

CHAPTER 274

ASSESSMENTS; REVIEW, CORRECTION,
EQUALIZATION

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274.01 BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION.

Subdivision 1. **Ordinary board; meetings, deadlines, grievances.** (a) The town board of a town, or the council or other governing body of a city, is the board of appeal and equalization except (1) in cities whose charters provide for a board of equalization or (2) in any city or town that has transferred its local board of review power and duties to the county board as provided in subdivision 3. The county assessor shall fix a day and time when the board or the board of equalization shall meet in the assessment districts of the county. Notwithstanding any law or city charter to the contrary, a city board of equalization shall be referred to as a board of appeal and equalization. On or before February 15 of each year the assessor shall give written notice of the time to the city or town clerk. Notwithstanding the provisions of any charter to the contrary, the meetings must be held between April 1 and May 31 each year. The clerk shall give published and posted notice of the meeting at least ten days before the date of the meeting.

The board shall meet at the office of the clerk to review the assessment and classification of property in the town or city. No changes in valuation or classification which are intended to correct errors in judgment by the county assessor may be made by the county assessor after the board has adjourned in those cities or towns that hold a local board of review; however, corrections of errors that are merely clerical in nature or changes that extend homestead treatment to property are permitted after adjournment until the tax extension date for that assessment year. The changes must be fully documented and maintained in the assessor's office and must be available for review by any person. A copy of the changes made during this period in those cities or towns that hold a local board of review must be sent to the county board no later than December 31 of the assessment year.

(b) The board shall determine whether the taxable property in the town or city has been properly placed on the list and properly valued by the assessor. If real or personal property has been omitted, the board shall place it on the list with its market value, and correct the assessment so that each tract or lot of real property, and each article, parcel, or class of personal property, is entered on the assessment list at its market value. No assessment of the property of any person may be raised unless the person has been duly notified of the intent of the board to do so. On application of any person feeling aggrieved, the board shall review the assessment or classification, or both, and correct it as appears just. The board may not make an individual market value adjustment or classification change that would benefit the property in cases where the owner or other person having control over the property will not permit the assessor to inspect the property and the interior of any buildings or structures.

(c) A local board may reduce assessments upon petition of the taxpayer but the total reductions must not reduce the aggregate assessment made by the county assessor by more than one percent. If the total reductions would lower the aggregate assessments made by the county assessor by more than one percent, none of the adjustments may be made. The assessor shall correct any clerical errors or double assessments discovered by the board without regard to the one percent limitation.

(d) A local board does not have authority to grant an exemption or to order property removed from the tax rolls.

(e) A majority of the members may act at the meeting, and adjourn from day to day until they finish hearing the cases presented. The assessor shall attend, with the assessment books and papers, and take part in the proceedings, but must not vote. The county assessor, or an assistant delegated by the county assessor shall attend the meetings. The board shall list separately, on a form appended to the assessment book, all omitted property added to the list by the board and all items of property increased or decreased, with the market value of each item of property, added or changed by the board, placed opposite the item. The county assessor shall enter all changes made by the board in the assessment book.

(f) Except as provided in subdivision 3, if a person fails to appear in person, by counsel, or by written communication before the board after being duly notified of the board's intent to raise the assessment of the property, or if a person feeling aggrieved by an assessment or classification fails to apply for a review of the assessment or classification, the person may not appear before the county board of appeal and equalization for a review of the assessment or classification. This paragraph does not apply if an assessment was made after the local board meeting, as provided in section 273.01, or if the person can establish not having received notice of market value at least five days before the local board meeting.

(g) The local board must complete its work and adjourn within 20 days from the time of convening stated in the notice of the clerk, unless a longer period is approved by the commissioner of revenue. No action taken after that date is valid. All complaints about an assessment or classification made after the meeting of the board must be heard and determined by the county board of equalization. A nonresident may, at any time, before the meeting of the board file written objections to an assessment or classification with the county assessor. The objections must be presented to the board at its meeting by the county assessor for its consideration.

Subd. 2. Special board; duties delegated. The governing body of a city, including a city whose charter provides for a board of equalization, may appoint a special board of review. The city may delegate to the special board of review all of the powers and duties in subdivision 1. The special board of review shall serve at the direction and discretion of the appointing body, subject to the restrictions imposed by law. The appointing body shall determine the number of members of the board, the compensation and expenses to be paid, and the term of office of each member. At least one member of the special board of review must be an appraiser, realtor, or other person familiar with property valuations in the assessment district.

Subd. 3. Local board duties transferred to county. The town board of any town or the governing body of any home rule charter or statutory city may transfer its powers and duties under subdivision 1 to the county board, and no longer perform the function of a local board. Before the town board or the governing body of a city transfers the powers and duties to the county board, the town board or city's governing body shall give public notice of the meeting at which the proposal for transfer is to be considered. The public notice shall follow the procedure contained in section 13D.04, subdivision 2. A transfer of duties as permitted under this subdivision must be communicated to the county assessor, in writing, before December 1 of any year to be effective for the following year's assessment. This transfer of duties to the county may either be permanent or for a specified number of years, provided that the transfer cannot be for less than three years. Its length must be stated in writing. A town or city may renew its option to transfer. The option to transfer duties under this subdivision is only available to a town or city whose assessment is done by the county.

History: (2034) *RL s 847; 1941 c 402 s 1; 1945 c 402 s 1; 1949 c 543 s 1; Ex1967 c 32 art 8 s 3; 1971 c 434 s 3; 1971 c 564 s 6; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 150 s 1; 1973 c 582 s 3; 1975 c 339 s 5; 1977 c 434 s 11; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1; 1987 c 268 art 7 s 37; 1988 c 719 art 7 s 8; 1990 c 480 art 7 s 14; 1995 c 264 art 3 s 13; 1997 c 231 art 2 s 23; 1998 c 254 art 1 s 77; 1999 c 243 art 5 s 25; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 7 s 21; 2003 c 127 art 5 s 22*

274.013 [Repealed, 1976 c 44 s 70]

274.014 LOCAL BOARDS; APPEALS AND EQUALIZATION COURSE AND MEETING REQUIREMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Handbook for local boards.** By no later than January 1, 2005, the commissioner of revenue must develop a handbook detailing procedures, responsibilities, and requirements for local boards of appeal and equalization. The handbook must include, but need not be limited to, the role of the local board in the assessment process, the legal and policy reasons for fair and impartial appeal and equalization hearings, local board meeting procedures that foster fair and impartial assessment reviews and other best practices recommendations, quorum requirements for local boards, and explanations of alternate methods of appeal.

Subd. 2. **Appeals and equalization course.** By no later than January 1, 2006, and each year thereafter, there must be at least one member at each meeting of a local board of appeal and equalization who has attended an appeals and equalization course developed or approved by the commissioner within the last four years, as certified by the commissioner. The course may be offered in conjunction with a meeting of the Minnesota League of Cities or the Minnesota Association of Townships. The course content must include, but need not be limited to, a review of the handbook developed by the commissioner under subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Proof of compliance; transfer of duties.** Any city or town that does not provide proof to the county assessor by December 1, 2006, and each year thereafter, that it is in compliance with the requirements of subdivision 2, and that it had a quorum at each meeting of the board of appeal and equalization in the prior year, is deemed to have transferred its board of appeal and equalization powers to the county under section 274.01, subdivision 3, for the following year's assessment.

The county shall notify the taxpayers when the board of appeal and equalization for a city or town has been transferred to the county under this subdivision and, prior to the meeting time of the county board of equalization, the county shall make available to those taxpayers a procedure for a review of the assessments, including, but not limited to, open book meetings. This alternate review process shall take place in April and May.

A local board whose powers are transferred to the county under this subdivision may be reinstated by resolution of the governing body of the city or town and upon proof of compliance with the requirements of subdivision 2. The resolution and proofs must be provided to the county assessor by December 1 in order to be effective for the following year's assessment.

History: 2003 c 127 art 2 s 16

274.02 [Repealed, 1949 c 543 s 2]

274.03 NOTICE OF MEETING.

The clerk shall give at least ten days' posted notice of the time and place of the meeting of the board of review. Failure to give notice or hold the meeting does not vitiate any assessment, except as to the excess over the market value of the property.

History: (2036) RL s 849; 1941 c 402 s 2; 1975 c 339 s 8; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1

274.04 [Repealed, 2003 c 127 art 5 s 50]

274.05 AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATES.

Subdivision 1. **Auditor's certificate of assessment books.** Upon the return of the assessment books under section 274.04, the county auditor shall examine them; and, if found in proper form, shall issue a certificate to the assessor. The certificate must state that the books comply with section 274.04. The assessor shall file the certificate with the clerk of the town. The town board must not pay the assessor for services until the assessor has complied with this section.

Subd. 2. **Auditor's certificate of summaries.** On receiving the summaries under section 274.04, subdivision 2, the county auditor shall examine them and, if found in proper form, shall issue a certificate to the assessor. The certificate must state that the summaries comply with section 274.04, subdivision 2.

History: (2038, 2039) 1907 c 87 s 1,2; 1963 c 781 s 4; 1975 c 339 s 8; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1

274.06 [Repealed, 1949 c 543 s 2]

274.07 LIST BY PERSON SICK OR ABSENT.

If any person required to list property for taxation is prevented by sickness or absence from listing it with the assessor, the person, or the person's agent in charge of the property, may give the auditor a statement of the property value as required by this chapter at any time before the taxes are extended by the county auditor. The auditor shall list the property and correct the corresponding items in the return made by the assessor. No statement may be received from any person who refused or neglected to attest to the statement when required by the assessor. No statement may be received from any person, unless the person makes and files with it an affidavit of absence from the town or district without design to avoid the listing of the property, or was prevented by sickness from giving the assessor the required statement when asked to do so.

History: (2041) RL s 851; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1

274.08 CORRECTION OF BOOKS.

The county auditor shall carefully examine the assessment books. If any property has been omitted, the auditor shall enter it on the list. The auditor shall notify the assessor of the omission. Upon notification, the assessor shall immediately determine the value of the omitted property and correct the original return. If the assessor does not perform, the auditor shall determine the value of the property and make the necessary corrections.

History: (2042) RL s 852; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1

274.09 CORRECTION OF FALSE LISTS AND RETURNS.

If the county auditor believes that any person has given the assessor a false statement of personal property, or that the assessor has not returned the full amount of all property required to be listed in the assessor's town or district, or has omitted, or made an erroneous return of, any property subject to taxation, the auditor shall correct the return of the assessor. At any time before the final settlement with the county treasurer, the auditor shall charge the owners of the property on the tax lists with the proper amount of taxes.

For purposes of this section the auditor may issue compulsory process, require the attendance of any person supposed to have a knowledge of the property, or its value, and examine the person, on oath, about the statement or return. Before making the entry on the tax list, the county auditor shall notify the person required to list the property of the right to show that the person's statement or the return of the assessor is correct. The county auditor shall file in the auditor's office a statement of the facts or evidence upon which the auditor made the corrections. The county auditor must not reduce the amount returned by the assessor without the written consent of the commissioner of revenue. A statement supporting the reduction must be submitted by the county auditor or the party aggrieved to the commissioner of revenue.

History: (2043) RL s 853; Ex1959 c 59 s 2; 1973 c 582 s 3; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1

274.10 PROPERTY OMITTED OR UNDERVALUED.

Subdivision 1. **Examiner; appointment, duties.** The governor shall appoint an examiner when it appears to the governor on a verified complaint, or by the finding of a court or of the legislature, or any committee of the legislature, that a considerable

amount of property in any county has been improperly omitted from the tax lists and assessment roll of the county for a year; or, if assessed, that the property has been grossly undervalued by the assessor or other county officials, whether or not the assessment has been reviewed by the county board of equalization. The appointment must be in writing. The appointee must be a competent citizen of the state, but not a resident of the county. The person appointed shall determine the character, location, value, and ownership of the real and personal property in the county omitted or undervalued. The person shall take an oath to faithfully perform the duties.

The person shall examine the subject and prepare a report in duplicate. A list must be attached to the report, showing the character, location, ownership, and valuation of all property that has been omitted or undervalued. The list must state the years or part of years that the property has been omitted or undervalued. The list must show opposite each piece or parcel of land or item of personal property undervalued, the amount of the assessment, its actual and market value at the time it should have been assessed, and the difference between its assessed and actual value. On or before January 1, in the assessment year, the examiner shall file the report and list with the county auditor and with the commissioner of finance. Lists must be verified substantially as follows:

"I,, solemnly swear that I have personally examined the real and personal property in the attached list, and that it is a correct and full list of the real and personal property subject to taxation in the county, and omitted from taxation for the years stated in it, or, if assessed for those years, grossly undervalued, and that the character, location, ownership, and valuation of the property as set down in the proper column, opposite the property, are correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief."

Subd. 2. Deputies; appointment, duties. When necessary to properly perform duties within the time prescribed by law, with the approval of the governor, the examiner may appoint one or more well-qualified citizens of the state as deputies to assist in the performance of examiner's duties. The deputies shall perform the duties assigned them by the examiner. The deputies must take an oath to faithfully perform the duties.

Subd. 3. Compensation of examiner and deputies. The examiner shall be paid \$3 for services, and each deputy shall be paid \$2, for every day they are necessarily employed in the performance of their duties. The examiner and deputies shall be paid their necessary expenses. Upon the approval by the governor, the compensation and expenses must be paid out of the general fund in the state treasury. The respective counties shall reimburse the state two years after the payments are made. The state auditor shall notify the county auditor of the amount to be paid. The county auditor shall levy a tax on the taxable property in the county sufficient to pay it. When collected, the proceeds of the tax must be paid into the state treasury like other state taxes.

History: (2044, 2045, 2046) *RL s 854,855,856; 1973 c 492 s 14; 1975 c 339 s 8; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1*

274.11 TAXES A LIEN ON PROPERTY IN EXAMINER'S LIST.

The taxes upon the property on the list of the examiner under section 274.10, and found to have been omitted from or undervalued in the tax list for any year, is a lien upon all the real property owned in the county by any person named in it as the owner. The lien attaches at the time the list is filed with the county auditor. The lien continues until the taxes are paid. The lien may be satisfied from the proceeds of the sale of any property in the county owned by the person.

History: (2047) *RL s 857; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1*

274.12 DUTIES OF AUDITOR AND ASSESSORS.

Upon the receipt of the examiner's list, the county auditor shall enter the property described in it in the real and personal property assessment books. Upon receiving the books from the auditor, the assessor shall assess the property entered in it at its market

value as shown by the list. A copy of the list must be furnished to the assessor with the assessment books of the district. The assessor shall also make the necessary corrections in any assessment made before receipt of the list to correspond with the market value of the property shown in the list and correct the returns accordingly. The auditor shall proceed under sections 273.02 and 274.09. On finding from the examiner's list that any property has been omitted from or undervalued in the lists of any prior year or years, the auditor shall enter it on the assessment and tax books for the year or years it was omitted or undervalued. The omitted and undervalued property must be assessed at the valuation and amounts shown on the list. The arrearages of taxes on the property accruing against it must be extended upon the tax list for the current year and collected like other taxes. An assessor or county auditor who neglects to perform a duty under this section is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition to the usual penalty, the assessor or auditor is liable on official bond for all taxes on the property on the examiner's list.

History: (2048) *RL s 858; 1975 c 339 s 8; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1*

274.13 COUNTY BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION.

Subdivision 1. **Members; meetings; rules for equalizing assessments.** The county commissioners, or a majority of them, with the county auditor, or, if the auditor cannot be present, the deputy county auditor, or, if there is no deputy, the court administrator of the district court, shall form a board for the equalization of the assessment of the property of the county, including the property of all cities whose charters provide for a board of equalization. This board shall be referred to as the county board of appeal and equalization. The board shall meet annually, on the date specified in section 274.14, at the office of the auditor. Each member shall take an oath to fairly and impartially perform duties as a member. The board shall examine and compare the returns of the assessment of property of the towns or districts, and equalize them so that each tract or lot of real property and each article or class of personal property is entered on the assessment list at its market value, subject to the following rules:

(1) The board shall raise the valuation of each tract or lot of real property which in its opinion is returned below its market value to the sum believed to be its market value. The board must first give notice of intention to raise the valuation to the person in whose name it is assessed, if the person is a resident of the county. The notice must fix a time and place for a hearing.

(2) The board shall reduce the valuation of each tract or lot which in its opinion is returned above its market value to the sum believed to be its market value.

(3) The board shall raise the valuation of each class of personal property which in its opinion is returned below its market value to the sum believed to be its market value. It shall raise the aggregate value of the personal property of individuals, firms, or corporations, when it believes that the aggregate valuation, as returned, is less than the market value of the taxable personal property possessed by the individuals, firms, or corporations, to the sum it believes to be the market value. The board must first give notice to the persons of intention to do so. The notice must set a time and place for a hearing.

(4) The board shall reduce the valuation of each class of personal property that is returned above its market value to the sum it believes to be its market value. Upon complaint of a party aggrieved, the board shall reduce the aggregate valuation of the individual's personal property, or of any class of personal property for which the individual is assessed, which in its opinion has been assessed at too large a sum, to the sum it believes was the market value of the individual's personal property of that class.

(5) The board must not reduce the aggregate value of all the property of its county, as submitted to the county board of equalization, with the additions made by the auditor under this chapter, by more than one percent of its whole valuation. The board may raise the aggregate valuation of real property, and of each class of personal property, of the county, or of any town or district of the county, when it believes it is below the market value of the property, or class of property, to the aggregate amount it believes to be its market value.

(6) The board shall change the classification of any property which in its opinion is not properly classified.

(7) The board does not have the authority to grant an exemption or to order property removed from the tax rolls.

Subd. 1a. **Failure to appear or appeal.** If a person, other than a public utility, mining company, or the metropolitan airports commission for which the original assessments are determined by the commissioner of revenue, fails to appear in person, by counsel, or by written communication before the county board after being duly notified of the board's intent to raise the assessment of the person's property, or if a person fails to appeal a decision of the board of review as described in section 274.01 after appearing before the local board, the person may not appear before the commissioner of revenue under section 270.11, subdivisions 5 and 6, to contest the valuation.

Subd. 1b. **Assessment changes.** No changes in valuation or classification that are intended to correct errors in judgment by the county assessor may be made by the county assessor after the county board of equalization has adjourned; however, corrections of errors that are merely clerical in nature or changes that extend homestead treatment to property are permitted after adjournment until the tax extension date for that assessment year. The changes must be fully documented and maintained in the assessor's office and must be available for review by any person.

Subd. 1c. **Alternative review option.** The county shall notify taxpayers whose town or city elected to transfer its powers and duties under section 274.01 to the county. Prior to the time of the county board of equalization, the county shall make available to those taxpayers a procedure for a review of its assessments, including, but not limited to, open book meetings. This alternative review process shall take place in April and May.

Subd. 2. **Special board; delegated duties.** The board of equalization for any county may appoint a special board of equalization and may delegate to it the powers and duties in subdivision 1. The special board of equalization shall serve at the direction and discretion of the appointing county board, subject to the restrictions imposed by law on the appointing board. The appointing board may determine the number of members to be appointed to the special board, the compensation and expenses to be paid, and the term of office of each member. At least one member of the special board of equalization must be an appraiser, realtor, or other person familiar with property valuations in the county. The county auditor is a nonvoting member and serves as the recorder for the special board.

History: (2049) *RL s 859; 1945 c 401 s 1; 1949 c 543 s 3; 1971 c 564 s 8; 1975 c 339 s 6; 1977 c 434 s 12; 1980 c 437 s 7; 1986 c 444; 1Sp1986 c 3 art 1 s 82; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1; 1993 c 375 art 3 s 22; 1997 c 231 art 2 s 24,25; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 7 s 22; 2003 c 127 art 5 s 23*

274.14 LENGTH OF SESSION; RECORD.

The county board of equalization or the special board of equalization appointed by it shall meet during the last ten meeting days in June. For this purpose, "meeting days" are defined as any day of the week excluding Saturday and Sunday. The board may meet on any ten consecutive meeting days in June, after the second Friday in June, if the actual meeting dates are contained on the valuation notices mailed to each property owner in the county under section 273.121. No action taken by the county board of review after June 30 is valid, except for corrections permitted in sections 273.01 and 274.01. The county auditor shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and orders of the board. The record must be published like other proceedings of county commissioners. A copy of the published record must be sent to the commissioner of revenue, with the abstract of assessment required by section 274.16.

History: (2050) *RL s 860; 1949 c 543 s 4; 1971 c 564 s 9; 1973 c 582 s 3; 1975 c 339 s 7; 1976 c 334 s 8; 1980 c 437 s 8; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1; 1987 c 268 art 7 s 38; 1Sp1989 c 1 art 9 s 29; 1990 c 480 art 7 s 15; 1995 c 264 art 11 s 5*

274.15 [Repealed, 1975 c 301 s 16]

274.16 CORRECTED LISTS, ABSTRACTS.

The county assessor or, in Ramsey county, the official designated by the board of county commissioners shall calculate the changes of the assessment lists determined by the county board of equalization, and make corrections accordingly, in the real or personal lists, or both, and shall make duplicate abstracts of them. One must be filed in the assessor's office, and one must be forwarded to the commissioner of revenue as provided in section 270.11, subdivision 2.

History: (2052) *RL s 862; 1949 c 543 s 5; 1955 c 71 s 1; 1971 c 25 s 56; 1971 c 564 s 10; 1973 c 582 s 3; 1978 c 743 s 11; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1; 1987 c 268 art 7 s 39*

274.17 RECORD; ABSTRACT TO COUNTY AUDITORS.

The secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the county board of equalization. The record must be published in the annual report of the commissioner of finance. Upon final adjournment the secretary shall send each county auditor an abstract of the proceedings, specifying: (1) the percent added to or deducted from the valuation of the real property of each of the towns and cities, and of the real property not in towns or cities, in case an equal percent has not been added to or deducted from each; (2) the percent added to or deducted from the classes of personal property in each of the towns and cities; and (3) the amounts added to the assessments of individuals, firms, or corporations.

The county auditor shall add to or deduct from each tract or lot of real property in the county the required percent on the valuation of the property after equalization by the county board, rounding the value of each separate tract or lot to the nearest dollar. The county auditor shall also add to or deduct from the classes of personal property in the county the required percent on the valuation of the property after equalization by the county board, rounding the value of each separate class of personal property to the nearest dollar. The county auditor shall also add to the assessments of individuals, firms, and corporations after equalization by the county board, the required amounts.

History: (2053) *RL s 864; 1973 c 123 art 5 s 7; 1973 c 492 s 14; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1*

274.175 VALUES FINALIZED.

The assessments recorded by the county assessor and the county auditor under sections 273.124, subdivision 9; 274.16; 274.17; or other law for real and personal property are final on July 1 of the assessment year, except for property added to the assessment rolls under section 272.02, subdivision 38, or deleted because of tax forfeiture pursuant to chapter 281. No changes in value may be made after July 1 of the assessment year, except for corrections permitted in sections 273.01 and 274.01.

History: *1Sp1989 c 1 art 9 s 30; 1990 c 480 art 7 s 16*

274.18 ABSTRACT OF REALTY ASSESSMENT ROLL TO TOWN CLERKS.

Once each year, the county auditor shall make out and send to each town clerk in the county who has requested it, a copy or abstract of the latest available real estate assessment roll of the town, as equalized by the county and state boards of equalization.

History: (2054) *RL s 865; 1979 c 50 s 31; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 229 art 4 s 1; 1993 c 375 art 3 s 23*

274.19 [Repealed, 1993 c 375 art 3 s 47]

274.20 [Repealed, 1993 c 375 art 3 s 47]