



Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association

The Public Recorder

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From the President, Donna Hooper

TOWN CLERK – THE PROFESSION, PROFESSIONALISM, ROLES & OPPORTUNITIES DONNA HOOPER, PRESIDENT

As another year draws to a close, we look back on a year full of change and activity. It is timely to reflect upon our successes & our challenges, to review our actions and operations and to consider where our decisions may have or may not have proven to be the best possible.

It is a time to consider how our individual actions contribute to or detract from the professionalism of our office -the position and title of Town Clerk. As many a wise person has advised - It is not what you say, but how you say it.

The position of Town Clerk, long ago transferred from one family member to another or chosen by election or promotion of in-office staff, has become of greater interest and appeal as a recognized profession. Clerks are now chosen from a broader pool of candidates with a varied professional work history.

As 2012 draws to a close and we look forward to 2013 as a new year with new opportunities, it is appropriate to ask:

- What does it mean to be a Town Clerk?
- What can I do to strengthen the understanding of my role/position in the community I serve to bring positive recognition to the work?
- What can I do to individually and collectively strengthen the under-

standing of our roles and the position of Town Clerk throughout the Commonwealth?

A number of key professional associations and affiliated organizations exist to support and promote the Town Clerk.

The International Institute of Municipal Clerks, New England Association of City and Town Clerks and Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association are key organizations providing and facilitating training and professional development opportunities for municipal clerks. These trainings not only address the technical requirements of the position but also recognize the importance of education in a broader scope to provide professional development opportunities for clerks to be knowledgeable and articulate in the areas of public management and administration. In addition to these larger organized associations, Massachusetts' county associations for both city and town clerks provide great opportunities for networking and addressing issues regionally.

Don't just make a resolution, seek out or serve as a mentor for fellow Clerks. Be an active contributor to others by not only identifying needs and areas for support and assistance, but by identifying your areas of strength you can share with fellow clerks!

Happy Holidays and
Best wishes to all for the New Year!

MTCA LOBBYIST REPORT—DECEMBER 2012

by Stephen Roche

THE FISCAL CLIFF

As we wind down the year, there is a dark cloud forming over Beacon Hill. The continuing inability of our political leaders in Washington DC is causing our state leaders to issue warnings about the consequences of our nation going over the “fiscal cliff.”

Governor Patrick recently took steps to prepare the Commonwealth for some of the effects of going over the “cliff.” Further complicating fiscal matters is declining state revenues. According to the Governor, we are running over \$500 million behind in tax revenues in FY2013.

In order to balance the state budget, the Governor announced a plan that will affect many state programs and services. He is instituting a 1% cut, totaling \$225 million, in spending reductions through 9C cuts in executive agencies. The Governor will eliminate over 700 new positions that were originally planned and funded in FY2013; that's a savings of \$20 million.

For cities and towns, the most controversial cut in the Governor's plan is a proposal for a 1% across-the-board reduction in unrestricted Local Aid, for a savings of \$9 million. The Governor has asked the General Court for approval of legislation to give him the power to cut Local Aid.

The General Court does seem inclined to give the Governor this power at this time. I expect they will wait until the start of the new legislative session on January 2, 2013 to tackle this issue.

There is a lot of talk on Beacon Hill about tax increases next year. The Governor's FY2014 budget plan will be filed at the end of January, so we will see how he plans to fill the budget gap.

2013-2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

I recently received some surprising and disappointing news about my work for the MTCA – I will not be your lobbyist for the next session. The MTCA Board has voted to select a different firm to represent town clerks on Beacon Hill.

FAREWELL & HAPPY HOLIDAYS

With great effort and enthusiasm I responded to the RFP issued for legislative agent services for the upcoming year and was hopeful the MTCA would view favorably my philosophies guiding my work as a legislative agent, past efforts on behalf of the MTCA, and thoughts for the upcoming year.

I have been most fortunate to represent the MTCA for over 20 years. I never took my work for town clerks for granted and have been proud to be your representative on Beacon Hill. I worked hard to gain respect for your organization and to build a presence at the State House.

I wish the MTCA only the best going forward but I will miss working with the MTCA.

I have so many to thank for their support and friendship over the years; there are too many to list here. Needless-to-say, the MTCA Legislative Chairman Larry Pizer tops that list.

So, farewell, take care, and enjoy the holidays ... and don't be surprised if I drop by your office sometime when I'm in the neighborhood.



OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN & POLITICAL FINANCE

Which candidates file year-end reports?

We sent you our mailing about forms and year-end reporting requirements by e-mail this year, a method that seemed to work well. Please let us know if you want additional e-mail addresses added to the e-mail database for these notifications.

The mailing also generated several questions about which candidates and committees need to file year-end reports by Jan. 22 (Jan. 20 is a Sunday, and Martin Luther King Day is Jan. 21, so the reports are due on Tuesday, Jan. 22).

Here's a breakdown:

- All incumbents, whether they have a cash balance, raised or spent any money or had an election in 2012.

- All incumbents who did not seek re-election and are leaving office.
- All non-incumbent candidates or committees with cash balances or outstanding liabilities as of their last report.

Several of you requested OCPF forms and we've mailed those packets during the last few weeks. The forms and guides can also be printed on-line at this link: <http://www.mass.gov/ocpf/forms.htm>

Seminars

Our office will travel to your community to conduct candidate seminars this spring. Please call Jason Tait at 617-979-8300 to schedule a training session. So far, we've scheduled seminars in Andover, Milford and Sudbury.

OCPF wishes you all a happy holiday season.

MTCA CERTIFICATION EXAM (CMMC) IN JANUARY

The MTCA examination for Certified Massachusetts Municipal Clerk (CMMC) designation will be offered in January. Applications must be received by Administrator Barbara LaBombard by **DECEMBER 15th** for the January exam, which will be mailed between January 1st and January 7th.

Applicants must have at least **three years** experience as **Town Clerk** and must complete a minimum of six required courses sponsored by the MTCA.

The Administrator will verify the courses through the Education Committee. More information is available in the certification program brochure.

Completed exams must be postmarked no later than February 10th for the January exam. Applicants are strongly urged to return the completed answer sheets by certified mail, return receipt requested.

Applicants will be notified by mail of the results of

their exams by March 1st. A copy of the notification must be submitted with the application for MTCA certification. The notification of successful completion of the exam will be valid for one year and will have an expiration date printed on it. If an applicant is not certified within one year, the test must be repeated.

The passing score for the exam is 80. Applicants are advised that they will need access to an updated copy of the Massachusetts General Laws to complete the exam successfully.

A non-refundable fee of \$50.00, made payable to the MTCA, must be submitted with the application. This examination is offered twice yearly – during the months of January and July. Application forms for the examination are available at all MTCA conferences and from the administrator, Barbara LaBombard - (cityclerk@easthampton.org) or by calling 413-529-1460.

MASSACHUSETTS TOWN CLERKS ASSOCIATION

~ SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FOR MTCA CONFERENCES ~

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
I am a Town Clerk or an Assistant Town Clerk.	_____	_____
I am the only applicant from my municipality.	_____	_____
I have been denied all or partial funding from my municipality and I am enclosing the <u>letter of denial</u> .	_____	_____
I am a member in good standing of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association.	_____	_____
I have paid my annual dues to the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association and have been a member for at least one year prior to the date of this application.	_____	_____

If you have answered **YES** to all of the above, you may apply for financial assistance. If you have answered **NO** to any of the above, you must include a letter of explanation stating why you have not complied with the above criteria. All applications must be received 30-days prior to the MTCA Conference.

Please note:

If you live within a 50-mile radius of the conference site, scholarship funding is limited to conference registration, lunch and travel expenses from your place of employment.

If you live outside a 50-mile radius from the conference site, scholarship funding may include registration, meals, travel expenses from your place of employment, and hotel accommodations.

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____

JOB TITLE/TOWN _____ POPULATION _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT REQUESTED \$ _____ **My Municipality will pay \$** _____

Return this application, letter of denial and any necessary letter of explanation to the MTCA Scholarship Chair; Nancy M. Blackmer, 1st Vice President, MTCA, 6 Prospect St., Orange, MA 01364 before January 2, 2013.

FOR USE BY MTCA CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE ONLY:

Date received: _____ Date action taken: _____

Amount awarded: _____ **OR** Reason for denial: _____

MASSACHUSETTS TOWN CLERKS' ASSOCIATION OFFERS CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS!

By Nancy M. Blackmer

In August 2008 the MTCA Executive Board voted to create scholarship funding for the MTCA conferences for municipal clerks who may have trouble obtaining financing from their communities to attend the MTCA conferences. You can apply for a scholarship for the cost of just the meals if you are a commuter, or the cost of the one or two night package if you plan to stay at the hotel. **This is completely separate from the NEMCI &A scholarships!**

The Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association holds three conferences annually in three different locations across the state in order to make attendance as easy as possible for the greatest number of municipal clerks in an effort to provide guidance and education to our membership. The MTCA Mission is **"The MTCA shall be dedicated to the purposes of increasing the proficiency of Town Clerks and other local government officials, of strengthening the quality of local government through professionalism, and of promoting recognition of the importance of the office of the Town Clerk."**

The application and criteria are printed below and will be available prior to each conference. If you can meet the criteria and hope to attend the Winter Conference in February, please fill out the application and send it to **the MTCA Scholarship Chair Nancy M. Blackmer, 1st Vice President, MTCA, 6 Prospect St., Orange, MA 01364 by January 2, 2013.**

MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA

The Executive Board shall determine, annually, the amount of scholarship monies to be allocated. Scholarships are only for those applicants who have been denied funds from their municipalities.

It shall be the Scholarship Committee chaired by the 1st Vice President that shall award the scholarships.

Scholarship awards will be limited to one person per office with the Clerk having first preference.

Applicant must be a Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk.

An applicant must be a member of the MTCA.

6. An applicant must have requested funds from his/her municipality and include a letter of denial for such funds.

The deadline for filing an application with the 1ST Vice President shall be 30 days prior to conference.

8. Applicants within a 50 mile radius - scholarship will consist of registration fee and lunch. Applicants outside a 50 mile radius - scholarship will consist of registration, meals and hotel accommodations if requested.

Conferences.....why go? by Linda Hutchenrider

There are so many reasons why you should attend the Massachusetts Town and City Clerk Conferences, the New England Association of City and Town Clerks Conferences, New England Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks conferences.

1. The first and foremost reason is education. You can take classes to inform, educate, and update you on subjects that we deal with throughout the year. If you are better educated, you will be a better clerk.
2. You can use that education to become certified through IIMC and the MTCA.
3. You also have the opportunity to receive updates from the various departments that we work with – i.e.: Elections, VRIS, Vitals, to name a few. These are of utmost importance, since our laws are continually changing.
4. If there are major changes to any of the laws, don't worry. You can count on the fact that the various education committees will provide you with a class to show you how to adjust to the changes.
5. Conferences also give you the chance to meet and speak with vendors. These are the companies who deal with products that we use and services

that we need.

6. You can network with other clerks to discover possibly a better or simpler way to perform a task.

One of the big things for some of us, who have been going to conferences for a while, is not just education and networking. It is friendship. Town and City Clerks alike have the opportunity to: spend time with each other; go to classes; share meals; share some laughs; and sometimes, have the good fortune to make lasting friendships with fellow clerks.

As some of us are nearing retirement, one of the big things we will all miss is having the easy opportunity of seeing other clerks on a regular basis. Other clerks are the ONLY people that truly understand our job and how it affects us. Clerks support other clerks through good and bad times. I am sure many of us will keep in touch with friends after leaving office; but there are other clerks, who we may not have the good fortune to continue seeing.

Go to the conferences for all the good reasons; and cherish the times you spend with each other. It is a wonderful part of being a Town/City Clerk. A part that will be hard for us to forget.

MTCA CONFERENCES

2013

MTCA WINTER CONFERENCE



Sturbridge Host Hotel
February 6 - 8, 2013

www.sturbridgehosthotel.com



MTCA SUMMER CONFERENCE



SeaCrest Beach Hotel
June 5 - 7, 2013

www.seacrestbeachhotel.com

MTCA FALL CONFERENCE



Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort
October 2 - 4, 2013

www.jiminypeak.com

In Memoriam 2012



MARIE TURNER, WINTHROP, 13 YEARS



DIANE FOLEY, WEST SPRINGFIELD, 24 YEARS



ELINOR PEARSON, NORFOLK, 15 YEARS



ELEONORA BURKE, SOUTHBOROUGH, 10 YEARS



J.J. LYONS, BROCKTON, 21 YEARS



ROBERT J. O'KEEFE, WORCESTER, 45 YEARS

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James Cash Penney



*Special thanks to Jeremy P. Gillis,
Town Clerk of Easton,
for providing this information.*

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Newsletter of the MTCA

584 Main Street
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Massachusetts Town Clerks Association

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The Public Recorder

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