



# Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association

# The Public Recorder

Volume 57, No. 89

MARCH 2013 April 2013

## From the President, Donna Hooper

### MTCA Communications Committee – Taking Clerks into the Electronic Age

I am pleased to report the great work of the MTCA's Communications Committee in recognizing the important role of technology in effective communication with, between, and by MTCA members. The MTCA Communications Committee, established in 2012 by the Executive Board and affirmed as a bylaw Committee by MTCA members in June 2012, *is charged with both paper and electronic communications to, from and among members, which includes establishing guidelines for and management of the Association's web site, e-mail discussion group (including etiquette guidelines), newsletter, and social media alternatives*.

Since creation, Committee members Nancy Burnham, Laura Gemme, Jeremy Gillis (MTCA Secretary), Jeffrey Sauer, and Amy Warfield reviewed and evaluated options for a coordinated, seamless system incorporating the MTCA specific web site (formerly found as part of NEACTC), yahoo email capabilities, 'social media', and 'The Public Recorder' newsletter for MTCA members and associate members.

### Great News – Results of the Communications Committee's work:

**Web Site:** [www.masstownclerks.org](http://www.masstownclerks.org) – This newly published website provides up-to-date information on critical information for municipal clerks, beginning with:

- Conference Registration Information (*soon to be released*)

- Association Bylaws & Policies
- Important Links – to NEACTC, IIMC, MMA, Commonwealth of MA, and allied agencies

### MEMBERS ONLY:

[www.masstownclerk.org](http://www.masstownclerk.org) will also include a 'members only' section accessible by members via an assigned log-in. This secure section of the web site will include MTCA :

- ✦ *The Public Recorder*
- ✦ Survey results
- ✦ Conference handouts & materials
- ✦ Legislative issues & positions
- ✦ Conference scholarship information
- ✦ 'The Public Recorder' archived copies
- ✦ Executive Board & Business Meeting Minutes
- ✦ Financial Statements
- ✦ County Association News & Information
- .....and more

**The Public Recorder:** Immediate access by MTCA members to the most current edition of The Public Recorder, MTCA's monthly newsletter, is made by posting on the MTCA web site. Opportunities for identifying publication frequency and content are under review.

**Advertisements:** Advertisements from participating and supporting vendors will be posted on the MTCA web site, providing more immediate visibility for the vendors and access by municipal Clerks.

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## BEACON HILL REPORT

by Thomas Joyce, Esq.

March was a month mainly consumed by the discussion of taxes inside the State House and at public hearings across the state. The Ways & Means Committees conducted a series of hearings focusing on crafting a realistic fiscal budget for fiscal 2014, using the Governor's plan, outlined in H1, as a framework. You may recall I reported last month that the Governor's plan called for an increase in the income tax as well as the elimination of scores of presently allowed tax deductions to raise an additional \$2billion in revenue, ostensibly to fund transportation and education needs.

At the time of this writing, the House fiscal budget document is being printed and will be unveiled on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The House plans to debate it the week of April 22. In the mean time House and Senate leaders, along with the Joint Committee on Transportation have taken this opportunity, separate from the budget, to develop and propose a tax bill to raise \$500million to fund transportation needs. The legislative plan calls for an increase in tobacco tax, a tax on computer services, a 3cent per gallon increase in the gas tax and a change in utility tax classification to achieve this goal. To be sure, this approach will not sit well with the Governor. You can expect him to amass all of his power to defeat it. The legislature will counter by promoting what it deems a more limited approach arguably relying less on taxing the middle class, their average voter! Stay tuned as the drama unfolds on both items in April.

Closer to home perhaps for the association, the joint legislative committees have begun their work, sorting nearly 6000 bills assigned to them for consideration. Public hearings have now started and the wheels of the legislative branch of government are churning! In fact, on March 27<sup>th</sup> the first public hearing directly affecting our interest was held by the Joint Committee on Election Laws taking testimony on 24 bills dealing with proposed constitutional amendments and constitutionally related issues involving absentee and early voting as well as further defining certain voter eligibility.

A number of elected officials testified including interested Representatives and Senators as well as Sec-

retary Galvin. A host of advocates including Common Cause, MASSVOTE and the NAACP also testified. To be certain there was no shortage of opinion.

I am pleased to report that I testified on your behalf in support of 9 of the bills, including allowing absentee voting by poll workers, minor changes to the Uniformed Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act and perhaps most importantly, H615 sponsored by Representative Michlewitz providing for early voting. His bill permits voting two weeks early in statewide and special congressional elections only in cities and towns that affirmatively "opt in." The Representative added this crucial provision to accommodate us. As I was quoted by the State House News, if enacted this bill will act as an incubator allowing towns not yet prepared to move forward to learn from those that choose to "opt in" in the near term.

I also offered the MTCA as a resource to the Committee, standing by willing and able, to provide a wealth of professional as well as practical experience in the conduct and administration of elections.

You should note that the bills proposing Constitutional amendments must be reported out of the Committee "as is" without amendment, either favorably or unfavorably by April 24 for consideration in the upcoming Constitutional Convention beginning in May. I will be carefully watching these bills as we contemplate seeking amendments on the convention floor.

In the next Public Recorder I will report on the April 3rd hearing of S327, the so-called Omnibus Election Reform bill filed by Senator Barry Finegold of Andover. Prior to that report, I will continue to work with the Association in meeting with key legislators on your behalf.

## What does it mean to ‘inspect’ campaign finance reports?

According to the state’s campaign finance law, local election officials must inspect campaign finance reports within 30 days of the reporting due date. That’s good to know, but what does “inspect” really mean?

At a minimum, local election officials should make sure a report is filed, signed and the correct beginning and ending dates are entered. Receipts and expenditures for more than \$50 should be itemized if the summary page shows activity in those two categories. The rules on how to itemize contributions are explained on the campaign finance form.

On the expenditures schedule, candidates and committees should disclose clear purpose information for their purchases.

Reports should be time-stamped and made available to the public *when they are filed*, even if the reports have not yet been “inspected” by the clerk.

If a campaign finance report is filed and it needs to be amended, local election officials can work with their

municipal candidates and committees to make the changes. It is not a clerk’s role to make amendments on behalf of a candidate.

Amendments can be filed using the CPF 102A form, which is available on OCPF’s website (it is also available by [clicking here](#)).

OCPF’s role is to provide local election officials with support during this process by answering your questions and providing guidance. The inspection process is important because the purpose of the campaign finance law is public disclosure – and candidates and committees want to know that everyone is treated equally

If campaign finance reports require significant amendments, and candidates or committees don’t file the required changes, local election officials can contact OCPF at 617-979-8300

for further assistance.



### *Presidents Report continued.*

**E-mail Yahoo Groups:** The importance of establishing a dedicated e-mail group for and by municipal Clerks was recognized during the MTCA Presidency (2003-2005). Through Linda’s efforts the MTCA established the current Yahoo group to allow the MTCA to communicate directly with Clerks, and for Clerks to communicate with each other. The group has continued under Linda’s oversight for the past 10 years! The MTCA Communications Committee continues to work with Linda and Naida Parker to provide for continuity of a MTCA sponsored system and to provide consistency with communication as part of an MTCA coordinated package of web/email/newsletter. The E-distribution group continues to be a primary means by which Clerks can receive information and communicate within the clerk community on important issues. More information on the E-mail Yahoo groups is forthcoming.

### **The Benefit to Municipal Clerks**

It is ever more clear that the technological capabilities of doing business have a significant impact the responsibilities of the municipal Clerk’s office (email communication, electronic records, etc.).

It is also clear that electronic communication via web, email, social medial, etc. is key to making information available to new and long standing municipal Clerks. Funding and staffing constraints often prohibit in-person participation at conferences, seminars, etc. It is not possible for all new or veteran Clerks to attend all conferences and seminars sponsored or endorsed by the MTCA.

No longer can the municipal Clerk expect to operate in an effective and efficient manner without the use of technology. The MTCA seeks to provide the systems and support needed to empower success. Please join us, the Communications Committee, and fellow Clerks, in making the best and most appropriate use of these tools.

As materials are released for the upcoming MTCA/MCCA Conference at SeaCrest (June 5-7, 2013) information will also be issued on accessing conference materials off the MTCA web site as the MTCA develops an electronic repository of information critical to municipal clerks and their ability to successfully fulfill responsibilities of the office.

## The Attorney General's Municipal Law Unit Decision Lookup

Accessing, reading, reviewing, and printing MLU's decision has never been easier or faster than it is right now. Since the Fall of 2012, the Municipal Law Unit (MLU) staff has posted all of its decisions on MLU's website. In addition, certain selected decisions prior to the Fall of 2012 are also posted on the website. The Decision Lookup feature may be found at <http://www.mlu.ago.state.ma.us>. To view a MLU Decision on the list, click on "Date of Decision." To view a different year's list of MLU Decisions, click on that

year. To search for a specific MLU Decision by date, town, selected topic, word or phrase, click on "Search MLU Decisions" and complete any of the searchable fields. A search of all available decisions can be done by leaving all search fields blank and hitting submit search. For more information on how to access the Decision Lookup feature or any other MLU related questions, please contact the Municipal Law Unit at (508) 792-7600.

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## 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 30<sup>th</sup>** for the July exam, which will be mailed between July 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup>. 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 appli-

cant 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](mailto:city-clerk@easthampton.org) or call 413-529-1460.



## Business Meeting Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort September 27, 2012

- ◆ Donna Hooper, President of the Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association, called the meeting to order at 12:49 PM.

- ◆ President Hooper for thanked everyone for attending the conference.

1. **SECRETARY'S REPORT**- Secretary Jeremy P Gillis presented the minutes of the Annual Meeting held in June for approval. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. **TREASURERS REPORT**- Treasurer Robert Cutler's report was unanimously approved.

3. **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**- Nancy Blackmer thanked the vendors for attending the conference and asked that we continue to support them, as their participation helps a great deal towards these conferences..

4. **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**- Andrew Dowd thanked all those attending and asked that anyone with any suggestions or complaints about the conference and/or facility to contact him.

5. **LEGISLATIVE REPORT**: Chairman Laurence Pizer updated the membership on several bills, most notably the so-called "Animal Control Bill" Chairman Pizer spoke of his meeting with Senator Jehlen about the proposed surcharge in that bill, and how this face to face meeting was a key in the removal of the surcharge.

6. **LEGISLATIVE AGENT UPDATE**: Agent Roche reiterated Chairman Pizer's comments and stressed how the membership was the most important tool in passing and/or blocking legislation. He spoke to his reports in recent Recorders and thanked the membership for their efforts.

7. **CERTIFICATION ADMINISTRATOR**: Barbara LaBombard was called upon to present

CMMC awards.

The following Clerk was awarded status as a Certified Massachusetts Municipal Clerk:

Carol Jammalo                      Clarksburg

Second Re-certification was granted to the following Clerk:

Carol Skerrett                      Dunstable

- ◆ President Hooper wished all attendees a safe trip home and thanked them for attending. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:13 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeremy P Gillis, MMC/CMMC  
MTCA Secretary

### Need to know what MTCA classes you have taken?

Contact Database Coordinator:

**Katherine Ingram**

Town Clerk

20 Williams Street

Longmeadow MA 01106

413-565-4103

kingram@longmeadow.org





# 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<br>and I am enclosing the <u>letter of denial</u> .   | _____      | _____     |
| I am a member in good standing of the Massachusetts<br>Town Clerks' Association.   | _____      | _____     |
| I have paid my annual dues to the Massachusetts Town Clerks'<br>Association and have been a member for at least one<br>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, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, MTCA, 6 Prospect St., Orange, MA 01364 before May 9, 2013.

\*\*\*\*\*

**FOR USE BY MTCA CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE ONLY:**

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Date action taken: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount awarded: \_\_\_\_\_ **OR** Reason for denial: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 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 Summer Conference in June, please fill out the application and send it to **the MTCA Scholarship Chair Nancy M. Blackmer, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, MTCA, 6 Prsopet St., Orange, MA 01364 by May 9, 2013.**

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### MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA

1. 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.
  2. It shall be the Scholarship Committee chaired by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President that shall award the scholarships.
  3. Scholarship awards will be limited to one person per office with the Clerk having first preference.
  4. Applicant must be a Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk.
  5. 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.
  7. 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.
- 
-

## CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL CLERKS

The following individual has earned the prestigious Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC):

**Marie Y. Ryan, CMC - Town Clerk - Town of Great Barrington, MA.**

**Danielle M. Sicard, CMC - Town Clerk - Town of Norton, MA.**

The CMC designation program is designed to enhance the job performance of the Clerk in small and large municipalities. To earn the CMC designation, a Municipal Clerk must attend extensive education programs. The designation also requires pertinent experience in a municipality. The program prepares the participants to meet the challenges of the complex role of the municipal clerks by providing them with quality education in partnership with 47 institutions of higher learning. The program has been in existence since 1970 and has helped thousands of clerks in various municipalities.

Founded in 1947, IIMC is a professional association with more than 10,000 members in the US, Canada and 15 other countries. IIMC's primary goal is to actively promote the continuing education and professional development of municipal clerks through extensive education programs, certification, recertification, publications, networking, annual conferences and research. IIMC also engages in municipal research administration, enhances critical professional skill development and fosters a spirit of mutual assistance and good fellowship among municipal clerks around the globe. IIMC is governed by a 26-member Board of Directors.

For more information please visit our website at [www.iimc.com](http://www.iimc.com) or contact us at [hq@iimc.com](mailto:hq@iimc.com) or 909-944-4162.

Sincerely,

Chris Shalby  
Executive Director



### Western Mass. City & Town Clerks Association

#### ANNUAL PICNIC

at



Friday, July 26th

More details to follow



## MTCA WEBSITE

The Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association is pleased to announce the roll-out of the newly created web site [www.masstownclerks.org](http://www.masstownclerks.org).

This web site provides information on the MTCA and its conferences, the IIMC, New England Municipal Clerks, Massachusetts' county clerk associations, state agencies, and other affiliated organizations.

The web site contains both public information and information accessible via the 'members only' section.

'The Public Recorder' will continue to be issued by email through the June edition (end of year) in addition to posting on the website. **Beginning in August 2013, 'The Public Recorder' will no longer be mailed, except for the rarest of circumstances.**

As it continues to be developed, this dedicated web site is intended as an ongoing resource for municipal clerks to access current and archived information on MTCA related materials including survey results, legislative issues, up to date reference materials on Elections, Vital Records, and municipal clerk core responsibilities.

The MTCA Communications Committee welcomes your comments as it develops this site as a great resource to municipal clerks.

[www.masstownclerks.org](http://www.masstownclerks.org)

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### MTCA CONFERENCES 2013

#### MTCA SUMMER CONFERENCE



SeaCrest Beach Hotel  
June 5—7, 2013  
[www.seacrestbeachhotel.com](http://www.seacrestbeachhotel.com)

#### MTCA FALL CONFERENCE



Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort  
October 2—4, 2013  
[www.jiminypeak.com](http://www.jiminypeak.com)

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