

(5) "Return" includes any tax return, report, reconciliation, schedule, and other document required to be filed with a the Tax Administrator or City of Bellefontaine by a taxpayer, employer, any agent of the employer, or any other payer pursuant to applicable law, including at any time before January 1, 2016.

(6) "Unpaid estimated income tax" means estimated income tax due but not paid by the date the tax is required to be paid under applicable law.

(7) "Unpaid income tax" means income tax due but not paid by the date the income tax is required to be paid under applicable law.

(8) "Unpaid withholding tax" means withholding tax due but not paid by the date the withholding tax is required to be paid under applicable law.

(9) "Withholding tax" includes amounts an employer, any agent of an employer, or any other payer did not withhold in whole or in part from an employee's qualifying wages, but that, under applicable law, the employer, agent, or other payer is required to withhold from an employee's qualifying wages.

(B)(1) This section applies to the following:

(a) Any return required to be filed under applicable law for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016;

(b) Income tax, estimated income tax, and withholding tax required to be paid or remitted to City of Bellefontaine on or after January 1, 2016.

(2) This section does not apply to returns required to be filed or payments required to be made before January 1, 2016, regardless of the filing or payment date. Returns required to be filed or payments required to be made before January 1, 2016, but filed or paid after that date shall be subject to the ordinances or rules and regulations, as adopted before January 1, 2016, of City of Bellefontaine to which the return is to be filed or the payment is to be made.

(C) Should any taxpayer, employer, agent of the employer, or other payer for any reason fails, in whole or in part, to make timely and full payment or remittance of income tax, estimated income tax, or withholding tax or to file timely with the City of Bellefontaine any return required to be filed, the following penalties and interest shall apply:

(1) Interest shall be imposed at the rate described in division (A) of this section, per annum, on all unpaid income tax, unpaid estimated income tax, and unpaid withholding tax.

(2)(a) With respect to unpaid income tax and unpaid estimated income tax, City of Bellefontaine may impose a penalty equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the amount not timely paid.

(b) With respect to any unpaid withholding tax, City of Bellefontaine may impose a penalty equal to fifty percent (50%) of the amount not timely paid.

(3) With respect to returns other than estimated income tax returns, City of Bellefontaine may impose a penalty of \$25 for each failure to timely file each return, regardless of the liability shown thereon for each month, or any fraction thereof, during which the return remains unfiled regardless of the liability shown thereon. The penalty shall not exceed \$150 for each failure.

(D) Nothing in this section requires City of Bellefontaine to refund or credit any penalty, amount of interest, charges, or additional fees that City of Bellefontaine has properly imposed or collected before January 1, 2016.

(E) Nothing in this section limits the authority of City of Bellefontaine to abate or partially abate penalties or interest imposed under this section when the Tax Administrator determines, in the Tax Administrator's sole discretion, that such abatement is appropriate.

(F) By the 31st day of October of each year City of Bellefontaine shall publish the rate described in division (A) of this section applicable to the next succeeding calendar year.

(G) City of Bellefontaine may impose on the taxpayer, employer, any agent of the employer, or any other payer City of Bellefontaine's post-judgment collection costs and fees, including attorney's fees.

SECTION 19 AUTHORITY OF TAX ADMINISTRATOR; VERIFICATION OF INFORMATION.

Authority.

(A) Nothing in this chapter/ordinance shall limit the authority of the Tax Administrator to perform any of the following duties or functions, unless the performance of such duties or functions is expressly limited by a provision of the ORC:

(1)(a) Exercise all powers whatsoever of an query nature as provided by law, including, the right to inspect books, accounts, records, memorandums, and federal and state income tax returns, to examine persons under oath, to issue orders or subpoenas for the production of books, accounts, papers, records, documents, and testimony, to take depositions, to apply to a court for attachment proceedings as for contempt, to approve vouchers for the fees of officers and witnesses, and to administer oaths.

(b) The powers referred to in this division of this section shall be exercised by the Tax Administrator only in connection with the performance of the duties respectively assigned to the Tax Administrator under City of Bellefontaine's income tax ordinance;

(2) Appoint agents and prescribe their powers and duties;

(3) Confer and meet with officers of other municipal corporations and states and officers of the United States on any matters pertaining to their respective official duties as provided by law;

(4) Exercise the authority provided by law, including orders from bankruptcy courts, relative to remitting or refunding taxes, including penalties and interest thereon, for any reason overpaid. In addition, the Tax Administrator may investigate any claim of overpayment and, if the Tax Administrator finds that there has been an overpayment, make a written statement of the Tax Administrator's findings, and approve and issue a refund payable to the taxpayer, the taxpayer's assigns, or legal representative as provided in this chapter/ordinance;

(5) Exercise the authority provided by law relative to consenting to the compromise and settlement of tax claims;

(6) Exercise the authority provided by law relative to the use of alternative apportionment methods by taxpayers in accordance with Section 3;

(7)(a) Make all tax findings, determinations, computations, and orders the Tax Administrator is by law authorized and required to make and, pursuant to time limitations provided by law, on the Tax Administrator's own motion, review, re-determine, or correct any tax findings, determinations, computations, or orders the Tax Administrator has made.

(b) If an appeal has been filed with the Board of Tax Review or other appropriate tribunal, the Tax Administrator shall not review, re-determine, or correct any tax finding, determination, computation, or order which the Tax Administrator has made, unless such appeal or application is withdrawn by the appellant or applicant, is dismissed, or is otherwise final;

(8) Destroy any or all returns or other tax documents in the manner authorized by law;

(9) Enter into an agreement with a taxpayer to simplify the withholding obligations described in Section 4.

Verification of accuracy of returns and determination of liability.

(B)(1) A Tax Administrator, or any authorized agent or employee thereof may examine the books, papers, records, and federal and state income tax returns of any employer, taxpayer, or other person that is subject to, or that the Tax Administrator believes is subject to, the provisions of this chapter/ordinance for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of any return made or, if no return was filed, to ascertain the tax due under this chapter/ordinance. Upon written request by the Tax Administrator or a duly authorized agent or employee thereof, every employer, taxpayer, or other person subject to this section is required to furnish the opportunity for the Tax Administrator, authorized agent, or employee to investigate and examine such books, papers, records, and federal and state income tax returns at a reasonable time and place designated in the request.

(2) The records and other documents of any taxpayer, employer, or other person that is subject to, or that a Tax Administrator believes is subject to, the provisions of this chapter/ordinance shall be open to the Tax Administrator's inspection during business hours and shall be preserved for a period of six years following the end of the taxable year to which the records or documents relate, unless the Tax Administrator, in writing, consents to their destruction within that period, or by order requires that they be kept longer. The Tax Administrator may require any person, by notice served on that person, to keep such records as the Tax Administrator determines necessary to show whether or not that person is liable, and the extent of such liability, for the income tax levied by City of Bellefontaine or for the withholding of such tax.

(3) The Tax Administrator may examine under oath any person that the Tax Administrator reasonably believes has knowledge concerning any income that was or would have been returned for taxation or any transaction tending to affect such income. The Tax Administrator may, for this purpose, compel any such person to attend a hearing or examination and to produce any books, papers, records, and federal and state income tax returns in such person's possession or control. The person may be assisted or represented by an attorney, accountant, bookkeeper, or other tax practitioner at any such hearing or examination. This division does not authorize the practice of law by a person who is not an attorney.

(4) No person issued written notice by the Tax Administrator compelling attendance at a hearing or examination or the production of books, papers, records, or federal or state income tax returns under this section shall fail to comply.

Identification information.

(C)(1) Nothing in this chapter/ordinance prohibits the Tax Administrator from requiring any person filing a tax document with the Tax Administrator to provide identifying information, which may include the person's social security number, federal employer identification number, or other identification number requested by the Tax Administrator. A person required by the Tax Administrator to provide identifying information that has experienced any change with respect to that information shall notify the Tax Administrator of the change before, or upon, filing the next tax document requiring the identifying information.

(2)(a) If the Tax Administrator makes a request for identifying information and the Tax Administrator does not receive valid identifying information within 30 days of making the request, nothing in this chapter/ordinance prohibits the Tax Administrator from imposing a penalty upon the person to whom the request was directed pursuant to Section 18, in addition to any applicable penalty described in Section 99.

(b) If a person required by the Tax Administrator to provide identifying information does not notify the Tax Administrator of a change with respect to that information as required under division (C) of Section 19 within 30 days after filing the next tax document requiring such identifying information, nothing in this chapter/ordinance prohibits the Tax Administrator from imposing a penalty pursuant to Section 18.

(c) The penalties provided for under divisions (C)(2)(a) and (b) of this section may be billed and imposed in the same manner as the tax or fee with respect to which the identifying information is sought and are in addition to any applicable criminal penalties described in Section 99 for a violation of Section 17 and any other penalties that may be imposed by the Tax Administrator by law.

SECTION 20 REQUEST FOR OPINION OF THE TAX ADMINISTRATOR.

(A) An "opinion of the Tax Administrator" means an opinion issued under this section with respect to prospective municipal income tax liability. It does not include ordinary correspondence of the Tax Administrator.

(B) A taxpayer may submit a written request for an opinion of the Tax Administrator in accordance with the Rules and Regulations.

(C) A taxpayer is not relieved of tax liability for any activity or transaction related to a request for an opinion that contained any misrepresentation or omission of one or more material facts.

(D) A Tax Administrator may refuse to offer an opinion on any request received under this section. Such refusal is not subject to appeal.

(E) An opinion of the Tax Administrator binds the Tax Administrator only with respect to the taxpayer for whom the opinion was prepared and does not bind the Tax Administrator of any other municipal corporation.

(F) An opinion of the Tax Administrator issued under this section is not subject to appeal.

SECTION 21 BOARD OF TAX REVIEW.

(A)(1) The Board of Tax Review shall consist of three members. Two members shall be appointed by the legislative authority of City of Bellefontaine, but such appointees may not be employees, elected officials, or contractors with City of Bellefontaine at any time during their term or in the five years (which applies only to these two appointments) immediately preceding the date of appointment. One member shall be appointed by the Mayor of City of Bellefontaine. This member may be an employee of City of Bellefontaine, but may not be the director of finance or equivalent officer, or the Tax Administrator or other similar official or an employee directly involved in municipal tax matters, or any direct subordinate thereof.

(2) The term for members of the Board of Tax Review City of Bellefontaine shall be two years. There is no limit on the number of terms that a member may serve if the member is reappointed by the legislative authority. The board member appointed by the Mayor of City of Bellefontaine shall serve at the discretion of the administrative official.

(3) Members of the Board of Tax Review appointed by the legislative authority may be removed by the legislative authority by majority vote for malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance in office. To remove such a member, the legislative authority must give the member a copy of the charges against the member and afford the member an opportunity to be publicly heard in person or by counsel in the member's own defense upon not less than ten days' notice. The decision by the legislative authority on the charges is final and not appealable.

(4) A member of the Board of Tax Review who, for any reason, ceases to meet the qualifications for the position prescribed by this section shall resign immediately by operation of law.

(5) A vacancy in an unexpired term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment within 60 days of when the vacancy was created. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of such term. No vacancy on the Board of Tax Review shall impair the power and authority of the remaining members to exercise all the powers of the Board of Tax Review.

(6) If a member is temporarily unable to serve on the Board of Tax Review due to a conflict of interest, illness, absence, or similar reason, the legislative authority or top administrative official that appointed the member shall appoint another individual to temporarily serve on the Board of Tax Review in the member's place. The appointment of such an individual shall be subject to the same requirements and limitations as are applicable to the appointment of the member temporarily unable to serve.

(B) Whenever a Tax Administrator issues an assessment, the Tax Administrator shall notify the taxpayer in writing at the same time of the taxpayer's right to appeal the assessment, the manner in which the taxpayer may appeal the assessment, and the address to which the appeal should be directed.

(C) Any person who has been issued an assessment may appeal the assessment to the Board of Tax Review by filing a request with the Board of Tax Review. The request shall be in writing, shall specify the reason or reasons why the assessment should be deemed incorrect or unlawful, and shall be filed within 60 days after the taxpayer receives the assessment.

(D) The Board of Tax Review shall schedule a hearing to be held within 60 days after receiving an appeal of an assessment under division (C) of this section, unless the taxpayer requests additional time to prepare or waives a hearing. If the taxpayer does not waive the hearing, the taxpayer may appear before the Board of Tax Review and may be represented by an attorney at law, certified public accountant, or other representative. The Board of Tax Review may allow a hearing to be continued as jointly agreed to by the parties. In such a case, the hearing must be completed within 120 days after the first day of the hearing unless the parties agree otherwise.

(E) The Board of Tax Review may affirm, reverse, or modify the Tax Administrator's assessment or any part of that assessment. The Board of Tax Review shall issue a final determination on the appeal within 90 days after the Board of Tax Review's final hearing on the appeal, and send a copy of its final determination by ordinary mail to all of the parties to the appeal within 15 days after issuing the final determination. The taxpayer or the Tax Administrator may appeal the Board of Tax Review's final determination as provided in Section 5717.011 of the ORC.

(F) The Board of Tax Review created pursuant to this section shall adopt rules governing its procedures and shall keep a record of its transactions. Such records are not public records available for inspection under Section 149.43 of the ORC. Hearings requested by a taxpayer before a Board of Tax Review created pursuant to this section are not meetings of a public body subject to Section 121.22 of the ORC.

SECTION 22 AUTHORITY TO CREATE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

Nothing in this chapter/ordinance prohibits the legislative authority of City of Bellefontaine, or a Tax Administrator pursuant to authority granted to the administrator by resolution or ordinance, to adopt rules to administer an income tax imposed by City of Bellefontaine in accordance with this chapter/ordinance. Such rules shall not conflict with or be inconsistent with any provision of this chapter/ordinance. Taxpayers are hereby required to comply not only with the requirements of this chapter, but also to comply with the Rules and Regulations.

All rules adopted under this section shall be published and posted on the internet.

SECTION 23 RENTAL AND LEASED PROPERTY.

(A) All property owners of real property located in the City of Bellefontaine, who rent or otherwise lease the same, or any part thereof, to any person for residential dwelling purposes, including apartments, rooms and other rental accommodations, during any calendar year, or part thereof, commencing with the effective date of this section, shall file with the Tax Administrator on or before the January 31 first following such calendar year a written report disclosing the name, address and also telephone number, if available, of each tenant known to have occupied on December 31 during such calendar year such apartment, room or other residential dwelling rental property.

(B) The Tax Administrator may order the appearance before him, or his duly authorized agent, of any person whom he believes to have any knowledge of the name, address and telephone number of any tenant of residential rental real property in the City of Bellefontaine. The Tax Administrator, or his duly authorized agent, is authorized to examine any person, under oath, concerning the name, address and telephone number of any tenant of residential real property located in the City of Bellefontaine. The Tax Administrator, or his duly authorized agent, may compel the production of papers and records and the attendance of all personal before him, whether as parties or witnesses, whenever he believes such person has knowledge of the name, address and telephone number of any tenant of residential real property in the City of Bellefontaine.

(C) Any property owner or person that violates one or more of the following shall be subject to Section 99 of this chapter/ordinance:

- (1) Fails, refuses or neglects to timely file a written report required by subsection (a) hereof; or
- (2) Makes an incomplete or intentionally false written report required by subsection (a) hereof; or
- (3) Fails to appear before the Tax Administrator or any duly authorized agent and to produce and disclose any tenant information pursuant to any order or subpoena of the Tax Administrator as authorized in this section; or
- (4) Fails to comply with the provisions of this section or any order or subpoena of the Tax Administrator.

SECTION 24 SAVINGS CLAUSE.

This chapter/ordinance shall not apply to any person, firm or corporation, or to any property as to whom or which it is beyond the power of Council to impose the tax herein provided for. Any sentence, clause, section or part of this chapter/ordinance or any tax against or exception granted any individual or any of the several groups of persons, or forms of income specified herein if found to be unconstitutional, illegal or invalid, such unconstitutionality, illegality or invalidity shall affect only such clause, sentence, section or part of this chapter/ordinance and shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions, sentences, clauses, sections or other parts of this chapter/ordinance. It is hereby declared to be the intention of Council that this chapter/ordinance would have been adopted had such unconstitutional, illegal or invalid sentence, or part hereof, not been included therein.

SECTION 25 COLLECTION OF TAX AFTER TERMINATION OF ORDINANCE.

(A) This chapter shall continue effective insofar as the levy of taxes is concerned until repealed, and insofar as the collection of taxes levied hereunder and actions or proceedings for collecting any tax so levied or enforcing any provisions of this chapter are concerned, it shall continue effective until all of said taxes levied hereunder in the aforesaid periods are fully paid and any and all suits and prosecutions for the collection of said taxes or for the punishment of violations of this chapter shall have been fully terminated, subject to the limitations contained in Section 12 and Section 99 hereof.

(B) Annual returns due for all or any part of the last effective year of this ordinance shall be due on the date provided in Sections 5 and Section 4 of this ordinance as though the same were continuing.

SECTION 26 ADOPTION OF RITA RULES AND REGULATIONS.

The City of Bellefontaine hereby adopts the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA) Rules & Regulations, including amendments that may be made from time to time, for use as the City of Bellefontaine's Income Tax Rules and Regulations. In the event of a conflict with any provision(s) of the City of Bellefontaine Income Tax Ordinance and the RITA Rules & Regulations, the Ordinance will supersede. Until and if the contractual relationship between the City of Bellefontaine and RITA ceases, Section 26 will supersede all other provisions within Ordinance 15-78 regarding promulgation of rules and regulations by the Tax Administrator.

SECTION 99 VIOLATIONS; PENALTIES.

(A) Whoever violates Section 17, division (A) of Section 16, or Section 4 by failing to remit City of Bellefontaine income taxes deducted and withheld from an employee, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to six months, or both. If the individual that commits the violation is an employee, or official, of City of Bellefontaine, the individual is subject to discharge from employment or dismissal from office.

(B) Any person who discloses information received from the Internal Revenue Service in violation of division (A) of Section 16 shall be guilty of a felony of the fifth degree and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$5,000 plus the costs of prosecution, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both. If the individual that commits the violation is an employee, or official, of City of Bellefontaine, the individual is subject to discharge from employment or dismissal from office.

(C) Each instance of access or disclosure in violation of division (A) of Section 16 constitutes a separate offense.

(D) If not otherwise specified herein, no person shall:

- (1) Fail, neglect or refuse to make any return or declaration required by this ordinance;
- (2) File any incomplete or false return;
- (3) Fail, neglect or refuse to pay the tax, penalties or interest imposed by this chapter/ordinance;
- (4) Refuse to permit the Tax Administrator or any duly authorized agent or employee to examine his books, records, papers and federal and state income tax returns relating to the income or net profits of a taxpayer;
- (5) Fail to appear before the Tax Administrator and to produce his books, records, papers or federal and state income tax returns relating to the income or net profits of a taxpayer upon order or subpoena of the Tax Administrator;

(6) Refuse to disclose to the Tax Administrator any information with respect to the income or net profits of a taxpayer;

(7) Fail to comply with the provisions of this ordinance or any order or subpoena of the Tax Administrator authorized hereby;

(8) Give to an employer false information as to his true name, correct social security number, and residence address, or fail to promptly notify an employer of any change in residence address and date thereof;

(9) Attempt to do anything whatsoever to avoid the payment of the whole or any part of the tax, penalties or interest imposed by this chapter/ordinance.

(E) Any person who violates any of the provisions in Section 99 (D) shall be subject to the penalties provided for in Section 99 (A) of this chapter/ordinance.

Passed: 12.2, 2015

Attest: Bonnie Pattison
Clerk of Council

David Henry
President of Council

Approved: 12.2, 2015

Ben Stiles
Mayor

Howard Frank
Director of Law

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Debrah Baker

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