Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C.
Erie • Pittsburgh • Jamestown, NY
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Municipalities & Authorities

Members of Knox McLaughlin Gornall & Sennett, P.C. have extensive experience working with cities, townships, boroughs, and public authorities and understand the special issues you face. We pool our vast breadth of knowledge to produce favorable and cost-effective results for our clients.

Our attorneys keep current on various developments and trends affecting your interests and have practical, hands-on experience in the full range of relevant legal disciplines. We cover all of your legal needs in areas such as:

Governmental Practice

- Counsel on all matters of municipal liability and immunity
- Provide counsel on parliamentary procedures for public meetings
- Draft and resolve matters involving municipal procurement, including public bidding issues
- Counsel on housing and urban development issues
- Advise on general aviation legal matters and public utility law
- Counsel regarding eminent domain matters
- Provide general counsel to water and sewer authorities
- Advise on compliance with the Municipality Authorities Act, Sunshine Act, Public Official and Employees Ethics Act, and Right-To-Know Law
- Provide counsel on port-related matters

Public Finance & Bonds

- Serve as bond and underwriters' counsel
- Secure required approvals under the Local Government Unit Debt Act
- Document finance transaction for general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, tax and revenue anticipation notes, specialized facilities bonds, and industrial development bonds
- Provide opinions regarding the validity, security, tax-exempt, and tax credit status of bonds, notes, and leases
- Assist in reviewing official statements to enable compliance with federal securities disclosure laws
- Monitor arbitrage regulations
- Advise public bodies on federal tax compliance issues

Real Estate

- Act as solicitor for governing bodies and zoning hearing boards in connection with variance requests, subdivision applications, and rezoning petitions
- Represent public bodies in buying, selling, or developing potentially contaminated property
- Negotiate and prepare leases and other administrative contracts

- Eminent domain proceedings

Environmental Law

- Sewage facilities planning and permitting - Act 537 compliance
- Stormwater permitting
- Recycling
- Water supply

Labor & Employment

- Negotiate collective bargaining agreements
- Provide guidance on bargaining unit issues and all union-related issues
- Represent in grievance processing, labor arbitration, and all matters before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board
- Advise and counsel on all aspects of employment law
- Representation in EEOC and PHRC discrimination claims, unemployment compensation and OSHA matters, and before other administrative agencies
- Prepare employment-related documents and agreements
- Train and update management and supervisors on critical workplace issues

Workers' Compensation

- Defense of work injury claims
- Counsel on loss control and prevention

Litigation

- Defend liability, civil rights, discrimination, employee benefit, and whistle blower claims
- Defend and prosecute contract claims
- Provide representation in alternative dispute resolution, including arbitration and mediation
- Counsel on debarment of public contractors

Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights

- Obtaining relief from stay regarding outstanding taxes and debts
- Collect outstanding or delinquent fees, taxes, and debts
- Consult on collection practices

Municipalities Litigation - Representative Experience

- Won a tax assessment valuation case on behalf of Erie area taxing bodies, resulting in additional past due taxes of nearly $1.2 million
- Obtained favorable decision in a non-jury trial on behalf of the City of Meadville against Crawford County. The City filed a lawsuit against the County seeking an order compelling Crawford County to undertake a comprehensive countywide reassessment of all real property within the County. Following a two day trial, the court found that Crawford County's property tax system violates the uniformity clause of the Pennsylvania Constitution, requiring a countywide reassessment by 2030.
- Obtained summary judgment on behalf of the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority and its former executive director related to a public works contract that displaced a tenant. The tenant was suing for breach of contract and promissory estoppel seeking damages exceeding $1.2 million claiming the

tenant's lease was wrongfully terminated. Following discovery, the court entered summary judgment in our client's favor dismissing the case.

- Successfully defended a tax assessment appeal on behalf of the Warren County Board of Assessment Appeals, in which the property owner sought to decrease the tax assessment on a multi-million-dollar manufacturing facility by half. The decision saved the taxing bodies from losing over $30,000 of annual tax revenue
- Successfully challenged a tax exemption case in Warren County on behalf of the taxing bodies. Following the hearing, the Court denied the property owner's request for a tax exemption, finding it was not an "institution of purely public charity" under the Pennsylvania Constitution
- Obtained dismissal, with prejudice, of Sunshine Act lawsuit against municipal client
- Obtained dismissal, with prejudice, of lawsuit seeking writ of mandamus against township client
- Obtained compulsory nonsuit for municipal client in eminent-domain trial

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