just government. When you look at even the school district, the charter schools, the social services that are provided to the residents, some of the unique situations that they may encounter because of their living situations, we find ourselves a lot of times, being a social service agency when that isn't necessarily the role of the government, and that takes away from some of the other things we have to do as a government. And even unfortunately the perception that people have of the city. I do not want to blame everything on the financial conditions of the city, because we have issues.

The participant here is describing some of the real-life issues that the city faces daily with the constituency having the wrong idea about what it is that the government is supposed to do.

Another city participant supported the above idea, but more so from a resident's perspective, because she is an employee and a resident due to the residency requirement. The participant had this to say about other constituents of the city:

As a resident of the city, I'm probably not a great person to interview because I really don't think the things that concern a lot of people unfortunately don't concern me, and I don't mean in my everyday living, I'm talking about inquisitiveness. I'm just a little off kilter when it comes to what the city should do for its residents. I'm probably more on the moderate to conservative side regarding that because I believe residents have a responsibility to the city as well.

This participant is supporting the idea expressed by the first participant regarding what the city should be doing for its residents. There are some constituents, as described by the first participant, who believe that the government should be doing more, when often times, those things are not even a function of government. In taking that concept a bit further, this participant is describing the relationship between the government and the constituency as a partnership and

suggesting that constituents be educated on such a partnership. Instead of relying heavily on the government to provide services, the residents have to bring something to the table as well. When discussing this concept with this participant further, it was noted that residents have a responsibility to the city, rather than throwing their trash out the windows of their two-story homes, and purchasing trash cans with lids, rather than sitting their trash outside in bags for rodents to destroy.

Within the township, a participant believed that the township could become more effective if they “educated the people.” When speaking of “people” here, the participant is referring to his colleagues who sit on council with him. He stated that voters elect the people at large with specific roles within government. Not only do voters elect these individuals to serve as elected officials, they are also charged with the task of working together with other elected members and thinking collectively. In addition to that, they are charged with managing municipal departments. This participant believed that education was vital, and councilors could benefit from learning what it is to be a manager and what it is to be a councilperson.

Another councilperson within the township believed that the township could be doing more education and outreach to assist their residents with every day skills. This participant believed that it was not enough to just beautify the appearance of the community, but to also develop the constituents of the community. While this participant acknowledged the idea that the township offers recreational activities for its youth, he also acknowledged that the township could do more within the community with other groups. It was the belief of this participant that the township needed to offer activities that would increase the employability of township residents such as job training and other job-related skills. Additionally, this participant believed

that the township needed to offer computer literacy training for its residents who may not be technologically savvy.

The salient feature revealed surrounding this theme was the thought shared about councilors receiving the proper training required to lead in a political capacity as well as a managerial capacity. This idea was interesting because it was being acknowledged by a current councilor. It has been my experience that councilors rarely take a step back to assess their own areas of weakness, and the areas for improvement. Often times elected officials respond to change and constructive criticism from a position of power. I found it very interesting, and cheerful that this idea was being recognized and expressed by a current councilor who also understands that there are always opportunities for growth.

This theme was an unanticipated finding. Both the city and the township believed that education of some sort was important to help build upon its inefficiencies. It is obvious that municipal structure has no bearing on how effective residents and officials are educated; however, the lack of education has direct effects on how efficient and effective a municipality can operate.

### **Theme: Patronage**

The idea of patronage is implied various times throughout the data within the city and the township; however, there was only one city participant to state the idea explicitly. At the city, there is a thorough hiring process and vetting process outlined within contractual agreements for union positions and civil service positions (police and fire). That process becomes questionable when considering non-union positions. Each participant was asked to outline the hiring process for non-union jobs, as well as the vetting process for non-union jobs. The responses among city participants were consistent in the fact that there is a process, but the process is not followed

consistently within city departments. One city participant responded by stating, “If it’s an in-house non-union position that needs to be filled, they can possibly take someone from another department and offer them the job, or if someone knows someone then you get hired.”

Another city participant responded to the question by outlining the processes (hiring and vetting) within his department only, and when asked if the processes are consistently followed, the participant ensued in a long pause. The interviewer then re-stated the question saying that the participant could respond based off of his department alone. The participant then answered by stating, “yes, the hiring process and vetting process is consistently followed within my department.”

Another city participant responded to the question by outlining the hiring process within the city, but said that it is based off the political administration serving at the respective time. This participant stated that the vetting process is mainly done by word of mouth. When asked whether these processes are consistently followed, the participant stated “no.”

Another city participant had this to say regarding the hiring process, more specifically regarding the interview process once a person is selected as a candidate, “okay what little I know on that is, again it depends on the department. I’ve heard before that people have been hired without even human resources being a part of that process. So, it all depends on the department and how that director chooses to hire that person.”

Another city participant outlined the hiring process used within her department for union personnel (laborers and administrators) since the majority of her department is unionized (about 95%). While there is a clear process outlined for union positions per the collective bargaining agreement, the participant had this to say regarding the hiring process for non-union positions, “I think for those management positions, it is up to the director. I think primarily people try to post

those jobs, but then for the management type of positions, you're looking for people who have the qualifications and/or education to support their being qualified for the position." When this participant was asked about the vetting process used at the city for non-union positions, it was stated that often time's word of mouth plays a huge part in trying to obtain new talent for the city. Per the participant external candidates can apply, word of mouth can be used, or the city can promote from within the organization when trying to fill non-union positions. When asking this participant whether the hiring process and vetting process are consistently followed, the participant answered based off of her department alone. The participant stated, "I know in my department consistency is very important to me. Consistency and making sure that I am in line with the Human Resources Department when I look to hire someone, so, I would say yes."

There was one city participant that discussed patronage very openly. When this participant was asked about the hiring process at the city, it was stated that there is a very clear process outlined for police and fire personnel because of their classification as civil service workers. The participant stated that while there is also a clear process present at the city to hire non-union personnel, the city relies on patronage practices and a referral system when filling non-union positions. The participant stated that 35% - 40% of city positions are patronage based, and the other 65% - 70% are referral based.

This participant further stated that the hiring process, the vetting process, and the interview process are not consistently followed, especially when the jobs are filled using the patronage and referral systems. The participant stated that she does not know if the patronage system and referral system have any direct negativity attached to them, but it is a method that has been handed down through various administrations. While it is not believed to have any direct negative connotations, the participant discusses how the patronage and referral systems snowball

into other issues such as negligent hires and competent employees. While this participant does not feel that the patronage system and referral system is done purposely, their use have become habits, and in trying to help the constituency, the city often hurt themselves because the issues that arise from those systems create concerns that become a bit out of control. While the competencies are not present, the will to help the constituents is present per the participant. The participant states, "It's a two-edged sword."

The township's workforce just recently unionized, so there is a hiring process and a vetting process outlined for their non-union positions and public safety positions (police and fire). In fact, as of recently, their police personnel were their only employees who were covered by a collective bargaining agreement. The same question was posed to the township participants about their hiring process and vetting process for non-union positions. While these processes are consistently followed due to provisions within the administrative code, participants interviewed all state that word of mouth and referrals are mainly used when filling vacant positions within the township. They state that although positions have to follow a certain process and be advertised within the local newspaper, the word is normally already out among the community before the vacancy is even advertised. In these situations, potential candidates are already approaching councilors. Potential candidates are told to simply apply once they see the position advertised in the newspaper.

The above idea is not totally the same for the filling of police positions within the township. Police positions are not always advertised. Instead, they recruit through the officers that are already working within the department. They tend to utilize a referral process. These officers may know someone in the police academy about to graduate, which is a requirement for becoming a police officer. Per one participant within the township:

And it ain't just because you know somebody. I mean, if you've been around a while like back in the 80s, if you knew somebody you could get a job just like that, it was political, but now, you have to fill out an application, you have to do a background check, you have to do a psychological evaluation, you have to take a physical agility test, you have to take a physical, drug test, you have to have a credit check, and you've got to take a poly graph, so you're now really put through a qualification process."

Although a referral process may be utilized to fill police positions due to the difficulty in recruiting police generally, individuals are still put through a process. These processes, the hiring process and the vetting process are consistently followed because they are guidelines required by the state of Pennsylvania for police personnel.

### **Theme: Incompetence**

The idea of incompetence was glossed over by some participants, but explicitly stated by one city participant. Incompetence was suggested among municipal managers, council members, employees, and partners. One township participant stated that council members needed to be educated. Another city participant stated that some managers and supervisors do not hold individuals accountable because they either do not understand the language in union handbooks, or they are not knowledgeable or educated on their duties and powers as managers.

Another township participant described incompetence, but did not use the term explicitly by stating:

We had an engineering department that a lot of our grants would go to and they weren't returned in time, so we lost a lot of grant money, so we removed that entity and hired an individual who since January has produced at least seven grants, which directly impacts the township and that raised our efficiency level because we are able to provide more



public services. So that was an immediate injection into our road programs, our revitalization programs, and our storm water programs. All of those things took off because we took care of that one position.

Another city participant spoke openly about the competence of employees with reference to the patronage and referral systems. This participant stated that often times the use of such systems, patronage and referral, creates issues surrounding the competence of employees. While the city wants to help, they tend to bring on individuals who are less competent and lack a certain skill set. This negligent hiring practice further complicates the city's operations, causing their inefficiencies to increase. Individuals who lack competence and specific skills cannot adequately contribute to the organization.

Patronage and incompetence are often related. Most times individuals hired through the patronage system lack competence to work in the roles they are filling. A salient feature standing out about the patronage theme and the competence theme is the idea that while both municipalities practice patronage; they rarely ensure that the individuals who are hired are competent and possess a certain skill set. I believe the idea of patronage may not be as frowned upon if the individuals being selected through this method were also competent.

Based on the data collected, the idea of patronage is not exclusive to one municipal structure. The patronage system impacts a municipality's efficiency and effectiveness because individuals hired through this method are not held to the same standards as everyone else. These individuals are free to break organizational rules without being held accountable. These individuals can possess an attitude of laziness that ultimately affects productivity and the delivery of services. Patronage and incompetence have a direct effect on the efficiency and

effectiveness of the city and the township's public services. The idea of patronage and incompetence was an unanticipated finding within the township.

### **Theme: Nepotism**

Another theme across the data is that of nepotism. It was found that in both the city and the township, there are no written policies prohibiting the hiring of relatives. One of the city participants responded to the question, "does your organization have a no nepotism policy," by stating, "what I will say is here at the city, we do have many relatives working together."

Another participant responded to the question by saying that the city does not have a no nepotism policy, but that there is something about hiring relatives within your department. Another city participant responded to the question by stating:

No! Uhhh...well (laughs)...so in our police department there is something about...not necessarily no nepotism, but how family members can't work the same shift. That is a policy or directive that's in police and fire actually. There are unofficial documents that talk about it, but I don't know again if we follow it.

Another city participant acknowledged that there is not a policy against the hiring of relatives, but outlined that when voting for relatives to be hired by the city during council meetings, if the person in question is a cousin of a council member, then the council member can vote; however, if the person in question is a sibling or child of the council member, then the council member would have to abstain from the vote.

The township participants' responses regarding the no nepotism policy were a bit similar to that of the city. One township participant responded to the question by simply stating that there is not such a policy in place. Another township participant responded to the question by stating, "I don't think so because we have a police officer whose wife works in administration,

and then we have two employees that have become that way that are working beneath each other. At Septa (where he recently retired from), we had that policy.” Another township participant responded to the question by stating, while relatives are not prohibited, they are still required to undergo the qualification process successfully.

Nepotism is closely related to patronage and incompetence. Honestly, it is the same concept where one hires someone that they personally know for a position. I believe nepotism should be eliminated as a hiring practice in these municipalities because it could have negative effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. In fact, I am certain that nepotism has already had negative effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of public services within these municipalities. Similar to individuals hired through the patronage system, these individuals are exempt from adhering to organizational rules and are rarely held accountable. The inconsistencies with adhering to rules for one group over another creates issues for these organizations due to their heavily unionized status. These inconsistencies result in issues of fairness. While one township participant stated that relatives are allowed, but are required to undergo the qualification process successfully, it is not enough to hire relatives simply because they are qualified. As outlined above, the use of this method creates opportunities for preferential treatment. Because elected officials have to adhere to certain codes of ethics, they should be cautious in their hiring practices due to the risk of re-election and public scrutiny. The idea of nepotism was a finding that was unanticipated within the township, but it is clear that the type of municipal structure has no bearing on its use. With that, the theme of nepotism contributes to the inefficiencies of both the city and the township.

**Theme: Non-Uniformity of Policies and Procedures**

There is a common theme across the data showing that policies and procedures are not implemented uniformly across the board, and rather implemented departmentally. As outlined above, there were city participants who knew that there was a hiring process and a vetting process in place, but often stated that the process is only followed within certain departments or depending on the administration currently serving at the city at the time. The same issue about department only policies presented itself within the city when a participant was asked about the interview process as part of the hiring process as outlined above.

The idea of departmental policies and procedures (rather than city wide) also came up when speaking to the participants about training and development at the city. The city is made up of a very skilled workforce that includes a great number of professionals. There are certain classifications within the city that require ongoing training and development in order to maintain a certain skill set. Those classifications include, but are not limited to: police, fire, electricians, code officials, engineers, inspectors, solicitors, planners, etc. It is without a doubt that individuals within these classifications have to undergo ongoing training in order to perform at peak levels; however, there is not a formal training and development program currently used within other classifications within the city.

When asking participants whether the city conducts annual training and development for its current employees, the responses received confirmed that training is only conducted in certain city departments for certain city employees. While training may be conducted in some city departments, it is not done consistently. One city participant responded to the question by stating:

Should we, yes, do we on a consistent basis, no. I know within my department, I tell all of my employee's, this is not the last stop. I mean because there are many, many trainings out there, so if you see a training or certificate that you think would be helpful to you, that you can get and bring back here and use it within your day-to-day operations, or be able to pass some information on to your colleagues that you may work along with on day-to-day operations, then definitely do that. So, we don't do it as much as we should, but it's offered.

Another city participant supported the above statement about training and development stating that while there is no formal training and development, city employees who are interested can receive training. This participant stated that training is individual based and it really depends on what an individual employee is seeking within their position with reference to training. This participant spoke to the training for police and fire personnel of the city by stating, "I believe that there are training modules for police and fire that they more than likely must follow, and I believe those are adhered to."

The township has a similar structure with its workforce. The township too has training and development that is conducted within certain township departments only. One participant answered the question on whether the township conducts annual trainings and development for its current workforce based on his own department. The concept is similar to the city in that township employees interested in developing within their roles are free to take advantage of training opportunities that may be available. With that, training and development within the city and the township are conducted informally.

Police personnel within the township by standard have to re-new their MOPEC certification every year. MOPEC puts out the curriculum annually, and within that curriculum

would be any new police laws that have come out within the year. In addition to the curriculum, officers are required to be CPR and first aid certified. They also must go to the gun range for testing.

It was rather interesting to learn that neither the city nor the township adheres to uniform policies and procedures surrounding annual training and development for all of its positions. Prior to this study, I understood that this was the case within the city, but had no idea that it was also the case within the township. The lack of uniform policies and procedures surrounding training clearly is not exclusive to one organizational model; however, this deficiency can affect public services. Employees cannot be efficient or effective in producing public services if they are ill trained. This theme adds to the inefficiencies faced by the city and the township both.

#### **Theme: Lack of Accountability**

There is a common theme across the data within the city of a lack of accountability. When asking city participants what measures they have in place to increase or measure employee accountability specifically with simple methods such as employees signing off on documents acknowledging that they have been trained, the responses were generally the same. One city participant began to respond to the question with a long pause and a sigh, then stating:

In some departments yes, the trainings are done and signed off by the actual employee to make sure that they understood, that they accepted the training, and understand that if something happens beyond this, as far as backing up into a fence or something, or whatever the case may be, or taking excessive force on a civilian in the streets, then there could be repercussions after because you had the training. I think majority of the time though there is just training without any type of repercussions or accountability or responsibility that follows it.

Another city participant responded to the question by stating, “It depends on the department, it’s not city wide. Police and fire, they do have things that they sign off on, acknowledgement forms to hold them accountable. Formally in some other departments, there may be, but globally, no. We need a global process for that.”

Another city participant responded to the accountability question in a different way, and not necessarily using sign off sheets acknowledging that employees have been trained on a particular task. The participant responded by stating that the city lacks a tool that can be used to measure performance. She stated that when she worked in the corporate environment, there was always a tool used to measure performance. While the governing body has had discussions about introducing such tools, and tying pay raises to performance ratings (raises at the city are mostly contractual), nothing has been set up yet.

Another city participant responded to the question regarding accountability by stating: I believe that those employees who, and I’m talking non-uniformed specifically right now...well let me go back...I think police and fire are more structured. Of course, it starts in the hiring process and the training process. I think because of the military like levels that you find in the police and fire departments; it’s easier to find that accountability. In our non-uniformed areas where here again, I hate to keep saying this, I sound like a broken record, where the patronage and referral system is much more used, if the employee or the new hire does not possess that quality themselves, if they don’t make themselves accountable, then I would say there would be none.

This participant is saying that nonunion employees have to possess self-accountability in order for it to be present in their work due to the processes the city often utilizes (patronage and

referral systems) in hiring for these positions. These employees more than likely will not be held accountable because of whom they know, and how they obtained their jobs.

When asking a township participant what measures they have in place to increase or measure employee accountability, the participant stated:

We try to do the annual trainings so that they'll develop skill sets and the mindset to be productive. I'll give you a two-part measuring tool. Of course, the administrative part where you have them sign saying that they received the training, and then the department performance rate. You measure performance by attendance, incident reports and things that give a consistent measuring tool.

Per a township participant, the police department utilizes performance reviews as a way to measure employee accountability. The Corporals give officers reviews every 6 months, and newer officers are reviewed within 90 days of their on the job training. Thereafter, they are on the same 6-month schedule as the other officers. The purpose of this measuring tool is to sit down with the officers to let them know where they can improve, allow officers to discuss any challenges that they may be having, and to offer additional training if it is found to be necessary.

There are not performance reviews or other accountability measures currently being used in either municipality (except within the city and township's police department). Even without these tools, there is no consistent use of policies and procedures that could be enforced to hold employee's accountable. I found it very interesting when one participant tied accountability to the patronage system. Hearing the connection described made sense as to why some employees are rarely held accountable. It also shed light on the inconsistencies in the use of uniform policies and procedures. Perhaps these things are overlooked simply because of patronage.



It is evident that the lack of accountability is not exclusive to one municipal structure. Each municipality lack accountability measures which may be due to nepotism and the patronage system. Either manager's do not understand how to hold employees accountable as a result of their own incompetence, or accountability measures are being overlooked depending on the person that needs to be reprimanded (someone's relative or friend). The lack of accountability can cost the municipality a huge amount of money (through litigation) due to the omission of fairness. The lack of accountability has a direct affect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the city and the township. This theme was an unanticipated finding within the township.

#### **Theme: Lack of Resources**

There is a huge amount of evidence within the data that suggests a lack of resources within the city and the township both. The data suggests that the city has a more difficult time with resources than that of the township. It is without a doubt that each participant responded, "yes" to the interview question: does your organization feel like it has to do more with less. As municipal organizations, we know that traditionally they have to work with limited resources. The city expressed a huge lack of resources and budgetary issues. The city is understaffed, lack certain supplies and materials, and is identified by the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as an Act 47 municipality.

One would like to first discuss the lack of staff as a limited resource that the city faces. When interviewing city participants, a lack of staff and manpower came up often. One city participant stated that she tries to be well versed in all departments due to the staffing issues. She believes that if she knows the inner workings of each department, she could be of great assistance when shortages occur.

Another city participant gave an example of the understaffing issues within the city by discussing one department. This participant stated:

At times we don't necessarily have the same amount of resources, or the individuals, or the equipment to go from street to street in a certain amount of time to do everything that we need to do because there's so much going on. If it's not picking up bulk trash and debris, it's filling potholes, its putting signs up that were knocked down or maybe stolen. It's carrying bulk trash out to Delaware county solid waste. It's making sure that the trucks are still up and operational and safe for the individuals to drive. It's so much that goes into the job. I think that the workload is too much, and keep in mind, the city's limits have not changed. In the 80s and 90s, the public works department, had 55 workers. At the current state, we only have about 25.

In addition to the above, the city's police department is severely understaffed. The crime within the city is up, and the amount of police personnel is down.

Another city participant discussed the idea of doing more with less staff within her department before, during, and possibly after COVID-19. The participant stated:

I felt before COVID, and during COVID, and I'm afraid it's going to be that way after we start to bring people back (recalled from lay off) that I'm going to have to do *more* with less. We're going to have to work differently now. In my department, it's a never-ending situation, the work is continuous. So sometimes it seems like it's not a win...*it's not a win win situation* (stated very confidently), it's very difficult!

Now to discuss the lack of supplies and materials as a limited resource that the city faces. One city participant stated that the issue that the city has with its money often causes issues with the purchase of supplies, equipment, and materials. This individual believed that the city is doing its

best to provide essential services with the limited resources that it has. He believed that if the financial situation was a bit different, that the city could do more.

Another city participant gave an example of the shortage of equipment within the police department. She stated, "If I just speak on police for an example, because I'm a little familiar with that, we don't have enough police cars. I believe we have maybe two riding together, and I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing, I can't speak on that."

Now to discuss the lack of money and the financially distressed status as a limited resource that the city faces. One of the city participants had this to say about the city's financially distressed status:

The city has been deemed financially distressed since 1995. I would say going back as late as the early 80s, and what the financial distressed status means is you get state assistance to come in and do financial analysis and assist and guide the city to financially good footing. Also, as a financially distressed municipality, you get preferential treatment when you apply for certain state funding, so you're a priority to help you remedy some of your issues that you may be facing. The state legislature however did change in 2013, it went into effect in 2015, and when it changed, it pretty much put a time line on how long a municipality can be in Act 47. So right now, the city unfortunately and fortunately has time constraints in which we need to exit Act 47, and our exit date now is August of 2021. If a municipality does not exit Act 47 within the time frame identified, three things would happen: 1. You would have to merge with another municipality, 2. You would have to disincorporate the city, meaning the city would be dissolved all together and what happens is maybe this town picks up this

and this town picks up that, or the county or something like that, 3. The city declares bankruptcy and there's a state takeover, and 4. If the city was making progress it could receive a three-year extension, which then would be your exit plan.

Another city participant wanted to discuss the financial constraints faced by the city and offer some history as to how the city may have gotten there. After listening to what the above participant stated about the city's financially distressed status, it seems as though this participant described a "kicking the can down the road" method. This participant discussed the budget within her specific department, and how it has dwindled over time. This participant responded to the question of whether the city is under any particular budgetary constraints by stating:

We have been hurting even before COVID and even before our now current situation being under receivership. We were hurting from a budgetary perspective. For example, I remember when the Democrats took over fully on council, the Republicans left about maybe 6 million dollars, but before they left, they made it so that we had to settle three contracts, the police, fire, and then the teamsters contract that they had *refused* to settle, and of course that 6 million dollars that they left soon went away because of all the things that we had to handle at the back end of their leaving. We are going to have to generate additional revenue to support our budget.

While the township believed that they had to do more with less, their lack of resources was nowhere comparable to that of the city. The township faces budgetary constraints like any other municipal organization. They are not considered a financially distressed municipality; however, one participant expressed some issues with the purchase of supplies, materials, and equipment at the township. The participant discussed how there are times when certain departments within the

township requires special materials and equipment, but often times the budget cannot support the purchase of those things. The participant stated that often times when equipment is needed and there are no funding, other avenues have to be explored in order to determine how the need can be met. Sometimes the department may have to choose between equipment and something that's more pressing to purchase. The participant acknowledged that some equipment is up to date and in stellar working condition, but there are also some other materials needed to fulfill some of the duties of the job.

Another township participant discussed an upcoming contract negotiation for the township's police personnel as a budgetary constraint. The participant stated that the upcoming contract is going to add to the township's budgetary concerns. The participant also stated that the township recently had two full-time officers go out, so benefits and other perks had to be negotiated, which he feels again, would impact the budget.

Another township participant discussed the budgetary constraints placed on him as the head of a specific department. The participant stated that historically the department that he oversees eats up 2/3rds of the budget. The participant stated that he's responsible for trying to get that 2/3rds down.

Another township participant discussed the budgetary constraints faced by the township stemming from unfunded state mandates, and the recent union organizing of their non-uniformed personnel. This participant referred to the pension for retirement as an unfunded state mandate simply because if something happens as far as the pension investments, the municipality is on the hook to make the difference in payment. The participant described the union issues by stating, "now we have uniform and non-uniform unions in place, so that in addition puts additional pressure on our budget."

The lack of resources faced by the city and the township was a theme to be expected as most public entities face issues surrounding limited resources. It was the depth of the lack of resources among the municipalities that was unanticipated. The city has always had financial issues and a lack of resources; however, I now understand the depth. I did not expect the township to have many issues with resources due to their municipal structure. It is clear that a lack of resources is not exclusive to one organizational model. Although there are a lack of resources in each municipality that participants are connecting to the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, these deficiencies do not have a direct relationship on efficiency. This thought contributes to the idea that each municipality must to be efficient with the resources that they currently have. Lacking resources does not justify the use of patronage systems, nepotism, the lack of accountability or the lack of uniform policies and procedures. The practices within each municipality must change in order to have a direct affect on the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

### **Other Discoveries**

Having discussed the themes found through the data collection process, I will now discuss other concepts discovered through this process. It is evident that the city and the township are not the same in reference to population size or employee size. The city's population size was 33,972 as per the 2010 census. The township's population size was 3,940 as per the 2010 census. The township's population size is about 10 percent of that of the city's population size.

The city employs close to 400 full-time and part-time employees in addition to about 200 retirees for whom the city administers post-employment benefits. The township employs between 32 and 35 full time and part time employees. Based off of the above information, the

city faces more challenges due to its size alone. While the city and the township both face issues with resources, the city does not have enough staff to fulfill most of its public services.

About 80 percent of the city's personnel are unionized. There are different sets of challenges that come with having a workforce that is heavily unionized. Based on the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Statistics, the number of wage and salary workers belonging to unions was 14.8 million in 2017. Traditionally, public sector employees (which include those in protective services such as police and fire) account for larger union membership numbers than that of the private sector. Schmitt found that:

Unionization is strongly associated with increases in overall compensation, hourly wages and health and pension benefit coverage. In the typical state, unionization is associated with about a 15 percent increase in hourly wages (roughly \$2.50 per hour), a 19-percentage point increase in the likelihood of having employer-provided health insurance, and a 24-percentage point increase the likelihood of having employer-sponsored retirement plans (Schmitt, 2010).

At the city, the unions bargain for wage increases (including overtime pay and shift differential), employee health care coverage for themselves and their dependents, pensions, post-retirement benefits, and work rules. The city's union workers receive very rich benefits. Because union workers receive rich benefits, the city's administration has had to make changes to the benefits of nonunion employees in order to remain fair. While nonunion employees do not receive the same pay increases as union employees, nonunion employees receive other perks such as medical benefit enhancements, rich leave banks, and the ability to sell unused sick time to name a few. All of these perks and adjustments impact on the city's overall budget.

Being a part of a union promotes job protection. With that, union workers are more difficult to discipline and terminate. This does not suggest that the city wants to terminate employees; however, when the city has an issue with a union employee, it becomes very difficult to address because of the collective bargaining agreement. If the city acts too prematurely and does not follow progressive disciplinary measures (which are proven to be time consuming), it can result in costly litigation as they navigate through the grievance and arbitration process. Due to this concept alone, the city's administration have to be cautious of who is hired through patronage and nepotism because when someone is hired and then protected by the union, it is difficult to hold them accountable.

Being a part of a union also does not guarantee the promotion of employees who are the most qualified for a position. Most times in unions, the agreement is that an organization will promote the most senior employee for a vacant position. While there are stipulations within the agreement that state that these individuals should have some sort of probationary period within the new position, often times a demotion falls in the category outlined above where legal fees are assumed when things do not work out accordingly. This promotion method could have negative effects on productivity and hinder organizations from promoting a competent employee.

In addition to the city's issues with size, limited personnel, and union memberships, the city is also considered an Act 47 municipality by the state of Pennsylvania. This status adds additional challenges to the city's operations. Under Act 47, the state of Pennsylvania ensures that municipalities are remaining fiscally responsible to its constituency by providing health, safety, and welfare measures. Additionally, under Act 47, the state of Pennsylvania ensures that municipalities are meeting their financial obligations to their vendors and employees, paying their debts when due, and maintaining proper budgeting, accounting, and taxing practices. Those



municipalities failing to adhere to the above are determined to threaten the health, safety, and welfare of their constituency, as well as the commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole. In order to ensure that Act 47 municipalities are remaining compliant, a coordinator is appointed by the state for careful and close monitoring (Municipalities Financial Recovery Act, June 2013).

The city faces more challenges than the township because of its size and budgetary issues. In addition to this, councilors within the city and the township are elected at large by the public, but also responsible to manage one municipal department. With that, these individuals serve in dual roles. The one difference between the city and the township in this area is that the township councilors oversee township departments at a high level since they have a township manager on site. The city councilors serve as directors of each city department, and manage those departments closely.

In the township, councilors serve as commissioners over township departments. In some instances, councilors serve as commissioners in more than one department. Their duties require oversight of these departments; however, they employ a township manager who assists in handling the day-to-day operations of the township. While the township manager handles the day-to-day operations, that individual is not involved with policy formulation efforts within the township.

The dual responsibility within the city can sometimes present its own set of challenges with reference to the politics-administration dichotomy. One of the participants discussed the way that the government (the city) is set up by stating:

So, the city is only one of two municipalities in the entire commonwealth that has the structure of the dual roles, legislature and department heads. That is an issue that is addressed in the recovery plan (prepared by DCED), and their thought process at the time

was to create the position that I am in to reduce some of the tensions and stresses and inefficiencies of council members being in dual roles. However, it was very, very, gray in the plan, and I do understand that in order for them to have accomplished that particular gray recommendation, what would have had to happen is that the charter would have had to be amended, and in order the for the charter to be amended, it has to actually go out on the ballot for a vote. It takes some time, but I think if we didn't have the dual roles, we probably would be much further along with improving our efficiencies within the city.

All of the challenges faced by the city as outlined above, ultimately affect the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and responsiveness of its public services.

### **Discussion**

While the township's scale of issues is much smaller than that of the city, there were a few things that presented themselves during the data gathering process for both the city and the township. If these things were handled differently, it could increase the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of each municipality. During the data gathering process, it was found that in both the city and the township, some policies and procedures are only created, implemented, and enforced departmentally. The lack of uniformity among policies and procedures creates a lack of consistency and a lack of accountability. The same was found with reference to training and development.

A lack of uniform policies and procedures around training and development creates the same types of issues as outlined above. There are certain policies and procedures that will only be departmental, and there is also some training and development that will only be departmental; however, there is a need for universal policies and procedures, and general trainings that can be

utilized to increase employee productivity. For instance, within the police department, there may be specific trainings regarding excessive force; however, police officers should also know how the organization expects them to conduct themselves professionally at all times. This would be the same expectation for a laborer. This message of expectations could be communicated through trainings and policies about the code of ethics/conduct. When employees do not have written policies and procedures and are unaware of how an organization would like them to conduct themselves, it becomes harder to hold them accountable for their actions.

In addition, having a lack of policies and procedures and training and development creates inconsistency within an organization. When certain measures are only taking place within specific departments, a lack of consistency is created because everyone is not being treated equally and held to the same standards. Again, this creates accountability issues, making it difficult to hold one employee group accountable over another employee group. This can also lead to a lack of enforcement.

While there is a lack of training and development programs within the city and the township across all departments, there is also a lack of a formal new hire orientation across all departments. Within the city, one participant stated that there is a new hire orientation for police and fire personnel. The participant stated:

Our Human Resources department meets with the new employees to make sure they get the benefits package, the health insurance information, and the employee handbook. A police officer I think has a 6-month training. They let them know who the departments are, whom they should go to for certain things, and they take them on a tour around the city all throughout the shifts.

Another city participant stated, “I think it may be unofficial depending on the department, city wide however, we do not.” Each township participant was unsure as to whether a formal new hire orientation existed.

Another interesting discovery found through the data collection process for the city was a lack of following policies and procedures that are currently written such as the hiring process and the vetting process. Participants acknowledged that there was a policy in place for each, but they are not consistently followed. Instead they are followed depending on the current administration serving (Republican or Democrat) or depending on the person the director of the department intends to hire. While the Republic Party knew whom they wanted to hire for a certain position, they followed the hiring process. The Democratic Party chooses when they want to follow the hiring process. Neither political party can negate from following the hiring process for union positions due to the collective bargaining agreements in place. Adhering to a hiring process and a vetting process increases the competence of the workforce and decreases negligent hires that the organization may be stuck with due to union protection.

An interesting discovery found through the data collection process between both municipalities was the idea of patronage. The characteristics of patronage were implied by most of the participants; however, one participant within the city spoke about patronage explicitly. I believe the idea of patronage was glossed over by the participants because they were reluctant to identify and speak out about their true inefficiencies. The “patronage system has been described as appointing persons to government positions on the basis of political support and work rather than on merit, as measured by objective criteria. Patronage has been part of human history as long as people have been governing themselves” (Martin, 2012, p. 670). When the United States adopted the Constitution, there were a number of jobs held by political party favorites. The first

incident involving the dismissal of a government worker due to their political affiliation occurred in 1797. It was stated that the reason for this dismissal was due to office misconduct; however, after further review of the issue, it was found that the individual aided Republican opponents in their political campaign (Martin, 2012).

The patronage system began to create a problem for governmental agencies, and “by the time William Henry Harrison became president in 1841, more than 40,000 people came to Washington hoping to fill one of 23,700 patronage jobs” (Martin, 2012, p. 672). There are several issues associated with the patronage system. One is the fact that the individuals hired through the patronage system lack a certain skill set and are often labeled as incompetent.

In order to decrease the use of the patronage system, Congress passed the Pendleton Act of 1883. The Pendleton Act “was primarily an effort to eliminate political influence from administrative agencies and secondarily, an effort to ensure more competent government employees” (Blanc et al, 2014). The Pendleton Act made it unlawful for a governmental agency to dismiss an employee due to their political or religious affiliation. The Civil Service Commission was created to support the Pendleton Act of 1883 and serve as a guide to hiring within the public sector.

The purpose of creating the Pendleton Act was to increase the efficiency of governmental services by employing, retaining and developing individuals based on merit who were competent. The government, through this type of hiring system, was not violating any laws (Martin, 2012, p. 674). The use of the civil service commission was not only made at the federal level, but also at the local level.

There are a slew of issues associated with the patronage system, contributing to the idea that these systems create obstacles that hinder administrative efforts and the proper management

of public services. Patronage systems follow no structure; therefore, they fail to be bureaucratic. Instead, patronage systems follow their own structure: creating fear, fostering corruption due to the employment of less competent and unaccountable individuals, and interfering with the proper management of democracy and the economy.

Although the above is true, patronage systems are persistent and have been around for years, simply because of the way they are comprised and the reasons for their establishment. Patronage systems benefit those who are loyal, trusting and supporting of a political party. Loyalty, trust, and support are important characteristics that are deemed necessary within the political environment. Patronage systems affect organizational morale and policy development. In patronage systems, policy development does not take place if the implementation of certain policies would hinder the patron. Either these policies are never created and implemented, or they are created and implemented, but are not adhered to by the patron. Finally, patronage systems foster control that ultimately benefits and favors the political party who has the power (Hodder, 2015).

Although the Pendleton Act of 1883 was adopted to prohibit discrimination within the government based on political affiliation, the problem persists within public entities today. Based on one city participant, the city is presented with issues surrounding patronage regularly. It results in an incompetent workforce, who ultimately hinders the efficiency, and effectiveness of services provided. This lack of competence can also have an effect on profits collected by the city. For instance, there may be a new initiative projected to be implemented in the downtown district where city employees would be required to cite vehicles illegally parked using a hand-held device. The hand-held device would do all of the work for the employee; however, if the employee does not know how to operate the device because they are not technologically savvy

and incapable of learning and understanding how to properly use the device, the city is unable to effectively provide the service. This issue becomes one that ripples because being able to properly cite vehicles would allow the city to gain desperately needed profits consistently.

Not only is it important for policies and procedures to be created and implemented, it is also important that they are enforced consistently and fairly across the board. Additionally, it is important that those needing to enforce the policies and procedures are well trained on the policy and understand the requirements placed upon them. During the interview process with the city participants, there were certain processes explained, such as the hiring process, but in very different ways. For example, two different city participants explained the hiring process in two totally different ways. In order for policies and procedures to be effective, everyone has to be on the same page regarding the policy and its intended purpose and outcome.

Another interesting discovery that was found through the data collection process was the idea of a no nepotism policy for both the city and the township. The participants' responses to this question can be found above, but in a nutshell, there is no such policy at either organization. The lack of a no nepotism policy is a bit concerning because of the inefficiencies that can be created with having relatives work together.

Nepotism can be related to patronage and involves "preferential treatment given to family members when making managerial decisions regarding employee selection, promotions and raises. Nepotism became prominent during the renaissance-era when popes would place their nephews in key clerical positions" (Abdalla et. al, 1998). There are a number of experts who have varying views on nepotism. Although these views vary, they are consistent in the idea that nepotism can be detrimental to any organization. One reason is because nepotism can cause conflict. While the family goal is to look out for one another, a business goal is to increase

profits and the bottom line. Often times it is difficult to separate the two (family relationships and business decisions). Another conflict includes the hiring of a family member who is incompetent and lack a certain skill set (Wong, 1994).

An interesting discovery that was found through this studies data collection process was the lack of performance management practices in each municipality. The township stated that performance appraisals are conducted annually. Although some participants stated that performance appraisals are conducted annually, and the township's administrative code outlines that they should be conducted annually, it was suggested by a participant that this is only happening departmentally. The township police adhere to performance reviews every six months for its police officers. While the city's participants understood that performance appraisals should be conducted annually, this is not a practice currently being utilized.

Performance management systems can be utilized within government to produce and maintain organizational results in an ever-changing, ever-evolving political environment. Poister (2003) stated, "Public and non-profit managers across the country, and indeed around the world, are learning how to design and implement performance measurement systems. Performance measurement systems refer to the ongoing process of defining, monitoring and using performance indicators to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency" (p. 1).

Kettl believed that performance management practices needed to be incorporated in the government's strategic plan. When ensuring performance management practices are aligned with the overall plan, government organizations ensure that employees are aware of the expectations, which causes them to do their jobs better, ultimately increasing productivity and producing results. Performance management practices therefore are a way to show taxpayers what services they receive in exchange for their payment (Kettl, 1997).



Participants were asked to describe employee job satisfaction at their organizations. The responses varied across each participant, and are listed below in a table for review:

<b>City Employee Job Satisfaction Table</b>	
<b>Participant 1:</b>	“Depends on the person. If I can speak for just myself, I’m fine, but I know in passing or from hearing, other people may not be as satisfied.” This response prompted the researcher to ask the participant where does the dissatisfaction stem from, and the response was “salary.”
<b>Participant 2:</b>	“Within the last term that I’ve sat in, I think it has increased. If I had to go on a grading scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not so good and 10 being the best, I honestly think that it would be in the 7.5 ranges. In saying that, most of the employees here are satisfied with where they work at overall.”
<b>Participant 3:</b>	“Understanding and working government for a while, though people may portray a certain thing because of the climate in which they work within government, I would say that the majority of the staff are satisfied. Probably more than 80% I would say is satisfied with working for the city.”
<b>Participant 4:</b>	“Before COVID-19 employee job satisfaction, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the worst, and 5 being the best), was a 4;

	however, now facing COVID-19, and the city having to lay employees off, employee job satisfaction is now at a 3.”
<b>Participant 5:</b>	Expressed a 55% job satisfaction rate.

<b>Township Employee Job Satisfaction Table</b>	
<b>Participant 1</b>	“If on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being the worse, and 5 being the best), I would rate job satisfaction between a 3 and 4.”
<b>Participant 2</b>	“Employee job satisfaction is a 4 (1 being the worse, and 5 being the best).”
<b>Participant 3, 4, &amp; 5</b>	These participants described employee job satisfaction as great. These participants felt that there is a sense of family and pride among township workers.

The responses vary by city participant about employee job satisfaction. There are some participants who believe job satisfaction can be improved, and there are other participants who believe that employees are satisfied on the job. I discovered in the data gathering process that while there is this variation, there is no formal incentive program at the city or the township to build employee morale. All of the participants acknowledge some morale boosting incentives that they give their employees, but it is done randomly and sporadically. For instance, at the city there may be a birthday club, a thanksgiving luncheon, a Christmas party, health fairs,

discounted soccer tickets, and perks for city employees during major city events. The township may have Christmas parties, luncheons, gift cards, and barbeques. Both the city and the township have an educational incentive program that reimburses employees for tuition costs.

Creating and implementing formal incentive programs in each municipality could really increase employee morale and job satisfaction, which could then increase productivity. It could also ensure consistency and that all employees are treated equally as one city participant stated that while there are some incentives, they are not formal and are dependent upon certain city departments. The same is true for the township where one of the participants stated that he randomly calls his employees off of the job early to the office and buys them lunch or sends them home early. While a formal incentive program may be helpful, it can also be costly which may be why it is currently done randomly in each municipality.

### **The Efficiency and Effectiveness of each Municipality**

When asking city participants to discuss the efficiency of their organization, their responses varied, but their overall message was the same. One city participant responded to the question by stating:

It depends on the department. If you speak about fire, you'd probably say really efficient because they're going out to their calls. If we say police, in a way, because they're out for the calls. I know by working in council, doing council meetings, that we've had people come in to complain about our inspectors in the public safety department. About how they should be doing more, that they're not efficient enough."

Another city participant responded to the question from a financial viewpoint. It was his thought that city departments do not know or understand the financial pressures on the city. Rather, they are only concerned with their departments and their need and ability to operate. The participant

stated, “I think there’s room for improvement and I don’t think that we run as efficient as we would like.”

Another city participant responded to the question by stating:

I think we’ve improved (pause and takes a breath) to a degree and what I mean by degree, if I had to scale it; we’ve improved maybe 20%. At this point in the game, we probably should be at maybe 60% to be honest with you, but again, because of the constraints of the city and the financial complexities that we have, and just the way that the government is set up, it’s a little hard to get where we need to be because of those constraints.

Another city participant responded to the question by stating:

Well you can’t be efficient or effective in a positive way. You can’t expect positive outcomes and you can’t expect to be able to provide A1 services if you’re under these budgetary constraints because you don’t have the personnel to do what you need to do, and then if you do, you don’t have enough equipment, and then you have equipment that’s outdated and need repairing. So, what we do for the city, we do the best that we can. But just for example, right now there’s a lot of grass that needs to be cut, there are potholes that need to be repaired, the bulk trash is out of hand, and the city is inundated with illegal dumping. We are under these constraints where we don’t have enough money. We need cameras at certain locations where people are dumping, but we don’t have enough money to do everything that we need to do to provide uhm safety measures and cleanliness and beautification the way that it should be.

Another city participant described the efficiency of one department of the city. This department within the city, the finance department, is far reaching and supports almost every aspect of the city’s function. This participant gave the finance department a 60% efficiency rate.

After each city participant outlined their efficiency, the interviewer then asked them, now knowing their efficiency rate, to discuss their effectiveness. One participant stated that the city is as effective as it can be considering some of the inefficiencies. The participant believes that the city is doing the best that it absolutely can. Another participant responded to the question by stating:

It depends on what lens you're looking in when talking about our effectiveness. I think there is a level of cooperation to become more effective; however, it's not a consistent level of cooperation. I think sometimes in our city, we are more reactive than we are proactive. And I think if we were more proactive, we could be further along, and we could be more effective.

When asking township participants to discuss the efficiency of their organization, their responses were about the same. One participant responded to the question by stating that the township has an 80-85% efficiency rate. Another township participant responded to the question by stating:

If it was a percentage from 1% being bad, and 100% being great, I'll say right now we're at about a 70% efficiency rate coming from around 40% just a few years ago. The reason as I stated earlier, a lot of injured employees, council shifted due to elections, so often times you lose some of your consistency with that, and not really having proficient people in positions that will ensure that we will have great production.

Another township participant discussed the organization's efficiency from a financial standpoint. It was this participant's belief that the township was being very efficient and able to muster up some money to build a reserve for a rainy day. While this was this participant's belief, he believed that COVID-19 would have a negative impact on the reserve, and change the efficiency

rate. While this participant wasn't hopeful due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he acknowledged that the township could only do the best that it could.

Another township participant discussed the efficiency of his department only. He stated that while he believes that his department is pretty efficient, it becomes a bit difficult when his workforce needs certain materials and equipment. Another township participant responded to the question about the organization's efficiency by stating, "I think we're efficient in that we provide the necessary services and programs for our residents."

After each township participant outlined their efficiency, the interviewer then asked them, now knowing their efficiency rate, to discuss their effectiveness. One participant responded to the question by stating, "We are becoming more effective every day. Being effective is one thing, being consistently effective is what we are striving to be." Another participant believed that they could be more effective if they educated the township councilors on how to be good managers and how to be good councilpersons and the balance between the two roles.

Another township participant responded to the question by stating, "I think we are. I just watch, and sometimes I'm astounded how effective our organization is in spite of everything that we face." Another participant responded to the question speaking specifically about his department within the township. This participant believed that his department gets the job done. He stated that anytime someone needs something, they figure out a way to do it. He stated that there are times where they may have to call another department for extra materials or equipment that they may have lying around, or apply for grants to aid in obtaining some of those materials and equipment.

Another township participant responded to the question from a financial standpoint. This participant believed that the township was very effective; however, he believed that there was room for improvement for organizational effectiveness outside of the township's finances. This participant believed that there was a lot more that the township could be doing to meet their community's needs, but acknowledged that these needs cannot be addressed at this time due to a lack of resources.

The message among all city participants was that the city could improve its efficiency rate. The message consistently showed that the city is not as efficient because of some of the financial constraints placed upon them, and the lack of resources. However, it appeared that efficiency levels varied by department depending on the skill set of those employed and the training that they may have received as part of the job. Another consistent message was the idea that the city does the absolute best that it can in regards to its effectiveness when considering its inefficiencies. The city is reactive rather than proactive, and lacks a consistent effort in wanting to be effective.

The general consensus among township participants was that the township is very efficient. Those participants rating the township gave a 70-85% efficiency rate. While one participant believed that the township was extremely efficient financially, he believed that the COVID-19 pandemic would negatively impact the excellent rating. Another township participant believed that the township provided the necessary services to its constituency, creating the aftermath of efficiency. There was a township participant who felt similar to a city participant and believed that the lack of resources put a burden on the efficiency rate.

The consensus among township participants was that the township is pretty effective; however, there are some things that hinder the township's effectiveness, requiring room for

improvement. One participant believed that education of the township's councilors could hinder its effectiveness. A few other township participants believed that resources could also place a hindrance on effectiveness when the tools necessary to provide public services are not readily available.

Having direct interaction with the city, I was not surprised by what was revealed regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the city. Although the above is true, I did not realize how much city departments suffer due to the lack of resources. There are some city departments who are not effective in providing the necessary public services because they do not have enough staff. There are also city departments who are not effective because they lack the proper supplies, materials and equipment required to get the job done due to the financial state of the city. These limits create pressure on city officials and city personnel, and decrease its efficiency and effectiveness. Prior to this study, I knew the city was struggling, but I did not realize the to what depth.

Prior to this study, I did not know much about the township except that they employed a township manager. I did not expect the township to have some of the same issues as that of the city. I simply believed that because the township employed a township manager, that they did not have any issues. I had no idea that the township faced similar issues as that of the city with reference to limited resources. I did not realize that the township was struggling as well. The township is better off than that of the city, but they still have financial issues. They experience the same issues with a lack of supplies, materials, and equipment such as the city, but not at the same magnitude, more than likely because of their size. Prior to this study I believed that the township did not face any problems because the township manager had all things under control.



While the city and the township have some improvements to make, they are making progress. The township recognizes that in order to be more efficient and effective, they have to work with surrounding municipalities more, and would like to work more closely with the city. It was noted by one of the participants that the city's police department and the township's police department should work together more regularly. The same offenders involved in criminal activity within the city may be the same offenders causing issues of a criminal nature within the township. The coordinated efforts of these two departments are a requirement for effectiveness per the participant. Per one participant, the township would like to partner with the city on some other efforts, particularly the school district, since residents from each municipality utilize the same school services. For instance, children from the city may attend schools within the township and vice versa. The city and the township are beginning discussions on how to collaborate more in the future.

While the city receives complaints about the efficiency of public services, and has limited resources and budgetary constraints, they are committed to doing better. The city has equipped their inspectors with handheld devices (and trained them) to aid in the citing of properties. The city has also updated ordinances allowing inspectors to have more power. The city has been on a mission to update several city ordinances in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. The city has also begun to follow the recommendations of the Department of Community and Economic Development. In addition to the above, both municipalities are very transparent with their constituency. This is an idea that has developed over-time with the enhancement in technology.

The city has been deemed an Act 47 municipality since the 90s. The city has finally agreed to cooperate with the state. When the city was first deemed financially distressed, the

Republican Party was in office. The Republican Party never cooperated or complied with the recovery plan prepared by DCED. It was not until the Democratic Party came into office that the recommendations were followed. Perhaps if the recommendations within the plan were adhered to and implemented with the Republican Party, the city would have made some progress some time ago. This progression could have allowed the city to reach financial solvency sooner, ultimately discouraging receivership.

This dissertation project looked to answer the following research question: How is the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services affected when considering the type of organizational model used within a city and a township within Pennsylvania? The research question was not completely answered by the research. The efficiency and effectiveness portion of the question was thoroughly answered by the professional participants interviewed; however, there is more that could have been determined regarding the accountability and responsiveness of public services. The accountability portion of the research question was slightly answered, but more so from an internal perspective. There needed to be more external information shed on accountability. There was not much information shed on the responsiveness portion of the research question. I was able to gather information on how transparent the municipalities are, but I was not able to gather information on how responsive the municipalities operate. For instance, if someone files a complaint, how quickly is that complaint handled? The drawback of this dissertation project was the idea that I relied solely on the experience and feedback from professionals within the organization. Perhaps, a deeper understanding of the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services could have been revealed had I also interviewed some of the constituency. The data collected only focused on the professionals' point of view, rather than a constituents' point of

view. The constituency may have a different perspective on how efficient, effective, accountable, and responsive the municipalities perform with reference to public services.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### Key Findings

This study looked to determine whether a certain organizational model yielded better results of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services. The results of this study did not show any real difference between the two municipalities based on their organizational model. This was an unexpected finding because I believed there would be a favorable difference between the council-manager form of government utilized by the township and the commission form of government utilized by the city. I believed that the practices of the township would be much greater than that of the city; however, the outcome was different. Both municipalities follow the same practices as it relates to the accountability and responsiveness to their constituency. Each municipality communicates and interacts with its constituency through technology and other methods such as council meetings. Each municipality has a website, and a method in place to handle constituent complaints. Each municipality seems to be transparent with its residents by ensuring that pertinent information is communicated regularly.

Each municipality is similar in the way in which they hold their employees accountable. There is no formal process established to hold employees accountable across all departments. Performance reviews are done within the city and township, but only in certain departments (police department). Each municipality has loose methods in place to increase employee morale. Each municipality lacks formal processes surrounding new hire orientation, training, written policies and procedures, and the consistent enforcement of work rules within all municipal departments. Finally, each municipality faces budgetary issues due to their unionized workforce, and both partake in a level of patronage for the filling of positions. The use of patronage to fill

positions can become an issue if those individuals are not competent enough to do their jobs. As outlined above, each municipality faces issues with a lack of supplies, materials, and equipment. These negligent practices coupled with the lack of resources affect the municipality's efficiency and effectiveness, as they cannot properly deliver public services in this manner.

While the city and the township does not differ much based on their organizational models, and shared several similarities, there were a few factors setting the two municipalities apart. The size of the city's population and staff compared to the township is a huge difference between the two municipalities. Another difference between the two municipalities is the city's financially distressed status. Because the city is deemed financially distressed by the state of Pennsylvania, and now find themselves in receivership, there will be an ongoing issue with resources. With the state involved, there is an additional level of fiscal responsibility and accountability expected by the city. The city has and will continue to do more with less. With the state take over comes its own set of resources for distressed municipalities, however, the city will be expected to work smarter in order to reach financial solvency and exit Act 47. These differences cause the city to have more complex issues.

While the council-manager form of government seems to be most ideal within the literature (Embrey, 2009 & Wheeland, 1994), there are some drawbacks to this form of government as well. The concern with the council-manager form of government is the idea that it can still be influenced by politics. The manager in this form of government still works at the direction of the council. The manager in this form of government is not secure in his/her position because the council acts as a supervisor and ultimately has the power to hire and/or fire the manager.

The manager in this particular study, even though the literature suggests otherwise, does not have free reign to act independently. The manager in this study did not have control over the hiring and firing of subordinates, nor did this manager advise council on policy formulation efforts. The manager handled some of the day-to-day operations of the township, but not all. The township manager does not act in the same capacity as managers described in the literature. Additionally, while the township is considered to have a council-manager form of government on paper, in practice, they function more like a mayor-council form of government. These two ideas are a bit concerning and require further research.

With the above concerns stated, and because the city faces larger issues, there needs to be a combination of factors in addition to a particular form of government in order to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness of public services within the city. Those factors include the adoption of private sector practices, and the utilization of collaborative governance.

One recommends a council-manager form of government where the mayor and council hire a city manager or chief administrative officer to execute city ordinances, assist in the policy formulation process, hire and fire subordinates, and handle all day-to-day operations of the city. In order for municipal government to be effective, there needs to be a structure in place that will produce substantive results and elevate elected leaders to a level where they are more concerned with those results, rather than individual or collective power.

In order to increase the performance of public services, the city needs to adopt private sector practices, and perhaps use contractors to assist in the completion of some of their work since they have limited staff. In recent years, organizations in the public and private sectors have witnessed many changes in their environment. Harel and Tzafrir believed that:

Pressures have pushed organizations from both sectors (public and private) to continuously improve their performance. In order to increase the performance of public entities, public sector is moving closer and closer to the private sector model by adopting “high performance work practices” in order to overcome the turbulent environment and public demand (Harel & Tzafrir, 2001, p. 316).

In addition to the above, the city also needs to incorporate collaborative governance in order to increase the performance of public services. Collaborative governance was developed as a way for other entities (private and other public entities) to aid the government in solving complex, difficult problems. Collaborative governance allows for multiple organizations across multiple jurisdictions to work together in creating solutions to public problems. Collaborative governance calls for a more horizontal structure, with a decentralized approach to decision-making. In collaborative governance control is loose, and power is diffused (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). Some theorists believe that the partnerships created through collaborative governance increases the expertise and knowledge required to solve public problems. It is the thought that without collaborative governance, complex public problems will persist, and results will remain unaccomplished.

### **Limitations**

This study had a few limitations that will be discussed in detail herein. One of the limitations of this study is the difference in size (population size and employee size) between the city and the township. The different class of the city (third class) and the township (first class) served as an additional challenge because with those distinctions in class comes a difference in population size. In a perfect world, I would have been able to gain access to other third-class

cities having a similar structure (and in some instances different structures) than that of the city a part of this study.

The intent of this project was to compare the city to that of other home rule chartered, third class cities within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The idea was to choose a municipality that operated under each one of the four organizational models identified within governments, and compare and contrast those organizations with that of the city. I would evaluate five organizations in total in order to have an identical match up to that of the city. In order to gain information, surveys would be sent to each agreeing participant. When I set out to begin the research, informed consent letters were sent to each municipality identified through research. The list included mayors, HR managers, and city administrators/managers just to name a few. The letters were sent out with an outlined return date, along with a stamped return envelope for convenience. The time period came and went, and there were no letters returned to my attention. With this obstacle, I had to re-visit my research and determine who would be my new target population. I believe that if I were able to access the above organizations, there would have been a difference in the results of this study. The study was limited simply because the other municipality in this study is designated as a township rather than a city.

Another limitation of this study was the interview process. Because I had more direct knowledge and experience working with the city, I believe that city participants may have trusted me more than the township participants. While this trust was already established due to work relationships, there were city participants who told me things that they thought I wanted to hear, rather than expressing how things really are done for fear of speaking out about the city's inefficiencies. There were city participants who did not fully release information and were reserved in their responses. Although city participants trusted me more, I believe that trust



became a limitation with the township participants. Some of the township participants were also reserved in their responses, describing themselves as the perfect place.

An additional limitation of this study was the idea that I only interviewed internal professionals of each municipality, instead of interviewing both internal professionals of each municipality and external constituents. The study became limited around this idea because there was not a constituent perspective that could be evaluated in order to determine whether public services operate efficiently, effectively, responsively, and with accountability. I simply relied on internal professionals to inform the data, which was not a holistic approach.

An additional drawback to this study was the type of research design utilized. An alternate research design that could expound upon this research and reveal new information is one that includes on site observations and/or field studies. This type of research would give the researcher a deeper understanding of the practices within local municipalities. It is not enough to simply interview participants, whether internal or external because the truth can be withheld, diminished, or weakened. Being on site and observing how operations and practices are performed, will serve as the best research experience to inform the data.

With that stated, I propose a case study research design with an ethnographic approach. As cited in the Hesse-Biber text, “the unique contribution of a case study approach is that it provides the researcher with a *holistic understanding* of a problem, issue, or phenomenon within its social context. Cases can be individuals, events, programs, institutions, or a society. Case study research usually relies on *one or a few cases* to investigate. A case study approach also allows us to study *systems*, which is particularly useful in both the social sciences and health studies” (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 221). The case study with the ethnographic approach allows the researcher to study these cases through on site observations. The researcher then has direct

experience by observing the day-to-day operations of each municipality. The case study design should be one that is collective, allowing the researcher to compare and contrast cases.

The final drawback to this study was its validity (internal and external). The internal validity of this study was threatened simply because the information revealed by each participant may not have been accurate. Because I had association with a municipality a part of this study, it was easier to acknowledge the accuracy of the information revealed; however, I did not have the same advantage with the township a part of this study. The threat to internal validity ultimately threatened the external validity of this study, making it less generalizable.

### **Further Research**

This study showed that there are some implications for future research. There is a need for more modern-day research within the field of public administration on this topic in order to determine which model, or combination of models, is most effective within governments. No two governments are the same, so this evaluation is necessary. There is also a need to utilize a different research design that could ultimately enhance the findings of the current study and increase its external validity (this research design has been discussed in detail above). Another implication for future research is to determine if the city a part of this study could benefit from a change in its current organizational model. Further research can be conducted to determine if the city as part of this study should reorganize and consolidate with the county. Another implication for future research is to further examine the council-manager relationship within the township, as well as their true organizational model. There needs to be research conducted to determine if patronage is currently used within local governments around the United States, and if so, the affects that patronage has on the efficiency of the government. Finally, there needs to be a consistent evaluation of municipal leadership, management, governance, and structures to

determine if and when reform is necessary. The municipal government evolves regularly, and becomes more and more complex with time, so this evaluation is imperative. Perhaps this can be done by the public with an understanding of the ICMA code of ethics.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the interest in this particular study was birthed by my desire to determine if other municipalities operated similar to that of the City. I conducted a total of ten in-depth interviews with public professionals from each municipality (five from the city and five from the township). The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the internal and external processes of each organization. I expected to find that there would be a difference in the efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and responsiveness of public services of a first-class township utilizing the council-manager form of government versus a third-class city utilizing the commission form of government. This study showed that such a difference does not exist. The study revealed that the city and the township, while having different organizational models, operate very similarly. The differences that could be found within each municipality were their size (employees and population) and the financially distressed status of the city. The city faces more complex issues because of these factors.

While the township has a township manager, that individual does not possess the same level of authority as professional managers outlined within the literature. Instead the township manager handles a minimum number of the day-to-day operations of the township, while the councilors handle the rest. It is noted within the literature that professional managers handle all of the day-to-day operations of a municipality and advises councilors on the policy formulation and planning process.

In addition to the above, this study had several limitations and implications for future research as outlined above. These limitations ultimately affected the results of this study. While there are limitations present within this study, and there are implications for future research, I hope that this study prompted the necessary discussions to positively enhance the field of public administration.

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**APPENDIX A****INTERVIEW QUESTIONS****ORGANIZATION:****DATE OF INTERVIEW:**

Question 1: What is your current role/job title (at insert location here)?

Question 2: How long have you held this role?

Question 3: How many years of experience do you have working within the public sector as a Professional?

Question 4: What public services does your organization provide?

Question 5: Does your organization use any other entities to provide any of its services?

Question 6: Can you verify what organizational model your organization follows?

- A. Commission formed: each elected official is in charge of a department. The mayor has an equal vote to that of other council members and no veto rights.
- B. Mayor-council formed: the mayor appoints department heads, but supervises all city departments and the mayor acts as the chief executive of the city and enforces the city ordinances.
- C. Council- manager formed: a city manager executes council's ordinances and also hires and fires department heads and subordinates.
- D. Weak-mayor formed: the mayor possesses little to no executive power. The council members have strong policy and administration authority.

Question 7: How many elected members of council are there?

Question 8: How many appointed positions are there?

Question 9: How many employees does your organization have?

Question 10: How involved is the township manager in the policy formulation process?

Question 11: How would you describe employee job satisfaction?

Question 12: Is your organization unionized?

Question 13: If yes, what percentage of your workforce, excluding management, is represented by a union?



Question 14: Does the union contract spell out the process for hiring? If so, explain.

Question 15: What hiring process is in place for non-union jobs?

Question 16: Is there a process used to vet potential new hires for non-union jobs?

Question 17: Would you say these processes (hiring process and vetting employees) are consistently followed?

Question 18: Does your organization have a no nepotism policy?

Question 19: If yes, what is the policy?

Question 20: Once a candidate is chosen, who is that individual interviewed by?

Question 21: After the interview process is complete and new hires are selected, are offer letters sent out:

Question 22: Does your organization conduct new hire orientation?

Question 23: Does your organization offer hands on training for new hires?

Question 24: Does your organization conduct annual training and development for its current employees?

Question 25: Is the purpose of this training and development to ensure employees are held accountable and continue to perform a certain way?

Question 26: What other measures does your organization have in place to increase/measure employee accountability?

Question 27: Discuss the transparency of your mayor and city council with its constituency?

Question 28: What methods are used to communicate with the public?

Question 29: Using employees as your greatest input, is it feasible to effectively perform your outputs (public services provided)?

Question 30: Does your organization feel like you have to do more with less?

Question 31: Are you under any particular budgetary constraints? If so, please explain.

Question 32: Discuss the efficiency of your organization?

Question 33: Discuss the effectiveness of your organization?

Question 34: Does your organization utilize performance management practices?

Question 35: If yes, please explain these practices in detail.

Question 36: How often is employee performance evaluated?

Question 37: How much time does an employee have to change their behavior after being given a bad performance review?

Question 38: Are there any incentives associated with performance reviews?

Question 39: Are there any other incentive programs currently in place?

Question 40: If yes, please describe.

Question 41: Describe other ways your organization motivates your workforce through other measures not directly associated with an incentive program.

Question 42: Is new ideas and innovation by employees encouraged and welcomed?


Question 43: Is there a method in place to handle employee complaints?

Question 44: If yes, please explain.

Question 45: Is there a method in place to handle constituent complaints?

Question 46: If yes, please explain.

## APPENDIX B



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**TO:** Quiana Pettiford and Michelle Wade


**FROM:** Nicole M. Cattano, Ph.D.  
Co-Chair, WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

**DATE:** 5/29/2019

**Project Title:** Organizational Models in Governments within Pennsylvania  
**Date of Approval:** 5/29/2019

**Expedited Approval**  
This protocol has been approved under the new updated 45 CFR 46 common rule that went in to effect January 21, 2019. As a result, this project will not require continuing review. Any revisions to this protocol that are needed will require approval by the WCU IRB. Upon completion of the project, you are expected to submit appropriate closure documentation. Please see [www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx](http://www.wcupa.edu/research/irb.aspx) for more information.

*Any adverse reaction by a research subject is to be reported immediately through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs via email at [irb@wcupa.edu](mailto:irb@wcupa.edu).*

**Signature:**  


Co-Chair of WCU IRB

WCU Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
IORG#: IORG0004242  
IRB#: IRB00005030  
FWA#: FWA00014155

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*This Protocol ID number must be used in all communications about this project with the IRB.*