

Town of LaGrange Clerk Position Description

Duties of Town Clerk

The town clerk is a key town official who is involved in most aspects of town government. Section 60.33 sets forth various duties of the town clerk, as follows.

1. Clerk of town meeting

The town clerk serves as clerk of the town meeting under sec. 60.15. The town clerk also has pre- and post-meeting duties involving the publication or posting of any required notices and resolutions passed by the town meeting.

2. Clerk of town board

The town clerk is the clerk of the town board. The clerk, in that capacity, attends town board meetings (including closed sessions, unless circumstances involving the clerk dictate that the clerk not be present) and keeps a full record of its proceedings. The clerk files the accounts approved by the town board or allowed at town meetings and enters a statement of the accounts in the town's record books. The clerk also files with the town board claims approved by the clerk under sec. 60.44(2)(c).

3. Finance book

The clerk maintains a finance book which must contain a complete record of the finances of the town. The book shows the receipts, with the date, amount and source of each receipt; the disbursements, with the date, amount and object of each disbursement; and any other financial information required to be kept by the town board.

It should be noted that the finance "book" required does not mean that clerks must keep records in a ledger book. Many records are kept, instead, in computer files. Also, the financial records kept by the clerk are in addition to those kept by the town treasurer.

4. Elections and appointments

The town clerk performs duties prescribed for local clerks in the election laws, chs. 5-12 of the statutes.

Within 10 days after the election or appointment and qualification of any town supervisor, treasurer, assessor, or clerk, the town clerk must send a written notice to the county clerk giving the name and post-office address of the officer. The clerk must notify the county clerk of any subsequent changes in office.

5. Sale of real property

The town clerk, rather than the town board chairperson, executes (i.e., signs) conveyances of the town's real property, according to the statutes. However, the Wisconsin Towns Association legal staff recommends that the chairperson also sign the conveyance.

6. Notices

The town clerk must publish or post ordinances and resolutions as required under sec. 60.80 and give notice of the annual and special town meetings as required by secs. 60.11(5) and 60.12(3).

7. Records

The clerk must perform duties under the public records law with regard to records of which the clerk is legal custodian.

8. Licenses

The town clerk issues licenses or permits granted by the town board upon presentation of a receipt from the town treasurer showing that any required fee has been paid.

9. Schools

The town clerk performs the clerk's duties relating to public instruction under chs. 115-121. The clerk must, within 10 days of election or appointment, report his or her name and post-office address to the administrator of each cooperative educational service agency which contains any portion of the town. The clerk must also report to the administrator of the CESA the name and post-office address of each school district clerk within 10 days after the name and address is filed in the clerk's office.

The town clerk must keep a map showing the boundaries of the school districts within the town and apportion tax revenues collected by the town for the schools.

10. Highways and bridges

The town clerk must perform the duties relating to highways, bridges and drains specified in chs. 80-92.

10.1 Notice of property tax revenue

The clerk must notify the county treasurer, by February 20, of the proportion of property tax revenue and state property tax credits to be disbursed by the taxation district treasurer to each taxing jurisdiction within the town.

11. General

The clerk also must perform duties required by law, ordinance or the lawful direction of the town meeting or town board.

The town clerk may appoint a deputy town clerk, who must take and file an oath of office and official bond. Sec. 60.331. The town clerk is in charge of the deputy and may designate the deputy to perform the clerk's duties when the clerk is absent, sick or otherwise disabled. Although the town clerk, rather than the town board, appoints and directly supervises the deputy town clerk, the town board establishes the deputy's salary.

The catch-all language in sec. 60.33(11) providing that the clerk must perform other required duties covers a multitude of tasks.

Additional information concerning the clerk's duties may be found in the Clerk's Manual available from the Wisconsin Municipal Clerk's Association. Members of the Association may access the manual on-line, at <http://www.wisclerks.org/>. The manual contains chapters on records management, board duties, the conduct of meetings and financial management. It also contains a calendar of clerk's duties. In recent years the Wisconsin Towns Association and the UW-Extension Local Government Center have kept current a calendar of main events for the use of town clerks. Contact the Town's Association for information on obtaining this calendar.