

Chapter 20

SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS*

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***State law references**—Special assessments for public improvements, MCL 68.31 et seq.; notices and hearings, MCL 211.741 et seq.; deferment of special assessments on homesteads, MCL 211.761 et seq.

Sec. 20-1. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Cost. The term "cost" as used in this chapter when referring to the cost of any local public improvement shall include the cost of services, plans; condemnation, spreading of rolls, notices, advertising, financing, construction, legal fees, interest on special assessment bonds for not to exceed one year and all other costs incident to the making of such improvement, the special assessments therefor and the financing thereof.

Local public improvement means any public improvement which is of such a nature as to benefit especially any real property or properties within a district in the vicinity of such improvement.

(Code 1959, § 12.051)

Sec. 20-2. Authority to assess.

The whole cost of any part thereof of any local public improvement may be defrayed by special assessment upon the lands specially benefited by the improvement in the manner hereinafter provided.

(Code 1959, § 12.052)

Sec. 20-3. Initiation of special assessment projects.

When the village council shall determine to make any improvement or repairs and defray the cost and expense thereof by special assessment, they shall declare by resolution, stating the nature of the improvement, and that one-half of the cost and expense thereof shall be paid from general funds of the village, and that the balance of the cost and expense shall be by the property benefited, and the village council shall designate the district or lands and premises upon which the special assessment shall be levied.

(Code 1959, § 12.053)

Sec. 20-4. Initiation by petition.

Local public improvements may be initiated by petition signed by property owners whose aggregate property in the proposed district was assessed for not less than 51 percent of the total assessed value of the privately-owned real property located therein, all shown by the last preceding general tax records of the village. Such petition shall contain a brief description of the property owned by the respective signatories thereof and if it shall appear that the petition is signed by at least 51 percent as aforesaid the clerk shall certify same to the council. The petition shall be addressed to the council and filed with the clerk and shall in no event be considered directory but is advisory only.

(Code 1959, § 12.054)

Sec. 20-5. Survey and report.

Before the council shall consider the making of any local improvement, the council shall cause to be prepared a report which shall include necessary plans, profiles, specifications and detailed estimates of cost, an estimate of the life of the improvement, a description of the assessment district or districts, and such other pertinent information as will permit the council to decide the cost, extent and necessity of the improvement proposed and what part or proportion thereof should be paid by special assessments upon the property especially benefited and what part, if any, should be paid by the village at large. The council shall not finally determine to proceed with the making of any local public improvement until such report has been filed, nor until after a public hearing has been held by the council for the purpose of hearing objections to the making of such improvement.

(Code 1959, § 12.055)

Sec. 20-6. Determination of the project, notice.

(a) After receiving the report required in section 20-5 for making any local public improvement as requested in the resolution of the council, and the council has reviewed said report, a resolution may be passed tentatively determining the necessity of the improvement, setting forth the nature thereof, prescribing what part or proportion of the cost of such improvement shall be paid by special assessment upon the property especially benefited, determination of benefits received by affected properties, and what part, if any, shall be paid by the village at large; designating the limits of the special assessment district to be affected, designating whether to be assessed according to frontage or other benefits, placing the complete information on file in the office of the village clerk, where the same may be found for examination, and directing the village clerk to give notice of public hearing on the proposed improvement, at which time and place opportunity will be given interested persons to be heard. Such notice shall be given by one publication in a newspaper published or circulated within the village and by first class mail addressed to each owner of or person in interest in property to be assessed as shown by the last general tax assessment roll of the village. The publication of notice shall be made at least seven full days prior to the hearing and the mailing of notice shall be made at least ten full days prior to the date of the hearing. The hearing required by this section may be held at any regular, adjourned or special meeting of the council.

(b) The last local tax assessment records means the last assessment roll for ad valorem tax purposes that has been reviewed by the local board of review, as supplemented by any subsequent changes in the names or the addresses of the owners or parties listed on that roll.

(c) The notice of hearing shall include a statement that appearance and protest at the hearing in the special assessment proceedings is required in order to appeal the amount of the special assessment to the state tax tribunal and shall describe the manner in which an appearance and protest shall be made.

(d) An owner or party in interest, or his or her agent may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment, or shall be permitted to file his or her appearance or protest by letter and his or her personal appearance shall not be required.

(e) The village council shall maintain a record of parties who appear to protest at the hearing. If a hearing is terminated or adjourned for the day before a party is provided the opportunity to be heard, a party whose appearance was recorded is considered to have protested the special assessment in person.

(Code 1959, § 12.056)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 211.741.

Sec. 20-7. Hearing on necessity.

At the public hearing on the proposed improvement, all persons interested shall be given an opportunity to be heard, after which the council may modify the scope of the local public improvement in such a manner as they shall deem to be in the best interest of the village as a whole; provided that if the amount of work is increased or additions are made to the district, then another hearing shall be held pursuant to notice prescribed in section 20-6. If the determination of the council shall be to proceed with the improvement, a resolution shall be passed approving the necessary profiles, plans, specifications, assessment district and detailed estimates of cost, and directing the assessor to prepare a special assessment roll in accordance with the council's determination and report the same to the council for confirmation.

(Code 1959, § 12.057)

Sec. 20-8. Deviation from plans and specifications.

No deviation from original plans or specifications as adopted shall be permitted by any officer or employee of the village without authority of the council by resolution. A copy of the resolution authorizing such changes or deviation shall be certified by the village clerk and attached to the original plans and specifications on file in the clerk's office.

(Code 1959, § 12.058)

Sec. 20-9. Limitations on preliminary expenses.

The council shall specify the provisions and procedures for financing a local public improvement. No contract or expenditure, except for the cost of preparing necessary profiles, plans, specifications and estimates of cost, shall be made for the improvement, nor shall any improvement be commenced until the special assessment roll to defray the costs of the same shall have been made and confirmed.

(Code 1959, § 12.059)

Sec. 20-10. Special assessment roll.

The assessor shall make a special assessment roll of all lots and parcels of land within the designated district benefited by the proposed improvement and assess to each lot or parcel of land the proportionate amount benefited thereby. The amount spread in each case shall be based upon the detailed estimate of cost as approved by the council.

(Code 1959, § 12.060)

Sec. 20-11. Assessor to file assessment roll.

When the assessor shall have completed such assessment roll he shall file the same with the village clerk for presentation to the council for review and certification by it.

(Code 1959, § 12.061)

Sec. 20-12. Meeting to review special assessment roll; objections in writing.

(a) Upon receipt of the special assessment roll, the council, by resolution, shall accept the assessment roll and order it to be filed in the office of the village clerk for public examination, shall fix the time and place the council will meet to review such special assessment roll and direct the village clerk to give notice of a public hearing for the purpose of affording an opportunity for interested persons to be heard. The notice shall be given by publication once, at least seven full days prior to the date of the hearing, in a newspaper published or circulated within the village and by first class mail addressed to each owner of or person in interest in property to be assessed as shown by the last general tax assessment roll of the village, mailed at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. The hearing required by this section may be held at any regular, adjourned or special meeting of the council. At this meeting, all interested persons or parties shall present in writing their objections, if any, to the assessments against them. The assessor shall be present at every meeting of the council at which a special assessment is to be reviewed.

(b) The last local tax assessment records means the last assessment roll for ad valorem tax purposes that has been reviewed by the local board of review, as supplemented by any subsequent changes in the names or the addresses of the owners or parties listed on that roll.

(c) The notice of hearing shall include a statement that appearance and protest at the hearing in the special assessment proceedings is required in order to appeal the amount of the special assessment to the state tax tribunal and shall describe the manner in which an appearance and protest shall be made.

(d) An owner or party in interest, or his agent may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment, or shall be permitted to file his appearance or protest by letter and his personal appearance shall not be required.

(e) The village council shall maintain a record of parties who appear to protest at the hearing. If a hearing is terminated or adjourned for the day before a party is provided the opportunity to be heard, a party whose appearance was recorded is considered to have protested the special assessment in person.

(Code 1959, § 12.062)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 211.741.

Sec. 20-13. Changes and corrections in assessment roll.

The council shall meet at the time and place designated for the review of such special assessment roll, and at such meeting, or a proper adjournment thereof, shall consider all objections thereto submitted in writing. The council may correct the roll as to any special assessment or description of any lot or parcel of land or other errors appearing therein; or it may, by resolution, annul the assessment roll and direct that new proceedings be instituted. The same proceedings shall be followed in making a new roll as in the making of the original roll. If, after hearing all objections and making a record of such changes as the council deems justified, the council determines that it is satisfied with the special assessment roll and that assessments are in proportion to benefits received, it shall thereupon pass a resolution reciting such determinations, confirming such roll, placing it on file in the office of the village clerk and directing the village clerk to attach her warrant to a certified copy thereof within ten days, therein commanding the assessor to spread and the treasurer to collect the various sums and amounts appearing thereon as directed by the council. The roll shall have the date of confirmation endorsed thereon and shall from that date be final and conclusive for the purpose of the improvement to which it applies unless contested in the manner provided in Chapter 8, Section 34 of Public Act No. 3 of 1895 (MCL 68.34), and subject to adjustment to conform to the actual cost of the improvement, as provided in section 20-19.

(Code 1959, § 12.063)

Sec. 20-14. Objection to assessment.

If at, or prior to, the final confirmation of any special assessments, the owners of privately owned real property to be assessed for more than 50 percent of the cost of an improvement, or in the case of paving or similar improvements the owners of more than 50 percent of the frontage to be assessed for any such improvement, shall object in writing to the proposed improvement, the improvement shall not be made by proceedings delineated by this chapter without a five-sevenths vote of the members elect of the council, provided that this section shall not apply to sidewalk construction.

(Code 1959, § 12.064)

Sec. 20-15. Special assessment; when due.

All special assessments, except such installments thereof as the council shall make payable at a future time as provided in this chapter, shall be due and payable upon confirmation of the special assessment roll.

(Code 1959, § 12.065)

Sec. 20-16. Partial payments; when due.

The council may provide for the payment of special assessments in annual installments. Such annual installments shall not exceed 30 in number, the first installment being due upon confirmation of the roll or on such date as the council may determine and deferred installments being due annually thereafter, or in the discretion of the council, may be spread upon and made a part of each annual village tax roll thereafter until all are paid. Interest shall be charged on all deferred installments at a rate not to exceed eight percent per annum, commencing on the due date of the first installment, or 60 days after the date of confirmation if the first installment is not due upon confirmation, and payable on the due date of each subsequent installment. The full amount of all or any deferred installments, with interest accrued thereon to the date of payment, may be paid in advance of the due dates thereof. If the full assessment or the first installment thereof shall be due upon confirmation, each property owner shall have 60 days from the date of confirmation to pay the full amount of said assessment, or the full amount of any installments thereof, without interest or penalty. Following said 60-day period, the assessment or first installment thereof shall, if unpaid, be considered as delinquent and the same penalties shall be collected on such unpaid assessments or first installments thereof as are provided by law to be collected on delinquent general village taxes. Deferred installments shall be collected without penalty until 60 days after the due date thereof, after which time such installments shall be considered as delinquent and such penalties on said installments shall be collected as are provided by law to be collected on delinquent general village taxes. After the council has confirmed the roll, the village treasurer shall notify by mail each property owner on said roll that said roll has been filed, stating the amount assessed and the terms of payment. Failure on the part of the village treasurer to give said notice or of such owner to receive said notice shall not invalidate any special assessment roll of the village or any assessment thereon, nor excuse the payment of interest or penalties.

(Code 1959, § 12.066)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 133.9.

Sec. 20-17. Delinquent special assessments.

Any assessment, or part thereof, remaining unpaid on the first Monday of March following the date when the same became delinquent shall be reported as unpaid by the treasurer to the council. Any such delinquent assessment, together with all accrued interest, shall be transferred and reassessed on the next annual village tax roll in a column headed "Special Assessments" with a penalty of four percent upon such total amount added thereto, and when so transferred and reassessed upon said tax roll shall be collected in all respects as provided for the collection of village taxes.

(Code 1959, § 12.067)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 68.33.

Sec. 20-18. Creation of lien.

Special assessments and all interest, penalties and charges thereon from the date of confirmation of the roll shall become a debt to the village from the persons to whom they are

assessed, and, until paid, shall be and remain a lien upon the property assessed, of the same character and effect as the lien created by general law for state, county and village taxes and the lands upon which the same are a lien shall be subject to sale therefor the same as are lands upon which delinquent village taxes constitute a lien.

(Code 1959, § 12.068)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 68.33.

Sec. 20-19. Additional assessments, refunds.

The village clerk shall within 60 days after the completion of each local or special public improvement, compile the actual cost thereof and certify the same to the assessor who shall adjust the special assessment roll to correspond therewith. Should the assessment prove larger than necessary by less than five percent the same shall be reported to the council which may place the excess in the village treasury or make a refund thereof pro rata according to the assessment. If the assessment exceeds the amount necessary by five percent or more, the entire excess shall be credited to owners of property as shown by the village assessment roll upon which such assessment has been levied, pro rata according to the assessment. No refunds of special assessments may be made which impair or contravene the provision of any outstanding obligation or bond secured in whole or part by such special assessments. In the case of assessments due in installments the council may order the refund given by credit against the installments last coming due. When any special assessment roll shall prove insufficient to meet the cost of the improvement for which it was made, the council may make an additional pro rata assessment, but the total amount assessed against any one parcel of land shall not exceed the benefits received by said lot or parcel of land.

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 68.32.

(Code 1959, § 12.069)

Sec. 20-20. Additional procedures.

In any case where the provisions of this chapter may prove to be insufficient to carry out fully the making of any special assessment, the council shall provide by ordinance any additional steps or procedures required.

(Code 1959, § 12.070)

Sec. 20-21. Collection of special assessments.

In the event bonds are issued in anticipation of the collection of special assessments as hereinbefore provided, all collections on each special assessment roll or combination of rolls shall be set in a separate fund for the payment of the principal and interest on the bonds so issued in anticipation of the payment of such special assessments, and shall be used for no other purpose.

(Code 1959, § 12.071)

Sec. 20-22. Special assessment accounts.

Moneys raised by special assessment to pay the cost of any local improvements shall be held in a special fund to pay such cost or to repay any money borrowed therefor. Each special assessment account must be used only for the improvement project for which the assessment was levied, expenses incidental thereto, including the repayment of the principal and interest on money borrowed therefor, and to refund excessive assessments, if refunds are authorized. (Code 1959, § 12.072)

Sec. 20-23. Statement of right to file written appeal.

If a special assessment is made against property, the notice of the special assessment sent to the property owner or person responsible for payment of the ad valorem property taxes under the general property tax act, Public Act No. 206 of 1893 (MCL 211.1 et seq.), shall include, in addition to any other requirements by statute or charter, a statement that the owner or any person having an interest in the real property may file a written appeal of the special assessment with the state tax tribunal under Public Act No. 186 of 1973 (MCL 205.701 et seq.) within 30 days after the confirmation of the special assessment roll if that special assessment was protested at the hearing held for the purpose of confirming the roll. (Code 1959, § 12.073)

State law reference—Similar provisions, MCL 68.34, 211.746.

Sec. 20-24. Reassessment for benefits.

Whenever the council shall deem any special assessment invalid or defective for any reason whatever, or if any court of competent jurisdiction shall have adjudged such assessment to be illegal for any reason whatever, in whole or in part, the council shall have power to cause a new assessment to be made for the same purpose for which the former assessment was made, whether the improvement or any part thereof has been completed and whether any part of the assessment has been collected or not. All proceedings on such reassessment and for the collection thereof shall be made in the manner as provided for the original assessment. If any portion of the original assessment shall have been collected and not refunded, it shall be applied upon the reassessment and the reassessment shall to that extent be deemed satisfied. If more than the amount reassessed shall have been collected, the balance shall be refunded to the person making such payment. (Code 1959, § 12.074)

Sec. 20-25. Combination of projects.

The council may combine several districts into one project for the purpose of effecting a saving in the costs. There shall be established for each district separate funds and accounts to cover the cost of the same. (Code 1959, § 12.075)

Sec. 20-26. Division of parcels.

Should any lots or lands be divided after a special assessment thereon has been confirmed and divided into installments, the assessor shall apportion the uncollected amounts upon the several lots and lands so divided, and shall enter the several amounts as amendments upon the special assessment roll. The village treasurer shall, within ten days after such apportionment, send notice of such action to the persons concerned at their last known address by first class mail. Said apportionment shall be final and conclusive on all parties unless protest in writing is received by the village treasurer within 20 days of the mailing of the aforesaid notice.

(Code 1959, § 12.076)

Sec. 20-27. Deferred payments of special assessments.

The village council may provide for the deferred payment of special assessments using the procedure set out in Public Act No. 225 of 1976 (MCL 211.761 et seq.) from persons who, in the opinion of the council and assessor, by reason of poverty are unable to contribute toward the cost thereof. In all such cases, as a condition to the granting of such deferred payments, the village shall require mortgage security on the real property of the beneficiary payable on or before his death, or, in any event, on the sale or transfer of the property.

(Code 1959, § 12.077)

Sec. 20-28. Reconsideration of petitions.

In the event that the council shall fail to make any public improvement petitioned for under the provisions of section 20-4 during the calendar year during which any petition is filed, such petition shall be reconsidered by the council prior to March 1 of the succeeding calendar year for the purpose of determining whether such improvement should be made during such calendar year.

(Code 1959, § 12.078)

Sec. 20-29. Hazards and nuisances.

When any lot, building or structure within the village, because of the accumulation of refuse or debris, the uncontrolled growing of weeds, or age or dilapidation, or because of any other condition or happening, becomes, in the opinion of the council, a public hazard or nuisance which is dangerous to the health or safety of the inhabitants of the village or those of them residing or habitually going near such lot, building or structure, the council may, after investigation, give notice to the owner of the land upon which such hazard or nuisance exists, or the owner of the building or structure itself, specifying the nature of the hazard or nuisance, and requiring such owner to alter, repair, tear down or remove same promptly and within a time to be specified by the council, which shall be commensurate with the nature of the hazard or nuisance. If, at the expiration of the time limit in said notice, said owner has not complied with the requirements thereof, or in any case where the owner of the land or of the building or structure itself is not known, the council may order such a hazard or nuisance abated by the

proper department or agency of the village which is qualified to do the work required, and the costs of such abatement assessed against the lot, premises or description of real property upon which said hazard or nuisance was located.

(Code 1959, § 12.079)