

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City of Charles Town

2019
PROGRESS
REPORT

West Virginia
Municipal Home Rule Board
P.O. Box 11360
Charleston, WV 25339-1360
MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov
304.558.3356

West Virginia State Code §8-1-5a (m) provides:

“Commencing December 1, 2015, and each year thereafter, each participating municipality shall give a progress report to the Municipal Home Rule Board and commencing January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, the Municipal Home Rule Board shall give a summary report of all the participating municipalities to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.”

The Municipal Home Rule Board has developed this standard format for Home Rule Program participating municipalities to prepare and submit their respective Annual Progress Reports. The intent of this standard format is to gather and compile information in a consistent, easily understood, and efficient manner that will be used to develop a concise and practical summary report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

Annual Progress Reports must be submitted electronically as an individual file in PDF format no later than the close of business on the first business day of December, by emailing WV Municipal Home Rule Board at MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality: City of Charles Town		
Certifying Official: Daryl Hennessy	Title: City Manager	
Contact Person: Daryl Hennessy	Title: City Manager	
Address: 101 E. Washington Street		
City, State, Zip: Charles Town, WV 25414		
Telephone Number: 304-724-3244	Fax Number: 304-725-1014	
E-Mail Address: citymanager@charlestownwv.us		
2010 Census Population: 5,259		
B. Municipal Classification		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I	<input type="checkbox"/> Class II	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class III
<input type="checkbox"/> Class IV		
C. Attest		
I hereby confirm that I am the authorized official for this municipality and certify that the information submitted herein and attached hereto is true and accurate and that this report addresses each and every initiative included in the original Home Rule Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Daryl Hennessy		Nov. 26, 2019
Type Name of Certifying Official	Signature of Certifying Official	Date

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: On Premises Alcohol Sales Beginning at 10 am on Sundays	
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ?	
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? November 2016	
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)	
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Charles Town has altered the time that establishments can begin selling alcohol on Sunday in the municipality from 1 pm to 10 am. The action was taken to level the playing field for local establishments, so they can compete with similar businesses in neighboring Maryland and Virginia. For a community like Charles Town that relies heavily on tourism, it is important that our businesses can offer services that are at least comparable to that of businesses in neighboring communities. Since this change went into effect, a new craft brewery/restaurant and a neighborhood pub have opened in downtown Charles Town and several other eating establishments have adjusted their hours of operation accordingly.</p>	
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p>	

In the process of educating the public about this change, we learned that many of our visitors were surprised to learn that West Virginia restricts the sale of alcohol on Sunday mornings and it impacted their level of tourism spending in our state and community. Businesses offering brunch lost business to neighboring states where visitors could enjoy an alcoholic beverage with their brunch. Adjusting the hours of sales has helped Charles Town businesses capture a larger share of the region's tourism spending. It has also had the added benefit of bringing more residents to our downtown on Sunday.

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: Community Enhancement Districts			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?			
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? June 2015			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>To date, the City of Charles Town still has done little to implement this requested power. This is primarily attributable to a slowdown in new, commercial real estate development that continues to persist in our community (although that may be changing as more developers are investigating Charles Town as an option for future investment). Without many viable new commercial investments, there is little interest in partnering with the city to use this economic development tool right now. That said, staff continues to look at ways other communities are using similar programs and educating city leaders and developers on the potential for using this tool to fund new infrastructure.</p>			
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>The city has learned that this economic development tool is relevant only when there is demand for new development and the subsequent infrastructure that makes such development possible is available. In evaluating lessons learned from the most recent real estate downturn, the city continues to see that ensuring infrastructure is installed and maintained is of paramount importance for encouraging future economic and community development. As a result, the city is investing more in its basic infrastructure by increasing this portion of its capital improvements budget to \$200,000 in FY20.</p>			

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: Improved Enforcement of Code Citations, Public Nuisance Laws, and Blighted Properties			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?			
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? September 2016			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
<p>SUCCESES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Charles has implemented a program in which one of its police sergeant’s is empowered to enforce the health and safety provisions of the city’s code enforcement laws. The sergeant can provide on-site citations for code violations. This has streamlined the code enforcement process and resulted in faster compliance with the nuisance code. Moreover, if the sergeant finds a structural problem, he alerts our building code official who follows up on the matter to ensure structures in the community remain safe for all.</p> <p>Approximately one day a week our police officer will patrol the streets and issue citations. While doing so, he may work with the homeowner, tenant, or landlord to immediately remedy the situation if at all practical. If an immediate remedy is not possible, it is not uncommon for the sergeant’s citation to be corrected before the appointed court date. That said, the homeowner is still expected to appear in municipal court where the judge can reinforce the importance of maintaining their property, so it remains in compliance with the city’s laws.</p> <p>In 2018, the city hired a new planner who is working closely with the police sergeant to support this initiative. In 2019, the planner and sergeant established clearer lines of responsibility to eliminate duplication of effort and maximize impact. Together, they are getting their arms around the issue of blighted properties in our city and it is making a noticeable difference in the appearance of the community.</p>			
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p>			

The city has learned that citizens appreciate the consistency and authority that a police officer brings to the process. For Charles Town, citizens report that our officer is friendly, professional, and fair while carrying out these duties. The use of a police officer has proven valuable in obtaining greater compliance from the public and appreciation for the importance of maintaining their properties.

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each non-tax related initiative must have a separate page.

Initiative: Disposal of Municipal Property Without Auction			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?			
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? April 2015			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Charles Town has successfully used a third-party vendor to sell excess municipal property to buyers at a competitive, fair market price. This method replaced the old process of selling property via a “sealed bid” auction, which often resulted in few bidders and low returns. Moreover, the use of external contractors to facilitate the sales process has proven to be more efficient and effective from a city staffing perspective. To date, most of the property sold via this method has been excess police and public service vehicles. In 2020, the city plans to use this Home Rule Authority to sell its old police department building.</p>			
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>Consumers see value in the city’s excess property and are prepared to pay a fair market price when the process is open and transparent. Implementing this initiative has also resulted in higher levels of participation from buyers in the sales process.</p>			

Please use this page to report progress on each **tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

Initiative: Implementation of a 1% Local Option Sales Tax
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? January 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)
<p>REVENUES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting revenue amounts and revenue categories realized; revenue amounts and revenue categories reduced; net revenue gain; and, any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>FY19 was the fourth full year of sales tax collections and the city is beginning to truly understand the financial benefits of this option. Final collections for FY17 were just over \$888,000 and all proceeds were deposited to a Special Revenue account and used to fund the city’s capital improvement program and a series of community development programs. In FY18, the collections were up nearly 2.7% to just over \$913,000 and were used for essentially the same purposes. For FY19, the collections increased another 11.2% to just under \$1.015 million. For the first time in FY19, however, Charles Town used all sales tax proceeds (after paying its long-term debt) to fund basic government services. This source of revenue will now replace the city’s dependence on gambling proceeds to fund basic city services. All future gambling proceeds are now being used to fund some of the city’s capital improvement needs.</p>
<p>SUCCESES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting projects, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The initial implementation of the 1% local option sales tax offered the opportunity to catch up on some needed capital improvements. The city used the funds to replace police cruisers and individual police equipment for several of its police officers. These purchases increased the effectiveness of our public safety personnel and improved their personal protection posture.</p> <p>Since that time, we have been able to invest the sales tax revenues in new public service equipment and to fund a large portion of a newly renovated headquarters for our police and utility departments. This new facility will serve the community for several years to come and would not have been possible but for this new, stable revenue source.</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>During the year, the city learned that we must work closely with the state tax department to ensure that our local option tax is being collected from those businesses that are within the city limits. Although no meaningful problems were detected in FY19, it is important to remain vigilant to guard against confusion in this area.</p>