



Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association

The Public Recorder

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JUNE 2014

From the President, Nancy M. Blackmer

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As I write this, we are busy preparing for the summer conference at Sea Crest. I hope those of you that attended enjoyed it and learned something new. We have a lot of new Town Clerks this year so I hope many of you were able to attend the New Clerks class. The Education Committee works hard to offer classes they think will be of interest to everyone. The Conference Committee also works hard to make sure there are no problems at the conference. I want to thank them again for all they do to make our conferences great.

The Election Law bill passed and was signed into law recently. Many of the changes will not be effective until 2016. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's office will be busy developing the regulations for this new law. I have talked to Michelle Tassinari and she has said that they will not be working on this until after the 2014 elections. She has also indicated that she plans to enlist the help of a few Town Clerks when working on this. The biggest change for our offices will be the Early Voting. Fortunately, they did not accept the Senate version which would have required many of our offices to be open on the Saturday and Sunday prior to the election. This would have created a large financial hardship for our cities and towns.

The other good part is that the Early Voting will only be for biennial elections – not primaries. While many may not support the Early Voting, we were lucky that some of the items requested to be part of this did not pass (expanded hours – including all

weekdays, nights and weekends and multiple sites).

The Election Law did eliminate the cancellation device requirement. It also reduced the number of officials to be trained annually and creates an election law task force where the City and Town Clerks will each be included. The advocacy groups will only have one representative, instead of one representative for each group, on the task force.

The law allows 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register. The Secretary's office will have to develop regulations and a system to implement this as well. Again, this will be worked on after the 2014 elections.

I know we all want to know how we will be required to implement these various regulations, but I ask you to give the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office time to work on this after the elections this fall.

At the Conference, I will be giving out membership recognition pins to 40 clerks totaling over 685 years of service. Congratulations to all of you.

BEACON HILL REPORT

by Thomas Joyce, Esq.

On May 22, 2014 Governor Patrick signed into law Chapter 111 of the Acts of 2014, "An Act Relative to Election Laws". Many of the most complicated sections of this law will not take effect until October of 2015 giving Secretary William Galvin plenty of time to promulgate thoughtful regulations with our input.

A tremendous amount of work was done by your Legislative Committee, as directed by association officials and the MTCA Executive Board on your behalf. I am proud to have been your lobbyist during this exciting and productive process. To be certain, major public policy changes, not even remotely on the horizon or even technologically possible even a decade ago, have been adopted to make it easier for Commonwealth voters to exercise their right to vote.

Soon sixteen and seventeen year olds will be able to pre-register, voters will be able to register and check their voting status by clicking a button on line and, as in 32 other states, our voters will likely not endure long lines at the polls with the enactment of early voting for biennial state elections.

Yes, all of this represents incredible change but should not present an undue burden to Clerk's and their staffs. Unrelenting efforts to require additional daily and weekend hours for your offices to stay open were rejected along with efforts to establish additional polling places for early voting. Additionally, a huge effort by the Governor and some Senators to create same day voter registration along with permanent and portable registration was thankfully rejected as well.

Importantly, the vast majority of the MTCA legislative agenda was included in the law. There will be no need for poll workers to receive annual training from the Secretary of State, the requirement for voting machine cancellation devices has been removed, you will be able to request a waiver for the number of election workers and finally, at long last, an elections task force has been established to include one town clerk, one city clerk, but only one advocacy group member.

To cap off this tremendous legislative achievement at the Sea Crest Convention, Representative James Mur-

phy, (D) Weymouth, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Election Laws was awarded the MTCA Legislator of the Year Award for the 2013-2014 legislative session. His magnificent leadership made certain MTCA members were heard and successful.

Although there is a lot happening on Beacon Hill, I do not believe anything will overshadow our victory!



From left to right: MTCA President Nancy Blackmer, MTCA Legislator of the Year Representative James Murphy, Weymouth, and MTCA Legislative Agent Tom Joyce.

MTCA CONFERENCES

MTCA FALL CONFERENCE

Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel

Springfield, MA

October 1 - 3, 2014

NEACTC CONFERENCE

Sheraton Harborside Hotel

Portsmouth, NH

November 19 - 21, 2014

OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN & POLITICAL FINANCE

Campaign finance questions and answers

Here are some questions that city and town clerks have asked recently:

Q: Can candidates fax or e-mail their campaign finance forms to town hall?

A: OCPF previously said that an original signed report was required, but we have updated advice based on state law. (MGL Chapter 110G allows signatures to be conveyed by electronic means). Local election officials may accept campaign finance reports and organizational forms from candidates by fax or e-mail.

Q: Can a candidate collect nomination signatures in town hall?

A: Yes, but only in areas that are open to all, subject to reasonable time, place and manner restrictions. Municipalities should work with their legal counsel to develop written policies that apply to all petitioners and/or candidates.

Q: A public employee who parks at town hall has a big campaign sign attached to his truck in support of a local candidate and people have complained. Can he do this?

A: The campaign finance law would not prohibit a public employee from placing a sign on his private vehicle, even if it's parked in a municipal parking lot.

Please call OCPF at 617-979-8300 with any questions about the campaign finance law.

MTCA CERTIFICATION EXAM (CMMC) IN JULY

The MTCA examination for Certified Massachusetts Municipal Clerk (CMMC) designation will be offered in July. Applications must be received by Administrator Barbara LaBombard by **JUNE 30th** for the July exam, which will be mailed between July 16th and 23rd.

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 August 25th for the July 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 September 15th. A copy of the notifi-

cation 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 from the administrator, Barbara LaBombard. For more information or to receive the exam packet, please e-mail city-clerk@easthampton.org or call 413-529-1460.

CONFERENCE UPDATE

By Jeremy Gillis, 2nd Vice President

SEACREST: I hope you all enjoyed the Summer Conference. If you have any complaints, suggestions, etc. please send them to me via email.

CONFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE: 87 of you responded to the survey I sent out earlier this year. Thank You. The results of that survey played heavily in the next item:

FALL CONFERENCE: The Fall Conference will be held October 1,2,3 at the newly renovated Springfield Sheraton. <http://www.sheratonspringfield.com/>

The room rate will be \$119/night. That rate will be extended to MTCA members for 3 days prior and 3 days post event. Overnight parking will be free, and there will be complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the hotel. Registration will be open later in the Summer. Food will be separate from the Hotel package and meal packages will be purchased directly from the MTCA.

Why did we decide on this venue instead of Jiminy?

1. Cost. Conferences cost a lot of money to attend, and a lot to put on. This venue is the best deal \$\$ wise for both individual municipalities and the MTCA.

2. Location: In reviewing the survey responses and doing a geographic mapping of conference registrants, Jiminy was unpopular due to extensive travel times. A good portion of the eastern counties (Essex down through Dukes/Barnstable, etc) did not attend Jiminy, while there was no increase in registration from Western Communities. A super majority of responses requested that the fall conference move east. In moving to Springfield, we still keep it as the "western" conference, but perhaps make it more con-

venient for everyone to attend. Jiminy's location prevented a large part of the state from attending, while failing to attract any more western MA communities. Unlike Seacrest or Sturbridge, Jiminy truly became a very regionalized conference for a much smaller number of Clerks. A slightly eastern move will benefit a lot more Clerks in their ability to continue their professional development. (Please note that the North Shore has for many years been outside the 50 mile radius of ALL 3 conferences, moving this one slightly east and in turn moving the Winter Conference slightly north will be fairer to all members of the MTCA)

3. Facility: Respondents to the survey felt that the Fall Conference facility was dated. Better amenities were a top priority for a majority of respondents. This move also seeks to satisfy that.

4. Dining: Dining options at Jiminy were very limited. With 2 restaurants in the Sheraton, more across the sky bridge at the Marriot and many more within a few blocks, there will be many more options available to members.

This decision was not taken lightly, but especially in a state election year, it was felt that conferences are that much more important to the members, and the location should be the most accessible for the most members possible.

FACEBOOK GROUP

By Jeremy Gillis, 2nd Vice President

We have set up a MTCA group on Facebook. Currently the settings for this group are “secret”, meaning that only members of the group can see the group, its membership and what is posted. There are currently about 50 members. It seems to be going well and offers a more “collegial” setting for us to communicate. There are photos of past conferences, reminiscing’s, items from the MTCA’s past as well as discussion points. If you are on Facebook and would like to join the group, please shoot me an email and we will take care of it.

The current group setting is “secret” which means a member of the group needs to add you. For those of you who want to join the Facebook page, there are 2

easy methods:

1. Send me an email with the email address you use for your facebook account. I can then send an invitation to that email.

2. Send me a Friend Request: <https://www.facebook.com/jeremy.p.gillis> and I will add you in that way. (no need to stay my friend after if you don’t want to, I understand some people keep very close tabs on their friends list. I won’t be offended J)

I hope you find this useful and enjoy the page!

RETIREMENT

WILLIAM BARNETT TOWN CLERK BELCHERTOWN



Nearly 200 individuals were present at the retirement party of William Barnett on Saturday June 21st at the Knights Of Columbus Hall in Chicopee, MA.

Friends, family, municipal employees, and stage officials were present for the occasion. Mr. Barnett was in his usual good humor but his wife Sharon, acting as Master of Ceremonies stole the show as when she told story after story about her husband of forty-four years.

Senator Stanley Rosenberg of Amherst presented a citation from the State Senate, Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan spoke as did Anthony Cignolli a political analyst and longtime friend. Each remarked about Bill’s integrity, his willingness to serve his community in many capacities over the years and his knowledge of the Town of Belchertown. Mr. Barnett was Treasurer Collector for the town for many

years and was also elected as a member of the Board of Selectmen, a position he will retain. Bill is also a member of the Hampshire Council of Governments and will continue to serve in this role also.

Representing the MA Town Clerks Association were Tom Florence of East Longmeadow, Nancy Talbot of Ware and retired Town Clerk of Palmer Patricia Donovan, who presented Mr. Barnett a gift from the association. The gift presented was a clock. Ironically, anyone who knows Bill is keenly aware of the many watches, clocks and his value of time; one of the many stories his wife told was that even though he has watches and clocks to spare he is generally unaware of what time it is!

The newly elected Town Clerk of Belchertown is Colleen Toothill-Berte was also present for the occasion.

CERTIFIED MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL CLERKS

These Clerks, having successfully completed the educational requirements for Certification and having met all other professional and educational standards of the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association, have been designated:

Certified Massachusetts Municipal Clerks

Elizabeth Sloan, Hanson

Diane Packer, Natick

Carlene Hamlin, South Hadley



From left to right: Carlene Hamlin, South Hadley; Elizabeth Sloan, Hanson; and Diane Packer, Natick.

CMMC: First Recertification

Linda Ramsdell, Ashburnham

Joyce Green, Hubbardston

CMMC: Third Recertification

Anita Tekle, Concord

Evelyn Bird, Windsor

**Congratulations to these
Massachusetts Clerks in recognition of their ongoing
training and professional development!!**

SEACREST CONFERENCE PHOTOS



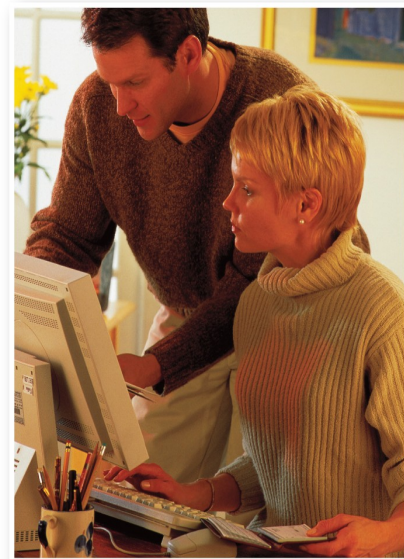
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- Mary-Ellen Lannon Town Clerk of Winchester

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