GOVERNOR TOM WOLF DECLARES DISASTER EMERGENCY IN PENNSYLVANIA

March 13, 2020 - With the discovery of the first cases of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Wolf declared a disaster emergency throughout the state. Governor Wolf’s proclamation issued March 6, 2020 will enable the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and municipalities to properly respond to this health emergency. The following information is provided to borough officials to help understand the various tools available to your borough throughout the duration of this emergency disaster declaration.

- Authorizes $25 million transfer to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) to be used for expenses authorized and incurred related to this emergency.

- Suspends the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of Commonwealth business, or the orders, rules or regulations of any Commonwealth agency, if strict compliance with the provisions of any statute, order, rule or regulation would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with this emergency.

- If the emergency requires greater flexibility to accommodate truck traffic on the highways, PENNDOT is directed to waive or suspend any laws or federal or state regulations related to the drivers of commercial vehicles.

- Directs the applicable emergency response and recovery plans of the Commonwealth, counties, municipalities and other entities be activated as necessary and that actions taken to implement those plans be coordinated through the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

- Enables all municipalities to employ temporary workers, rent equipment, and enter into such contracts and agreements as may be required to meet the emergency, all without regard to those time consuming procedures and formalities normally prescribed by law, except when required by the PA Constitution.

In addition to the Governor’s proclamation, please remember the powers under the Borough Code (BC) and The Emergency Management Code in Title 35 of the Pa. Consolidated Statutes.

- Declaration of Local Emergencies. 35 Pa.C.S. 7501
- Expanded powers to enter into contracts, employ temporary workers, and the appropriation of funds. 35 Pa.C.S. 7501(d)
- Powers in all other disasters and their consequences. BC Section 1202(33)
- Mayor’s Emergency Powers. BC Section 10A06

As always, please be sure to consult your municipal solicitor.