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**HOUSE BILL 2440**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2024 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Springer; by request of Board of Tax Appeals

AN ACT Relating to the administration of the board of tax appeals; and amending RCW 82.03.020, 82.03.070, 82.03.090, 82.03.150, 82.03.160, 82.03.170, and 82.03.050.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.020 and 2018 c 174 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The board of tax appeals, hereinafter referred to as the board, must consist of three members qualified by experience and training in the field of state and local taxation, appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate, and no more than two of whom at the time of appointment or during their terms may be members of the same political party.

(2) Beginning with appointments made after June 7, 2018, at least two members of the board must be attorneys licensed to practice law in the state of Washington with substantial knowledge of Washington tax law. At least one attorney member must have substantial experience in making a record suitable for judicial review. Any nonattorney member must have substantial experience in the fields of residential and commercial property appraisal or valuation experience as an appraiser accredited by the department.

(3) Each member of the board must attend at least ((~~twenty~~)) 20 hours of judicial training deemed by the board to be appropriate for instructing members in Washington law, evidentiary procedures, and judicial practice and ethics.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.070 and 1988 c 222 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

The board may appoint, discharge and fix the compensation of ((~~an executive director,~~)) tax ((~~referees, a clerk,~~)) appeals officers and such ((~~other~~)) clerical, professional and technical ((~~assistants~~)) staff as may be necessary. Tax ((~~referees shall~~)) appeals officers are not ((~~be~~)) subject to chapter 41.06 RCW.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.090 and 1967 ex.s. c 26 s 38 are each amended to read as follows:

The principal office of the board shall be at the state capital, but it may sit or hold hearings at any other place in the state. A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum for making orders or decisions, promulgating rules and regulations necessary for the conduct of its powers and duties, or transacting other official business, and may act though one position on the board be vacant. The chair, or the vice chair in the chair's absence, may select one of the board's tax appeals officers to serve pro tem when a position on the board is vacant, or a member of the board is recused, is disqualified, or otherwise cannot hear and consider a particular case set for full board review. One or more members may hold hearings and take testimony to be reported for action by the board when authorized by rule or order of the board. The board shall perform all the powers and duties specified in this chapter or as otherwise provided by law.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.150 and 2018 c 174 s 14 are each amended to read as follows:

In all appeals involving an informal hearing before the board or any of its members or tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers, the board, any member of the board, and the board's tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers have all powers relating to administration of oaths, issuance of subpoenas, and taking of depositions as are granted to agencies by chapter 34.05 RCW. The board, any member of the board, and the board's tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers also have all powers granted the department of revenue pursuant to RCW 82.32.110. In the case of appeals within the scope of RCW 82.03.130(1)(b) the board or any member thereof may obtain such assistance, including the making of field investigations, from the staff of the director of revenue as the board or any member thereof may deem necessary or appropriate.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.160 and 2018 c 174 s 15 are each amended to read as follows:

In all appeals involving a formal hearing before the board or any of its members or tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers, the board, any member of the board, and the board's tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers have all powers relating to administration of oaths, issuance of subpoenas, and taking of depositions as are granted to agencies in chapter 34.05 RCW; and the board, and each member thereof, or its tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers, are subject to all duties imposed upon, and have all powers granted to, an agency by those provisions of chapter 34.05 RCW relating to adjudicative proceedings. The board, any member of the board, and the board's tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers also have all powers granted the department of revenue pursuant to RCW 82.32.110. In the case of appeals within the scope of RCW 82.03.130(1)(b), the board, or any member thereof, may obtain such assistance, including the making of field investigations, from the staff of the director of revenue as the board, or any member thereof, may deem necessary or appropriate: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That any communication, oral or written, from the staff of the director to the board or its tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers may be presented only in open hearing.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.170 and 2018 c 174 s 16 are each amended to read as follows:

All proceedings, including both formal and informal hearings, before the board or any of its members or tax ((~~referees~~)) appeals officers must be conducted in accordance with such rules of practice and procedure as the board may prescribe. The board must publish such rules and arrange for public access to the rules, including through a publicly available website.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.03.050 and 2018 c 174 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The board must operate on a full-time basis. Each member of the board must devote his or her full time and efforts to the efficient discharge of the duties of the board.

(2) Board members must receive an annual salary ((~~in the same range as that established for equivalent members of class four boards under RCW 43.03.250~~)) as fixed by the governor pursuant to RCW 43.03.040.

(3) Each board member must receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred in the discharge of his or her duties in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended.

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