

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTICUT, 3RD EDITION

Instructor's Guide

Chapter 11

Class Discussion

1. List the services that are provided by your municipality.
2. Prioritize these services giving reasons for why they are in the order they are recommended.
3. Discuss the ways these services are paid for and who pays for them.

Class Assignments

1. Have the class research their municipality's budget (most are on the local community website, or available in the annual town report) and determine where the money is spent.
2. Divide the class into groups and have them research the surrounding community's budgets and compare the dollars allocated for various services among the communities. Look for similarities and differences and why.
3. Have students ask their parents what they think are the most important services the local government provides and why.

Field trips and Other Ideas

- Invite local officials familiar with the local community budget to class and have them explain the budget, budget process, and the allocation of the budget for various services.
- Have students look at prior year budgets and see where the budget has changed from year to year in the allocation of dollars for specific services. Have them email town officials to ask why things may have changed or haven't changed.
- Have students visit the various town services such as the police department, fire department, public works department, school superintendent and interview the head of the service (Department Head, Director) and ask them their opinion of what town services they provide and report back to the class on their interview.

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Chapter 12

Class Discussion

1. What are the public safety services in your community?
2. Are any of the public safety services in your community provided by volunteers?
3. Are there requirements to become a Police Officer?
4. What is the average response time for an ambulance to reach a destination in your community after being called for an emergency?
5. What are the requirements for automobile drivers on the road when they encounter an emergency vehicle responding to an emergency call?
6. What type of emergency response apparatus does the local fire department have? Why do they have different types of equipment?
7. Who pays for the equipment provided to the public safety services?

Class Assignments

1. Ask the Police Chief or one of the senior officers to visit the class as a speaker, and have them describe the police departments operations and the types of calls they respond to in your town.
2. Make arrangements for a visit to the local Fire Department and have a firefighter describe the types and purposes of the equipment they have. Discussions about response times are important.
3. Divide the class into three research groups: police, fire, emergency medical services, and have each group pick a spokesperson to describe the group's findings of how the community is served by each service.

Field Trips and Other Ideas

- Have students interview individuals serving in the police, fire or emergency management departments and report to the class their findings. Questions to be asked might include:
 - a. What was your most dangerous situation encountered,
 - b. What training did you have to accomplish to be selected for your position,
 - c. What hours do you work,
 - d. What do they do on duty when there are no calls.
- Field trips to the Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Departments are always productive.
- Make arrangements to visit the training facilities for police (State Police Academy-Meriden) or for fire (State Fire Academy-Windsor Locks). You can actually have a tour and see police and fire recruits participating in training.

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Chapter 13

Class Discussion

1. What event in America led to the passage of the Homeland Security Act by Congress in 2002?
2. What was the name of the federal agency that dealt with emergencies, both natural and man-made, before the Department of Homeland Security was formed?
3. Explain why the State of Connecticut is different from most of the other states.
4. Name the titles of those local government positions that are the first-responders to emergencies.
5. What is the goal of a government's response to emergency, either natural or man-made?
6. Does your city or town have any of the citizen assistance and support groups that help provide support in the field of homeland security?
7. Which of these citizen assistance groups do you think is the most important, and why?
8. What is the name of the State of Connecticut agency that is responsible for emergency management and homeland security? Do you know where this State department is located?

Class Assignments

1. Inquire on how your local police and fire departments cooperate during an emergency.
2. Briefly describe the name of the current national warning system, and provide a brief overview of how it works?
3. Check-out the websites for these citizen assistance groups to see how many have chapters in your state?
4. Find out if your city or town has any mutual aid agreements (police, fire, ambulance) with other neighboring communities? How do they work? Has there been any major situation that involved joint town cooperation?

Field Trips-Other Ideas

- Visit your local police and fire department and ask them to review their role in homeland security and how it has changed since 9/11.
- Check your city or town's website to see if it mentions homeland security as a public service.
- Ask your principal to the classroom and ask him/her to review the school's security program (some security items he/she may not be able to discuss with you). Has your city or town ever held a simulated emergency management exercise?

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Chapter 14

Class Discussion

1. What services does your community's public works department provide?
2. Who collects your trash and garbage at home? Is there recycling in your community and how is it accomplished?
3. Does your school recycle? What happens to the recyclables?
4. When you flush the toilet at home or school where does the waste go?
5. The water in your school is safe to drink. Who provides the water? How do we know it is safe to drink? Where does the water come from?
6. How does your town name its roads?
7. How many miles of roads does your community have? What type of surface treatment do the roads have? How many bridges are there in your town?

Class Assignments

1. Break the class down into different groups to undertake research on: roads, bridges and highways; trash; sewage system; water system; have each group select a spokesperson, and have them deliver a report to the class on their findings.
2. Pick a season of the year and have the class discuss what functions of the public works department are seasonal, non seasonal, routine, or unusual.
3. Have the class inventory what equipment a public works may have to have to do its job, and then have the public works director or a member of the senior departmental staff come to class to discuss the equipment inventory as well as the functioning of the department.

Field Trips and Other Ideas

- Frequently Public Works Departments will, if asked, provide tours of their facilities, including offices, garages, water and sewage treatment plants.
- Local or regional trash plants will also provide tours. The Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority actually has a trash museum in East Hartford, Connecticut.
- Speakers are always interesting. The local director of public works, the sewage or water treatment plant superintendent or the equipment maintenance superintendent all have stories to tell. Ask them to evaluate the condition of the roads and bridges.

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Chapter 15

Class Discussion

1. What power does a planning and zoning commission have? Is it short term or long term?
2. Is there an area of town that the students think could be improved? What steps would be involved? Who has to approve of changes?
3. What is the difference between planning power and zoning power?
4. Have a discussion on what impact a new road or highway in town would have on development?
5. Should there be more apartments in town so young people can live on their own? What is needed to have an apartment complex?
6. Is it important that the wetlands in town be protected? Why?
7. Have students discuss their community and describe it in terms of rural, suburban, city, industrial, orientated to water, mixed

Class Assignments

1. Have students find out if there are sewers in town. If so, how does this affect development?
2. Does the community have town or community water or does everyone have wells? How does this affect development?
3. Have students take photos of some land development in town they like and some they do not like. Have them explain why they favor one or the other. Can anything be done with it?

Field Trips-Other Ideas

- Invite the Town Planner/Town Engineer to class to talk about current and future land use development.
- Visit the town planner's office and review the maps and the information in the office.
- Invite an official from a regional planning agency (see Appendix C) and have them talk about regional development and its impact on the students' town.
- Is there a hot topic on land development in the newspapers? Divide the class in half and have each side prepare arguments on either side of the argument. Allow class time for preparation.

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Chapter 16

Class Assignments

1. Discuss the concept of risk management, the management of reducing risks in your community and within your local government.
2. What risks are there present in the community and its local government?
3. What types of programs already exist for reducing risks? Are speed limits a risk reducing measure?? How about the emergency lights of emergency vehicles? How about salt and sand on winter highways? How about the treatment of the water we drink and the waste water we discharge? How about insurance?
4. What is the role of training in reducing risk? What is the role of systematized maintenance in reducing risk?
5. What is the process for identifying and prioritizing risk?

Class assignments

1. Break the class down into groups and have them research the various types of risk within different types of activities: public safety services, public works services, their school, their home, themselves personally, what risks do they see, how and why would they prioritize them?
2. Identify five risks and have the class develop a risk reduction program around the five risks.
3. What risk reduction techniques are reasonable and which are not. Have the class develop standards for measuring risks (i.e. the number of auto accidents at a particular location – could be obtained from the local police department) and possible remedies and their cost.

Field Trips and Other Ideas

- Have a local insurance agent that insures the town or city come to speak to the class about municipal risk and how they measure it, and how that measurement is used in determining the cost of the insurance the town or city buys.
- Have a speaker come from the municipality to talk about safety in the workplace. Does the municipality have a safety committee, who is on the committee and why. What type of activities does the safety committee undertake? Have the recommendations been implemented? Have they had a positive effect?

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Chapter 17

Class Discussion

1. How has GIS used in our society today?
2. What is the difference in GPS vs. GIS
3. How many of the students have used GPS? (cell phone, boating, navigation system in car).
4. How did boats know where they were before GPS?

Class Assignments

1. Prepare a list of how GPS and GIS can be used by municipalities? How was land use planning done before the introduction of GPS?
2. Go on line to Google Earth and plug in local addresses (this is very informative and can be used in many different assignment in class-a good tool).

Field Trips-Other Ideas

- Visit the town hall and see how they are using GPS for various municipal functions
- Ask if any student has a hand held GPS and if they could bring it in and show how it works and how important it can be if they go hiking or camping
- Contact the regional planning organization (see Appendix C) and ask them to visit class and show how they use GIS

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Chapter 18

Class Discussion

1. How does a municipal Health Department provide public health services?
2. What is the difference between municipal health services and health district services?
3. Do you think that municipal Health Directors should be appointed for terms of office, or like other department managers?
4. When a public health department provides courses for the public, what subject are they likely to focus on?
5. Do you agree with the CDC's (Center for Disease Control) ten essential public health services?
6. If not, which ones do you think should be changed and why?
7. Can you describe the human services provided by your city or town government?
8. Do you think a local city or town government should provide any additional health or human services?
9. If so, who would pay for them, or how would they be financed?

Class Assignments

1. Prepare a list of the health or human services provided by your city or town government and who provides them. Is anything missing?
2. Look at your city or town's website. Does it adequately explain its health services?
3. Look at your city or town's website. Does it adequately explain its human services?
4. Check your municipal budget to see how much money is spent on these services. Have a class discussion on the worth of these services. Is there a need to educate the public about these services that they pay for and receive?

Field Trips-Other Ideas

- Take a field trip to your municipal or regional health department and have them explain all the services they provide.
- Invite a public health official to class to explain the services provided. Ask if there is any other public health or human services that they would like to provide.
- If they would like more services, ask them how they would be financed – user fees and charges or state grants.

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Chapter 19

Class Discussion

1. What is the role of the Town/City Clerk?
2. How is the Town/City Clerk selected? What knowledge, skills, and abilities does the Town/City Clerk need to perform their job?
3. What types of records would you expect to find if you visited your local town or city clerk's office?
4. What technological changes would you expect to find in the Town/City Clerk's office?
5. How does the Town/City Clerk assist in "getting out the vote" during election times?

Class Assignments

1. Have each student access the local land records in the Town/City Clerk's office remotely from home or school computer through the town or city website and locate their home deed.
2. Contact the Municipal Clerk's office and ask where the back-up records of the municipality are kept, and in what format.
3. Ask the municipal clerk or research the Connecticut State laws (available on-line) as to what physical requirements are necessary for the preservation, storage, retrieval and conservation of municipal records.

Field Trips and Other Ideas

- Arrange a class visit to the municipal clerk's office. Have the clerk explain the special requirements for the vault. Also ask the clerk about electronic storage.
- Have the municipal clerk attend a class and bring copies and explain about some of the types of records that are stored in the clerk's office or vault.
- Have the clerk bring absentee ballot registration forms for the students to bring home to their parents and explain the absentee balloting process.
- Have a dog visit the class if allowed and show the class the dog tag and dog registration form.

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Chapter 20

Class Discussion

1. Although students are entitled to a free education, how is it paid for? What level is primarily responsible for K-12 education?
2. Have students identify all the people involved in providing education, and put the list on the board. Be sure they pick up on custodians, maintenance, bus drivers, hall monitors, psychologists, nurses, etc.
3. The local boards of education decide on textbooks, which is not the case in many other states. Should the State of Connecticut adopt textbooks that all students have to use? Why or why not? (A good debate issue)
4. What do student think about the statewide testing they have to take? How could it be improved?

Class Assignments

1. Have students research how much it cost to educate a student in the school. How does this compare with state wide average to educate a student, or compare with other areas, such as a small town or a big city.
2. Is the quality of education among towns equal? If not, what can be done to improve it and equalize it?
3. Find out what DRG your school is in and what other towns are in your DRG. Ask the students if they agree with the assignment of their town in that particular DRG. Why or why not?
NOTE: The school business official can help with these questions and sources of data

Field Trips-Other Ideas

- Invite the principal to the class and his him/her talk about how many employees are in your school, where does the money come from, any big upcoming plans for school renovations or improvements, etc.
- Invite the school business manager to class to talk about the business of education