



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

February 27, 2009

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Please route to all interested parties in your township.

HOUSE ATTEMPTS TO MOVE CABLE BILL; SUPPORT BUILDING FOR LOCAL AMENDMENTS

On Thursday, the House attempted to move HB 4247, a bill creating a cable dispute resolution process, but stopped short of officially counting the vote as support for an amendment recommended by local governments gained support. MTA appreciates the quick responses by township officials to MTA's alert calling for immediate communication with legislators to support the amendment sponsored by Rep. Vicki Barnett (D-Farmington Hills). The amendment was offered for a vote and appeared to have enough support for passage: (64 bipartisan votes). However, a procedural move stopped the amendment from being tallied and delayed further action on the bill for the day. This demonstrates that there is support amongst House members to incorporate changes to make the bill workable. MTA and MML are working to revise provisions of the bill that would favor cable companies who have much deeper pockets for legal expenses than local governments. The bill creates an unusual scenario that discourages complaints. MTA is willing to work with Rep. Mayes, the sponsor of HB 4247, Rep. Barnett and any others to try and resolve the differences. However, MTA continues to ask township officials to contact both House and Senate members about supporting local government amendments to HB 4247 and SB 190. Contact your legislators at: www.senate.michigan.gov and www.house.michigan.gov.

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARS TESTIMONY ON FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE BILL

Members of the House Ethics and Elections Committee heard testimony this week on legislation to require state and certain local candidates and officials to provide financial disclosure similar to what is required for members of Congress. HB 4381, introduced by Rep. Kate Ebli (D-Frenchtown Chtr. Twp.), would require candidates and office holders for virtually all state offices, including judges, and those local offices where the compensation is greater than two times the statewide median gross income to report financial information to the Bureau of Elections by May 1 of each year. Specifically, a candidate/elected official, their spouse, and other immediate family members would have to disclose income above \$1,000 and assets and liabilities valued over \$10,000. Several concerns were raised over the inclusion of judges, candidates, and certain family members under the legislation. Due to the concerns raised, the bill was not reported out of committee and the sponsor agreed to work with interested parties to make improvements before taking a vote to move the bill to the House floor.

FEDERAL STIMULUS PROJECTS AND FUNDING UPDATE

As of today, MTA has submitted all known township requests for federal stimulus funding to the governor's office for consideration. The governor has established a new Web Site at www.michigan.gov/recovery, which lists the stimulus projects that have been submitted by MTA and other organizations. In addition, the Web site is being used by the Granholm Administration to relay information to interested parties on future steps that need to be taken to continue the process for receiving federal stimulus funds. Most federal stimulus dollars going to local units will flow through existing federal or state programs and in most cases will require additional efforts to secure funding through these existing programs. MTA will also be updating information on our Web site in the near future to provide additional information related to next steps for townships to pursue.

ALL TREASURERS REQUIRED TO HOLD OFFICE HOURS ON MONDAY

With the passage of PA 352, treasurers are no longer required to be in their offices on Saturday, Feb. 28, but instead all treasurers are required to be in their offices from 9 to 5 on Monday, March 2. In any community where the property taxes were due on Feb. 28, those taxes are considered timely until the close of business on Monday, March 2. Treasurers must turn over delinquent taxes to the county on Tuesday, March 3. For future years, anytime the last day of February falls on a weekend or legal holiday, the state legal requirement for treasurer hours is moved to the next business day.

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