

Civil Infractions and Municipal Ordinance Violations Bureau

An ordinance setting forth the authority and procedures for designating violations of township ordinances as municipal civil infractions, establishing a municipal ordinance violations bureau for the purpose of accepting admissions of responsibility for ordinance violations, authorizing the issuance of civil infraction notices and citations and the manner of serving the same; establishing sanctions for municipal civil infractions; authorizing the collection and retention by the township of civil fines / costs for such violations as prescribed herein and to repeal all conflicting ordinance or parts of ordinances.

THE TOWNSHIP OF CLINTON ORDAINS:

Section 1. Title

This ordinance shall be known and cited as the Township of Clinton Civil Infractions and Municipal Ordinance Violations Bureau Ordinance.

Section 2. Definitions.

As used in this Ordinance:

- 2.1 “Act” means Act No. 236 of the Public Acts of 1961, as amended.
- 2.2 “*Authorized township official*” means a police officer, sheriff deputy or other personnel of the township authorized by this ordinance or any other township ordinance to issue municipal civil infraction citations.
- 2.3 “*Municipal civil infraction*” means an act or omission that is prohibited by any ordinance of the township and for which civil sanctions, including, without limitation, fines, damages, expenses and costs, may be ordered, as authorized by Chapter 87 of Act No. 236 of the Public Acts of 1961, as amended. A municipal civil infraction is not a lesser included offense of a violation of any township ordinance that is a criminal offense.
- 2.4 “*Municipal civil infraction citation*” means a written complaint prepared by an authorized township official and filed with the court, in those cases where the alleged violator either denies responsibility or admits responsibility with explanation following the issuance of a municipal civil infraction notice.
- 2.5 “*Municipal civil infraction notice*” means a written notice, prepared by an authorized township official, notifying a person of the occurrence or existence of a municipal

civil infraction violation and directing that person to appear at the Municipal Ordinance Violations Bureau and to pay the fine and costs, if any, prescribed for the violation by the schedule of civil fines adopted by the township, as authorized under Sections 8396 and 8707(6) of the Act.

Section 3. Establishment, Location and Personnel of Municipal Ordinance Violations Bureau

- 3.1 *Establishment of Bureau.* The Clinton Township Municipal Ordinance Violations Bureau (hereafter Bureau) is hereby established pursuant to Section 8396 of the Act (MCL 600.8396), for the purpose of accepting admissions of responsibility for ordinance violations designated as municipal civil infractions, and to collect and retain civil fines/costs for such violations as prescribed herein.
- 3.2 *Location of Bureau.* The bureau shall be located at the Township hall/office or other such location in the Township as may be designated by the Township board.
- 3.3 *Personnel.* All personnel of the bureau shall be Township employees. The Township board may by resolution designate bureau personnel and a bureau clerk with the duties prescribed herein and as otherwise may be delegated by the Township board.

Section 4. Bureau Authority

The bureau shall only have authority to accept admissions of responsibility without explanation for municipal civil infractions for which a municipal ordinance violations notice has been issued and served, and to collect and retain the scheduled civil fines/costs for such violations specified pursuant to this ordinance or other applicable ordinance. The bureau shall not accept payment of fines/costs from any person who denies having committed the alleged violation or who admits responsibility only with explanation. The bureau shall not determine or attempt to determine the truth or falsity of any fact or matter relating to an alleged ordinance violation.

Section 5. Civil Infraction Action.

- 5.1 *Commencing Action.* A municipal civil infraction action shall be commenced by the issuance of a municipal civil infraction notice by an authorized township official directing the alleged violator to contact the bureau for purposes of admitting or denying responsibility for the violation.
- 5.2 *Grounds for Issuing Notice.* An authorized township official may issue a municipal civil infraction notice to a person if:
- A. The authorized township official witnesses that person commit a municipal civil infraction, or
 - B. Based upon investigation, the official has reasonable cause to believe that that person is responsible for a municipal civil infraction; or

- C. Based upon investigation of a complaint by someone who allegedly witnessed that person commit a municipal civil infraction, the official has reasonable cause to believe that that person is responsible for an infraction and if the township attorney approves in writing the issuance of the municipal civil infraction notice.

Section 6. Civil Infraction Notice

6.1 *Contents of Notice.* A municipal ordinance notice shall at a minimum contain the following information:

- A. The name and address of the alleged violator;
- B. The municipal civil infraction alleged;
- C. The address and telephone number of the bureau;
- D. The days and hours that the bureau is open.
- E. The amount of the scheduled fines/costs for the violation
- F. The time within which the person must contact the bureau for purposes of admitting or denying responsibility for the violation;
- G. The methods by which the violation may be admitted or denied; and
- H. The consequences of failing to pay the required fines/costs or contact the bureau within the required time;

6.2 *Rights of Violator.* Further, the municipal civil infraction notice shall inform the alleged violator that he or she may do one of the following:

- A. Admit responsibility for the municipal civil infraction by mail, in person, or by representation, at or by the time specified for appearance
- B. Admit responsibility for the municipal civil infraction “with explanation” by mail by the time specified for appearance or, in person, or by representation.
- C. Deny responsibility for the municipal civil infraction by doing either of the following:
 - (1) Request an informal hearing in which event he or she shall appear in person for a hearing before a judge or district court magistrate, without the opportunity of being represented by an attorney, unless a formal hearing before a judge is requested by the township; or
 - (2) Request a formal hearing before a judge, with the opportunity of being represented by an attorney.

6.3 *Effect of Failure to Admit.* The municipal civil infraction notice shall also inform the alleged violator that in the event the alleged violator admits responsibility “with explanation”, denies responsibility or fails to contact the bureau within the prescribed time, a municipal civil infraction citation shall be issued and served.

Section 7. Civil Infraction Citation

7.1 *When Citation Shall Issue.* Where a person fails to admit responsibility without explanation for a violation within the jurisdiction of the bureau and pay the required civil fines/costs within the designated time period, the bureau clerk or other designated Township employee(s) shall advise the authorized township official to issue and file a municipal civil infraction citation for such violation with the court having jurisdiction of the matter.

7.2 *Contents of Citation.* The citation filed with the court and served on the alleged violator shall contain the following information:

- A. The name and address of the alleged violator;
- B. A sworn complaint containing all the allegations regarding the violation as set forth in the municipal civil infraction notice;
- C. The place where the alleged violator shall appear in court;
- D. The address and telephone number of the court; and
- E. The time as or by which the appearance shall be made.
- F. Clear and unambiguous information on how the alleged violator must respond to the citation.
- G. Notice in boldfaced type that the failure of the alleged violator to appear within the time specified in the citation or at the time scheduled for a hearing or appearance is a misdemeanor and will result in entry of a default judgment against the alleged violator on the municipal civil infraction.

7.3 *Rights of Violator.* The citation shall also inform the alleged violator of his or her right to admit or deny the violation, as more fully set forth Section 6.2 of this ordinance.

7.4 *Service of the Citation.* A copy of the citation may be served on the alleged violator either by personal service or by first class mail sent to the alleged violator's last known address. The citation shall thereafter be processed in the manner required by law.

Section 8. Schedule of Civil Fines/Costs

Unless a different schedule of civil fines is provided for by an applicable ordinance, the

civil fines payable to the bureau upon admissions of responsibility by persons served with municipal ordinance violation notices shall be determined pursuant to the following schedule and on the basis of the of the date of the violation(s):

- First violation \$100
- Second violation within a 2-year period \$150
- Third violation within a 2-year period \$250
- Fourth or subsequent violation within a 2-year period \$500

In addition to the above prescribed civil fines, costs in the amount of \$10 shall be assessed by the bureau if the fine and costs are paid within 10 days of the date of service of the municipal ordinance violation notice. Otherwise, costs of \$20 shall be assessed by the bureau.

Section 9. Record and Accounting

The bureau clerk or other designated Township official/employee shall retain a copy of all municipal ordinance violation notices and shall account to the Township board once a month or at such other intervals as the Township board may require concerning the number of admissions and denials of responsibility for ordinance violations within the jurisdiction of the bureau and the amount of fines/costs collected with respect to such violations. The civil fines/costs collected shall be delivered to the Township treasurer at such intervals as the treasurer shall require and shall be deposited in the general fund of the Township.

Section 10. Availability of Other Enforcement Options

Nothing in this ordinance shall be deemed to require the Township to initiate its municipal civil infraction ordinance enforcement activity through the issuance of an ordinance violation notice. As to each ordinance violation designated as a municipal civil infraction, the Township may, at its sole discretion, proceed directly with the issuance of a municipal civil infraction citation or take such other enforcement action as is authorized by law.

Section 11. Authorized Persons-Civil Infractions

Unless prohibited by state law or unless otherwise provided by specific provisions of a particular Clinton Township ordinance to the contrary, the following officials are hereby designated as the authorized Township officials to issue and serve municipal civil infraction notices and citations for violations of Township ordinances which provide for a municipal civil infraction for a violation thereof:

- The Township building official/inspector
- The Lenawee County Sheriff and all other deputy county sheriffs of said county
- The Township Supervisor or his designee
- The Township ordinance and/or zoning enforcement officer
- Any certified officers of a private company or companies contracted with the Township for enforcement purposes.

Section 12. Applicability of the Act

If this Ordinance is silent as to given procedural requirements or in any way conflicts with the Act, the Act shall govern.

Section 13. Severability

The provisions of this ordinance are hereby declared to be severable, and if any part is declared invalid for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, it shall not affect the remainder of the ordinance which shall continue in full force and effect.

Section 14. Repeal

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed, including without limitation Ordinances 1, 2 the Municipal Civil Infractions Bureau Ordinance.

Section 15. Effective Date

This ordinance shall be effective twenty (20) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Township.

YEAS: (5) _____

NAYS: (0) _____

ABSENT: (0) _____

Ordinance declared adopted on November 9, 2020.

Basil Greenleaf, Supervisor
Clinton Township

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION

I, Joann Steffens, the duly elected Clerk of the Township of Clinton certify that the foregoing ordinance is a true and correct copy of the ordinance enacted by the Township Board of the Township of Clinton on November 9, 2020 and published in the Clinton Local a newspaper circulated in the Township of Clinton on November 19, 2020.

Joann Steffens, Clerk
Township of Clinton