



HANDBOOK

Ohio County Commissioners

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CHAPTER 14

LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES

Latest Revision
 October 2014

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14.01 INTRODUCTION

Property taxes form the financial base of many local government services. For counties, the board of county commissioners is the county's taxing authority and has the authority and responsibility to place most of the statutorily authorized county property tax levies on the ballot for consideration of the electors. In addition, a county commissioner is a member of the county board of revision.

County government plays a central role in the administration of property taxes for all political subdivisions. The county auditor has the complex job of serving as the agent of the state in the appraisal of real property; calculation of tax rates; applying tax reduction factors to tax bills; calculating the non-business (formerly the 10% tax credit or "rollback") and the owner-occupied tax credits (formerly the 2½% tax credit or rollback); administering homestead exemption tax credits; and, distribution of taxes collected to taxing authorities. The county auditor also has the important responsibility of certifying to taxing authorities anticipating the submission of a tax levy to electors the current value of property in the subdivision; the number of mills required to generate a specified dollar amount of revenue; or the dollar amount of revenue that will be generated by a specific number of mills.

The county treasurer is responsible for sending out tax bills and for the collection of property taxes; calculates penalties and interest on late payments; and, works with the county prosecutor to collect delinquent property taxes or to foreclose on properties when necessary. Some county treasurers provide plans for the prepayment of taxes using escrow accounts; administer tax lien sales to collect tax monies on delinquent properties; and, have been drivers to establish land banks to fight the problem of abandoned properties and to stabilize neighborhoods.

The county board of revision, comprised of a county commissioner selected by the board, the county auditor, and the county treasurer, hears complaints relating to the appraisal and valuation of real property.

The county budget commission has the important responsibility to assure that both voted and unvoted property tax levies are "needed" by taxing authorities. This responsibility is performed on the basis of tax budgets demonstrating "need", or other information submitted to the county budget commission, if the county has waived the requirement for a tax budget. The county budget commission certification includes the county auditor's estimate of the rate of each tax necessary to be levied by the taxing authority. Members of the county budget commission include the county auditor, the county treasurer, and the prosecuting attorney. While Ohio law allows for two citizens to be elected to the budget commission, no county has ever used this option (ORC 5705.27).