

# The Public Recorder



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## Report of the President, Donna Hooper

### Election Reform – and the Municipal Clerk

Virtually a day doesn't pass where some type of election related topic isn't in the news - the challenges and issues of voters, elected officials, candidates, and election administrators.

Issue frequently discussed include:

- \* Voting technologies and internet offerings
- \* Multi lingual ballots
- \* Overseas & Military voting
- \* Voter ID
- \* Voter registration system modernization
- \* Instant Runoff Voting
- \* Voter convenience & assistance

With a long and diverse listing of reform initiatives, we can't help but question how election reform is to meet the needs, demands, and interests of the multitude of stakeholders – voters, election officials, policy makers, researchers, technology experts, businesses and others in the election process to help guide election 'modernization'. Who are they and how should they be included in establishing election reform?

Many have the aims for election accuracy & security, convenience, efficiency & cost effectiveness using state of the art technologies and systems. Many questions come to mind when these generalities are stated:

- \* How is that measured given the vast differences in voter expectations and needs?
- \* What is election modernization and how should it be approached?
- \* Whose views are any more or less important?
- \* How can reform be more proactive instead of reactive?
- \* What kind of resources must be committed?
- \* How is it different for the New England states, Michigan and Wisconsin's decentralized election administration vs. those states running elections at the county level?
- \* Should election operations be more uniform throughout the country?
- \*

Reform is not easy or quick, and strong opinions exist. These questions and these issues are not for us to dictate but are for the municipal clerk to have a voice. Massachusetts' movement of the MTCA-sponsored Election Laws Task Force (H.3115) is long overdue and critical for Massachusetts to have an effective and thoughtful approach to election reform. With a change in some of the players, and our Association's 'Day on the Hill' scheduled for March 19, 2012 a wish for our Association should be that 2012 is now the year for the voice of the municipal clerk to be heard and for progress to be made.

## MTCA LOBBYIST REPORT – JANUARY 2012

### By Stephen Roche

#### 2012 STATE PRIMARY

Now that the General Court has returned to formal sessions, the pace is picking up at the State House. One unresolved issue is whether or not there will be another proposal to change the date of the 2012 State Primary.

Of course, we are moving closer and closer to various deadlines for running for state office this year, making it less likely that another change will go through. But we will see – there are some who believe there may be one more attempt to change the date.

#### 2012 ISSUES OF NOTE

The MTCA Legislative Committee met recently to review the bills that comprise the MTCA Agenda. At this point, all of our bills have been heard and are still in committee. In terms of our work, here are the main areas of interest.

- Election Laws Task Force bill – **House 3115**. *This is our top priority for 2012. We need you to talk with your local state legislators now to get them on board. The mess created by the change of date for the 2012 State Primary is yet another example of why we need a Task Force.*
- Animal Control bill – **Senate 1033**. As you know, we continue to object to the surcharge in the bill; so long as it remains part of the bill, we will oppose it. *You will be asked at the MTCA Conference in Sturbridge whether or not you wish to add this issue to the MTCA Agenda.*
- JP Fees – **House Docket 4190**. This is a late-file bill filed by Rep. Martha Walz of Boston. Basically, this bill was filed in response to press reports about the City Clerk of Boston earning over \$60,000 in fees for serving as JP for weddings at Boston City Hall. The proposal provides that the “total fee for lawfully solemnizing and certifying a marriage connected by a municipal employee during business hours ... shall be deposited with the municipality.” The bill is before the Judiciary Committee. *You will be asked at the MTCA Conference in Sturbridge whether or not you wish to add this issue to the MTCA Agenda.*

#### NEW HOUSE CHAIRMAN OF ELECTION LAWS

As you may know, we have a new House Chair of the Election Laws Committee. Representative Aaron Michlewitz of Boston was appointed by Speaker DeLeo to fill the vacancy when Rep. Mike Moran moved up to become one the House Floor Leaders.

Rep. Michlewitz was elected in a special election in 2009 to fill the North End seat vacated by former Speaker of the House Sal DiMasi. He is a graduate of Northeastern University.

MTCA President Donna Hooper and MTCA Legislative Chair Larry Pizer joined Michelle DeNisco and I at a recent meeting with the new chairman at the State House. In fairness to Rep. Michlewitz, he is very new to this position and to this committee. However, he was very open to our comments and opinions and stated that he looks forward to working with the MTCA.

We pressed him hard on the need for an Election Laws Task Force and he was open to the idea.

## SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Yet another special legislative election was held recently to fill the senate seat vacated by Steven Tolman of Boston who is now the President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO. State Representative William Brownsberger of Belmont beat out three other Democrats to win the December 13<sup>th</sup> Primary Election. He was unopposed in the final election.

Senator-Elect Brownsberger will be sworn in on January 24<sup>th</sup> after resigning his House seat.

There is a lot of discussion right now on Beacon Hill on whether or not to fill Brownsberger's House seat and the House seat about to be vacated by Vincent Pedone of Worcester; Rep. Pedone is leaving the Legislature to accept a job as the new executive officer of the Council of Presidents of the Massachusetts State University System.

On the one hand, citizens in these two districts will not have representation in the House for nearly a year if no special election is held. On the other hand, conducting the special elections will cost the state and municipalities hundreds of thousands of dollars and provide only several months of representation for the communities involved.

Speaking of monies for special elections, a recent supplemental budget – **House 3878** – provides \$101,000 to the State Secretary for the state's cost for the Brownsberger election. No monies were allocated for local costs.

*MTCA "DAY ON THE HILL" – MARCH 19, 2012*

**Please mark the date and plan to attend if you can.**

We are working closely with Donna and Larry to pull together the program for the Day on the Hill. We expect several key legislators to attend and address the clerks in attendance. We will brief clerks on the issues of the day and how to effectively lobby their local legislators.

### NEED A RIDE ??



The Western Mass. City and Town Clerks Association and the Worcester County Clerks have reserved a bus for the upcoming trip to Boston for Clerk's Day on the Hill on March 19th. Anyone wishing to join the bus trip should contact Nancy Blackmer to reserve a seat on the bus.

The bus will pick up at Staples Plaza in Greenfield at 6:30 a.m., at the Quality Inn in West Springfield at 7:30 a.m., and at Park & Ride off from I-90, Exit 10A in Auburn at 8:15 a.m. The cost for the bus is \$21.00 per person. Checks payable to Western Mass. City & Town Clerks Assoc. (WMCTCA) can be sent to Nancy Blackmer, Town Clerk, 6 Prospect St., Orange, MA 01364. Please include your name, town, and location you plan to board the bus. If you have any questions you can call 978-544-1100, ext. 101 or e-mail [townclerk@townoforange.org](mailto:townclerk@townoforange.org). Seats are limited and will be on first come basis.

**Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association  
Business Meeting  
Jiminy Peak  
October 13, 2011**

Donna Hooper, President of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association, called the meeting to order at 12:53 p.m.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

June 10, 2011 Business Meeting minutes were published in the May edition of The Public Recorder. A motion was made and seconded to approve the June 10, 2011 Business Meeting minutes. The motion was carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Mr. Cutler called on clerks to send in membership dues.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's report. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Cutler thanked those who bought 50/50 tickets for the 2016 New England Conference and announced that the committee would begin doing baskets at the 2012 Sea Crest conference.

**LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Mr. Pizer told the meeting that he had received questions over the past few weeks about what clerks should do if they have an issue that they think the association should support.

He prefaced his comments with the remark made by Representative Steve Kulik, at the morning Legislative Action class; that the best associations have a compact agenda that they bring to the legislature.

Mr. Pizer said this is what the Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association does. They have a small legislative agenda, they work on those bills, and they get them passed.

Mr. Pizer said this doesn't mean that they can't add to the agenda. If someone has something they think should be addressed, bring it to him and he will take it to the Legislative Committee. They will decide if it is added to the agenda. One important consideration is whether or not it is pertinent to Town Clerks. If not there may be another group through which it might be more appropriate to take action. If someone thinks the Legislative Committee is wrong then appeal to them; they can contact the association and get feedback. If enough people agree that it should be taken up then they will add it to the agenda.

Michelle DeMesco told the meeting that a number of bills had been filed this session and all but one has been heard. Election Laws Task Force will be heard on November 2.

Right now the Joint Committee has not scheduled any meetings but they (Victory Group) are on top of them to get our bills through.

Steve Roche reported that Massachusetts will most likely get casino gambling. The House has passed the bill, and the Governor has already committed to sign it if it falls within certain parameters, which they believe it does. It is scheduled to be heard today. There are a few differences between the two branches so it will take a couple of weeks to resolve. November 16 is date for final session. Conference Committee will come up with a compromise bill to take to the Governor before that date.

The basic framework is three casinos distributed geographically across the state.

Another issue the senate is finishing up with and the house will take in two weeks is dealing with the Pension Reform Bill. This would affect elected clerks who work for another government entity. They would have to take a one year cooling off period before taking another job. Mr. Roche said his Town Clerk had called him and said the bill would affect him for these reasons. Mr. Roche made a commitment to talk to the house chair of the Public Service Commission. Mr. Roche anticipates they will see a bill completed before the legislature takes its break.

Other interesting meetings and hearings over the past two months included a meeting on House 1979 which allows 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register. Mr. Roche told the sponsor that many clerks are opposed and could not be supportive.

Mr. Roche also met with Senator Barry Feingold to talk about election bills; voter ID and ID requirement at local elections.

Also, the animal control bill, 1033, was killed last session because of surcharge. The bill is in committee and not going anywhere; however it was refiled with same language so surcharge is still there.

Mr. Roche said there is interest in House 2739, which is a bill requiring clerks to get mandatory training as an elections officer. Mr. Roche doesn't feel it is necessary unless someone can actually point out deficiencies.

Mr. Roche supported the Legislative Committee's position of having a small legislative agenda, but assured the membership that many other bills which may affect the office of the Town Clerk are still being looked at.

A clerk asked Mr. Roche a question regarding the effect the Pension Reform Bill would be on a particular individual who is a Town Clerk and a Clerk for their Fire District; both elected positions. Mr. Roche said it was very complicated and advised her to talk to her house representative.

#### FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Ms. Blackmer thanked the clerks and the vendors for coming to the conference, and reminded everyone that raffle tickets would be drawn after the break which would be held in JJ's.

#### SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Mr. Dowd welcomed everyone back to Jiminy. He noted that the facility is familiar with our group from years past.

Problems, some more apparent than others, are being worked out. Hopefully they will improve in these areas. Mr. Dowd welcomed constructive ideas and suggestions.

#### PRESIDENT

Ms. Hooper acknowledged new clerks.

Haley A. Meczywor, Adams; Ann Dunne, Ashfield; Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Belmont; Robin Phelan, Boxford; Elizabeth Sloan, Hanson; Cheryl A. Jenkins, Holden; Marcia Lanctot, Millville; Kathleen Martell, Pelham; Paula Burke, Topsfield; Judy ???, Hingham; Ronni Barrett, West Stockbridge; Amy Warfield, Burlington; Carol St. Pierre, Cohasset; Lisa Turner, Hawley; Jeanmarie Tarara, Holbrook; Elizabeth Greendale, Holliston; Patricia E. Brown, Rockport; Denise Graffeo, Tewksbury; Gretchen C. Smith, Wendell; and Susan M. Coache, Palmer.

Ms. Hooper called on Barbara LaBombard, Certification Administrator to present CMMC awards.

Ms. LaBombard presented the CMMC award to Katherine Kelly Reagan, Granby.

First CMMC recertification was presented to Eileen M. Lowney, Fairhaven; Nancy J. Lowell, Warren; and Nancy J. Talbot, Ware.

Second CMMC recertification was presented to Lynn M. Sibley, Whately.

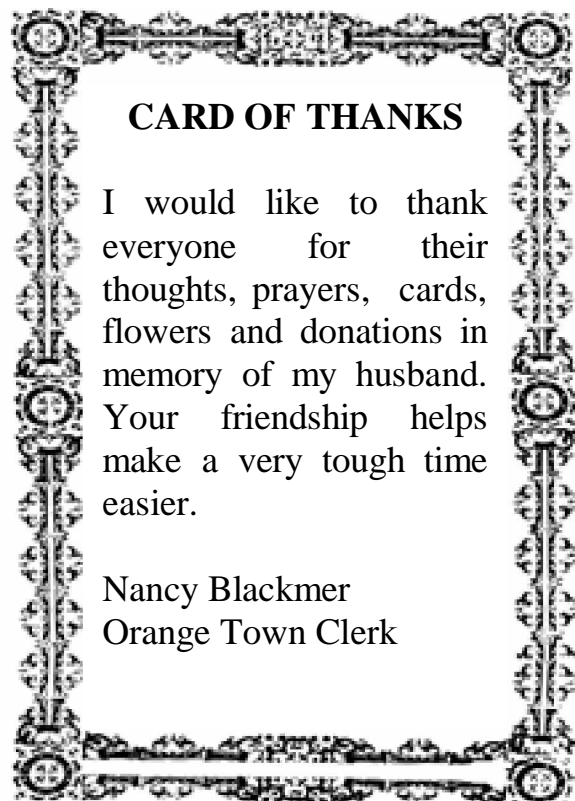
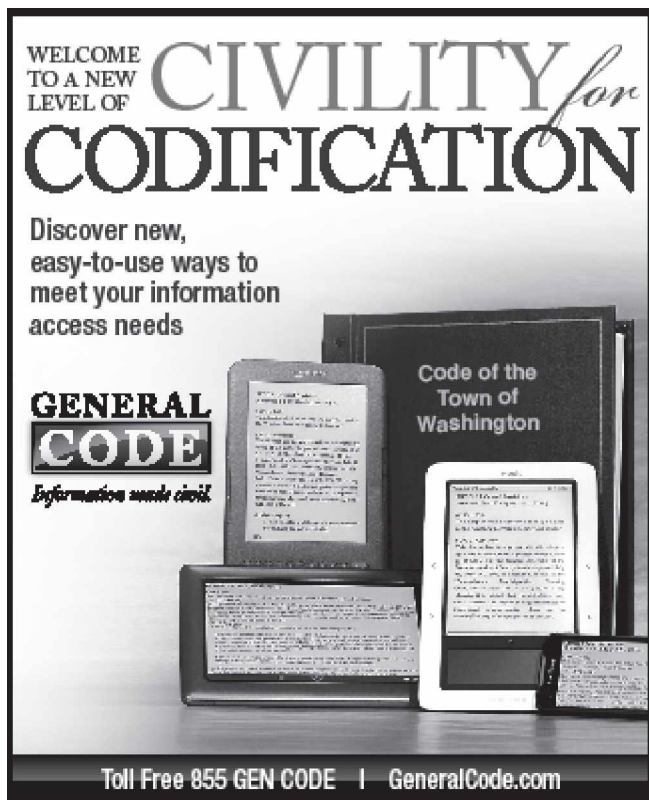
Third CMMC recertification was presented to Nancy M. Oates, Duxbury; Anita M. Doucette, Harwich; and Mary Lou Murzyn, Kingston.

Ms. LaBombard announced that Laurence R. Pizer, Plymouth received Fourth CMMC Recertification in June 2011.

Ms. Hooper made several announcements.

- Afternoon session begins at 1:45 p.m.
- Eighteen communities have still not completed the process required to work in the VIP system. RVRS is very keen on assisting these communities to get signed on and trained.
- There will be a FAST meeting in Crane West immediately following the afternoon class
- There will be a New Clerks meeting in Crane East in order to give them an opportunity to speak with veteran clerks.
- Afternoon break will be at 3:00 p.m.
- There will be a Social Hour at 6:00 p.m. with dinner at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m.



**New England Municipal Clerk Institute & Academy  
@ Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH  
July 14-20, 2012  
2012 Scholarship Application Procedures**

By Nancy M. Blackmer, MTCA Scholarship Chair

The 2012 New England Municipal Clerk Institute & Academy returns July 14-20, 2012 to Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH. 2012 promises to be another exciting year for the NEMCI.

NEACTC members planning to attend the Institute or Academy are advised the deadline for applying for a scholarship is **Thursday, March 15, 2012.**

All applications will be reviewed by Scholarship Committee members Nancy Blackmer (Orange), Marlene Chused (Sharon) and Sandra Burgess (Amherst). Applicants will receive notification of award, to be followed by announcements at the June 2012 MTCA conference.

In awarding scholarships to attend the New England Municipal Clerk Institute & Academy, the MTCA gives preference to first-time students.

Scholarships to attend the Institute are also funded by the state associations, New England Association of City and Town Clerks, and the New England Municipal Clerks Institute. Scholarship applications will be funded at the state level and forwarded to NEACTC for further funding if needed.

The application will be in the February Public Recorder. Be sure to print it and return it before the deadline.

**Application Deadline: Thursday, March 15, 2012!**

**Submit scholarship application to:**

MTCA Scholarship Committee  
c/o Nancy M. Blackmer  
6 Prospect St.  
Orange, MA 01364  
townclerk@townoforange.org  
Phone: 978-544-1100, ext. 101; Fax: 978-544-1134

## WE WANT YOU!



The New England Association of City and Town Clerks Annual Conference returns to Massachusetts in 2016 and will need your help to make it the best conference yet! The time to start preparing for this event is now, and we are looking for volunteers to serve on the Conference Committee. Whatever your expertise, however much time you can spare, this is a great opportunity to interact with your colleagues and give back to the Association. Please email [NEACTC2016@gmail.com](mailto:NEACTC2016@gmail.com) with your contact info if you would like to be part of this fantastic experience. We Look Forward to hearing from You!

We will also be conducting 50/50 and basket raffles at the Sturbridge conference, all donations welcome!

## FOR ALL GRADUATES OF NEMCI!!!

FOR ALL GRADUATES OF NEMCI!!! - An Alumni Academy Session will be offered for the first time in July of 2012 - so be sure and watch for more details as time goes on. As a fund raising effort, we have created a new Alumni Polo shirt and logo for ALL graduates of NEMCI...so please order your shirt now and join us in July of 2012. The Board of NEMCI&A appreciates your support. To order: Go to the New England website and fill out an order form and mail it today!!!

Ann M. Quirk, CMC  
Assistant Town Clerk  
Town of Barnstable



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# Newsletter of the MTCA

584 Main Street  
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## **The Public Recorder**

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