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Delinquent Tax Deputies and Delinquent Tax List

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: CTAS-1585

The trustee is authorized to appoint such deputies as may be necessary to collect delinquent taxes after these taxes become delinquent.¹ These deputies may collect delinquent real property taxes as well as delinquent personal property taxes. These deputies take the same oath as the trustee.² The official bond of the trustee is held liable for the acts of these deputies, and also for the actions of any constable or deputy sheriff who may also be furnished with a list of delinquent taxes by the trustee. However, the trustee may require these officials to post a bond securing the faithful performance of their duties prior to turning over the delinquent tax list to them.³

The trustee is required to prepare and provide a list of delinquent taxpayers to the deputies appointed to collect delinquent taxes. This list must contain a description of the property of each taxpayer and the amount of taxes due from each. In cases of delinquent real property taxes, the list must identify the current owner of the property and state the owner's last known mailing address, if the owner can be identified; in those cases, there is no need to identify any former owners of the real property. However, the identification of the current owner on the delinquent tax list does not alter the liability of the owner of the property as of January 1 of the tax year. The trustee is not entitled to compensation for the preparation of the delinquent tax list.⁴

Deputy trustees who have not received copies of the delinquent tax list have no authority to collect the delinquent taxes.⁵ Deputy trustees who do receive copies are to collect delinquent taxes. Deputy trustees who have delinquent lists for collection must make partial settlement with the trustee whenever required by the trustee, and must, on or before January 1 following the receipt of the delinquent tax lists, make final settlement with the trustee and return the lists showing in the return what disposition was made of each item of taxes therein set out, and the reason for not collecting items remaining unpaid, and sign the return in the deputy trustee's official capacity.⁶ The officer making the return shall receive no additional compensation for making it.⁷

On January 1, the deputy trustee must make a final settlement of the taxes in the deputy trustee's hands for collection, and in the settlement will be charged with the aggregate amount of taxes in the deputy trustee's hands for collection, and will be credited with the amount collected and accounted for, with errors, double and illegal assessments, and with the insolvent or other taxes as the officer shows could not have been collected by law after diligent effort on such officer's part.⁸ It is the duty of the collecting officers to return the delinquent lists to the county trustee, on or before January 1 of each year, and the officer failing to make a return on or before January 1 will be presumed to have collected all the taxes on the lists delivered to the officer, and will account for and pay the same to the trustee.⁹ Any balance found due on the settlements may be recovered from the deputy trustee and the person's sureties on the person's bond, by suit or motion, on five days' notice, in any court of record, instituted by the county trustee or any agent or district attorney general of the state.¹⁰

The officer making collections receives no additional fees for making delinquent collections. The only compensation consists of salaries paid either to deputies in accordance with T.C.A. Title 8, Chapter 20, or to trustees in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 8-24-102, 8-24-106, and 8-24-107. Postage and other office expenses incurred by the trustee or the trustee's deputies incidental to the collection of delinquent taxes is paid from the fees of the trustee. In the case of a levy or garnishment proceeding, officers receive, in addition to the above mentioned compensation, the fees allowed by law in such cases. The fees are taxed as a part of the costs of collection and are paid by the delinquent tax payer. The county is not liable for costs where no collection is made by the officer.¹¹

¹T.C.A. § 67-5-2001(a)(1).

²T.C.A. §§ 8-18-112; 67-5-1901.

³T.C.A. § 67-5-2001(b).

⁴T.C.A. § 67-5-2001(a)(1) - (4).

⁵*Shipp v. Rarick*, 67 S.W.2d 145 (Tenn. 1934).

⁶T.C.A. § 67-5-2006(a)(1).

⁷T.C.A. § 67-5-2006(a)(2).

⁸T.C.A. § 67-5-2006(b).

⁹T.C.A. § 67-5-2006(c).

¹⁰T.C.A. § 67-5-2006(d).

¹¹T.C.A. § 67-5-2007.

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