

MUNICIPAL HOME RULE
PILOT PROGRAM

City of Ranson

2015
PROGRESS
REPORT

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 Pilot 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 December 1, 2015 by emailing Debbie Browning at debbie.a.browning@wv.gov, West Virginia Development Office, West Virginia Home Rule Pilot Program, State Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room 553, Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0311, 304-558-2234.

A. General Information		
Name of Municipality: City of Ranson		
Certifying Official: Andrew P. Blake	Title: City Manager	
Contact Person: Andrew P. Blake	Title: City Manager	
Address: 312 S. Mildred Street		
City, State, Zip: Ranson, WV 25438		
Telephone Number: 304 724-3872	Fax Number:	
E-Mail Address: ablake@ransonwv.us		
2010 Census Population: 4,440		
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. Pilot Program Entry Phase		
<input type="checkbox"/> Phase I (2007 Legislation)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phase II (2014 Legislation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Phase III (2015 Legislation)
D. 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.		
Andrew P. Blake		11/24/2015
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. Each non-tax related initiative must have a separate page.

Initiative: Citation Authority for Property Maintenance and Nuisance Violations			
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? December 16, 2014			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s)			
<p>There were no challenges in enacting the ordinance. Once the ordinance was enacted, however, administrative staff had to develop a citation process. In an attempt to foster consistency, the cities of Charles Town, Martinsburg and Ranson held a workshop to discuss process, challenges and administration.</p>			
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>Citation authority for property maintenance and nuisance violations have sped up the process for enforcement. This is especially important for smaller jurisdictions where the Building Code Official serves as the building inspector, plan reviewer and code enforcement officer because the expedited process frees up human and financial resources. Immediate citation authority has and will continue to increase property values by taking care of problem properties because the issues spread to other parts of the neighborhood. Effective enforcement of building, housing and property maintenance codes is a key ingredient in neighborhood revitalization efforts. Studies have consistently shown that under the “broken window theory” that vacant properties and dilapidated buildings and properties become magnets for increased crime.</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>Speak to and coordinate with surrounding local governments who have implemented this tool and use the techniques, forms and enforcement processes that have been proven to work.</p>			

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Initiative: Conveyance of City Property Without Auction
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Organization X Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application X or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/> ?
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? December 16, 2014
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s) There were no challenges in enacting the ordinance.
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City has used this tool to sell a former police asset to the Sheriff’s Department, but has not utilized the ordinance to sell real property yet; although, negotiations will take place in 2016 to start selling some surplus City lots to private individuals and/or entities for the purpose of placing the properties back on the property tax rolls. This tool will be important because it will allow for expedited and arms-length transactions to spur economic development and neighborhood revitalization. The enactment of this ordinance allows the City to sell the property directly through the City Council rather than having to convey the property through a building commission, redevelopment agency and economic development authority. This streamlines the process, cuts out bureaucracy and allows for the City’s vision to be carried out without being diluted by outside agencies.</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>This tool allows the City to directly control it property, control economic development incentives and reduces the need to create separate entities or branches of the government (i.e. building commission, economic development authority) because the City can enter into direct negotiations for land purchases.</p>

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Initiative: Permitting Contracts by Resolution with Other Jurisdictions Rather than by Ordinance			
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? December 16, 2014			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s) There were no challenges in enacting the ordinance.			
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City has already used this tool a few times. The City has utilized this ordinance to enter into contracts and agreements the Jefferson County PSD, Charles Town and Jefferson County for intergovernmental agreements and contracts. This is a simple tool that saves time and cost and achieves the same result as if the agreements were approved by ordinance.</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>This is a simple ordinance that streamlines the process.</p>			

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Initiative: Expansion of Authority to Use Community Enhancement Districts			
Category of Issues Addressed (check all that apply)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organization	<input 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? December 16, 2014			
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s) There were no challenges in enacting the ordinance.			
<p>SUCSESSES – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>A Community Enhancement District (CED) has not been established in the City yet. However, a large commercial developer within the City limits has expressed much interest in the CED and the amendments that the City has made to the existing legislation pursuant to Ordinance.</p> <p>The CED allows for a separate assessment (which are not taxes) to be placed on current or future property owners in the area of the district to support public bonds for the construction of infrastructure, public parks, and other amenities targeted for development or revitalization.</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>Convincing the first developer to utilize the advantages of a CED is the challenge. Existing developers are not yet comfortable with the tool and developers are concerned that an extra “assessment” may not be competitive in the market. It is the City’s role to continue to educate the development community about why the CED tool is effective and beneficial.</p>			

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

Initiative: Reduction of B&O Tax and Imposition of 1% Sales and Use 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 20, 2015
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s) There were no challenges or objections in enacting the ordinance. However, after enacting the ordinance, the challenge was figuring out the best method of providing ZIP + 4 addresses to the State Tax Department.
<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>The City reduced B&O tax by 10% on retail and has provided a 50% tax credit on all businesses located within the Old Town Business District in an attempt to encourage growth and development within the urban core. The City then imposed a 1% sales and use tax effective July 1, 2015. The City has only received a partial quarter of sales tax revenue so it is too early to provide accurate financials.</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 of Ranson receives direct tax payments from Hollywood Casino in Charles Town from table games and video lottery. With gaming revenues in steep decline over the last several years, increased unfunded mandates and aging infrastructure, and growth pressures, sales tax revenue helps the City keep public services and investments moving forward. Without sales tax and with the continued forecast of declining gaming revenue, the challenge of maintaining essential government services, public safety and necessary investments to move our community forward would have become even more daunting. Sales tax broadens the tax base and alleviates reliance upon one industry, which can now be fully utilized for one-time capital improvements to improve our City and community.</p> <p>The imposition of sales tax will allow the City to control is own destiny and expand its tax base without major reliance upon one industry. Video lottery and table games will be shifted in totality to a much needed capital improvement fund and sales tax will be used for general fund operations.</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>With the legislature capping property taxes and B&O taxes; ever increasing unfunded mandates; and requirements placed on small towns and cities; and dilapidated infrastructure, the imposition of a sales tax became essential. If the legislature eliminates or reduces B&O, it will have no choice but to allow municipalities to increase sales tax even more or cities and town will not be able to meet their obligations.</p>