

The Public Recorder



Volume 56, No. 35

Published By The Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association

APRIL 2008

Website: www.newenglandclerks.org

Report of the President, Sally M. Hayden

Hello Spring!! It has been a long winter, and I am glad to see spring arrive! I have not put the snow blower away just yet. I remember a few years back, having a doozy of a snow storm in late April. With spring come daffodils, crocuses, tulips and spring elections and town meetings. This is a year, whenever we turn the corner; it is time for yet another election.

The State House is busy hearing proposed amendments to election laws. Our Lobbyist tracks the hearings and keeps our Legislative committee informed. They have been watching House 639 – An Act Relative to Voting Equipment - cancellation device elimination. As well as House 640 – An Act Relative to Election Officers – Check-out table. We are waiting to here what committee will have it once it gets to the Senate. We are anticipating a busy year with amendments to election laws.

Your Education Committee has been very busy working on the classes that will be presented at Sea Crest this June. They offer classes on pertinent topics to the Association. This is critical to our certification program. Your conference brochure will be mailed to you shortly. When you receive it please fill out the appropriate paperwork and return it to the corresponding fax numbers and or addresses.

April's edition of the Public Recorder is being brought to you by Nancy Burnham, Athol Town Clerk. I want to welcome Nancy and thank her for her contribution to the Association. I know that Nancy will do a wonderful job for the Association as the Editor of the Public Recorder.

I would like to once again, extend an invitation to any Town Clerk who would like to volunteer their services to serve on a committee. Many committees meet during our conferences, a few meet in between the conferences, education, legislative and executive board. The Budget Committee is busy at this time of year, planning the expenses and revenues for the next fiscal year. Please consider volunteering some of your time, you will help the Association, as well as getting to know your fellow town clerks.

I look forward to seeing you all at Sea Crest in June. Enjoy your Spring!

MTCA LOBBYIST REPORT – March 2008

By Stephen Roche

FISCAL STORM CLOUDS ARE GATHERING

I know that many of your communities are struggling this year to balance your budgets – maybe more than any year I can recall. Many of you are directly involved as you oversee the voting on tax override questions. But as bad as it seems now, be prepared – it's going to get worse!

There are fiscal storm clouds gathering over the State House as I write this report; among the problems we are facing are:

- a structural budget deficit of \$1.3 billion
- the defeat of Governor Patrick's proposal to legalize casino gambling – he had included \$400 million in revenues from casinos in his FY2009 budget proposal
- rising costs due to the success of the health care access law
- the slowing of our national and state economies, meaning reduced revenues from state taxes, including income and capital gains taxes

The House passed a significant tax package (\$392 million) on April 10th to address the revenue shortfall, in part, by raising the cigarette tax by \$1/pack and closing corporate tax loopholes. The House package is similar to the Governor's budget proposals in these matters. The Senate is expected to pass its own tax package the week of April 14th; many believe that the Senate will be even tougher on corporate tax breaks than the House, with a price tag in excess of \$400 million.

The House Ways & Means (HW&M) Committee is scheduled to release its FY2009 spending plan on April 16th. HW&M Chairman Robert Deleo has made it quite clear that his budget will include actual cuts in funding for state programs, not just level spending. House Speaker Sal DiMasi has stated the House would be making at least \$100 million in cuts.

Governor Patrick has also acted recently in response to our slowing economy. He has imposed a hiring freeze for most vacant state jobs while also stating his administration can save \$200 million using various tactics, including spending controls.

The Patrick Administration is talking about the "*regionalization*" of local services as another way to help municipalities, including shared services for education, public safety, and financial management. Leslie Kirwan, the Governor's Secretary of Administration & Finance, suggested more regional school districts and "streamlined" public safety dispatches.

Secretary Kirwan stated "that local treasurer and assessor functions may be better off under regional collaboration."

Senate President Therese Murray commented how these ideas sounded a lot like "county government" and that she expects communities would resist giving up "local control."

Speaking of regionalization, the Public Health Committee just reported out **Senate 2568**, a bill to facilitate the “regionalization” of health care services. Under this bill, two or more towns may vote to form a “regional health district.”

What about Local Aid this year? The House and Senate each voted in March to increase Local Aid by 4.4 % but that could change given heightened concerns on Beacon Hill with the direction of our state’s economy.

Will the increase in Local Aid stand? Will the House and Senate reach deep into our reserves to make up for revenue shortfalls? How far with the General Court cut programs in an election year? Is regionalization on its way? Stay tuned!

As stated above, The House budget is expected to be released on April 16th. Amendments would have to be filed by House members by the close of business on April 18th and the full House will debate the budget starting April 28th.

ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION – CAN WE AFFORD IT?

MTCA Legislative Committee members Larry Pizer and Mary Lou Murzyn secured a meeting last month with Senate President Therese Murray– who represents Larry and Mary Lou’s towns. They were assisted in this effort by State Representatives Tom Calter (D-Kingston) and Vinny deMacedo (R-Plymouth). Rep. deMacedo and Rep. Calter’s aide, Betty, joined us at the meeting which was brief and direct.

We covered the basic elements of the revised EDR bill – **Senate 2514** – still pending before the Senate Ways & Means (SW&M) Committee. We voiced the MTCA’s continuing concerns with: 1) the fiscal and administrative impacts; 2) voter confusion, 3) the impact of a shortened timeframe between voting and the close of registration; and, 4) our push for the elimination of the check-out table legislation (**House 640**).

We also discussed the possibility of adding the provisions of our bill to eliminate the cancellation device – **House 639** - as a time and money saver.

We felt the Senate President listened carefully to our arguments, although she was very non-committal on EDR. She did question why state law requires the check-out table when no other New England state does. She also questioned EDR’s cost given the state’s worsening fiscal condition. We stated our understanding that costs arising from the new EDR requirements would be a “local mandate” and would have to be reimbursed by the state. We also stated our concern with the actual cost which we expect would easily exceed cost estimates of \$500,000 being floated.

A week or so ago, I attended a Boston fundraiser for the House Chair of the Elections Law Committee, Rep. Garrett Bradley. We chatted about EDR and his impressions about the likelihood of passage on the House side. He said the Speaker has yet to reach a final decision on EDR but that the Speaker is concerned about the costs.

But it is well known on Beacon Hill that the Senate Chair of the same committee – Sen. Ed Augustus - is fully committed to passage of EDR and continues to lobby hard on its behalf. Many view this as an attempt by Senator Augustus - who is not seeking election to a third term this year – to leave EDR as his legacy.

The EDR advocates have cranked up their efforts in the past few weeks, with a State House rally and editorials in support in newspapers across the Commonwealth. Here's an excerpt from an editorial that ran in my local newspaper – the Metrowest Daily News (4/8/2008):

“There's no good reason why eligible voters must be denied access to the ballot box other than inertia. Eight states now allow voters to register on Election Day. It's time Massachusetts joined them.”

“What officials in those states have seen is a dramatic increase in participation, with voter turnout averaging 10 percent higher than in states that don't have Election Day registration. These states tend to have high turnout, so that gain can't be expected everywhere, but one study estimates that allowing eligible voters to register on Election Day in Massachusetts could boost turnout by nearly 5 percent. Turnout among groups that typically vote in lower numbers - young people, minorities, poor people and new residents - could increase by as much as 9 percent.”

“Opposition is expected from some municipal clerks, who worry about anything with the potential to make their jobs more complicated on Election Day, from knee-jerk defenders of the status quo, and from politicians who worry about the unpredictability of first-time voters. None of their reasons are sufficient to counter what should be a basic principle: Whenever possible, the government ought to remove unnecessary barriers to democracy's fundamental act.”

Ouch! The comments in that last paragraph hurt.

MTCA BILL UPDATES

House 2218 – our vital records bill was reported favorably by the Public Health Committee. It now awaits further action in the House Ways & Means (HW&M) Committee which will not act until after the House budget debate is concluded in May, at the soonest. While pleased with the positive action by the committee on this bill, the fact is that there remain a number of parties who are strongly opposed to the bill; among them are the genealogists and Supervisor of Public Records. There's a lot of work to do before House 2218 will pass.

House 639 – the bill that would eliminate the cancellation device was mentioned above since we raised it in our meeting with the Senate President. But the bill has legs of its own and may pass the House soon. Larry Pizer recently discussed the bill in detail with one of the attorneys in the House Counsel's Office. It seems that the House is readying the bill for passage.

The action is just beginning to heat up on Beacon Hill as we head toward the General Court's break on August 1st – it's an election year after all – and there's much to do before they break.

OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN & POLITICAL FINANCE By Michael Sullivan

The state Office of Campaign and Political Finance hired Jason Tait, a former Lawrence Eagle Tribune newspaper reporter, as director of communications and public education.

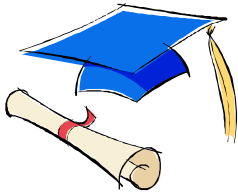
Tait replaces Denis Kennedy, who held the job for 11 years before joining the Boston-based Dewey Square Group, a marketing and strategic communications company with offices in Washington, D.C., and California.

The communications director writes the office newsletter and press releases, compiles studies and answers questions from the media and the public. In addition to his other responsibilities at OCPF, Tait will serve as the office's liaison with municipal clerks and election commissioners, and conduct public education seminars on campaign finance regulations in cities and towns across the Bay State.

Tait covered politics for seven years at The Eagle-Tribune in the Merrimack Valley, regularly writing about campaign finance issues. Prior to working at the newspaper he was a sergeant in the Army's 10th Mountain Division and served nine months in Bosnia. Jason is a Michigan native and graduated in 1996 with a bachelor of science degree in journalism from Central Michigan University.

The state campaign finance office welcomes all requests for education seminars, including instruction on local ballot questions. Workshops can be scheduled by calling 617-727-8352.

Starting April 16, the office will also hold education seminars each Wednesday at 2 p.m. in its conference room, Room 411, One Ashburton Place, Boston. Workshops are open to the public and do not require reservations.



Scholarship Reminder ! By Tedi Eaton

Just a gentle reminder that the deadline for submitting the scholarship application for the New England Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy is April 22, 2008 (with no exceptions) to the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association! If you are interested in applying for a scholarship just fill out the following application and include a letter from either your Finance Director or Board of Selectmen that states that you have been denied funds from your municipality. Preference is given to first-time students, but all students have a chance for a scholarship. The state associations, the New England Association of City and Town Clerks and the New England Municipal Clerks Institute all provide money for scholarship to go to the Institute.

St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vermont will once again host the 2008 New England Municipal Clerk Institute and Academy from July 13 – 18, 2008 and it promises to be another exciting year.

Remember the deadline for scholarship application for the New England Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy is April 22, 2008. Send your application to: Tedi Eaton, Chair – Scholarship

Committee, Town of Needham, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA 02492. If you have any questions, please call me at 781-455-7510 or send me an e-mail at Teaton@town.needham.ma.us.

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. The Joint Scholarship Committee shall consist of a committee made up of members appointed by the President of the New England Association of City & Town Clerks and the Chair of the NEMCI & Academy Board of Directors.
 3. Scholarship money from both sources shall be combined and allocated to applicants as agreed by the committee, with the exception of funds specifically earmarked and in the possession of the New England Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy Board of Directors.
 4. The NEACTC President appoints a Joint Scholarship Chairman to serve for three years.
 5. Scholarships shall be awarded to students attending the New England Municipal Clerks Institute and Academy.
 6. Scholarship awards will be limited to one person per office with the Clerk having first preference.
 7. Applicant must be a Municipal Clerk or Deputy/Assistant Clerk.
 8. The Joint Scholarship Committee will give priority to first year Institute students.
 9. An applicant must be a current member of his or her state association.
 10. An applicant must have been a member of the NEACTC for over one year.
 11. Applicant shall disclose at time of application they have applied for IIMC funds.
 12. An applicant must have requested funds from his/her municipality and include a letter of denial for such funds.
-
1. Applicants should (after denial from municipality) send this application to their state association for funding. A reason for denial or explanation must accompany this application in order to be considered.
 2. Deadline for filing an application with the Joint Scholarship Chair is May 14, 2008.
 3. Joint Scholarship Chair will notify the applicant, the Treasurer of the NEACTC, and the Treasurer of the NEMCI & Academy by June 1, 2008.

Joint Scholarship Chairperson

ME: Connie Brown, PO Box 67, Orland, Me 04472 - phone 207 469-3186, fax 469-3187
townclerk@orlandme.org

State Scholarship Chairpersons

CT: Sharon Miller, 740 Main St, East Hartford, CT 06108 860-291-7235
smiller@ci.east.hartford.ct.us

MA: Theodora (Tedi) K. Eaton, Town of Needham, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham MA 02492, 781-455-7510, Fax 781-449-1246
Teaton@town.needham.ma.us

NH: Sharon Teel, PO Box 194, Center Sandwich NH, 03227, 603-284-7113, fax 603-284-6819
[No E-Mail](#)

RI: Maureen Smith, Deputy Town Clerk, Town of Lincoln, 100 River Rd., PO Box 100, Lincoln RI 02860
401-333-3648, fax: 401-333-8450 msmith@lincolnri.org

VT: Linda Spence, PO Box 830, Manchester Center VT, 05255, 802-362-1315, fax 802-362-1315
manclerk@sover.net

New England Association of City & Town Clerks
And
New England Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

- | | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. I am a Deputy or Municipal Clerk. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. I am the only applicant from my municipality. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. I have been denied all or partial funding from my municipality
And I am enclosing the <u>letter of denial</u> . | _____ | _____ |
| 4. I am a member in good standing of my state association. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. I am a dues-paying member of the New England Association
Of City & Town Clerks 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

NAME _____ DATE _____
 ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____
 JOB TITLE/TOWN _____ POPULATION _____
 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

I am applying for financial assistance for the New England Municipal Clerks Institute Year _____ or Academy Course
AMOUNT REQUESTED \$

If Academy student, the year you graduated from the Institute:

My Municipality will pay \$

I have _____ have not _____ applied to IIMC for scholarship funds. IIMC will pay \$

Return this application, letter of denial and any necessary letter of explanation to your STATE Scholarship Chair (on page 2 of this application) by your state deadline.

Applicants from NH need additional paperwork. Check with your State Scholarship Chair

FOR USE BY STATE SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR ONLY:

Date received: _____ Date action taken: _____

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

After state action, State Scholarship Chair should forward to NEACTC Joint Chair by May 14, 2008

FOR USE BY NEACTC JOINT SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR ONLY:

Date received: _____ Date action taken: _____

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

APRIL 2008 – MAY 2008

Sunday, April 23	Easter Sunday
Sunday, April 20	Passover
Monday, April 21	Patriot's Day
Wednesday, April 23	Professionals Day
Sunday, May 11	Mother's Day
Monday, May 26	Memorial Day

MTCA CONFERENCE SCHEDULES – 2008

MTCA SUMMER CONFERENCE
JUNE 11, 12, & 13, 2008
SEA CREST
FALMOUTH, MA

IIMC NE CLERK'S INSTITUTE & ACADEMY
JULY 13 – 18, 2008
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
COLCHESTER, VT

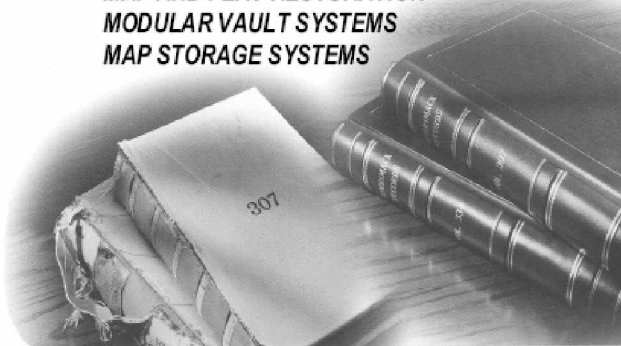
MTCA FALL CONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 24, 25, & 26
JIMINY PEAK
HANCOCK, MA

Brown's River

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One Allen Martin Drive PO Box 8501
Essex, VT 05451
800-639-3027
802-878-0932 Fax
brownsriver@juno.com

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