



October 28, 2009

Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Intergovernmental Affairs Committee

Dear Committee Members

Towanda Borough is a small Borough of 1.2 square miles in size with a little over 3,000 residents located in central Bradford County. The Borough, in addition to providing municipal services within its boundaries, also provides operating services to the Towanda Municipal Authority, a non-profit sewer and water utility that serves 7 municipalities in the central Bradford region. The Borough was first settled in 1786, made the county seat in 1812 and incorporated in 1828. Most of its homes, public and private buildings, streets, public sewers and water lines and limited storm water facilities were built during the 19th century.

Since the early 1980's, the Borough has been pursuing a fairly aggressive redevelopment strategy of affordably rebuilding and improving its infrastructure while retaining its historical character. Despite a real estate tax exempt rate of 26% within the Borough, some remarkable progress has been made with the help of our state and federal representatives. However, much remains to be done. Seemingly, Towanda Borough and Towanda Municipal Authority should be ideal candidates for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

To date, the Towanda Municipal Authority has submitted one application for funds for an energy efficiency project. The application, which was very rigorous and technical, cost \$25,000 in consultant fees plus our time and, if successful, will require over \$100,000 in local match money. Submitted over 2 months ago, we've yet to hear if our request is approved or not.

Towanda Borough has submitted one request for a COPS Hiring Recovery Program grant to put an additional police officer on its force but was turned down.

From our perspective, the bulk of ARRA monies has gone or is going either directly to "entitlement" communities or to those with paid community development specialists on staff or on retainer.

Those of us with limited resources, be it staff or funds, are losing out. The procurement and delivery process needs to be streamlined and made less onerous in terms of difficulty and bureaucratic red tape.

Thank you

Sincerely

TOWANDA BOROUGHS

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Borough Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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