

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

Weekly News and Information from the Michigan Townships Association | Oct. 19, 2018

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND ADDITIONAL NEWS

### Assessing reform update

A stakeholder workgroup met for the second time to discuss a proposal that would fundamentally reform Michigan's assessing system. While MTA and others await the revised language, we are outlining several of the changes that are



contingent on final agreement to the revised proposal contained in two bills--[HB 6049](#), sponsored by Rep. James Lower (R-Cedar Lake) and [SB 1025](#), sponsored by Sen. Jim Stamas (R-Midland). The discussed changes include the deletion of several provisions contained in the bill as introduced including the parcel / tax revenue threshold and the requirements for full-time assessors and full-time office hours as well as the IAAO staffing standard. However, each local unit would be required to provide notice of how taxpayers can contact the assessor as well as include a minimum response time. For level of assessing certification, there would be no change from current law regarding assessors--thereby allowing MCAO (Level 2) assessors to continue serving as the assessor of record. Additionally, elected officials would be allowed to continue to serve as assessors if they are qualified and meet performance standards--and they would be accountable to the board.

Assessing entities would be required to meet quality standards that will be outlined in the changes. If substantial compliance is not met, a local entity would be required to submit a corrective action plan. Once approved by the State Tax Commission (STC), specific timeframes would have to be met and an initial review by STC would take place during the second calendar year of noncompliance to assure the plan is being implemented. If substantial compliance is not being met, the STC may require the local entity to contract with a designated assessor. Each county would have a designated assessor who would be determined through an agreement by a majority of the county board of commissions, a majority of assessing districts within the county and the individual assessor. The local entity may be required to contract with the designated assessor for a minimum of five years or upon approval by the STC to

## MTA QUICK LINKS

[Members-only Website](#)  
[Training](#)  
[Answer Center](#)  
[Advocacy](#)  
[MTA Store](#)  
[Township Governance Academy](#)  
[Allied Service Providers Classified Ads](#)  
[NATaT](#)  
[MTA Webcasts](#)  
[MTA Publications Catalog](#)  
[Community Connection](#)  
[Community Connection Blog](#)  
[Township Talk Podcast](#)

## UPCOMING

### MTA EVENTS

\*\*[On the Road Regional Meetings](#)  
\*\*[Treasurer's Guide to Tax Collecting](#)  
\*\*[Township Finances](#)  
\*\*[Land Use: Defining Your Township's Future](#)  
\*\*[New Officials Training](#)

## ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



resume their assessing (can petition to discontinue after 3 years). Finally, the revised language also would require mandatory biennial training for board of review members with annual updates. This could be achieved with online training. MTA will continue to update members on the progress and will share a revised bill as soon as it becomes available.



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## Additional guidance for 'Emily,' Republican Party FOIA requests

This summer, many townships received a Freedom of Information Act request from the United Impact Group, LLC-commonly known as the "Emily" FOIA-that requested voter information and ballots from the November 2016 presidential election. Now, MTA is learning of another FOIA request to all clerks from the Michigan Republican Party asking for information on all absentee ballot requesters, both mailed and in-person, in the municipality within 24 hours of receiving a request for an absentee ballot.

We are receiving continued inquiries from clerks about the "Emily" request, as well as the new request. We consulted with MTA Legal Counsel, who offered guidance on these requests. Read more [here](#).

[\\* Bauckham, Sparks, Thall, Seeber & Kaufman, PC](#)

[\\* BS&A Software](#)

[\\* Consumers Energy](#)

[\\* DTE Energy](#)

[\\* Fahey, Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

[\\* Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

[\\* ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

[\\* Johnson Rosati Schultz Joppich P.C.](#)

[\\* Mika Meyers, PLC](#)

[\\* Willis Towers Watson](#)

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## Local input needed on Treasury's Uniform Chart of Accounts

The Michigan Department of Treasury wants to hear from you! Local officials' input is needed on the implementation of the new [Uniform Chart of Accounts](#). Specifically, Treasury wants to know what topics you'd like to know more about, how you'd like to hear about those topics (webinars, live instruction, white papers), and tools that could make the transition go more smoothly. Thoughts, concerns or ideas can be emailed to [LAFD\\_Audits@michigan.gov](mailto:LAFD_Audits@michigan.gov), with the subject line "Uniform Chart of Accounts."



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## Member input sought on policy platform



Time is running short to submit proposed policies to help shape MTA's 2019 Legislative Policy Platform. This document is extremely important as it guides MTA's government relations efforts on behalf of members. Proposed policies must be submitted by **Monday, Nov. 5**, and will be reviewed by MTA

committees for word selection and legality, as well as to ensure they conform with the Association's overall goals and objectives. The proposed 2019 policies will then be presented for membership approval at the 2019 MTA Annual Meeting, to be held Thursday, April 4, 2019, in conjunction with the 66th MTA Annual Educational Conference & Expo in Grand Rapids. MTA's 2018 Policy Platform is available [online](#). Contact the MTA Government Relations Department at (517) 321-6467 or email [legislation@michigantownships.org](mailto:legislation@michigantownships.org) with questions, comments or suggestions.

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## MTA podcast debuts

Have you tuned into MTA's new podcast, Township Talk? This new platform, hosted by staff writer Bethany Mauger, provides you with a convenient way to learn about the topics that matter most to you and features MTA staff, legislators and township officials. In this week's [inaugural episode](#), MTA's Executive Director Larry Merrill discusses the history of townships--and their future. We've got a special election update coming next week. Watch your inboxes for the latest episode!

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## MTA's November workshop tackles tax collecting

Whether you are a seasoned treasurer or new to the game, you're sure to benefit from MTA's upcoming refresher on tax collecting basics. Join your fellow treasurers (and deputies!) at our full-day workshop, [Treasurers' Guide to Tax Collection](#), coming to two locations next month. Discussion includes applicable laws, practical techniques, best practices and so much more! Download a registration form [here](#) or register online [now](#).

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## Dam management grants available

Grant money is now available to address Michigan's failing dam infrastructure. The Department of Natural Resources' [Dam Management Grant Program](#) will provide \$350,000 to support dam removals as well as critical repair and maintenance, focusing on abandoned, unused or hazardous dams. Applicants should highlight projects that will enhance aquatic resources and fishing opportunities, reduce infrastructure costs and improve public safety. Applications must be submitted by **Nov. 16**.

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## Federal update for week of Oct. 15

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships' [e-newsletter](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.

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