VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 58.1-3370 and 58.1-3378 of the Code of Virginia, relating to real property tax; boards of equalization.

[H 1495]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 58.1-3370 and 58.1-3378 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 58.1-3370. Appointment.

A. The circuit court having jurisdiction within each city and each county other than those counties operating under § 58.1-3371 shall, in each tax year immediately following the year a general reassessment or annual or biennial assessment is conducted in such city or county, appoint for such city or county a board of equalization of real estate assessments, unless such county or city has a permanent board of equalization appointed according to law. In addition, at the request of the local governing body, the circuit court may appoint alternate members as provided in subsection B of § 58.1-3373, and the provisions of that subsection shall apply mutatis mutandis.

B. The term of any board of equalization appointed under the authority of this section shall expire one year after the effective date of the assessment for which ~~they were~~ *it was* appointed. *However, if a taxpayer applies to the commissioner of the revenue or other official performing the duties imposed on commissioners of the revenue for relief from a real property tax assessment prior to the expiration of the board of equalization's term, and the term of the board of equalization expires prior to a final determination on such application for relief, and the taxpayer advises the circuit court that he wishes to appeal the determination to the board of equalization, then the circuit court may reappoint the board of equalization to hear and act on such appeal.*

§ 58.1-3378. Sittings; notices thereof.

Each board of equalization shall sit at and for such time or times as may be necessary to discharge the duties imposed and to exercise the powers conferred by this chapter. Of each sitting public notice shall be given at least 10 days beforehand by publication in a newspaper having general circulation in the county or city and, in a county, also by posting the notice at the courthouse and at each public library, voting precinct or both. Such posting shall be done by the sheriff or his deputy. Such notice shall inform the public that the board shall sit at the place or places and on the days named therein for the purpose of equalizing real estate assessments in such county or city and for the purpose of hearing complaints of inequalities wherein the property owners allege a lack of uniformity in assessment, or errors in acreage in such real estate assessments. The board also shall hear complaints that real property is assessed at more than fair market value. Except as otherwise provided by the Code of Virginia:

1. The fair market value of real property shall be established by the board as of January 1 of the applicable year; or

2. If a county or city has adopted July 1 as its tax day for real property pursuant to § 58.1-3011, then, for other than public service corporation property, the fair market value of real property shall be established by the board as of July 1 of the applicable year.

The governing body of any county or city may provide by ordinance the date by which applications must be made by property owners or lessees for relief. Such date shall not be earlier than 30 days after the termination of the date set by the assessing officer to hear objections to the assessments as provided in § 58.1-3330. If no applications for relief are received by such date, the board of equalization shall be deemed to have discharged its duties. Such governing body may also provide by ordinance the deadline by which all applications must be finally disposed of by the board of equalization. All such deadlines shall be clearly stated on the notice of assessment. *Notwithstanding such deadlines, if a taxpayer applies to the commissioner of the revenue or other official performing the duties imposed on commissioners of the revenue for relief from a real property tax assessment prior to such deadlines, and such deadlines occur prior to a final determination on such application for relief, and the taxpayer advises the circuit court that he wishes to appeal the determination to the board of equalization, then the circuit court may require the board of equalization to hear and act on such appeal.* The governing body may provide for applications for relief to be made electronically; however, taxpayers retain the right to file applications on traditional paper forms provided by the governing body as long as such forms are submitted prior to the established deadline. If such paper forms are mailed by the applicant, the postmark date shall be considered the date of receipt by the governing body. A hearing for relief before the board of equalization regarding an assessment on residential property shall not be denied on the basis of a lack of

information on the application for relief, as long as the application includes the address, the parcel number, and the owner's proposed assessed value for the property. A hearing for relief before the board of equalization regarding an assessment on commercial, multi-family residential, or industrial property on the basis of fair market value shall not be denied on the basis of a lack of information on the application, as long as documentation of any applicable assessment methodologies is submitted with the application, and the application includes the address, the parcel number, and the owner's proposed assessed value for the property.