

## General Selection Criteria

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Dear Reader:

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Any person asking for an appointment to the municipal governing board should be willing to submit to an interview for the position. Ideally, such interviews would be held in the council chamber at an open meeting – giving the public the opportunity to see for themselves the persons under consideration for the position.

The purpose of the interview is for the board to ascertain whether the person has the temperament for the position, a political point of view that can be accommodated by the board, and any other skills that might be useful to the city. We will assume here that municipal board members already know how to assess candidates in this regard.

However, in making an aldermanic appointment, the board needs to consider more than a person's political or philosophical orientation, values or experience. Three other important factors should not be overlooked – time, temperament, and residency.

- **Time considerations.** Most persons would be surprised at the amount of time an alderman spends performing his or her duties. Does the person understand the amount of time required to successfully serve as a board member? Is he/she available at the times when the board regularly meets? Does the person have the time to attend the training sessions and conferences that other board members do? Is the person willing to attend the annual TML Conference, the legislative conferences, MTAS training, etc.
- **Temperament.** This may be a little harder to ascertain, but before appointing anyone to the city council, the board should have a firm understanding of precisely why the person wants the position. A wise mayor once said that some people run for office to do something; while others run for office to be something. A candidate who cannot clearly, succinctly say why they want a seat on the board is not as likely to be interested in accomplishing city goals.
- **Residency.** Everyone knows that an appointee to the town governing board must be a resident of that town (but again, check your charter – exceptions may be possible). But sometimes there may be a question about an appointee's actual place of residence. It will be embarrassing to the governing board to learn – after the fact – that it has appointed an out-of-town resident to fill a vacancy on the board. For this reason, cities should also ask potential appointees for official identification (driver's license, voter registration, etc.) that proves their residency. And, in those municipalities where aldermen are elected by ward or district, check to make sure that the proposed appointee lives within the district he wants to represent.

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