

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City of Charles Town

2025
PROGRESS
REPORT

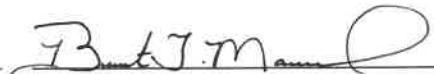
WV Municipal Home Rule Board
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E
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Charleston, WV 25305
MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov
304.558.3356

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 to WV Municipal Home Rule Board at MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality: City of Charles Town		
Certifying Official: Brent Manuel	Title: City Manager	
Contact Person: Stephanie Grove	Title: City Attorney	
Address: 101 E. Washington St.		
City, State, Zip: Charles Town WV 25414		
Telephone Number: 304-725-2311	Fax Number: /	
E-Mail Address: bmanuel@charlestownwv.us		
2020 Census Population: 6,545		
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.		
Brent T. Manuel		02 December 2025
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 10am on Sundays
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 ordinance authorized alcohol sales for on-premises consumption beginning at 10 a.m., rather than the previous 1 p.m., on Sundays within the City. This initiative allowed local City establishments to compete with similar businesses located in neighboring Maryland and Virginia. For a community like Charles Town that relies heavily on tourism, it is important that our business can offer services that are comparable to business in bordering jurisdictions.</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>Adjusting hours of sales helped Charles Town’s businesses capture a larger share of the region’s tourism spending and brought more local residents to our downtown on Sunday.</p>

Initiative: Community Enhancement Districts

Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application or a plan amendment ?

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? Yes No

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? June 2015

If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).

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.

The City has not yet created any active districts as a result of this enhanced authority. However, the City is currently collaborating with local developers and financing entities to spur economic development of buildings scheduled to be vacated by the County Commission in our downtown core. As a part of this process, it is anticipated that enhancement districts will be discussed as a potential tool to attract commercial development of those properties.

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.

Initiative: Improved Enforcement of Code Citations, Public Nuisance Laws, and Blighted Properties

Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application or a plan amendment ?

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? Yes No

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? September 2016, Amendment

If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).

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.

Although the City began its enforcement efforts almost immediately after passage of the Ordinance, staffing continued to disrupt enforcement efforts. However, in 2023, the City approved funding to hire an in-house code enforcement officer, permanently removing the duties from the City’s Police Department. The in-house position has allowed the City to focus enforcement of all ordinances related to code violations as well as nuisance and blighted properties. The City has received positive feedback from community members as they observe non-compliant properties become compliant.

Since Jan. 2025

72 NOVs issued

42 Abated

3 in Court

Remaining in process of obtaining compliance

138 Warnings Issued

133 Abated

In addition to enforcing the City’s Code Compliance program, the Code Enforcement Officer has been able to devote time and effort in enforcing the City’s rental registration program and vacant structures registry. Previous enforcement had been intermittent due to lack of full-time staff to administer the programs.

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.

Implementing in-house enforcement enables more efficient administration of the Code Enforcement, Blighted Properties, and Public Nuisance Ordinances. An enforcement officer dedicated solely to these responsibilities can allocate their full attention to enforcement activities and work collaboratively with other City departments and personnel, thereby optimizing enforcement outcomes for the City's overall benefit.

Initiative: Disposal of Municipal Property without Auction

Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application or a plan amendment ?

Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? Yes No

If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? April 2015

If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).

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.

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.

In 2020, the City used this initiative to advertise for proposals to purchase its old police department building. The elimination of the auction requirement allowed the Council to consider proposed uses of the building, ensuring that the owner would use the building in manner that complements the City’s vision as delineated in the Comprehensive Plan.

This initiative may be utilized again in the near future as the City seeks economic development opportunities for vacant buildings.

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.

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 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"/> or N/A <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>FY 24 was the ninth year of sales tax collections, and the City is truly benefiting from this initiative. If it were not for this additional revenue source, the City would be severely limited in its ability to provide services to its residents.</p> <p>In FY 25, collections were 2.05 million, allowing the City to include the additional positions in the FY 26 budget.</p>
<p>SUCSESSES – 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 City continues to allocate a portion of its sales tax revenues to capital improvements, including the payment of debt service on the current police station and renovations to provide civic spaces and fuel economic development. The City is also making capital investments in technology to streamline reporting and improve transparency to our citizens. Additionally, the City has used funds for matching grants and is currently in the process of building trails that provide connectivity to the entire city and renovating the County’s only public pool.</p> <p>Finally, the stability of this revenue stream has allowed the City to add positions to better serve its constituents, including the addition of a Parks Manager and Long-Range Planner.</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 Implementation, the City learned that it must work closely with the state tax department to ensure that our local option tax is bring collected from those businesses that are within the city limits or selling products online to residents in Charles Town. While no significant issues have arisen since implementation, maintaining a relationship with the State Tax Department remains important.</p>

Each year of collections continues to demonstrate the relative stability of this revenue stream. The City continues to monitor collections, recognizing the importance of this revenue source to the City's ability to provide services to its residents.