

# TOWNSHIP OF MONTCLAIR

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## REORGANIZATION OF TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

### REPORT TO TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

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*“Problems Addressed, Solutions Proposed, Benefits Gained”*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since arriving in Montclair, I have been gratified to hear about the community's many wonderful attributes – great schools; a vibrant arts community; fabulous restaurants, galleries and shops; incredibly diverse, talented and resourceful citizens. But not once – not ever – did anyone say to me, “we have a great town government.”

It's time to change this. Make no mistake, change is what's on the way for Montclair Township government. Change is often a little threatening but it's also very exciting. That excitement has already started to take hold in town hall and, with the support of the Township's elected officials, will surely make its way through the entire community in the near future.

When I arrived here, I found demoralized, disconnected managers and employees. I found citizens highly upset (justifiably) that basic services weren't being effectively and consistently delivered – snow plowing, leaf removal, street and property maintenance, refuse collection and recycling, etc. Most of all, I found everyone upset – from elected officials to citizens – with a poor (or non-existent) system of communications. A lack of responsiveness – with good and timely information – was at the top of everyone's list of what was wrong in Montclair town government.

To be sure, many people saw these problems and tried to take steps to resolve them. The problem is, they were the wrong steps. “Program budgets” were tried. Wrong step. “Strategic planning.” Wrong step. “TQM (Total Quality Management) customer service training”. Wrong again. While these things do have a place and time in organizational management, they cannot fix basic dysfunctionality. They certainly didn't get the streets plowed, did they?

At last, the Township's elected officials decided to take a completely new direction and bring in a new Township Manager. The change Montclair needed was underway.

What is this change all about? I'd like to pretend it's some kind of magical, mystical process. But it's not. It's about bringing to Montclair sound, proper principles of leadership and management which have demonstrated their worth and success over many, many years. They are:

- **Connectedness.** Everyone who works for an organization wants to and needs to feel and understand that they are part of something larger than themselves. Our Township government is now on the way to connecting as a team – a family even – joined together in helping one another in the common goal of serving the citizens of Montclair.
- **Involvement.** The least effective workers and managers are those who feel they have no say or involvement in how their jobs get done. Total top-down management doesn't work. Fortunately, Montclair has many good workers and managers. We are now directly involving them in how their jobs get done.

- Personal attention/accessibility. It's important that both citizens and employees know their concerns have the personal attention of the Township Manager and/or appropriate Township staff and that management is easily accessible. They do and we are.
- Good communications. This is the most indisputable aspect of good management and we work on this every day.
- Vision. People work best when they know and feel they are working toward something worthwhile. We are working now on shaping our vision for Montclair but, even in these early stages, people feel the excitement that comes with a new, positive attitude.
- Leadership. Not being afraid to do the right thing. Standing up for others who are trying to do the right thing. Supporting both the elected officials and the employees when they make tough decisions. Fighting for the common good of all citizens, not just those with the loudest or most powerful voices. These things are vital to effective management in municipal government.
- Accountability. For local government, there is nothing more important than being accountable to the citizens and taxpayers for doing a good job and personally holding all employees to that same standard. This must also be done with the highest standards of fiscal responsibility.

Recently, we submitted a recommended budget to Township Council reflecting a restructuring and reorganization of township government that fulfills all of these principles, with more to be expected over the next twelve to eighteen months. By the end of this year, I believe citizens of Montclair will, indeed be saying, "we have a great town government!"

As far as I'm concerned, we should – and we will – always strive to be the best.

In the following pages, I discuss in more specific detail organizational changes I am recommending. This discussion is geared towards identifying the specific benefits that will derive from the changes – problems are identified, solutions explained, and benefits/outcomes described.

## 1.

**PROBLEM: Cost of Government**  
 Controlling Costs in Municipal Government.

How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

The reorganization, in combination with the early retirement program, results in a net reduction of at least eight positions in municipal government with a resulting gross annualized savings of \$698,960. This is achieved as follows:

<b>A. Positions Eliminated</b>	<b>Gross Annual Saving (with 30% benefits, if applicable)</b>
Assistant Township Manager	132,089.
Director PRCA	148,363.
Recreation Supervisor	95,067.
Director Arts & CA	108,969.
Project Ass't. Arts & CA	61,917.
Admin. Ass't. PRCA	68,367.
Code Officer	90,413.
Police Supervisor(s)	118,000.
Ass't. Township Attorney	43,375.
PH Nurse	81,579.
Social Services Coord. (FT)	96,161.
Section 8 FSS Coord. (FT)	61,190.
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,105,490.</b>
<b>B. Additions</b>	<b>Gross Annual Cost (with 30% benefits, if applicable)</b>
Webmaster	78,000.
Communications (by contract)	60,000.
Director RCA	121,899.
Outside Nursing	10,000.
Section 8 & Social Services	16,443.
Director Admin., Code, & En.	120,188.
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>406,530.</b>
<b>A – B =</b>	<b>698,960.</b>

It should be noted that the above are approximate savings without minor attrition factored in. Also, changes that are close “washes” (e.g., Environmental Outreach

Coordinator to Environmental & Code Officer/Executive Director of the Environmental Commission) are not included.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

The benefits/outcomes of this aspect of reorganization are reduced costs of municipal government and reduced tax burden on Montclair taxpayers.

### 2. **PROBLEM: Poor Communications.**

The Township's communications with its citizens and its elected officials, and between departments and public agencies, has been poor.

#### How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

In addition to measures already taken, the reorganization addresses this problem in two new ways: 1, it ramps up the Township's technological ability, which is vital to communicating in today's world; and 2, it adds professional communications and marketing skills to the Township's talent pool. It does these things by eliminating old positions to fund a professional Webmaster position (which will also help coordinate community events) and, by contract, a communications/marketing professional.

It is important to note that these two positions will be greatly synergistic; i.e. working in tandem, their sum effect will be much greater than their individual effects.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

Within six months of Council funding these positions and their being filled, Township communications will be substantially improved. Citizens will appreciate an exponential leap in useful information – information that will bring citizen expectations and Township performance closer together to create community satisfaction and improved quality of life. Providing adequate and timely information on refuse collection or leaf removal schedules, coming events, law enforcement activity, or other vital public health, safety, environmental, or welfare issues is a critical component of effective public service and Council's support for the reorganization will help get this done.

### 3. **PROBLEM: Maximizing use of Technology.**

The Township falls short in its uses of technology.

#### How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

The reorganization addresses this issue by eliminating old positions to fund a new webmaster position. This completes the establishment of a "technology team" for the Township that can work together to ensure best practices on Montclair's part

in the usage of technology. That team has been carefully constructed to provide the complimentary talents and skills to deliver a high level of technological prowess, as follows: Network administration and communications (Director of Information Systems); database development, training, and systems and communications coordination (Project Manager); and utilization of the Internet for communications and service delivery (Webmaster).

#### Benefits/Outcomes

When this team is clicking on all cylinders, significantly improved delivery of services and information to the citizens of Montclair can be expected. With a rich, interactive website, the Township can offer the citizens the opportunity to transact business over their computers rather than coming to Town Hall, as well as provide a wealth of information on community events. The potential benefits to civic groups, citizens, artists and arts organizations, and businesses and business groups are substantial.

#### 4. **PROBLEM: Arts and Cultural Affairs**

The Township is not advancing most of the components of its Arts Plan, specifically marketing/promotion, coordination, facilities, government leadership, and information delivering, especially via electronic technology.

#### How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

First and foremost, the reorganization addresses the leadership issue raised by the Arts Plan by placing responsibility for arts and cultural affairs on its highest management official, the Township Manager, and not on a subaltern, mid-level manager. This is both significant and appropriate, because, in Montclair, the arts hold a position in the community that merits the direct attention of the Township's CEO.

Secondly, the reorganization reverses the backwards approach that seems to have been taken with respect to local government support for the arts; to wit, the Township has been largely providing support in those areas that the private arts community is best equipped to provide on its own (e.g., programs, education, nurturing of young artists) and has not been providing enough support where the private arts community could most use it, exactly as described by the Arts Plan itself – marketing/promotion, coordination, facilities, government leadership, and information delivery.

In addition to the direct involvement of the Township Manager and his staff, the reorganization directly addresses the needs cited by the Arts Plan by eliminating old positions that (through no fault of their occupants) were not designed for the skills necessary to get the job done to meet the cited Arts Plan needs and replaces them with positions with precisely the skills needed (communications/marketing professional, webmaster). The reorganization will cover the programmatic

aspects of the Arts Plan goals by redeploying tasks, as appropriate, to other Township personnel and to the arts community. It calls for the accomplishment of the latter via the establishment of an Arts Council (something also supported by the Arts Plan). The Township Manager has asked the Montclair Economic Development Corporation to assist with development of the Council.

It should be noted that preliminary work on this reorganization is well underway with enthusiastic support from arts groups in the community. A community-wide recruitment of individual artists is also underway.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

The following benefits can all be expected:

- Successful coordinated marketing/promotion of the arts in Montclair and Montclair as an arts community.
- Effective coordination of arts events and activities in the community.
- Continuation of existing programs and growth of new programs
- Successful delivery of information utilizing up-to-date technology (website, email, etc.), and centralized information services.
- Facilities development
- Technologically interactive support for the arts, such as web-based ticket sales and registry of individual artists.

In short, it can be expected that the reorganization will lift the arts and cultural affairs in Montclair to a whole new level.

#### 5. **PROBLEM: Poor Service Delivery.**

Basic community services – such as snow and leaf removal – were not being adequately performed.

#### How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

Via merger, consolidation, and centralization the reorganization is directly addressing the root causes of poor service delivery in Montclair; people's skills and responsibilities not being in alignment, task fragmentation, and divided chains of command.

By providing better unity of command, logical arrangement and utilization of tasks, and alignment of talents to responsibilities, the reorganization directly addresses these issues.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

Simply put, the benefits will be better delivery of services to residents, with added cost effectiveness via centralization.

6. **PROBLEM: Citizen Complaints/Quality of Life Issues.**

Montclair officials and citizens believe that a slippage in quality of life issues is occurring in the community, largely through the cumulative effect of unresolved complaints.

How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

The reorganization directly addresses this issue via the establishment of a new “quality of life” department – the Department of Administration, Code Enforcement and Environmental Affairs. By creating a department whose major focus is the quality of life in Montclair, this issue will receive the attention it deserves.

Benefits/Outcomes

The new department will implement better systems for receiving, tracking, and verifying citizen complaints. The new department will especially establish a more effective, winning system of enforcement, so that individually small violations will still be picked up and no cases will be thrown out of court for insufficient presentation.

Ordinances on the books will be enforced to the greatest extent possible (signage, property maintenance, refuse, etc.). The philosophy is simple: if you lose a streetcorner, you could lose the neighborhood. If you lose a neighborhood, you can keep losing until the whole community loses. All neighborhoods should receive fair and equal enforcement.

The outcome is simple, but profound: a more desirable, attractive community for all citizens with a better quality of life for all.

7. **PROBLEM: Stalled Environmental Initiatives.**

The Township has stagnated in major environmental achievements.

How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

Since the Township has been doing a very good job in environmental outreach and educational programs and projects, but needs to get to the next level of making a real difference in environmental achievements, the reorganization addresses this situation by building on and elevating current activities. This is accomplished in two ways: 1, bringing the environmental function to departmental level; and 2, expanding the status and role of the Environmental Commission. The current Outreach Coordinator position is being eliminated and replaced with Environmental and Code Enforcement Officer. Additionally, the

position of Executive Director of the Environmental Commission is being established.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

Two major benefits are expected: 1, better enforcement of environmental regulations through direct linkage to the Environmental Officer; and 2, significant advancement in the Environmental Sustainability Plan. (A side benefit of these is cost savings through increased recycling and energy efficiency.) Additionally, there will be better prioritization and coordination of environmental goals via the newly created direct linkage to the Environmental Commission (i.e., the Environmental Officer and Executive Director of the Commission will be the same person).

#### 8. **PROBLEM: Liability Exposure.**

The Township (and thus its citizens and taxpayers) is a victim of the threatening insurance/liability marketplace and, like most municipalities, is finding it increasingly difficult to provide protection.

#### How Reorganization Addresses This Problem

With the insurance marketplace in near-crisis, an ever-more litigious society, and post 9-11 and other growing liability concerns, the proposed reorganization positions the Township is highly pro-active in addressing these concerns. Specifically, for the Township to even be able to provide liability coverage for its taxpayers in the future – whether via traditional insurance, self-insurance/reinsurance, or joint coverage – it must have a designated, aggressive risk management program, which the reorganization will provide by assigning this to the new Department of Administration, Code Enforcement, and Environmental Affairs.

#### Benefits/Outcomes

The Township will: 1, be able to protect its citizens and taxpayers from liability exposure; and, 2, be able to do so in a manner much more cost effective than without the reorganization.

### **IMPORTANT NOTES AND CONCLUSION**

Taken as a whole, the reorganization advances all of the important principles noted in the Introduction: Connectedness, Involvement, Personal Attention, Good Communications, Vision, Leadership, and Accountability. And it is very important to note that this reorganization must be taken in its totality – it was carefully planned as one, interwoven whole. Any one piece cannot necessarily be evaluated or “tinkered with” on its own or in a vacuum, because of the many

interlinkages. For example, money saved in one area may be being used to support another area, which has been designed to exist only with the support of a third (technology) or fourth area (communications) or may exist only because a person being moved from a fifth area has the right skills to do the job in the new area. So if you remove or alter one, two, three, four, or five, the whole chain (and whole reorganization) may falter. Of course, adding to any part is possible, but that then adds costs and diminishes #1 (cost savings).

Finally, it should be noted that, as with any major organizational change, the first year will be a transitional year, subject to minor “bumps” and disruptions. But I have been very impressed and pleased with how Township managers and staff have already begun to plan for implementation and, more importantly, have welcomed these changes as important for a bright, exciting future for Montclair.

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Township Manager