



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 27, 2010

Phone: 517-321-6467

Website: www.michigantownships.org

Please route to all interested parties in your township.

HOUSE TAKES STEPS TO CLOSE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR SHORTFALL

On Wednesday, the Michigan House took some positive steps to help resolve the current fiscal year shortfall of around \$300 million in the General Fund by shifting \$208 million from the School Aid Fund to General Fund. While the measure (HB 6086) passed along party lines with most Democrats in support and Republicans in opposition, Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.), stated that the alternative was to withhold the last revenue sharing payment for the current fiscal year to local units of government. The money shift is controversial as it potentially sets a precedent for moving money away from K-12 education to other uses. However, the money will actually be used to fund the costs of community colleges, keeping it in the education realm. The measure now moves over to the Senate where leadership seems to be open to the concept that was originally proposed by Gov. Jennifer Granholm. In addition, the House approved a supplemental appropriations bill (HB 5872), which includes \$312 million in new federal education funds to restore the \$154 per pupil cut passed earlier this year. The bill also includes \$500,000 to assist with fire suppression services under the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, restoring depleted dollars for fighting wildfires around the state. Meanwhile, the House and Senate cancelled tentative session days for the remainder of the week as negotiations are continuing on setting "targets" on the various spending bills for the next fiscal year that starts on Oct.1. The House is scheduled to return on Sept. 1, while the full Senate plans to return to Lansing on Sept. 7.

FILLING THE LAST SPOTS ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT

The Democratic and Republican state parties will hold their conventions this weekend to nominate their candidates for the positions of Lt. governor, secretary of state, attorney general, justices of the state Supreme Court, State Board of Education as well as the governing boards for University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University. Given the fact that absentee ballots must be ready for distribution by Sept. 18, just three short weeks from now, these nominees have a very short time period to make their case to the voters. The time period may be even shorter in at least one legislative race. Republican gubernatorial nominee Rick Snyder has announced that his choice for Lt. governor is Rep. Brian Calley (R-Portland). Rep. Calley is the Republican nominee for the 33rd State Senate District. If Rep. Calley's nomination is approved at the state convention this weekend, his place on the ballot for the Senate seat is voided and a replacement must be selected by the Republican executive committees of the four counties that make up the 33rd Senate District. That decision would likely come next Thursday. This could also be an issue if Rep. Paul Scott from Genesee County is nominated as the Republican secretary of state candidate. County and township clerks will be working on very short turnaround times to comply with all of the election laws.

SENATOR INTRODUCES BILL TO SHIFT STATE TIMBER REVENUE TO LOCAL LEVEL

Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Muskegon) introduced legislation on Aug. 17 that would retain revenue from the sale of timber on state-owned land for local roads. SB 1453 would redirect 20% of money from state timber sales for roads and bridges within the county. The remaining 80% from the sale would stay with the state. The bill addresses a long-standing MTA policy to shift some of the revenue collected from state timber sales towards local roads that are impacted during tree harvesting.

TIME IS RUNNING SHORT TO MAKE PLANS FOR NATaT CONFERENCE

The National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) *America's Town Meeting* in Washington, D.C. is fast approaching. The conference will be held Sept. 15-17 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Keynote speaker will be U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Hotel reservations can be made at (888) 591-1234 or <http://washingtonregency.hyatt.com>. The special room rate of \$239 plus tax for single or double is still in effect. For further information and to register, please consult the NATaT website at www.natat.org or contact Debbie Shue at (517) 321-6467 or debbie@michigantownships.org.

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