

CHAPTER 17

RESIGNATIONS, VACANCIES, AND REMOVALS FROM OFFICE

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17.01 Resignations to whom made; when effective. Resignations of public officers shall be made as follows:

(1) By the governor, lieutenant governor or any officer appointed by the legislature, to the legislature, if in session; otherwise by the governor or lieutenant governor, to the secretary of state, and by an officer appointed by the legislature, to the governor.

(2) By the secretary of state, treasurer, attorney general, state superintendent, and all officers appointed by the governor alone or by him by and with the advice and consent of the senate, to the governor.

(3) By senators and members of the assembly, to the presiding officers of their respective houses, who shall immediately transmit the same to the governor, and to the governor during the recess of the legislature.

(4) By the justices of the supreme court, circuit and county judges, to the governor.

(5) By a sheriff, to the county clerk, who shall immediately transmit notice thereof to the governor.

(6) By a clerk of the circuit court, to the circuit judge.

(7) By county supervisor, county clerk, county treasurer, coroner, district attorney, register of deeds or county surveyor, to the sheriff, who shall immediately transmit a notice thereof, in case of a coroner, district attorney or register of deeds, to the governor; and in case of a county supervisor, county clerk, county treasurer or surveyor, to the chairman of the county

board; and after such notices the sheriff shall file such resignations with the county clerk.

(8) By the mayor or alderman or councilman of a city, however organized, to the council; by other elective officers thereof, to the mayor; and by other city officers, to the officer or body having power to appoint in their stead.

(9) By a town officer, to the town board.

(10) By officers of a village, however organized, to the village board.

(11) By a school district officer, to the district board.

(12) By all other officers, to the officer or body having power to appoint in their stead.

(13) Resignations shall be made in writing, shall be addressed and delivered to the officer or body prescribed in this section and shall take effect, in the case of an officer whose term of office continues by law until his successor is chosen and qualifies, upon the qualification of his successor; and in the case of other officers, at the time indicated in the written resignation, or if no time is therein indicated, then upon delivery of the written resignation. Delivery shall be made by leaving a copy of the written resignation with the officer to whom it is required to be addressed and delivered at his public office or his usual place of business, or if required to be addressed and delivered to a body, by leaving a copy with the following officer at his public office or his usual place of business:

(a) If required to be addressed and delivered to the legislature, with the presiding officer of each house, or if required to be addressed and

delivered to but one house, to the presiding officer of that house.

(b) If required to be addressed and delivered to the county board, city council or to the village, town or school district board, to the clerk thereof, except the resignation of the county, city, village, town or school district clerk which shall be delivered to the chairman of the county board, mayor, village president, town chairman, or director, as the case may be.

(c) If required to be addressed and delivered to any other body, to the secretary or clerk thereof, if any, and if none, to any member of such body.

17.02 Notice of resignations. Notice of resignations, in addition to those provided for in s. 17.01, shall be given forthwith as follows:

(1) SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. Of the resignation of a United States senator or member of congress from this state, by him to the secretary of state.

(3) MUNICIPAL JUSTICES. Of the resignation of municipal justices in any city or village, however organized, or in any town, by the city, village or town clerk, as the case may be, to the clerk of the circuit court for his county.

17.025 Temporary vacancies. (1) **EXISTENCE.** Whenever the duly qualified incumbent of an office enumerated in sub. (4) is found to be unable to perform all of the functions of his position by incapacitation caused by illness or injury of any nature, a temporary vacancy exists.

(2) **HOW CONVENED.** (a) *Voluntary petition.* Whenever the incumbent of an office enumerated in sub. (4), or his duly appointed guardian, files a written petition for a hearing to determine his incapacitation with any member of the board requesting a hearing, the disability board shall be convened within 5 days from the date of filing said petition.

(b) *Involuntary petition.* Whenever a written petition duly signed by any 4 members of the disability board is filed with the board requesting a hearing to determine the incapacitation of the incumbent of an office enumerated in sub. (4), the board shall be convened within 5 days from the date of filing said petition. The petition shall be signed by at least one member of each of the political parties represented on the board.

(3) **HEARING.** (a) *When held.* Whenever the disability board has been convened it shall conduct a hearing to determine whether a temporary vacancy exists.

(b) *Proceedings.* In the conduct of the hearing any member of the board shall have the right to administer oaths, to summon and compel attendance of witnesses, and to sign and issue a subpoena. The board shall keep a record of its

proceedings and a phonographic transcript shall be taken, made a part of the files and transcribed only by order of the board. The files and records of the board in proceedings under this section shall be kept in locked files and shall not be open to inspection except upon specific permission of the board. In any action or special proceeding in a court of record, such files and records shall be made available by special order of such court.

(c) *Quorum.* A quorum shall consist of 6 members. Findings shall be effective only by a secret affirmative vote of 6 members of the disability board. Said findings shall be final without right of appeal, except that after a finding of disability or inability to act, the affected incumbent may appeal such finding pursuant to ch. 227. The appeal shall be limited to the board record. The finding of disability or inability to act shall remain in effect during the pendency of such appeal.

(d) *Findings.* After a hearing by the disability board and a finding of disability or inability to act has been filed, a written certificate of temporary incapacity signed and authorized by the board members shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state not later than the next succeeding legal work day and when so filed shall create a temporary vacancy in such affected elected office. In the event of a finding of no disability by failure to secure 6 affirmative votes in support of the petition, the board shall dismiss the petition.

(e) *Rehearing.* The disability board shall conduct rehearings in accordance with pars. (b) and (c). A rehearing before the disability board to reconsider an existing finding of temporary incapacitation shall be held when petitioned as provided in sub. (2), but no such rehearing shall be held unless 3 months have elapsed from the date of the conclusion of the original hearing or the most recent rehearing. When the existing finding of disability or inability to act was made pursuant to a voluntary petition under sub. (2) (a) and more than 3 months have elapsed since such finding, such affected incumbent may file a declaration of fitness. Upon the filing of such declaration the board may reconvene on call of any member and conduct a rehearing to determine such incumbent's ability to serve. Failure to reconvene the board within 15 days from the date of filing of such declaration shall result in voiding the finding of disability or inability to act, and restore the incumbent to office.

(f) *Removal of disability.* After a board rehearing and a finding of a removal of the disability and, therefore, an ability to act, a written certificate of such finding shall be signed and authorized by the board members and shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state not

later than the next succeeding legal work day and when so filed shall rescind the previously filed certificate of temporary incapacity. At such time the regularly elected incumbent shall resume his office.

(4) AFFECTED OFFICES AND HOW FILLED DURING DISABILITY. Whenever the board has made a finding that a temporary vacancy exists in the following offices, such office shall be filled for the period of such temporary vacancy or the balance of the unexpired term, whichever is the shorter period, as follows:

(a) *Governor.* When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of governor, the duties of the governor shall automatically be assumed by the lieutenant governor as required by article V, section 7 of the constitution.

(b) *Lieutenant governor.* When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of lieutenant governor during the continuance of a vacancy in the office of governor, the duties of the office of governor shall be assumed by the secretary of state as required by article V, section 8, of the constitution.

(c) *Secretary of state; state treasurer.* When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of secretary of state or in the office of state treasurer, the duties of the office shall be assumed, respectively, by the first emergency interim successor designated under s. 22.20 (4) or, if no such designation has been made for the respective office, then by a deputy appointed by the governor.

(d) *Attorney general; state superintendent.* When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of attorney general or in the office of state superintendent of public instruction, the duties of the office shall be assumed, respectively, by the deputy under s. 15.05 (2) or, if such office is vacant, by a deputy appointed by the governor.

(e) *Supreme court.* When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of supreme court justice, the duties of the office shall be assumed by an acting justice appointed by the governor, but if such vacancy exists in the office of chief justice, the justice who would succeed to the office of chief justice if the vacancy were permanent shall assume the duties of chief justice for the period of the temporary vacancy and the acting justice appointed by the governor shall assume the duties of an associate justice.

History: 1971 c. 40 s. 93; 1975 c. 332.

17.026 Temporary vacancies, circuit and county judges. (1) Whenever a judge of a circuit or county court is found incapable of performing, or materially impaired in ability to perform, the duties of the office, by reason of physical or mental infirmity, a temporary vacancy exists. The determination that a

temporary vacancy exists shall be made by the judicial commission.

(2) The supreme court shall establish the procedure to be used in determining whether a temporary vacancy exists, including provisions for convening by voluntary and involuntary petition and for determining that a temporary vacancy no longer exists. When a temporary vacancy is found to exist, the incumbent judge shall continue to receive the salary and other benefits to which entitled, and the person appointed to serve temporarily shall for the period of temporary service receive salary and other benefits computed at the rate of the incumbent judge's salary and benefits, to be vouchered against the appropriation under s. 20.625 (1).

(3) When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of circuit court judge, the duties of the office shall be assumed by a reserve judge appointed under section 24 of article VII of the constitution. If no reserve judge is available, the duties of the office shall be assumed by an acting circuit court judge appointed by the governor.

(4) When the temporary vacancy exists in the office of county court judge, the duties of the office shall be assumed by a retired judge appointed under s. 253.195. If no retired judge is available, the duties of the office shall be assumed by an acting county court judge appointed by the governor.

History: 1975 c. 332, 421.

17.03 Vacancies, how caused. Any public office, including offices of counties, cities, villages, towns, school districts and vocational, technical and adult education districts shall become or be deemed vacant upon the happening of any of the following events:

(1) The death of the incumbent.

(2) His resignation.

(3) His removal.

(4) His ceasing to be an inhabitant of this state; or if the office is local, his ceasing to be an inhabitant of the district, county, city, village, town, aldermanic district or school district for which he was elected or within which the duties of his office are required to be discharged; and in the case of a school district officer, and in addition to the foregoing, his being and remaining absent from the district for a period exceeding 60 days.

(5) His conviction by a state or United States court of and sentence for treason, felony or other crime of whatsoever nature punishable by imprisonment in any jail or prison for one year or more, or his conviction by any such court of and sentence for any offense involving a violation of his official oath, in either case whether or not sentenced to imprisonment. A vacancy so

created shall in no case be affected by a stay of execution of judgment. Reversal of the judgment against such officer shall forthwith restore him to office, if the term for which he was elected or appointed has not expired, but, in any event, shall entitle him to the emoluments of the office for all the time he would have served therein had he not been so convicted and sentenced; but pardon shall not restore him to office or entitle him to any of the emoluments thereof.

(6) The decision of a competent tribunal declaring void his election or appointment or adjudging him insane.

(7) The neglect or refusal of any person elected or appointed or reelected or reappointed to any office to take and file his official oath or to execute or renew his official bond if required, or to file the same or either thereof in the manner and within the time prescribed by law.

(8) The neglect or refusal of any officer in office to execute and file an additional bond, when lawfully required, in the manner and within the time so required or prescribed by law.

(9) The death or declination in writing of any person elected or appointed to fill a vacancy or for a full term before he qualifies, or his death or such declination before the time when, by law, he should enter upon the duties of his office to which he was elected or appointed.

(10) On the happening of any other event which is declared by any special provision of law to create a vacancy.

(11) Upon the failure of the first annual school meeting of a school district to elect school board members for the district.

(12) The establishment of such offices upon the creation by the legislature of a new county and a new town, unless otherwise ordered by the legislature.

History: 1971 c 154; 1971 c 304 s. 29 (1).

Cross Reference: Vacancy in office of district attorney, assistant district attorney, city attorney, assistant city attorney or judicial officer may be caused by his employment by a common carrier or public utility; see 196 675

County board supervisor does not vacate office by moving from district if he continues to reside in county 60 Atty Gen 55.

A county judge's resignation is effective when successor qualifies 62 Atty Gen 35.

17.035 Vacancies; military leaves. (1) If an elected or appointed official or employe of any city or village or school district however organized shall enter the armed forces of the United States and shall remove himself temporarily from the municipality or district for which he is an officer or employe such temporary removal shall constitute a temporary vacancy in such office or position.

(3) Such temporary vacancies shall be filled as other vacancies are filled, except that no election need be held to fill any part of such

temporary vacancy, but the term of the person appointed temporarily shall not extend beyond the expiration of the term of the officer or employe who entered federal service, and such temporary term shall be terminated sooner in case and at such time as the original officer or employe shall return to such district or municipality during his original term of office after completing his federal service and upon his filing within 40 days of such termination with the clerk of the city, village, or school district, his statement under oath of such termination, and that he elects to resume his office or position. On filing such statement the term of the temporary officer or employe shall cease, and the returning officer or employe shall be entitled to resume the duties of his office.

17.05 Governor may declare vacancies.

The governor may declare vacant the office of any state officer required by law to execute an official bond whenever a judgment is obtained against such officer for a breach of the conditions of such bond.

17.06 Removal state officers; impeachment; address.

(1) Any civil officer of this state may be removed from office by impeachment for corrupt conduct in office, or for crimes and misdemeanors as provided in section 1, article VII of the constitution; and any supreme court justice or circuit court judge may also be removed from office by address of both houses of the legislature as provided in section 13, article VII of the constitution.

(2) In this section, "address" means a procedure for removal of a judge from office based on a document entitled "Address" which specifies charges against a judge alleging misconduct or that he is not physically or mentally qualified to exercise the judicial functions of his office. A copy of the address containing the charges against him shall be served upon the judge. The judge shall have the opportunity of being heard in his defense and he may be removed from office by address of both houses of the legislature if two-thirds of all members elected to each house concur therein.

History: 1971 c 142

17.07 Removals; legislative and appointive state officers. Removals from office of legislative and appointive state officers may be made as follows:

(1) Officers elected by either house of the legislature, by the house that elected them, at pleasure.

(2) State officers appointed by the legislature, by that body, at pleasure; or by the governor during the recess of the legislature, for cause.

(3) State officers appointed by the governor by and with the advice and consent of the senate, or appointed by any other officer or body subject to the concurrence of the governor, by the governor at any time, for cause; but the commissioner of banking and state auditor may be so removed only by and with the consent of a majority of the members of the senate.

(4) State officers appointed by the governor alone for a fixed or indefinite term or to supply a vacancy in any office, elective or appointive, except justices of the supreme court and judges, by the governor at pleasure; and all officers appointed by the governor during the recess of the legislature whose appointments are required to be later confirmed by the senate shall be deemed to be appointed by the governor alone until so confirmed.

(5) Other state officers appointed by any officer or body without the concurrence of the governor, by the officer or body that appointed them, at pleasure, except officers appointed according to merit and fitness under and subject to or whose removal is governed by ch. 16 who may be removed only in conformity with said chapter.

History: 1971 c 211

17.08 Suspension of receiver of moneys.

(1) The governor may summarily suspend from office any appointive state officer who collects, receives or handles public moneys, if it appears to him by reason of action, proceedings, charges or credible information that the officer has in any particular wilfully neglected his duty in connection with such moneys. The suspension shall continue until the final determination of the action or proceedings or of the investigation of such charges or information, or pending any proceedings to remove such officer from office as provided by law for any such neglect of duty, and a competent person shall be appointed, in the manner and by the appointing power prescribed for filling vacancies in such office, to discharge the duties of such officer during his suspension. If it is determined in the action or proceedings or is found upon investigation that the officer has not in any particular wilfully neglected his duty in connection with such moneys, and such fact is certified to the secretary of state by the judge, governor or other officer who conducted such action, proceedings or investigation, the suspended officer, unless he has been removed from office for any cause provided by law, shall thereby be restored to office, if the term for which he was elected or appointed has not expired, and shall thereby become entitled to the emoluments of the office for all of the time he would have served therein had he not been suspended as herein provided.

(2) This section in no manner impairs or restricts the power of the governor or other officer or body to remove any officer from office as provided by law.

17.09 Removal of elective county officers. Elective county officers may be removed from office as follows:

(1) COUNTY CLERK; TREASURER; SURVEYOR; SUPERVISOR. The county clerk, county treasurer or surveyor, or a county supervisor, by the county board, for cause, by a vote of two-thirds of all the supervisors entitled to seats on such board.

(2) CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT. The clerk of the circuit court, by the judge or a majority of judges of the circuit court for his county, in term time or vacation, for cause.

(4) JUDGES. The county judge, by address of both houses of the legislature in the manner provided in the constitution for the removal of justices of the supreme court or judges of the circuit courts.

(5) OTHER ELECTIVE COUNTY OFFICERS. The sheriff, coroner, register of deeds or district attorney, by the governor, for cause.

17.10 Removal of appointive county officers. Appointive county officers may be removed as follows:

(1) APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR. County officers of any county appointed by the governor, by him, for cause.

(2) APPOINTED BY COUNTY BOARD. County officers appointed by the county board, by that body, for cause. All such removals may be made by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the supervisors entitled to seats on such board.

(3) APPOINTED BY CHAIRMAN OF COUNTY BOARD. County officers appointed by the chairman of the county board and confirmed by the said board, or appointed by him alone, by such chairman, for cause, except members of the county civil service commission who may be removed by the county board, for cause, as provided in sub. (2). A county commissioner of elections so removed may appeal to the county board within 10 days after such removal, and the county board shall conduct a hearing in such manner as shall be determined by it and determine the question of removal on such appeal.

(4) APPOINTED BY THE CIRCUIT JUDGE. County officers appointed by a judge or judges of the circuit court, by the judge or a majority of the judges authorized to appoint their successors, at pleasure.

(5) APPOINTED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE. County officers appointed by the county judge, by him, at pleasure.

(6) **OTHERS.** All other appointive county officers, by the officer, or body that appointed them, at pleasure, except probation officers and their substitutes appointed pursuant to ch. 48 who may be removed for cause only. Removals by a body, other than the county board, consisting of 3 or more members may be made by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members thereof.

(7) **GENERAL EXCEPTION.** But no county officer appointed according to merit and fitness under and subject to a civil service law, or whose removal is governed by such a law, shall be removed otherwise than as therein provided.

17.11 Suspension of district attorney or sheriff. (1) If any district attorney or sheriff is arrested for or charged with any offense against the laws of this state, or if the governor is credibly informed that any district attorney or sheriff is guilty of any such offense, or that proceedings are pending before any court or officer involving any criminal charge against him, or that any district attorney or sheriff wilfully neglects or refuses to perform his duties, the governor shall in the case of a felony and may in the case of a misdemeanor suspend him from office until such charge shall be investigated and finally determined. He shall, in the case of the district attorney, appoint the attorney general or one of his assistants or some competent attorney of the state, and he shall, in the case of the sheriff, appoint a suitable person, to discharge the duties of such office during such suspension.

(2) The county in which an attorney is so temporarily appointed district attorney or person is appointed sheriff shall pay such appointee for his services and expense such amount as is determined and fixed by the governor and certified by him to the county clerk of such county.

(3) Any attorney so temporarily appointed shall have all the power and discharge all the duties of the district attorney and he shall speedily bring to a hearing and determination any charges made against the district attorney so suspended. Any person so temporarily appointed as sheriff shall have all the power and discharge all the duties of sheriff.

(4) If it is determined in such action or proceedings or is found upon such investigation that the district attorney or sheriff so suspended is not guilty of any offense, or has not wilfully neglected or refused to perform his duties, as charged, and such fact is certified to the county clerk by the governor, he shall thereby become entitled to the emoluments of his office for all of the time he would have served therein had he not been suspended as herein provided, and shall be

restored to office if the term for which he was elected or appointed has not expired.

(5) This section in no manner affects provisions of law relating to the removal from office of the district attorney or sheriff.

17.12 Removal and suspension of city officers. (1) **GENERAL AND SPECIAL CHARTER.** Officers of cities operating under the general law or under special charter including school officers, may be removed as follows:

(a) *Elective.* Elective officers by recall as provided in s. 9.10, or by the common council, for cause.

(c) *Appointive.* Appointive officers, by whomsoever appointed, by the common council, for cause, except officers appointed by the council who may be removed by that body, at pleasure. Officers appointed by any other officer or body without confirmation or concurrence by the council, by the officer or body that appointed them, at pleasure, except commissioners of election in cities of the first class who may be removed by the mayor for cause only, and any such commissioner may appeal to the common council within 10 days after removal. The council may conduct a hearing thereon by a committee which committee shall proceed in such manner as may be determined by it and make full report to the council, which shall determine the question upon such appeal.

(d) *Votes required.* Removals by the common council may be made only by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of all the members thereof, and by any other body consisting of 3 or more members, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members thereof.

(2) **COMMISSION FORM.** Officers of cities operating under the commission form of government may be removed as follows:

(a) *Elective.* Elective officers by recall as provided in s. 9.10.

(c) *Appointive.* Appointive officers, by whomsoever appointed, by the council, at pleasure, by a majority vote; and officers appointed by any officer or body other than the council may also be removed from office by the officer or body that appointed them, at pleasure, by vote as provided in sub. (1) (d).

(3) **SUSPENSION.** The mayor of any city may summarily suspend from office any officer thereof whose removal is sought and against whom charges have been preferred therefor, and may appoint an officer to discharge the duties of such office until such charges have been disposed of. If such charges are dismissed, the officer so suspended shall thereby be restored to office and be entitled to the emoluments of the office for all of the time he would have served therein had he not been suspended.

(4) GENERAL EXCEPTION. But no officer of any city, appointed according to merit and fitness under and subject to a civil service or to a police and fire commission law, or whose removal is governed by such a law, shall be removed otherwise than as therein provided.

17.13 Removal of village, town, school district and vocational officers. Officers of towns, and of villages, school districts and vocational, technical and adult education districts may be removed as follows:

(1) APPOINTIVE OFFICERS. Any appointive village, town, school district and vocational, technical and adult education district officer, by the officer or body that appointed him, at pleasure. Removal of any such officer by a body shall be by a majority vote of all the members thereof.

(2) ELECTIVE VILLAGE OFFICERS. Any elective village officer by a majority vote of all the members of the village board, because of continued physical inability to perform the duties of office or gross neglect of duty.

(3) ALL OFFICERS. Any village, town, school district or vocational, technical and adult education district officer, elective or appointive, including those embraced within subs. (1) and (2), by the judge of the circuit court of the circuit wherein the village, town, school district or vocational, technical and adult education district is situated, in term time or vacation, for cause.

History: 1971 c 154.

Where statute provides that a public officer, including VIAE board members, serves at pleasure but is appointed for a term, such public officer may be summarily dismissed during the term. 62 Atty. Gen. 97.

17.14 Removal; assessors; boards of review; county boards; procedure. Any assessor and any member of a board of review or of a county board of supervisors, in addition to being removable as otherwise provided, may be removed by the presiding judge of the circuit court for his county, in term time or vacation, as follows:

(1) ASSESSORS. Any assessor for one or more of the following causes:

(a) Wilful or intentional assessment of property at other than its true cash value with the intent to subject such property to more or less than its lawful share of taxes.

(b) Wilful or intentional omission of taxable property from the assessment roll with intent to permit the same to escape taxation.

(c) Wilful or intentional assessment of the property of one person at a lower value than the property of another or others whereby favoritism or discrimination between taxpayers in the district is shown.

(d) Solicitation or receipt of any favor, reward, money or other thing of value of or from the owner of any taxable property in his assessment district for the assessment or valuation of property at other than its true cash value.

(e) Solicitation or demand by any assessor of any owner of property liable to assessment in his assessment district to aid, assist or promote the business or interests of such assessor by means of which and by virtue of his office he shall gain or receive pecuniary profit or advantage that he could not otherwise have gained or received.

(f) Any violation of law in the valuation or assessment of property in his assessment district.

(g) Failure to use the "Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual" provided under s. 73.03 (2a) and as required by s. 70.32 (1) and 70.34. The certification of any assessor removed under this paragraph may for sufficient reason be reinstated by the secretary of revenue after one year upon formal application for reinstatement.

(2) MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF REVIEW AND COUNTY BOARD. Any supervisor, alderman, trustee or other officer who acts as a member of a board of review or of the county board of supervisors, for one or more of the following causes:

(a) Wilful or intentional valuation or equalization of property of persons or towns, cities or villages at other than the true cash value thereof, with the intent to subject the property of persons or of towns, cities or villages to more or less than their lawful share of taxes.

(b) Aiding, abetting or assisting in any understanding, combination or conspiracy to value or equalize the property in towns, cities or villages in a county at other than the true cash value, with intent to subject the property in one or more towns, cities or villages to more or less than its lawful share of taxes for state or county purposes or both.

(c) Any violation of law in the valuation or equalization of property in towns, cities or villages or in the discharge of official duties.

(3) PROCEDURE. Removals under this section may be made by the circuit judge in term time or vacation, by order specifying the cause thereof, a copy of which order shall be certified by the circuit judge to the proper town, village or city clerk. Such removal shall be made only upon a duly verified petition signed by a freeholder and taxpayer of the county setting forth fully the charges preferred against such officer. The district attorney of the county upon complaint showing cause therefor shall prepare the petition and have the same duly verified by the complainant. The judge, upon the presentation of the petition, shall by an order to show cause, which shall be served upon such officer

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personally at least 10 days prior to the hearing, fix a time and place for hearing the matters alleged in the petition. The testimony shall be taken and the proceedings conducted under such reasonable regulations as the judge shall prescribe. The district attorney shall attend the hearing and conduct the proceedings on behalf of the petitioner. The removal of such officer shall disqualify him from holding such office for 3 years from the date of the order of removal.

(4) COSTS. If the presiding judge, after a hearing on the merits, dismisses the petition and further finds the complaint was wilful and malicious and without probable cause, such judge shall order judgment in favor of the officer and against the petitioner for \$10 attorney's fees and for the costs and fees of witnesses and officers incurred on behalf of such officer. The judgment shall be signed by the clerk of the circuit court and entered and docketed in the clerk's office as the judgment of the circuit court in term. An execution may be issued thereon against the property of the petitioner in the same mode as upon a judgment entered in the circuit court in civil actions founded in tort. Upon the return of such execution unsatisfied in whole or in part, an execution against the person of the petitioner may be issued in the manner and with the force and effect of an execution against the person as provided in ss. 815.01 to 815.10. In all other cases the judge may order that the expenses incurred in procuring witnesses and other needed actual expenses, be paid out of the treasury of the county in which such officer resides upon certificates of the clerk of said court.

History: 1973 c. 90; Sup. Ct. Order, 67 W (2d) 773; 1975 c. 218.

17.15 Removals; other officers. (1) **JOINT COUNTY INSTITUTIONS.** Any member of the governing body of any joint county school, hospital, sanatorium, asylum or other joint county institution, appointed by the county board of any county, may be removed by said county board, for cause; and any other officer of any such institution may be removed by the officer or body that appointed him, for cause.

(2) JURY COMMISSIONERS. Jury commissioners may be removed from office by the judge or a majority of the judges authorized to appoint them, at pleasure.

17.16 Removals; definition; procedure; disqualification. (1) Removals from office at pleasure shall be made by order, a copy of which shall be filed as provided by sub. (8), except that a copy of the order of removal of a court commissioner, a jury commissioner or family

court commissioner shall be filed in the office of the clerk of the circuit court.

(2) The word "cause," as used in this chapter, unless qualified, means inefficiency, neglect of duty, official misconduct or malfeasance in office.

(3) Removals from office for cause under this chapter, except as provided in s. 17.14, shall be made as provided in this section, and may be made only upon written verified charges preferred by a taxpayer and resident of the governmental unit of which the person against whom the charges are filed is an officer, and after a speedy public hearing whereat said officer shall have full opportunity to be heard in his defense, personally and by counsel. A copy of the charges and written notice of the time and place for the hearing thereon shall be given such officer by the removing power by delivery to such officer in person or by mailing the same to him at his last and usual post-office address not less than 10 days prior to such hearing. The officer may within 10 days from service of such charges file with the removing power his verified answer thereto. The hearing shall be conducted and investigation made by the removing power with due dispatch, but the governor, in case of charges preferred to him, may appoint a commissioner to conduct the hearing, make the investigation and report the testimony and proceedings to him, and the council of any city having a membership of more than 20, in case of charges preferred to it, may appoint a committee of not less than 5 of its members, to conduct the hearing, make investigation and report the testimony and proceedings to it. Such commissioner or committee shall have the same power and authority as the governor or the council, as the case may be, in the conduct of the hearing on and investigation of such charges.

(4) The removing power may, before acting upon any charges preferred against any officer, require the person preferring the same to execute and deliver to such power a bond in the sum of \$1,000 with one or more sureties to be approved by such power, conditioned for the payment of all costs and expenses actually incurred by the state, county or other unit of which the person charged is an officer and by the removing power in the hearing and investigation of such charges.

(5) The removing power, and in case such power consists of more than one person, each such person is authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas for the attendance of witnesses and the production of evidence, and may make and enforce such orders and rules as are necessary to properly conduct such hearing and may appoint and fix the compensation of a stenographer to take testimony thereat.

(7) No person shall be excused from testifying or from producing evidence on such

hearing for the reason that the testimony, documentary or otherwise, required of him may tend to incriminate him, but no person so testifying shall be prosecuted for or on account of any transaction, matter or thing concerning which he may have so testified or produced any documentary evidence, except for perjury committed in giving such testimony.

(8) Removals from office for cause shall be by order, a certified copy of which, together with a complete transcript of the testimony and proceedings at the hearing and a statement of the cause or causes for which removal is made, shall be filed by the removing power as follows:

(a) In the case of a state officer, in the office of the secretary of state.

(b) In the case of other officers, in the office of the clerk of the unit of which the person removed was an officer.

(c) In the case of officers of joint county institutions, in the office of the county clerk of the county wherein the buildings of such institution are located.

(9) In the case of procedure for removals by the governor, all expenses incurred shall be paid upon vouchers duly certified by him and shall be charged to the appropriation provided in s. 20.525. In the case of procedure for removals by any other state officer or body, such expenses shall be paid out of the appropriation to the officer or body invested with power to remove. In case of procedure for removals by other officers or bodies, the expenses thereof shall be paid by the unit of government of which the person against whom charges are preferred was an officer. But if the removing power finds that the complaint was wilful and malicious and without probable cause all such expenses shall be paid by the person who preferred the charges and may be collected in an action against him or on the bond furnished by him.

(10) A person lawfully removed from office shall be ineligible to appointment or election to fill the vacancy caused by such removal.

17.17 Notice of vacancies. Notice of vacancies occurring otherwise than by resignation shall be given forthwith as follows:

(1) **SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.** In the office of United States senator or member of congress from this state, by the county clerk of the county wherein such officer resided at the time of election, to the elections board.

(3) **VACANCIES BY JUDGMENTS.** In any office occurring by virtue of a judgment of a court of this state convicting the incumbent of and sentencing him for treason, felony or other crime of whatsoever nature punishable by imprisonment in any jail or prison for one year or more, or convicting him of and sentencing him for any

offense involving a violation of his official oath; or declaring the election or appointment of any officer to be void or that the office of any officer has been forfeited, or become vacant; or adjudging any officer to be insane, by the clerk of such court to the officer or body authorized to fill such vacancies, or if such vacancies are required to be filled only by election, then to the officer authorized to give notice thereof.

(5) **OTHER VACANCIES.** In city, village, town or school district offices, other than those of which notice is required by sub. (3), by the clerk or in his absence by the treasurer thereof, and in state, county and other offices other than those of which notice is required by sub. (3), by the county clerk of the county wherein the officer resided at the time of election or appointment, or in his absence by the sheriff, to the officer or body authorized to fill such vacancies, or if such vacancies are required to be filled only by election, then to the officer authorized to give notice thereof.

History: 1973 c. 334 s. 57.

17.18 Vacancies, United States senator and member of congress; how filled. (1)

Vacancies in the office of member of congress from this state shall be filled by election, as provided in s. 8.50, for the residue of the unexpired term.

(2) Vacancies in the office of United States senator from this state shall be filled by temporary appointment by the governor which appointment shall continue until a successor is elected for the unexpired term. If the vacancy occurs 60 days or more prior to the second Tuesday in July in even-numbered years, such vacancy shall be filled at the primary and general election in such even year. If the vacancy occurs less than 60 days prior to the second Tuesday in July in even years, it shall be filled 2 years hence. The provisions for election for the unexpired term shall not apply if the next general election is one at which the vacant senate seat is to be filled for a full term. The senator so elected shall qualify for office as soon as possible after he receives his certificate of election. This subsection shall apply to any vacancy occurring after June 19, 1957.

17.19 Vacancies, elective state offices; how filled. Vacancies in elective state offices shall be filled as follows:

(1) **MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURE.** In the office of state senator or representative to the assembly, by election, as provided in s. 8.50, for the residue of the unexpired term.

(2) **JUDICIAL.** In the office of justice of the supreme court or judge of the circuit court, by temporary appointment by the governor, which

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shall continue until a successor is elected, as provided in s. 8.50, and qualifies. When so elected such successor shall hold his office for a full term and shall take office as follows:

(a) A supreme court justice, on the first Monday of January next succeeding such election.

(b) A circuit court judge, on the first Monday of January next succeeding such election.

(3) **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS.** In the office of presidential elector, by the remaining electors present in the manner prescribed by s. 7.75.

(4) **OTHER ELECTIVE STATE OFFICERS.** In the office of secretary of state, treasurer, attorney general or state superintendent, by appointment by the governor, and a person so appointed shall hold office until his successor is elected, as provided in s. 8.50, and qualifies, but if no such election is held, the person so appointed shall hold office for the residue of the unexpired term.

17.20 Vacancies in appointive state offices; how filled; terms. (1) **GENERAL.** Vacancies in appointive state offices shall be filled by appointment by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointments thereto, and appointees to fill vacancies therein shall hold office for the residue of the unexpired term or, if no definite term of office is fixed by law, until their successors are appointed and qualify.

(2) **INTERIM VACANCIES; TERMS.** Vacancies occurring during the recess of the legislature in the office of any officer normally nominated by the governor, and with the advice and consent of the senate appointed, shall be filled by appointment by the governor for the residue of the unexpired term, subject to confirmation by the senate at the next regular session thereof if the term for which the person was so appointed has not expired. Any such appointment subject to confirmation by the senate shall be in full force until acted upon by the senate, and when confirmed by the senate shall continue for the residue of the unexpired term. Any appointment made under this subsection on the days specified in s. 13.02 (1) for organization of a new legislature shall be invalid, but may be renewed after the executive office has been officially notified by a joint resolution that the new legislature has been organized.

History: 1973 c. 24.

Cross Reference: See 14.22 for other provisions on appointments to state offices.

17.21 Vacancies in elective county offices; how filled; term. Vacancies in elective county offices shall be filled in the manner and for terms as follows:

(1) **SHERIFF, CORONER, ETC.** In the office of sheriff, coroner, register of deeds or district attorney, by appointment by the governor for the residue of the unexpired term.

(2) **JUDGES.** (a) In the office of county judge, by temporary appointment by the governor, which shall continue until a successor is elected, as provided in s. 8.50, and qualifies. When so elected the successor shall hold office for a full term and shall take office at the time of year specified for the beginning of term for the respective office.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of the law to the contrary any vacancy occurring in the office of the judge of any county court, by reason of the induction of such judge into any branch of the armed forces of the United States when at war, shall be filled by appointment by the governor of a qualified person who shall continue to act as judge of such court for the residue of the unexpired term or until the judge so inducted is discharged from military service and resumes his duties and functions as judge of said court, whichever period is the shorter. When the judge so inducted is discharged from military service before the expiration of the term for which he was elected or appointed he shall thereupon resume his duties and functions as judge of such court until such expiration. When the compensation of the judge of such court or any part thereof is an annual salary the judge so inducted and person so appointed to fill the vacancy shall each receive as compensation for his services as judge such proportion of the annual salary in any year as the number of months or parts of months he served in such year, as judge, bears to the number of months in the year.

(3) **COUNTY CLERK, TREASURER AND SURVEYOR.** In the office of county clerk, treasurer or surveyor, by appointment by the county board for the residue of the unexpired term.

(4m) **CLERK OF COURT.** In the office of clerk of circuit court, by appointment of the judge, or by a majority of the judges of the circuit court of such county, in term time or vacation, for the residue of the unexpired term.

(5) **SUPERVISORS, POPULOUS COUNTIES.** In the office of county supervisor of counties having a population of at least 500,000, according to the last United States census, by election for the residue of the unexpired term on the first Tuesday of April next after the vacancy happens, in case it happens 100 days or more before such day, but if such vacancy happens less than 100 days before such first Tuesday in April, then such successor shall be elected on the first Tuesday of April of the next ensuing year; but no election to fill a vacancy in such office shall be held at the time of holding the regular election for such office. Notwithstanding any other

provision of this subsection, the county executive may order a special election to be held to fill the vacancy and s. 8.50 shall apply to such election. When an assembly district in such county is altered by legislative redistricting effective prior to the end of an existing supervisor term and a vacancy happens, the person elected to fill such vacancy for the residue of the unexpired term shall be an elector of such assembly district as it existed prior to such redistricting.

(6) APPOINTMENTS, HOW REPORTED. For the information of all concerned appointments by the governor under subs. (1) and (2) shall be reported by the appointing officer to the county clerk. Appointments of the county board under sub. (3) shall be reported by the county clerk to the secretary of state. Appointments of clerks of court by a judge of the circuit court under sub. (4m) shall be reported to the county clerk and to the secretary of state.

History: 1973 c. 58.

Cross Reference: See 59.03 (3) (e) for method of filling vacancies on county boards.

17.22 Vacancies in appointive county offices; how filled. (1) Vacancies in any appointive county office shall be filled by appointment for the residue of the unexpired term by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointments thereto; but the term of any person appointed by the county board to fill a vacancy in the office of county highway commissioner shall terminate the first Monday of January of the second year next succeeding the appointment. All appointments, subject to confirmation by the county board, made while the board is not in session, shall be acted upon by said board at its meeting next following such appointment.

(2) Vacancies in the offices of officers appointed by the county board, occurring when the board is not in session, shall be filled in manner and for terms as follows:

(b) In the office of the county highway commissioner, by appointment by the county highway committee. A person so appointed shall hold office until the first Monday of January next succeeding his appointment, and his successor shall be appointed by the county board at its first regular meeting next succeeding such appointment and shall take office on the Tuesday following the first Monday of January next succeeding and shall hold office for term as prescribed in sub. (1).

(d) In the office of any other officer appointed by the county board, by temporary appointment by the chairman of the county board. A person so appointed shall hold office until his successor is appointed and qualifies, and such successor shall be appointed by the county

board for the residue of the unexpired term at its meeting next after such vacancy occurred.

17.23 Vacancies in city offices; how filled.

(1) GENERAL AND SPECIAL CHARTER CITIES. Vacancies in offices of cities operating under the general law or special charter shall be filled as follows:

(a) In the office of mayor, except as provided in s. 9.10, by appointment by the common council. In the office of alderman in cities of the 1st class, by the mayor, and in cities of 2nd, 3rd and 4th class, by the common council, except in both cases as provided in s. 9.10. A person so appointed shall hold office until his successor is elected and qualified. His successor shall be elected for the residue of the unexpired term on the first Tuesday of April next after the vacancy happens, in case it happens 90 days or more before such day, but if such vacancy happens within 90 days before such first Tuesday of April, then such successor shall be elected on the first Tuesday of April of the next ensuing year; but no election to fill a vacancy in such office shall be held at the time of holding the regular election for such office.

(b) In the office of any other elective officer, and except as provided in s. 9.10, by appointment by the mayor subject to confirmation by the council, except that in case of vacancies in the office of any such officer of a city of the first class who is authorized by law to have a deputy, such deputy shall perform the duties of such office, and he shall be entitled to the emoluments of such office during the remainder of the term. A person so appointed and confirmed shall hold office until his successor is elected and qualifies. His successor shall be elected as provided in par. (a).

(d) In appointive offices, by appointment for the residue of the unexpired term by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointments thereto.

(2) COMMISSION FORM. Vacancies in offices of cities operating under the commission form of government shall be filled as follows:

(a) 1. In the office of mayor or other member of the council, except as provided in s. 9.10, in the manner provided in sub. (1) (a). On failure of the council to make such appointment for 30 days after the vacancy exists the city engineer shall be a temporary acting member of the council until such vacancy is filled in the manner provided by law, and he shall have all the powers, prerogatives and duties of the vacant office except the right to vote to fill a vacancy in the office of mayor or councilman.

2. When 2 vacancies exist in the council the city clerk shall be a temporary acting member of

the council until the vacancies are filled in the manner provided by law, and he shall have all the powers, prerogatives and duties of the vacant office except the right to vote to fill a vacancy in the office of mayor or councilman.

3. When 3 vacancies exist in the council the city treasurer shall be a temporary acting member of the council until the vacancies are filled in the manner provided by law, and he shall have all the powers, prerogatives and duties of the vacant office except the right to vote to fill a vacancy in the office of mayor or councilman.

4. When 2 or more vacancies exist in the council 6 months or more prior to the first Tuesday of April of any year a special election to fill the vacancy for the residue of the unexpired term of each such vacancy shall be held and conducted, and the returns thereof made in the manner and within the time required in the case of regular municipal elections, and the city clerk shall call and give notice of such special election as provided by law within 10 days of the date when such vacancies exist.

5. While serving as temporary members of the council the city engineer, city clerk and city treasurer shall not be entitled to have or receive any compensation for such temporary service.

6. The powers, prerogatives and duties conferred on such temporary acting members of the council shall be in addition to all those otherwise vested by law in such city engineer, city clerk and city treasurer.

7. It is hereby declared to be the purpose and intention of this paragraph to permit the city engineer, city clerk and city treasurer to have and perform the powers and duties herein provided as temporary acting members of the council, in addition to the regular powers and duties of their respective offices and notwithstanding any other contrary provision of the law.

8. This paragraph shall apply only to cities organized and operating under ss. 64.25 to 64.38.

(c) In appointive offices, by appointment for the residue of the unexpired term by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointment thereto.

17.24 Vacancies in village offices. (1) A vacancy in any elective village office may be filled by appointment by a majority of the members of the village board for the residue of the unexpired term or until a special election is held under sub. (2). A vacancy in an appointive office shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(2) A vacancy in any elective office in a village may be filled by special election of a successor for the residue of the unexpired term

on the first Tuesday of April next after the vacancy happens, if it happens 90 days or more before such day, but if the vacancy happens within 90 days before the first Tuesday of April, then the successor shall be elected on the first Tuesday of April of the next ensuing year; but no election to fill a vacancy in such office shall be held at the time of holding the regular election for such office.

17.245 New city, village or town office, temporary appointment. Whenever an elective office is created in a city, village or town pursuant to law or ordinance, a temporary appointment may be made by the governing body pending the election of the incumbent for the first full term.

17.25 Vacancies in town offices; how filled. Vacancies in town offices shall be filled as follows:

(1) In the town board, by the remaining supervisors and the town clerk, except when the vacancy is caused by removal by the circuit judge as provided by law, which latter vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the said judge. Vacancies in other elective town offices shall be filled by appointment by the town board, except vacancies caused by removal by the judge of the circuit court which latter vacancy shall be filled by the said judge. Persons appointed under this subsection to fill vacancies shall hold office for the residue of the unexpired term, except persons appointed to fill vacancies in the office of municipal justice and member of the water or light commission, which persons shall hold office only until their successors are elected and qualify and such successors shall be elected at the annual town meeting next after the vacancy occurs if such vacancy occurs 12 days or more prior to such meeting; otherwise at the annual town meeting held in the year next succeeding; but no election to fill a vacancy in such office shall be held at the time of holding the regular election for such office.

(2) In appointive offices, by appointment for the residue of the unexpired term by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointments thereto, except vacancies caused by removals by the judge of the circuit court which shall be filled for the residue of the unexpired term by the said judge.

17.26 Vacancies in school district boards and boards of education; how filled. Vacancies in school district boards and boards of education operating under the general law or under special charters shall be filled as follows:

(1) In the case of common, unified and union high school districts and school districts organized under ch. 119, by appointment by the remaining members. Such appointees shall hold office until a successor is elected and takes office pursuant to s. 119.08 (4), 120.06 (4) or 120.73 (1). The appointment shall not be for the unexpired term but shall be until such successor is elected and qualifies.

(2) (a) In the case of city school district boards except under par. (b), by appointment by the mayor for the residue of the unexpired term, subject to confirmation by the council.

(b) In the case of joint city school district boards, by appointment by the mayor for the residue of the unexpired term, subject to confirmation by the district's fiscal board.

(3) Any person selected pursuant to sub. (1) or (2), upon being notified of his selection, shall be deemed to have accepted the same unless within 5 days thereafter he files with the clerk or director a written refusal to serve.

(4) In boards where the first annual meeting of the district has failed to elect school board members, by appointment by the state superintendent of public instruction.

History: 1973 c. 144; 1975 c. 138 s. 37; 1975 c. 200.

17.27 Vacancies in other offices; how filled.

(1) JOINT COUNTY INSTITUTIONS. Vacancies in the office of any member of the governing body of any joint county school, hospital, sanatorium, asylum or other joint county institution, or in the office of any other officer of any such institution, shall be filled by appointment by the appointing power and in the manner prescribed by law for making regular full term appointments thereto. A vacancy in the office of any such officer appointed by the county board, occurring while the board is not in session,

shall be filled by appointment by the chairman of the county board. A person so appointed shall hold office until his successor is appointed for the residue of the unexpired term by the county board at its first regular meeting held next after the vacancy occurs and qualifies.

(2) JURY COMMISSIONERS. Vacancies in the office of any jury commissioner shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by the judge or a majority of the judges authorized to make regular full term appointments thereto.

(4) ANY OTHER VACANCY. In case of a vacancy in any office in the state where no other provision is made for filling the same, it shall be filled by appointment by the governor.

17.28 When officers may take office.

When no different provision is made in respect thereto, any officer elected or appointed to fill a vacancy shall qualify in the manner required by law of the officer in whose stead he was elected or appointed and shall enter upon the duties of his office immediately thereafter and shall hold office for the residue of the unexpired term and until his successor is elected or appointed and qualifies, or, if no definite term of office is prescribed by law, until his successor is elected and qualifies.

17.29 Effect of chapter. The provisions of this chapter supersede all contrary provisions in either the general law or in special acts, except ch. 7 relating to election officers appointed for the election wards or polling places in the state and ch. 21 relating to the military staff of the governor and to officers of the Wisconsin national guard; and shall govern all offices whether created by general law or special act, unless otherwise specially provided.

History: 1971 c. 304 s. 29 (2).