

OPEN BOOK MEETINGS

THE BENEFITS OF OPEN BOOK MEETINGS

The Open Book Process

- Valuation Notices are mailed in March of each year
- Property owners contact the assessor's office to discuss any concerns or questions they have regarding the assessment at any time after receiving their notice, right up until County Board and Equalization in June
- Property owners do not need to attend a meeting. A staff appraiser will make an appointment to view the property and address the property owner's concerns on the spot
- Property owners have an extended period of time in which to appeal their classification or valuation. There is no need to appeal at the local level in order to appeal to the County Board

Jurisdictions Currently Participating in Open Book Meetings

- Cities:
Sartell, St. Joseph, St. Stephen, Cold Spring, Richmond, Rockville, Roscoe, Elrosa, Greenwald, Lake Henry, Spring Hill, St. Anthony, St. Martin, and St. Rosa
- Townships:
Crow River, Getty, Grove, and Raymond

Planning Ahead for the Next Assessment (If Not Already Open Book)

- Interested jurisdictions need to inform the County Assessor of their intent to transfer the local board duties to an open book format before December 1st for the next year's assessment.
- The initial term runs for three years (the upcoming year plus the following two years).
- After three years, the jurisdiction can request that their local board be reinstated if they choose. They will need a MN Department of Revenue Board of Appeal trained member by February 1st in order for that to happen.

Benefits for the Property Owner:

- More flexibility in scheduling a time for the assessor to review properties
- Personalized one on one meeting with the assessor at their home or property
- Property owner can still appeal even if they open their value notice late (after local board would've normally met)
- The setting is less intimidating; with no need for the owner to "present" their appeal to a board made up of their neighbors or acquaintances
- Property owners can compare their values to the values of other similar properties more easily
- Questions and concerns are often resolved immediately
- Property owners may appeal to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization without having to attend the Local Board
- County Board is made up of trained real estate professionals

Benefits for the City/Township:

- Reduces the need to have a trained board member
- Board members do not need to be present
- Eliminates the need for the board to become familiar with the local real estate market
- Confrontational situations with constituents can be avoided
- No need to disrupt city council meetings if this is where local boards were typically held, or no need to open up the building after hours

Benefits for the County:

- Allows for immediate consideration of issues
- An efficient use of resources due to the ability to directly meet with property owners at their home or property
- Fewer deadlines and an extended period of time (right up until the day of the County Board) to work with property owners on resolving issues



COUNTY OF STEARNS

PROPERTY SERVICES DIVISION

Property Assessment Services

Service Center Rm 2500 • 3301 County Road 138 • Waite Park, MN 56387
320-656-3680 • Fax: 320-229-7032 • www.stearnscountymn.gov

LOCAL BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION TRANSFER AGREEMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City of Freeport, in Stearns County, Minnesota, has opted to transfer their power and duties of a Local Board of Appeal and Equalization to the County under the Open Book format. This agreement to transfer said duties is effective for the 2023 assessment year and shall be:

CIRCLE ONE:

a. considered permanent

b. for a minimum period of three (3) assessment years and will automatically renew from year to year thereafter

As a condition of this transfer, the County shall make available to those taxpayers within the City of Freeport a procedure for review of their assessments, including but not limited to, onsite appointments. The County Appraisal Staff will work with taxpayers at a date, place, and time that is convenient to them to review their property assessment. The County Assessor will be allowed to make changes during this review time up until the County Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting typically held in June.

The City of Freeport may terminate its transfer after three assessment years if the three-year option was chosen above. Termination for the next assessment will need to occur in writing at least 120 days prior to the reinstatement date of February 1st.

Given under my hand this _____ day of _____, 20____

City of Freeport

Council members, please sign below.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Memo

From: Jon Nelson, Clerk-Treasurer

To: Freeport City Council

Date: 10/11/2022

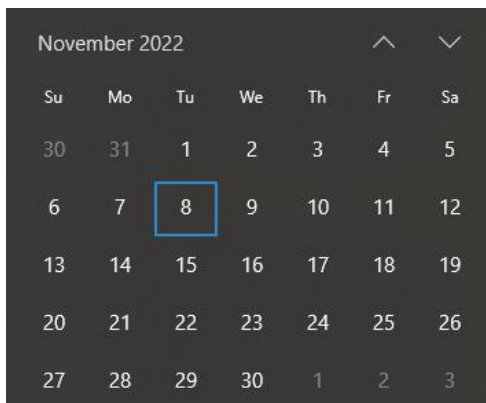
Re: Canvassing the Election

The city council serves as the canvassing board for city elections. The council must meet to canvass the returns and declare the results on the second or third day after a primary and within three to ten days after a general election. The canvass may only be held on the second day after a primary if the county auditor agrees to review primary voting statistics within a time that permits the canvass to be conducted on that day.

The steps to canvass the results are:

- The clerk prepares a canvassing report (abstract) to accumulate results from multiple precincts; this report may be available from the state Election Reporting System (ERS);
- The canvass board publicly canvasses the election returns by reviewing the abstract and write-in reports
- The board may ask to examine summary statements before it declares the results;
- When satisfied that the abstract reports are correct, the board signs the abstracts and they become the official results;
- In the case of a tie vote, the canvassing board determines the winner by lot;
- Errors by election judges in counting may be corrected by following specific procedures as prescribed by law.

Recommendations: Establish a date and time for canvassing the election.



A calendar for November 2022. The days of the week are abbreviated as Su, Mo, Tu, We, Th, Fr, Sa. The dates are arranged in a grid. The date 8 is highlighted with a blue square.

November 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

Memo

From: Jon Nelson, Clerk-Treasurer

To: Freeport City Council

Date: 10/12/2022

Re: Compensatory Time Accrual Period

The following from our personnel policy details the compensatory time accrual period:

Non-Exempt (Overtime-eligible) Employees:

The accrual period for compensatory time runs from November 1 through October 31 of the following year. The maximum compensatory time accumulation is 60 hours. Once an employee has earned 60 hours of compensatory time in the accrual period no further compensatory time may accrue in that accrual period. All further overtime will be paid.

Effort should be made by the employee to use up compensatory time before October 31. An employee may carry over no more than 24 hours of compensatory time into the next accrual period. Any compensatory time remaining on October 31st in excess of 24 hours to be paid out shortly after that date.

Loren Goebel has accumulated 149.45 compensatory hours throughout his employment with the City. Goebel has requested to be compensated for these hours in order to comply with the personnel policy. Since the number of hours accrued exceeds the 60-hour limit that was not previously enforced, I am requesting a motion be made to pay Goebel for up to 149.45 hours of compensatory time but no less than 125.45 hours of compensatory time, at the rate of one and one-half times his hourly wage at the end of this year's accrual period, in order to bring his compensatory hours to an acceptable amount for the start of the new accrual period.