Prorated Property Taxes an Option for Cities

Dick Phebus, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant

For cities in those counties declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be disaster areas as a result of the recent flooding, the General Assembly has enacted legislation that allows the proration of property taxes for the time a building or improvement is destroyed or substantially damaged as long as the building or improvement is not replaced or restored for more than 30 days.

The legislation, Chapter 1036, Public Acts 2010, is permissive rather than mandatory and will not become effective until approved by a two-thirds vote of the municipal legislative body. Once approved, the law is retroactive to January 1, 2010 and it expires on December 31, 2010. The property owner must apply to the county assessor of property for this relief by September 1, 2010, using a form approved by the Director of the State Division of Property Assessments.

The following counties in Tennessee have been declared eligible for disaster assistance as a result of the “flood of 2010”:

Benton    Campbell    Dyer    Jackson    Robertson
Campbell    Cannon    Fayette    Lauderdale    Rutherford
Carroll    Cheatham    Gibson    Lawrence    Obion
Cheatham    Chester    Hardeman    Lewis    Shelby
Clay    Crockett    Hardin    Macon    Smith
Crockett    Davidson    Haywood    Madison    Stewart
Decatur    Dickson    Henderson    Marshall    Sumner
DeKalb    Dickson    Henry    Maury    Tipton
Dickson

MTAS has prepared a sample resolution that cities can use to adopt the legislation. Click here to read or download the resolution: Word | PDF

Please contact your MTAS finance and accounting consultant if you have questions.
MTAS Welcomes New Executive Director Steve Thompson

Steve Thompson has been named as the new executive director for MTAS and will join the agency near the end of July.

Thompson comes to MTAS from Marco Island, Florida, where he has served as city manager since 2008. He has held city manager and assistant city manager roles in Deltona, Fla., Virginia Beach, Va., Greenville, S.C. and Aiken, S.C.

Thompson was hired from a pool of six candidates who went through a rigorous interviewing process with the MTAS advisory board, the Tennessee Municipal League, the IPS leadership team, UT Knoxville faculty and the MTAS staff.

“MTAS has a long history of professional service to the cities of Tennessee, and I’m both honored and looking forward to working with the professionals of MTAS and IPS to continue this service,” Thompson said.

Look for more information on Thompson in future issues of the Municipal E-News.

Tracy Baker, MTAS Post-graduate MPA Intern Named Sevierville Assistant City Administrator

Tracy Baker, MTAS Post-graduate MPA intern, has accepted an assistant city manager position in Sevierville. Baker participated in the two-year internship program where she had the opportunity to work in Athens, Cleveland, Cleveland Utilities, Collegedale, Dayton, East Ridge, Etowah, Signal Mountain, Soddy-Daisy and the Southeast Tennessee Development District.

We wish Tracy all the best in her new position!

If your city is interested in hosting an intern, please contact MTAS Municipal Management Consultants Ron Darden (Middle Tennessee) at ron.darden@tennessee.edu or 615-532-4942 and Margaret Norris (East Tennessee) at margaret.norris@tennessee.edu or 865-974-9063.

EPA Initiates Rulemaking on Sanitary Sewer Overflows

Sharon Rollins, MTAS Consulting Program Manager

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating a rulemaking to reduce the harmful effects on sanitary sewer overflows (SSO) and basement backups. The agency is considering two modifications to the existing regulations: (1) establishing standard National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit conditions for publicly owned treatment works permits that specifically address sanitary sewer collection systems and SSOs; and (2) clarifying the regulatory framework for applying NPDES permit conditions to municipal satellite collection systems.

Municipal satellite collection systems are sanitary sewers owned or operated by a municipality that conveys wastewater to a publicly owned treatment works operated by a different municipality. As part of this effort, the agency is also considering whether to address long standing questions about peak wet weather flows at municipal wastewater treatment plants to allow for a holistic, integrated approach to reducing SSOs, while at the same time addressing peak flows at publicly owned treatment works.

EPA will hold a series of listening sessions on the proposal and accept comments from the public for 60 days. Comments are due by August 1, 2010.

For additional information on the listening sessions and to read the proposed rule, please visit: http://www.epa.gov/npdes.

Additions to the MTAS Library

Candidate Running for Two Municipal Offices
(Legal opinion) Melissa Ashburn, MTAS Legal Consultant Read

Tennessee Fire Service Emergency Response Plan
TN Fire Chiefs Association Read

Contract Documents for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Service (RFP) Sharon Rollins, MTAS Consulting Program Manager Read
MTAS Classes in June 2010

**Municipal Administration Program**

- **Stormwater Workshop for MS4s**
  - Lakeland  July  14
  - Mt. Juliet  July  15
  - Knoxville  July  27
  - Chattanooga  July  28

- **Public Acts**
  - Smyrna  August  3
  - Jackson  August  4
  - Lakeland  August  5
  - Knoxville  August 11
  - Johnson City  August 12

**Certified Municipal Finance Officer Program**

- **Debt Management**
  - Spring Hill  July  27

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**Free Online Course: New Building Codes Requirements Compliance**

The “Tennessee Clean Energy Future Act of 2009” makes one- and two-family homes subject to inspection by either the state or local government. The act goes into effect on July 1, 2010 and requires a decision by local governing bodies. MTAS is offering this free online course, “Energy Codes Training” to assist you in making sure your building codes are in compliance by July 1, 2010.

There is no cost for the course as this project is funded under an agreement with the Department of Economic and Community Development. This is a three-hour class, delivered via web access, which includes a discussion of methods of complying with the statute.

This course is a must for municipal officials who are responsible for compliance with International Residence Code and the Tennessee Clean Energy Future Act of 2009.

For information go to [http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu](http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu).

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**Stormwater Workshop for MS4s**

July 2010

MTAS, in cooperation with TDEC, EPA, and the Tennessee Stormwater Association (TNSA), will be presenting statewide workshops in July 2010 for all cities and counties that have been designated under the NPDES Stormwater Program in Tennessee.

The workshop addresses the re-issue of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Permit for MS4’s (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems). The permit will be re-issued in June 2010 and local governments will have 120 days to complete their permit application or NOI (Notice of Intent).

This permit is a MANDATE from EPA and TDEC.

**PENALTIES** for noncompliance with the regulations could be $10,000 per day, per violation in civil penalties. A TDEC Director’s Order for noncompliance could also result in spot fines of $1,000 or $2,000 and an order to complete stormwater permit program.

This workshop will provide information on the preliminary program requirements for the new Phase II Municipal NPDES Permit for Stormwater Management and enable you to prepare an action plan for submitting your permit application.

Robert Karesh, TDEC, who will be approving Phase II Permit Applications for the state of Tennessee, will be one of the workshop lecturers and facilitators. Additionally, portions of the workshop will be conducted by EPA Region IV representatives.

- Lakeland  July 14
- Mt. Juliet  July 15
- Knoxville  July 27
- Chattanooga  July 28

Click here for registration brochure.

This course is offered as part of the MTAS Municipal Administration Program.
New MTAS Publications

Administrative Inspections Warrants
Melissa Ashburn, MTAS Legal Consultant
This publication interprets and explains the statutory administrative inspection warrant process for code enforcement at the municipal level. Read

Health Insurance Premiums as Salary for Municipal Elected Officials and Employees (2010)
Don Darden, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant
In some Tennessee cities, compensation is awarded to mayors and board members in lieu of health insurance coverage. Read

Interest Rate Set at 7.25 Percent Effective July 1, 2010, on Delinquent Taxes Collected or Administered by the State of Tennessee
William Haston, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant
The rate of interest effective July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2011, has been set at 7.25 percent, which is the same as for the current year (FY 2010). Read

IRS Regulations on Personal Use of City-Owned Vehicles
Ron Darden, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant
The personal use of a city-owned vehicle is taxable to the employee. Read

New Audit Standards: What Do They Mean to Local Governments?
Kay Stegall, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant
Because state law requires that municipalities be audited, the financial statement audit must be performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Read

New Fee for Cash Bond Forfeitures in City Court
Rex Barton, MTAS Police Management Consultant
The state legislature recently created a new fee to be collected by the city when a defendant posts a cash bond for a municipal traffic violation. Read

Josh Jones, MTAS Legal Consultant
This guide summarizes Tennessee’s open records laws as of the end of the 2009 legislative session and includes

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Green Energy Expo
July 13, 2010
U.T. Research and Education Center
Jackson

What is green or alternative energy?
How can green energy technology benefit my business and my community?

The Green Energy Expo will answer these questions by providing practical information and exhibits concerning how to build a green business, adopt alternative energy sources, and sustain local infrastructure that closes the gaps in income, wealth, health, security, and opportunity across Tennessee.

The Expo will center on the benefits of green technologies in the area of lighting, gasification, and other smart green technologies. A panel of representatives from the Internal Revenue Service, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, TVA, and USDA Rural Development will discuss financial incentives available to business owners, industry representatives, and local government leaders in their pursuit of cutting energy costs, providing green infrastructure, and opportunities to create jobs in the green industry. Regional green businesses and entrepreneurs will showcase their technologies through onsite exhibitions.

The Green Energy Expo is hosted by the University of Tennessee’s Center for Industrial Services in partnership TREEDC/MTAS and other government agencies and green businesses.

Registration is FREE. Please call 615- 253-6371 to register. For more information, please visit http://www.cis.utk.edu/training/energy/GreenEnergyExpo.
2010 Thomas H. Muehlenbeck Award for Excellence Winner: Johnson City’s “Will This Float?” Program

At its annual conference, the Alliance for Innovation named Johnson City as the 2010 winner of the Thomas H. Muehlenbeck award for Excellence in Local Government.

The City of Johnson City and the founders of the “Will This Float?” program faced a growing problem with the loss of the manufacturing industry. In response, the city explored innovative ways to get the skilled people who have lost jobs back in the work force. Entrepreneurship became one of the answers. “Will This Float” creates the forum for entrepreneurs to promote their ideas to potential investors. The program is a catalyst for those who are beginning to develop their idea and a forum for idea development, business support services, marketing suggestions, and access to capital. Johnson City dealt with the crushing loss of the manufacturing industry with a creative forum to assist entrepreneurs in chasing their dream. To read more about this program, click here.

Athens Awarded Governor’s 2010 Environmental Stewardship Award for Aquatic Resource Preservation

With two streams listed on the state’s “impaired waters” list, Athens teamed up with the local YMCA to convert a plan for a traditional parking lot into a plan for an all-green parking area, showcasing various green technologies. Located on city property behind city hall, the lot uses pervious concrete and pavers, geoblock green paving and rain gardens. These technologies have an approximate 50-year life as opposed to asphalt with a 20-year life. The rain gardens allow the rain to percolate through six inches of stone underneath the lot and clay berms to keep water in the garden’s sub-base longer. Athens supplied the labor and equipment, saving a total of $60,000, and utilized a local Eagle Scout candidate to help build an educational kiosk with the first green roof in the county.

Renewable Energy Outreach by the City of Franklin and TREEDC

Warren Nevad, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

The Tennessee Renewable Energy and Economic Development Council (TREEDC) held its first membership meeting in Middle Tennessee on June 8, 2010 at the Factory in Franklin, Tennessee. More than 130 attendees from 48 cities, 25 counties and six states took advantage of educational and networking opportunities that focused on growing the renewable energy industry in Tennessee. Panel discussions ranged from cellulosic ethanol, biodiesel, electric cars, municipal and county best practices, gasification, solar energy and state and economic development and planning.

Franklin Alderman and TREEDC Middle Tennessee Coordinator Ken Moore and MTAS Management Consultant/TREEDC Director Warren Nevad organized the workshop. U.T. President Emeritus Dr. Joe Johnson praised the visionary leadership and grassroots approach demonstrated by MTAS and mayors of TREEDC. He also announced that TREEDC in collaboration with McBee Bailey & Associates have brought in more than $1.9 million dollars in energy economic impact to Tennessee. Johnson added that TREEDC has become a national model partnership between a major university, mayors, and a small innovative firm.

Tracy Woodard, Nissan Director of Government Affairs, advised the audience that Nissan officials were working closely with state and local officials in the Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga areas on infrastructure to support the marketplace entry of the Nissan Leaf.

TREEDC Advisory Board Member/Legal Advisor Ernest T. Brooks, II and Cortney Piper with the Tennessee Business Leaders for a Clean Economy discussed key legislative policy initiatives for TREEDC.

TREEDC presented Green Leadership awards to Ken Moore, Franklin Alderman, L.K. Browning & Associates, Tennessee Department of Agriculture Biofuels Coordinator Kyle Holmberg and Penny Judd, TVA.
Parliamentary Procedure and Your Council Meeting

Margaret Norris, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant

MTAS legal and management consultants often receive inquiries into parliamentary procedures and questions as to whether a motion passed or not. Because many cities have chosen to adopt Robert’s Rules of Order as their guideline for conducting meetings, we would like to review some of the key points and common misunderstandings regarding Robert’s Rules over the next several issues of the Municipal E-News. We will begin the series with a bit of history about who “Robert” was as recounted in the following excerpt taken from the “Official Robert’s Rules of Order Website”:

“Henry Martyn Robert was an engineering officer in the regular Army. Without warning he was asked to preside over a public meeting being held in a church in his community and realized that he did not know how. He tried anyway and his embarrassment was supreme. This event, which may seem familiar to many readers, left him determined never to attend another meeting until he knew something of parliamentary law.

Ultimately, he discovered and studied the few books then available on the subject. From time to time, due to his military duties, he was transferred to various parts of the United States where he found virtual parliamentary anarchy since each member from a different part of the country had differing ideas of correct procedure. To bring order out of chaos he decided to write Robert’s Rules of Order as it came to be called.

The tenth, current, edition has been brought about through a process of keeping the book up to date with the growth of parliamentary procedure. All editions of the work issued after the death of the original author have been prepared by persons who either knew and worked with the original author or are connected to such persons in a direct continuity of professional association.”

It should be pointed out that municipalities are not required to adopt Robert’s Rules of Order and may opt to create their own rules of procedure. We look forward to providing more information on parliamentary procedure in future issues of the Municipal E-News.

MTAS Web Site Provides Resources on Health Care Reform

A web page has been added to the MTAS Web site to provide information on the topic of health care reform. Most of the information is posted in the form of a blog with questions from cities and responses from MTAS consultants. The consultants have also selected links to useful Web sites, FAQs, recommended reading and links to other blogs on the topic of health care reform.

Click here: http://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/public/web.nsf/Web/Health_care?Opendocument#
TML 2010 Achievement Awards

The following cities and towns were honored with achievement awards from Tennessee Municipal League at their annual conference in Gatlinburg, June 13–15.

For more details on the program for which each city or town was recognized, please visit the June 14, 2010 issue of Tennessee Town and City.

- ★ Excellence in Police Services
  Knoxville Police Department

- ★ Small City Progress
  Unicoi

- ★ Excellence in Green Leadership
  Franklin

- ★ Excellence in Governance
  Pittman Center

- ★ Excellence in Public Works
  Athens Public Works Department

- ★ Excellence in Community Service
  Kingston

- ★ Excellence in Fire Service
  Dayton Fire Department

- ★ Small Town Progress
  Graysville

★★ Congratulations to all the winners! ★★

Calendar of Events

July 7 and 23
Alliance for Innovation New Knowledge Network Free Webinars

July 10–13
Tennessee Fire Chief’s Association Annual Conference (Nashville)

July 13
Green Energy Expo (Jackson)

July 16
Tennessee Personnel Management Association-West Tennessee Membership Meeting (Bartlett)

July 17–21
Water Professionals Conference (Combined KY/TN Chapter of American Water Works Association and KY/TN Water Environment Association) (Nashville)

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practical applications for municipal officials and employees. Read

Physical Fitness in Public Safety
Don Darden, MTAS Municipal Management Consultant
Cities can develop criteria or standards for medical examinations and physical testing that are job related, and if the testing is task related, the probability of successful defense in the event of a court challenge should be considerably improved. Read

State Shared Taxes
Dick Phebus, MTAS Finance and Accounting Consultant
Based on economic projections for FY 2011, municipalities are expected to receive approximately $104.02 per capita for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010. Read

“Municipal E-News” is provided by the University of Tennessee Municipal Technical Advisory Service in an effort to meet the challenge of providing timely, valuable information and assistance to Tennessee cities to build better communities.

If you have any questions or comments related to this newsletter please contact Frances Adams-O’Brien at frances.adams-obrien@tennessee.edu.

… in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League