

The Collector Treasurer

A publication of the Massachusetts Collectors and Treasurers Association

Volume 30

Spring 2017

No.1

MCTA's Annual Cape Conference at Hyannis, June 18 to 21

MCTA's 68th Annual Conference on Local Taxation and Finance will be held at the Resort and Conference Center Hotel at Hyannis beginning on Sunday, June 18th. Reservations for the Hotel are ongoing till May 14. The Program and Conference Registration form are posted on the MCTA website, www.masscta.com. If you need a hotel registration form, you can call or email the MCTA Office.

The Education Committee has been very busy assembling a well-rounded conference agenda to meet the needs of our Association members. Credit for Re-Certification will again be offered, so please review the program agenda for the courses offered.

Our Program will begin on Monday morning with the Annual meeting of the Association, then the election of Officers followed by a Legislative Report and update from Atty. Steve Roche. A panel of HR Directors will kick off the Conference on the topic of "T/C Contracts and Employee Retirement Benefits" and an update on the "Public Records Law".

On Tuesday morning we will hear from a panel of experts on "Rating Agencies" and "Developing Financial Policies".

New Collectors and New Treasurers School on May 3rd in Dudley

We have many newcomers entering the profession every year, and we know that the degree of expertise and knowledge demanded of the Treasurer and the Collector is increasing daily. For newcomers especially, MCTA's New Collectors and New Treasurers School represents the first step in your formal learning as a Collector or Treasurer. You will find this day to be a good orientation for the Association's Annual School at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst in August, and to our educational program that leads to designation as a Certified Municipal Collector or Certified Municipal Treasurer.

All new Collectors, Municipal Treasurers and District Treasurers are urged to attend. Collectors attending will receive Annual School credit for Course No. 160, Duties & Responsibilities of the Collector. Treasurers attending will receive Annual School credit for Course No. 101, Duties & Responsibilities of the Treasurer. Officially appointed assistants are welcome, but clerical staff are not permitted to attend. The Association conducts a separate School Program for Staff in September.

A copy of the Program can be accessed at MCTA's web site, www.masscta.com, with directions to the Municipal Building in Dudley and a registration form. The registration fee of \$25.00 includes a continental breakfast on arrival, all classroom material and lunch.

MCTA Spring Meeting in Sterling...great turnout

The Association's Spring Meeting was held at the Sterling National County Club in Sterling, MA. Over 180 members attending.

Mary Jane Hardy, Director of the Bureau of Accounts and Bill Arrigal gave a very informative presentation on, "Short Term Borrowing" That was followed by a panel discussion on, "OPEB Issues and Concerns", presented by, Paul Todisco, Sr. Client Service Officer of PRIM, Maureen Toal, Senior Vice President of Public Agency Retirement Services (PARS) and Chuck Patterson, Senior Vice President of Bartholomew & Company. This was followed by a Legislative Committee update from Kevin Merz, MCTA 1st VP and Attorney Steve Roche, the MCTA Legislative Agent who provided an update on the status of Beacon Hill and MCTA bills.

Thanks to UniBank and Justine DeNonrschia for hosting the breakfast and coffee break. Thanks also to Rockland Trust and Harbor One Bank for Door Prizes.

47th Annual School at UMass in Amherst, August 15 - 18

Make your plans to attend the Annual School. Certified Track Courses will be offered on Tuesday and Wednesday, August 15 & 16. **Collector and Treasurer Examinations will be held on Friday, August 18.**

The President's Page

By

Barbara Auger

Collector & Treasurer
City of Taunton

MCTA President's Report

After a very cold start, it looks like spring has arrived! We can be thankful for the much needed rain that has recently replenished our water reserves in many areas of the state. Now that the income tax filing deadline has past, so are the questions about "How much did I pay in taxes last year?" or "I lost my W-2, can I have a duplicate copy? We can shift our focus to the workings of the office and preparations for year end. Spring is also a sign that we are coming upon MCTA's busiest season!

The Education Committee and Executive Director Mike Hanlon organized a great spring meeting, which was held at the Sterling National Country Club on April 12th. It was a beautiful spring day and the program concluded just before the rain began. The beautifully maintained grounds at the Country Club always make it an easy decision to return to this venue.

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Association Calendar- 2016

May 3, 2017	New Coll/Treas Day Dudley Municipal Bld Dudley, MA
May 31, 2017	PACT Form Deadline Must be postmarked by May 31
June 18 -21, 2017	68th Annual Cape Cod Conference Resort & Conference Center Hotel Hyannis, MA
Aug 15-18, 2017	47th Annual School University of Mass. Amherst, MA
Sept. 13 & 27, '17	Annual Staff School Town of Dudley Municipal Bld Dudley, MA
Nov. 15, 2017	Fall/Holiday Meeting Pleasant Valley CC, Sutton, MA

Our day started with Mary Jane Handy and Bill Arrigal discussing short term borrowing and other updates at the Bureau of Accounts. They were encouraging Treasurers to get their paperwork into the Bureau by mid-June to ensure a smooth year end close. The preferable delivery methods are courier, fed-ex, or certified mail. This program was followed by a panel discussion on "OPEB Issues and Concerns" which focused on implementing accounting standards and general law changes. The program concluded with an update from Steve Roche our Legislative Researcher. Steve noted the Associations success in getting three bills enacted during the last session, gave an update of our six proposals included in the new session, and encouraged members to become advocates for our legislative efforts.

A big thank you goes out to Keven Merz and the Legislative Committee. This spring they have been busy preparing testimony and attending hearings at the State House. I want to stress how important it is for every member to reach out to their Senators and Representatives to ask for support of our legislative proposals. Please watch for a call to action from Kevin Merz our Legislative Committee Chair concerning your support!

The Education Committee is winding down their planning in anticipation of our upcoming events. You may want to note in your calendars for the following: New Collector and Treasurer Day will be held in Dudley on May 3th; our 68th Annual Meeting and Cape Conference is scheduled for June 18th through 21th at the Hyannis Convention Center; and our 47th Annual School held at UMass Amherst on August 15th through 18th. These events promise to be enriching educational experiences that are well worth your time.

It would be remiss not to mention the enormous undertaking of Steve Lonergan and the Education Committee, and the members of the Executive Committee, for this has been a year has required an update

to our manuals, certification exams and class educational materials. This has been no small effort! I am very pleased to inform members, the proposed updates to manuals are complete and under review, the changes to our certification exams are in process, and the educational materials are next in line for review.

Our organization has been successful over the years because of those who volunteer! Our Executive Board, Legislative Committee and Education Committee members attend meetings that set policy, plan educational programs, and support legislative proposals that benefit our membership. I also want to thank each Association member for your dedication and hard work. Whether new to the position or a long time member, the Association is really grateful for all your participation and support.

Please join me in thanking Mike Hanlon, Director and Diane O'Donnell for all their efforts behind the scenes, as many of our events would not happen without their support. Thank you to our Associate Business members who not only support our events in a variety of ways, but also provide products that make us more efficient in our roles. The opportunity to network and share information, and knowing you can simply pick up the phone and call your fellow Treasurer or Collector in any county across the Commonwealth, or share a List Serve message certainly makes our jobs a lot easier. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Cape Cod Conference.

Barbara

The Collector-Treasurer

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Education **Committee Report**

*By Second V-P Steve Lonergan,
Treasurer & Collector, City of Springfield*

Hello everyone, Happy Spring! As the old adage goes, April showers..., so hopefully we will see May flowers shortly! But as I look out the window to the rain and wind, it is the perfect time to update the membership regarding the upcoming educational programs from our committee.

First, I would be remiss if I did not thank the members of the Education Committee for all of the hard work and effort in providing the educational programs offered. The topics are current for all of us and the speakers are experts in the particular fields. It is because of the committee's efforts that our membership continues to be able to gain information and knowledge that is helpful to performing our duties. If any of the MCTA's members have a topic of concern to them, please forward it to the committee to help us plan future events.

The new Municipal Modernization Law passed this past year has had an impact on our association. The Education Committee, working with the Executive Board, reviewed and made necessary changes to the manuals, classes and exams offered for certification. I would like to thank them all, as it was not an easy task, but one that everyone pitched in to complete.

A change in the educational programs offered this year is to eliminate State House Day, normally held in May. Instead, working with local Treasurer/Collector Associations, individual meetings were set up with the appropriate legislators invited to attend. We hope this will assist members in getting more time to discuss issues with their Representatives and Senators.

We held the MCTA Spring Meeting on Wednesday, April 13th, at the Sterling National Country Club in Sterling, Ma. There were 165

Treasurers, Collectors and Associate members in attendance, listening to a program that featured Mary Jane Hardy, Director of the Bureau of Accounts, and Bill Arrigal, Public Finance Section, Bureau of Accounts speaking about short term borrowing and the common mistakes made causing delays in borrowing. Also speaking was a committee of Paul Todisco, Sr. Client Service Officer, Pension Reserve Investment Management, Maureen Toal, Senior VO, Public Agency Retirement Services and Chuck Patterson, Senior VP, Bartholomew & Company, who spoke about Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and the issues facing municipalities regarding this important issue. Finally, the Legislative Committee headed by Kevin Merz, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Ipswich, presented an update from Attorney Steve Roche on the bills the MCTA is following at the State House.

Next on the educational agenda is New Treasurer/Collector Day, scheduled for May 3rd at the Dudley Town Hall located in Dudley, Ma. All newly appointed/elected Treasurers and Collectors are encouraged to attend a very informative day. The program includes classes that offer a review of municipal finance laws and an overview of the duties and responsibilities facing those new to the position. It is also a great way to meet colleagues in the field.

Then the Sixty-Eight Annual Conference on Local Taxation and Finance is being held at the Resort and Conference Center in Hyannis, Ma. from June 18th through June 21st, with registration from 3:00pm to 6:00pm on Sunday. **Please note that members are on their own for dinner on Sunday, but there will be entertainment at the hotel in the evening and all are encouraged to attend.** The conference begins on Monday with the Association's Annual Meeting. It is at this meeting that the election of Associations Officers, votes for any proposed changes to the by-laws, and annual reports of the various committees will be heard by

members. The rest of the conference includes various topics concerning members in their municipalities. Please refer to the MCTA website for a list of topics and the time they are being offered. Also, any certified Treasurer and Collectors attending classes, including course 201, can count these courses toward their recertification requirements. Information regarding the conference, including registration and hotel reservations, can be found on the MCTA website.

The Annual School, entering its 47th year, will be held at UMass Amherst from August 15th to the 18th. This school is an important way to stay current on areas of concern and offers new ideas for all Treasurers and Collectors. For one price, you will have access to fellow Treasurers and Collectors, and attend classes taught by experts in a variety of fields, including select members of the Department of Revenue. Additionally, the classes count towards fulfilling the requirements to sit for the certification exams, which are taken on the last day of the school. **Please note that if you are planning to take a certification exam this August, your PACT application must be postmarked by May 31, 2017 or you will not be eligible to sit for the exam this year.**

The agenda for Staff School is being finalized as of the date of this newsletter. While we are still confirming the classes and the instructors, the dates have been finalized. Staff School will be offered on two days, September 13th (Basic Section) and September 27th (Advanced Section) at the Dudley Town Hall in Dudley, Ma. This is an excellent opportunity to send your staff to meet others and to be brought up to date on a variety of topics, all of which will assist them in their duties and responsibilities. It is designed for those members of our staffs that are unable to attend the annual school in Amherst, or the conference at the Cape.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members

of the Education Committee for their assistance and time spent planning the educational agenda for the year. A lot of time and effort was required and was provided without hesitation. I would like to thank the veteran members of the committee who took new members, including me, under their wing and made for a seamless transition. A lot was accomplished in a short period of time which will assist all the members of the Association. If anyone has any areas of concern, or interest, please contact Mike Hanlon or any Education Committee members with your ideas.

Have a great Spring and I look forward to seeing everyone at a meeting soon!

Steve

Comings - - - - - **And Goings - - - - -**

Ann Gill is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Georgetown, replacing Jacqueline Cuomo.

Melissa Martinetto is the new Collector in the Town of Washington. **Dawn Fahey** is the new Treasurer of the Town of Dalton, replacing Sharon Messenger, who retired.

Kelly Oakes is the new Treasurer/Collector in the City of Lawrence, replacing Vivian Haydar.

Lynn Taylor is the new Collector in the Town of Ashfield, and Rebecca Herzog is the new Treasurer, replacing Laura Blakesley, who retired.

Lisa Lewis is the new Collector in the City of Pittsfield replacing Marilyn Sheehan.

Richard Buffington, is the new Treasurer of the Barnstable Fire District, replacing Susan Laak.

Nancy Heffernan, is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Watertown, replacing Joseph DiVito.

Scott Walker, is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Orleans, replacing Christine Lorge.

Joanne Savignac is the new Treasurer/Collector in the Town of Charlton, replacing the Collector, Virginia Porter and the Treasurer, Keith Arsenault.

Legislative **Committee Report**

By First V-P
Kevin Merz
Treasurer & Collector, Town of Ipswich

It has been a relatively quiet time at the State House since January. Our five bills have been submitted and have been assigned to different Committees. The Committees have not yet set hearing dates on any of our bills, but a few of us went to the State House to discuss our bills prior to the hearings. Ron Mendes, T/C in Swampscott, Christopher Sweet, T/C in North Attleborough, Steve Roche our Legislative Counsel and I met with Senator Brady and Representative Kaufman, the two Chairmen of the Revenue Committee to discuss our three bills that were sent to their committee.

Ron and Christopher did a great job presenting our bills and discussing the reasons why our Association needs these bills to pass. Below is a list of our bills and the committee that will have a hearing on the bill. A summary of each of these bills can be found on the MCTA website.

House 1411 – An Act Relative to Compensation for Assistants, Public Service Committee

Senate 1123 – An Act Relative to Municipal Use of the Prudent Investor Standards, Municipalities & Regional Government Committee

House 3495 – An Act Relative to Tax Title Expense, Revenue Committee

House 2594 – An Act Relative to Personal Property Taxes, Revenue Committee

House 1494 – An Act Relative to Charges Associated with

Condominiums in Tax Title, Revenue Committee

If you feel strongly about any of the proposed bills, please take a few minutes to write a letter of support for the bills you want to pass. Your letter will be included in the testimony when we have a hearing at the State House on the proposals. Please email letters to Legislative Committee Vice-Chairman John Clark, jclark@town.billerica.ma.us.

Finally, we are also keeping an eye on House 3336 – An Act Relative to the Improvement in the Process for Collecting Delinquent Property Taxes. This bill had a hearing with the Revenue Committee on April 10. Legislative member Greg Barnes, Finance Director in Dartmouth, Steve Loneragan, T/C in Springfield as well as other Treasurers were at the State House to provide testimony opposing the bill. The language of the bill can be found at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/190/H3336>.

If you are unsure of your Senator or State Representative, please search for them at malegislature.gov/people

Kevin Merz

Chairman of the Legislative Committee.

Annual School Exam **Information:**

If you are planning to take the Examination, you must send your PACT Application to MCTA, postmarked no later than May 31

The Annual School will continue to offer New Student Orientation on Tuesday, along with a Preliminary Exam Review on Thursday. On Wednesday the General Assembly and the Annual Legislative Program will be offered as well as the Review of New Legislation (Course 201).

News From Beacon Hill

By Atty. Steve Roche
MCTA Legislative Agent
sroche@thevictorygroup.org

As I write this report, The MA House of Representatives just completed its debate on its version of the FY2018 state budget. It was an interesting few days as the House:

- Approved a state budget of \$40.8 billion – see **House 3600**, as amended.
- Spent \$80 million less than the Governor's budget plan – see **House 1**.
- Processed 1200 budget amendments – most were rejected and tucked into "Consolidated Amendments" after being discussed in Room 348 which is just off the House Chamber entrance.
- Completed its budget debate in 2 days – a record for sure.¹

This is my 39th House budget debate. The state budget process now moves to the State Senate. The Senate FY2018 budget proposal is expected to be released on May 17th with amendments due by the 18th or 19th. The Senate debate will commence on May 23rd and end no later than May 26th.

¹ I experienced my first House budget debate in 1977 when I served as an intern for a state representative from Springfield. Back then, the debate went well into the next day and we actually had fist fights on the House Floor over a few social issues. When I worked in the State Secretary's office back in the 1980s, I often worked into the next morning. One year, I remember starting on a Friday morning at 10 am and leaving the State House at 8 am on Saturday morning to go home and coach my son's soccer game. I returned to the State House that day around 11 am and they wrapped up at 3 pm that day.

We expect a number of differences between the House and Senate budgets but the overriding concern on Beacon Hill these days is the shortfall in state revenues in FY2017 and FY2018. Further complicating matters are the expected hit that our state budget will take from President Trump's policies. Governor Baker has indicated that Massachusetts could lose up to \$2 billion in federal funds. Changes in health care coming from Washington DC are also a great concern – the state has used NIH and other funding to grow industries, including the biotechnology industry.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, the MCTA Legislative Committee is already busy with legislative matters at the State House. **House 3336** is of great concern to many MCTA members. We are working to kill the bill this session.

Here's what we need MCTA members to do to help kill this bill. Below you will find a list of the state senators and representatives who serve on the Revenue Committee:

<https://malegislature.gov/Committees/Detail/J26>

If you see your state rep or senator listed, we ask that you contact him/her ASAP to advise them of your opposition to House 3336.

The MMA, the MCTA, and various lien purchasers have gone on record in opposition but there is still some interest in moving some version of the proposal forward.

Your involvement NOW is critical in this effort to kill House 3336!

With respect to action on the several bills filed by the MCTA, we're preparing for a legislative hearing on May 1st. The Revenue Committee is hearing the following MCTA bills then:

H.1486 : An Act relative to tax title expense

[James M. Cantwell](#)

H.1494 : An Act relative to charges associated with condominiums in tax title

[Brendan P. Crighton](#)

H.1495 : An Act relative to the collection of personal property taxes

[Brendan P. Crighton](#)

The Committee will hear a number of bills that day relating to local taxes. We hope to see favorable action this session on these bills. When we met with the House and Senate Chairs of the Revenue Committee last month, they seemed to understand the MCTA's reasons for these proposals. Of course, we're also interested in the other bills filed this session relating to local taxes.

As we have requested, please reach out to your local state legislators to advise them of your support for the MCTA bills. This is particularly important if any of your local legislators serve on the Revenue Committee; see list above.

Thanks again to the MCTA Legislative Committee members for all of their work.

In closing, I want to mention the loss of Senator Ken Donnelly. Ken battled brain cancer the past few years and died a few weeks ago. He was the lead sponsor of the MCTA proposal to establish tax titles revolving accounts that was passed into law. We will miss him!

Steve