

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 367
Ways and Means

(Worcester County Delegation)

Budget and Taxation

Worcester County - Bingo Board - Repeal

This bill abolishes the Worcester County Bingo Board, and transfers its duties, responsibilities, and oversight of bingo to the Worcester County Department of Development Review and Permitting. A representative of the Worcester County Bingo Board members who were in office on September 30, 2014, must consult with the department on what materials from the Bingo Board should be stored permanently and send those materials to the department no later than November 1, 2014.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Worcester County expenditures decrease by \$1,000 annually from eliminating the Worcester County Bingo Board.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A religious organization that has conducted religious services in Worcester County for at least six years, a municipal corporation in Worcester County, a volunteer fire company in Worcester County, a local unit of a nationwide nonprofit organization or club that consists of members who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, and a nonprofit organization that has operated in Worcester County for five years and intends to raise money for an exclusively charitable or educational purpose may conduct bingo. These organizations that intend to conduct bingo must obtain annual or temporary licenses from the Worcester County Bingo Board.

The Worcester County Bingo Board consists of three members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Members must be registered voters of Worcester County and own real property in Worcester County. The Worcester County Commissioners must pay each board member an annual salary of at least \$1,000 as determined by the county commissioners and a reasonable travel and expense allowance. The term of a member is six years and begins on June 1. The Governor must fill any vacancy on the board occurring during the term of an appointed member for the unexpired term with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The Worcester County Bingo Board can adopt regulations to administer and enforce bingo, and a copy of the regulations adopted by the board must be made available at a reasonable cost. The Worcester County Bingo Board must exercise control and supervision over all bingo games, and the board must prevent bingo from being conducted for unauthorized purposes or in unauthorized manners. The Worcester County Bingo Board, its officers, and its agents may enter at any time for purposes of inspection any place where bingo is being or will be conducted or any place that has equipment that is being or will be used to conduct bingo.

Applicants must pay the Worcester County Bingo Board an annual or temporary license fee, and the Worcester County Bingo Board must pay the Worcester County Commissioners all bingo license fees collected. The Worcester County Bingo Board must issue a license to qualified applicants and, if an applicant conducts bingo on leased premises, the board must approve the lease agreement. The Worcester County Bingo Board may deny, suspend, or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee has violated any bingo laws or regulations.

The Worcester County Bingo Board must approve a licensee's employees and the terms of their employment before they may conduct bingo. Each bingo licensee must submit to the board a statement of its gross receipts and expenses. Licensees must maintain the books and reports that the board requires, and the board must submit to the county commissioners a detailed annual report of all statements submitted to the board.

Background: Each county is responsible for regulating gaming activities conducted by civic and charitable organizations. There is no statewide reporting of gaming activities by civic and charitable organizations, except for the slot machines operated on the Eastern Shore.

There is currently only one member serving on the Worcester County Bingo Board. The other two board member positions have been vacant since 2009 and 2011. The board reviews approximately 6 annual licenses and 30 temporary licenses each year.

Local Expenditures: The bill eliminates the requirement that Worcester County pay at least \$1,000 to each of the three board members of the Worcester County Bingo Board. Since only one of the board positions is currently filled, Worcester County expenditures decrease by \$1,000 from no longer paying the one Worcester County Bingo Board member. Current law requires that there be three board members, so the bill prevents Worcester County from having to fill those two vacant positions and pay an additional \$2,000 to those board members annually.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 441 (Senator Mathias) - Budget and Taxation.

Information Source(s): Worcester County, Comptroller's Office, Maryland State Lottery and Gaming Control Agency, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 3, 2014
ncs/jrb

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