Greetings!

What a year it has been so far, and we are just getting into the good stuff. Election year is upon us. I know it is sick but I really do enjoy the Election season, except the political side not so much.

We have had some challenges these last few months with the passage of SB 13 (PA 268), doing away with Straight Party voting, and then SB 571 (PA 269) which bans local officials or employees of local governments from using public funds for a communication 60 days before an election. Our members testified, sent resolutions, and contacted their legislators to let them know our position on these two bills. They are aware we are here and that we do speak in volumes. Of course, they did not listen, but the legislators do what they believe is in the best interest of the State of Michigan.

Our upcoming Institute and Master Academy should be another great start to the year. Our Free Education Day will be held in Mount Pleasant in April. Everyone should enjoy this new venue, and perhaps some will contribute to the economy. We are also working on the 2016 conference, “Capital Stampede”, to ensure we make this one very memorable. So make sure to budget Education dollars this year.

We must continue to educate our Boards, Commissions, and yes, the Legislature, on the importance of our positions as Municipal Clerks.

Masterful – powerful and able to control others.

Municipal Clerks/Deputy Clerks are very masterful, just ask anyone that has been involved with the Clerk's office. We must be masterful in all that we do to ensure that what we do is done correctly, ethically, and in a positive way.

Astounding – surprisingly impressive or notable.

We are astounding in our commitment to ensure our fellow elected and appointed officials know all the tasks that we must do on a daily basis. We have to continue to educate the public on the important of the Municipal Clerk.

Magical – beautiful or delightful in such a way as to seem removed from everyday life.

We strive to be magical in our day to day lives, and I know a lot of members that do just that. I find it easier and easier to find members that are doing awesome things daily and that reflect on all of us as Municipal Clerks. Keep up the great work.

Cheerful – noticeably happy and optimistic.

Cheerful, what can I say? We are challenged each and every day of our lives to be the life of our offices, and we find success in challenge, no matter what is going on in our lives we still must ensure we set the example. It is hard at times, but our members’ rock!

Until next time, have a great and blessed day. Contact me with comments or suggestions.

~Joe Bridgman
Winter has finally arrived in Michigan. We have been hard at work organizing the class schedules for the Clerks Institute, Masters Academy and Free Education Day. We know February and March will be a busy time for a lot of the clerks, but we hope you are able to take advantage of the upcoming educational opportunities. We do have scholarships available for Clerk’s Institute, Masters Academy and Summer Conference if you or someone you know qualifies. You can find the forms on the MAMC website and they can be returned to our office for consideration by the Board of Directors. Continuing Education is not only a time for learning but also an opportunity to network with your fellow clerks, so we look forward to seeing you soon.

As always you can email questions, comments, suggestions, or concerns to us at jhoward@mt-pleasant.org and lmcmanus@garfield-twp.com.


4/14/2016 – MAMC Free Education Day (Mt. Pleasant - Soaring Eagle Conference Center)

Financial Report

Mary Clark, CMMC
Delta Township
MAMC Treasurer


Bank Statement
Beginning Balance $92,804.87
Deposits/Credits 27,558.27
Interest 0.00
Withdrawals 3,361.96

Ending Balance
Main Bank Account $117,001.18
Investment Account 26,068.89

TOTAL FUNDS $143,070.07

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2016 Conference Preview

The MAMC Conference Committee is busy rounding up great events for the Capital Stampede 2016 Annual Conference. Whether you are a tenderfoot or a longhorn, MAMC is committed to providing quality educational programs and networking opportunities to help you “Cowboy Up” for the year ahead. Mark your calendars as we roll into our state capital of Lansing on June 14-17, 2016. We’ll have you leavin’ Cheyenne – or Lansing - ready for your “8 Second Ride”.

Legislative Committee

Happy New Year 2016!
The Legislative Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month at Delta Township.
MAMC will continue to share Legislative news with you in a timely fashion. Watch for urgent updates and emails. Check out our website and Facebook pages often. Much information will be shared on these pages. Please make sure your computer settings allow these various options so that you do not miss time sensitive information and requests for action.

I am grateful for all the hard work Bill Zaagman, GCSI, puts in for our membership. His dedication is nothing short of amazing! Thank you Bill!
Membership: 826 Members as of February 1, 2016

The word is out and MAMC is growing. Here we are, at the beginning of 2016 preparing to conquer the year’s challenges of administering a minimum of three elections while integrating new legislative requirements, all-the-while managing every day responsibilities such as agendas, minutes, licensing, records management, personnel and training, providing quality customer service, as well as completing other tasks that vary from community to community. Members know that MAMC is with you every step of the way committed to helping you succeed.

Here is how we know - membership numbers continue to grow. At the end of 2014, membership totaled 884; then in 2015 MAMC grew to 949 members. It is because of our membership that we are able to provide quality support and resources that are promised, have come to be expected, and are well deserved. Thank you for your continued trust in MAMC.

MAMC is designed to provide the support necessary to succeed as a Michigan Clerk. The association is constantly striving to improve your benefits in preparation for meeting the high demands placed upon you, your time, and your office. Benefits include the Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk’s certification program, education for free or at reduced cost, scholarships, legislative representation and influence, forum discussion, networking, website, resources, and MAMC Newsletter, we are now preparing to launch a new service exclusive to our members – The Course Credit Tracker.

Implementation of the Course Credit Tracker was approved at the January 13, 2016, Board of Directors Meeting. Software is currently being developed that will provide members the ability to view completed and archived course credits, as well as print certificates of completion. Members will soon be able access credits through the website at www.michiganclerks.org by logging into your personal profile section. This program will also permit easy uploading of certificates when applying for certification.

As MAMC members leave the public sector and retire to enjoy family, friends, hobbies, and to pursue other life’s pleasures and adventures, many Clerks have a difficult time completely leaving behind the profession, friends, and the network of Clerks that have been built over the years. That is where MAMC’s Honorary Memberships come into play. Our Clerk members benefit from the wealth of knowledge that Clerks opting to continue with the association have to share. They provide mentoring and advice from their many years of practical work experience in the field. Honorary Memberships are held in perpetuity.

The Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Board of Directors reviews and votes to award an Honorary Membership request. It is our pleasure to announce the following:

2015 Honorary Members

Delphine Oden - Wayne County
Christina Bacon - City of Vassar
Eileen Dehart - City of Westland
Susan Preuss - City of Farmington
CMMC Program

Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk (CMMC) Program: 173 Members Certified as of February 2016

The first round of recertification approaches quickly. Those Clerks who originally certified in 2014 are due to recertify by December 31, 2016, in order to retain CMMC credentials. Hopefully your “Me” folder is in order to ensure you have attained 20 educational points and that recertification goes smoothly. Also, please review the CMMC Guidelines for recertification criteria as they are different from original certification criteria.

Members that previously completed the Michigan Municipal Clerks Institute and graduated in 2015 or earlier are permitted to apply for CMMC certification using the Institute criteria through December 31, 2016. Future graduates of MMCI commencing with the 2016 class will have three years to apply.

The following Clerk's have recently been awarded the prestigious designation of Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk. Congratulations to all!

Brenda Meek - Cohoctah Township
Mary Sanders - Cohoctah Township
Shirley Wazny - Saginaw Township

For additional information on the Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk's program, an informational brochure, Guidelines, and Application are available on MAMC’s website, or contact Lisa Kay Hathaway at lhathaway@gpwmi.us.

Applying for Certification is easy. Go to: www.michiganclerks.org.

MAMC Website & Social Media

I am hoping it had been a benefit to our members to have all of the information sent to you regarding SB-13 and others proposed legislative actions, through the forum, MAMC web site, the facebook page, and the newsletter. FYI, when you send a forum question it will not show up in your inbox, sorry, we are not able to change that.

Don’t forget to “like” our facebook page: Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC)-OFFICAL SITE, this page was created for you to connect and share information with other Michigan Clerks, in a timely manner, and also to enjoy pictures and comments from other clerks.

Stay connected and stay informed. Feel free to contact me with questions, kasunicd@ci.kentwood.mi.us
Legislature Jams, Governor Signs Bill Eliminating Straight-Ticket Voting

In the late evening of the last day of session of 2015, the Republican-dominated Legislature was able to muster the votes to pass Senate Bill 13, a bill to eliminate straight ticket voting. This caps off a process started in November when the Senate passed the bill over to the House. In the House, Rep. Lisa Lyons, chair of the House Elections Committee, tie-barred SB 13 to House Bill 4727, her legislation expanding absentee voting options and reported both from committee. A tie-bar is a procedural amendment that in essence states that one bill doesn’t take effect, in this case Senate Bill 13, unless another bill or bills are also enacted, in this case House Bill 4724. This was met with a strong rebuke from the Senate Republican Leadership and their party bosses. Despite this opposition, the House shipped the tie-barred bills over to the Senate setting up the showdown that unfolded the last week of session. After intense backroom arm-twisting, a Call of the Senate and having all member staff removed from the floor, Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof secured the votes to break the tie-bar on SB 13 to HB 4724, a no-reason AV bill. The amendment passed 20-17, a bare majority of Republicans with one Democrat (Sen. Virgil Smith). One member was excused.

Republicans who voted to strip the tie-bar are as follows: Senators Booher, Brandenburg, Casperson, Hansen, Hildenbrand, Horn, Jones, Knollenberg, Kowall, Marleau, Meekhof, Nofs, O’Brien, Pavlov, Proos, Robertson, Schuitmaker, Shirkey, Smith and Stamas.

The following Republicans voted against removing the tie-bar: Senators Colbeck, Emmons, Hune, MacGregor, Rocca, Schmidt, and Zorn. They were joined by 10 Democrats.

The bill passed 24-13. Republican Senators Hune and Rocca joined a united Democratic caucus in opposing the bill.

On the north side of the Capitol building, the House acted quickly in concurring as 54 Republicans quickly went green. Similar arm-twisting occurred throughout the day as Speaker Kevin Cotter bucked his committee chair in allowing for the tie-bar to be broken. The entire Democratic caucus voted against the bill and were joined by the following Republicans: Rep. Lisa Lyons, Ben Glardon, Martin Howrylak, Dave Maturen, John Bizon and Phil Potvin.

The bill—now Public Act 268 of 2015—was signed on December 31, 2015 and took immediate effect. In a rare bill signing letter, the Governor asked the Legislature to address concerns over long wait times by enacting secure no-reason absentee voting measures. I have learned that the Senate Republicans intend to have a caucus meeting specifically to discuss no-reason absentee voting. I know from my interactions with Senate Republicans that there is overwhelming support for secure no-reason absentee voting. I hope we will see progress as a result of this caucus meeting set to happen later this month.

I want to thank everyone who contacted their legislators. I had numerous legislators tell me that they had repeatedly heard from their clerks. Based on the legislators who voted with us, it is apparent as many of them were legislators who were in contact with their clerks.

Governor Signs Bill with Local “Gag” Provision

In the late evening of the last day of session, the Legislature adopted and passed a substitute to Senate Bill 571 that effectively prohibits local bodies from using public resources for communications relating to local ballot questions within 60 days prior to the scheduled election. Existing law already prohibits use of public dollars for express advocacy for or against a local ballot
question. However, the language of SB 571 seemingly muzzles local bodies further to the extent that they would be prevented from expending any resources to educate voters about what a ballot question does and its impact. Almost immediately, locals cried foul and had lobbied the Governor to veto the legislation. In another rare bill signing letter, the Governor asked the Legislature to send him new legislation to “clarify that the new language does not impact the expression of personal views by a public official.” With the Governor’s signature, it is Public Act 269 of 2015.

Legislation was introduced by Rep. Lisa Lyons to loosen the gag provisions within P.A. 269. However, it appears that House Bill 5219 might not go far enough for some local officials. However, it may signal the extent of how far House and Senate Leaders are willing to go. Also, a bill was introduced in the Senate, Senate Bill 703, to repeal the changes enacted under P.A. 269. A similar bill is expected to be introduced in the House. I don’t foresee a full repeal of the change to occur. Rather, I expect something similar to House Bill 5219.

Robertson Drops Bill Impacting Voter Convenience

In the closing days of the 2015 session, Senator Dave Robertson (R-Grand Blanc) introduced legislation significantly restricting clerk elections operations by expressly prohibiting a number of common practices offered by clerks to increase both the convenience of voting and access for voters in several ways. The bill, Senate Bill 639, was referred to the Senate Elections & Government Reform Committee, chaired by Senator Robertson.

The bill amends the Michigan Election Law in the following ways:

- Would eliminate the ability of a first-time voter who registered by mail to present photo ID at the clerk’s office or the Department of State Branch Office for the purpose of voting absentee. Essentially this would require all individuals who register by mail to vote in person their first time.
- Would prohibit a clerk from deputizing another clerk for the purpose of verifying the identification of a first time voter for the purpose of voting AV.
- Permit individuals to be challengers up to 45 days before the election within the clerk’s office.
- Extending the 100 feet prohibition on displaying political material near a polling location to the clerk’s office 45 days prior to the election.
- Prohibits a clerk’s office from being open beyond the normal business hours (i.e. evenings and weekends) for the purpose of processing, accepting or issuing AV ballots.
- Prohibits a clerk for operating a satellite office for the purpose of processing, accepting or issuing AV ballots.
- Requires each county clerk to separate and report by precinct the AV ballot election results.

It is unknown at this point whether Senator Robertson intends to take the bill up. He can be emailed at sendrobertson@senate.michigan.gov or contacted at his office 517/373-1636 if you would like to share your thoughts on the bill with him.
Upcoming Events

March 20-25
MAMC Basic Institute
Mt. Pleasant

March 29-31
MAMC Master Academy
Mt. Pleasant

April 14
Free Education Day
Mt. Pleasant

June 14-17
MAMC Annual Conference
Lansing

June 14-17
MAMC Annual Conference
Lansing

2016