

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 SECOND EXTRAORDINARY SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 2040

By Senators Blair (Mr. President) and Woelfel

(By Request of the Executive)

[Introduced October 7, 2024]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §8-13-13 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 fees and charges for municipality provided fire services; and placing a limited moratorium
3 on new municipal fire fees imposed on non-municipal residents.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 13. TAXATION AND FINANCE.

§8-13-13. Special charges for municipal services.

1 (a) Notwithstanding any charter provisions to the contrary, a municipality which furnishes
2 any essential or special municipal service, including, but not limited to, police and fire protection,
3 parking facilities on the streets or otherwise, parks and recreational facilities, street cleaning,
4 street lighting, street maintenance and improvement, sewerage and sewage disposal, and the
5 collection and disposal of garbage, refuse, waste, ashes, trash, and any other similar matter, has
6 plenary power and authority to provide by ordinance for the installation, continuance,
7 maintenance, or improvement of the service, to make reasonable regulations of the service, and to
8 impose by ordinance upon the users of the service reasonable rates, fees, and charges to be
9 collected in the manner specified in the ordinance: Provided, That no new fire protection fee or
10 charge effective on or after June 30, 2024, may be imposed pursuant to this section on any
11 resident or business situated outside the boundaries of any municipality until June 30, 2025:
12 Provided, however, That this prohibition does not prohibit a municipality from increasing or
13 decreasing a fire protection fee or charge, in accordance with this section, in effect prior to June
14 30, 2024.

15 (b) Any sewerage and sewage disposal service and any service incident to the collection
16 and disposal of garbage, refuse, waste, ashes, trash, and any other similar matter is subject to the
17 provisions of Chapter 24 of this code.

18 (c) A municipality shall not have a lien on any property as security for payments due under
19 subsection (a) of this section except as provided in subsection (d) of this section.

20 (d) A municipality may enact an ordinance, pursuant to this section, permitting it to file a

lien on real property located within the municipal corporate limits for unpaid and delinquent fire, police, or street fees. The ordinance must provide an administrative procedure for the municipality's assessment and collection of the fees. The administrative procedure must require that, before any lien is filed, the municipality will give notice to the property owner, by certified mail, return receipt requested, that the municipality will file the lien unless the delinquency is paid by a date stated in the notice, which must be no less than 90 days from the date the notice is mailed. The administrative procedure must include the right to appeal to the circuit court of the county in which the real property is located. The circuit court shall consider the appeal under its general authority, including but not limited to §51-2-2(f) of this code.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of §8-11-4 of this code, any ordinance enacted or substantially amended under the provisions of this section shall be published as a Class II legal advertisement in compliance with the provisions of §59-3-1 *et seq.* of this code. The publication area for the publication is the municipality.

(f) In the event 30 percent of the qualified voters of the municipality, by petition duly signed by them in their own handwriting and filed with the recorder of the municipality within 45 days after the expiration of the publication, protest against the ordinance as enacted or amended, the ordinance shall not become effective until it is ratified by a majority of the legal votes cast by the qualified voters of the municipality at a regular municipal election or special municipal election, as the governing body directs. Voting shall not take place until after notice of the submission is given by publication as provided in subsection (e) of this section.

(g) The powers and authority granted to municipalities and to the governing bodies of municipalities in this section are in addition and supplemental to the powers and authority named in any charters of the municipalities.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, if rates, fees, and charges provided in this section are imposed by the governing body of a municipality for the purpose of replacing, and in amounts approximately sufficient to replace in its general fund amounts

47 appropriated to be paid from ad valorem taxes upon property within the municipality, pursuant to
48 an election duly called and held under the Constitution and laws of the state to authorize the
49 issuance and sale of the municipality's general obligation bonds for public improvement purposes,
50 the call for the election shall state that the governing body of the municipality proposes to impose
51 rates, fees, and charges in specified amounts under this section for the use of one or more of the
52 services specified in subsection (a) of this section, which shall be related to the public
53 improvement proposed to be made with the proceeds of the bonds, no notice, publication of
54 notice, or referendum, or election or other condition or prerequisite to the imposition of the rates,
55 fees, and charges shall be required or necessary other than the legal requirements for issuance
56 and sale of the general obligation bonds.

57 (i) Payments for rates, fees, and charges due under this section that are postmarked after
58 the due date by which they are owed shall be considered late and may be subject to late fees or
59 penalties: *Provided*, That payments that are received by the municipality after the due date, but
60 that were postmarked on or before the due date shall be considered to be on time and shall not be
61 assessed any late fees or penalties.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to place a limited moratorium on new municipal fire fees imposed on non-municipal residents.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.