

Jury of View Procedure

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

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Jury of View Procedure

Reference Number: MTAS-1269

The jury of view procedure requires the condemner to initiate the condemnation action by filing a petition for condemnation in the circuit court and giving the property owner 30 days notice of the proceedings. T.C.A. §§ 29-16-104 and 105; 29-17-104. The circuit court then appoints a jury of view to examine the property to be condemned and determine the amount of just compensation to which the property owner is entitled. T.C.A. §§ 29-16-108 thru 113. The jury of view will then file its report with the court. The report may be confirmed or it may be excepted to and/or appealed by one or both parties that have objections to the report. T.C.A. § 29-16-115 thru 118.

If the report is confirmed, an order will be entered conveying the property to the condemner upon payment to the property owner of the amount of just compensation set by the jury of view. T.C.A. § 29-16-116. If an exception is filed, the court may, upon a showing of good cause, appoint a new jury of view. T.C.A. § 29-16-117. If an appeal is filed to the report, the circuit court conducts a trial de novo before a petit jury. T.C.A. § 29-16-118.

Petition for Condemnation

Reference Number: MTAS-1270

Petition for Condemnation (Jury of View Procedure)

The petition for condemnation must be filed in the county in which the property is located. T.C.A. § 29-16-104. The petition must name as defendants all parties having any interest in any way in the property being acquired. T.C.A. § 29-16-106. All parties must be named as defendants for the condemnation proceedings to bind the parties, with the exception of unborn remaindermen, who are bound if all living parties in interest are parties. T.C.A. § 29-16-106. ^[12] Thus, to obtain clear title to the property, the condemner should name as defendants the spouse of the property owner, ^[13] any person owning a life estate or reversionary or remainder interest in the property, ^[14] any lessee of the property, ^[15] any holder of a recorded mortgage, ^[16] and any holder of any other interest in the property, including a purchase contract of which the condemner is aware. ^[17] The name and residence addresses of all defendants, if known, should be listed in the petition, and if the name or address is unknown, that fact should be stated in the petition. T.C.A. § 29-16-104.

The body of the petition for condemnation should set forth the statute, private act, or charter provision giving the condemner the general power to acquire property by eminent domain and should cite the jury of view statutes as the specific statutory procedure being used by the condemner to acquire the property in question. ^[18] The petition should also identify the specific ordinance or resolution of the county or municipal legislative body authorizing the acquisition of the property under the power of eminent domain.

The nature of the project for which the property is being acquired should be described. T.C.A. § 29-16-104. The petition should recite that the project is for a public use, is in the public interest, and that the acquisition of the property is necessary to complete the project. ^[19] The particular interest in the property, either a fee interest or an easement, should be identified. T.C.A. § 29-16-104. An accurate legal description of the property should be included, along with a corresponding map or plat attached as an exhibit if available. T.C.A. § 29-16-104. ^[20] Also, any known encumbrances upon the property should be specified. Finally, the petition should contain a prayer that a copy of the petition be served on the defendants and a suitable portion of the land or the rights of the defendants be awarded to the condemner. T.C.A. § 29-16-104.

Notes:

[12] *Sanford v. Louisville & Nashville Railroad Co.*, 225 Tenn. 350, 469 S.W.2d 363 (1971).

[13] *Brady v. Correll*, 20 Tenn. App. 224, 97 S.W.2d 448 (1936).

- [14] *Colcough v. Nashville and Northwestern Railroad Co.*, 39 Tenn. 171 (1858).
- [15] *Union Railway Co. v. Hunton*, 114 Tenn. 609, 88 S.W. 182 (1905); *Lamar Advertising of Tennessee, Inc. v. Metropolitan Development and Housing Authority*, 803 S.W.2d 686 (Tenn. Ct. App. 1990); *City of Morristown v. Sauls*, 61 Tenn. App. 666, 457 S.W.2d 601 (1969).
- [16] *State v. Holland*, 51 Tenn. App. 344, 367 S.W.2d 791 (1962).
- [17] *Cheatham v. Carter County, Tennessee*, 363 F.2d 582 (6th Cir. 1966).
- [18] *Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corp. v. Batey*, Docket No. 89-233-II (Tenn. Ct. App. M.S. January 31, 1990).
- [19] *Noell v. Tennessee Eastern Power Co.*, 130 Tenn. 245, 169 S.W. 1169 (1914); Griffith and Stokes, *Eminent Domain in Tennessee*, p. 22 (Rev. Ed. July 1979).
- [20] *State ex rel. Shaw v. Shofner*, 573 S.W.2d 169 (Tenn. Ct. App. 1978).

Deposit and Appraisal

Reference Number: MTAS-1271

Deposit and Appraisal (Jury of View Procedure)

The condemner using the jury of view procedure must deposit with the clerk of the court at the time the petition is filed the amount determined by its appraisal as the amount the property owner is entitled to for the property being acquired. T.C.A. § 29-17-801. The appraisal must value the property considering its highest and best use, its use at the time of the taking, and any other uses to which the property is legally adaptable at the time of the taking. The appraiser must be a Member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) or an otherwise licensed and qualified appraiser. T.C.A. § 29-17-1004. The statute requires interest to be paid only on the amount of an award exceeding the deposit at the rate of two percentage points (2%) greater than the prime loan rate established, as of the date of the taking, by the federal reserve system of the United States. T.C.A. § 29-17-913. Thus, the statute provides the condemner with a mechanism to avoid the payment of interest on the amount deposited. ^[21]

The condemner should make a good faith estimate of the damages and expenses the property owner will likely incur when it determines the amount to deposit. ^[22] The amount of the deposit should be specified in the condemnation petition. The amount of the deposit is not relevant to the trial, ^[23] and the condemner can offer proof that the property is of lesser value. ^[24]

Notes:

- [21] *Clinton Livestock Auction Co. v. City of Knoxville*, 52 Tenn. App. 614, 376 S.W.2d 743 (1963).
- [22] *State ex rel. Smith v. Overstreet*, 533 S.W.2d 283 (1976).
- [23] *Smith County v. Eatherly*, 820 S.W.2d 366 (Tenn. Ct. App. 1991).
- [24] *Kennedy v. City of Chattanooga*, 56 Tenn. App. 198, 405 S.W.2d 653 (1966); *Clinton Livestock Auction Co. v. City of Knoxville*, supra.

Notice

Reference Number: MTAS-1272

Notice (Jury of View Procedure)

Notice of the filing of the condemnation petition must be given to each respondent at least 30 days before the taking of any additional steps. T.C.A. § 29-17-104. If the defendant's name or address is unknown, or if he or she is not a resident of the state, notice should be given as for suits in chancery court. T.C.A. § 29-17-104. ^[25] Although notice by publication is also authorized for non-residents of the state, the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution requires more than notice by publication when the name and address of a non-resident defendant are known or

very easily ascertainable. [26] The notice should advise the defendant of the filing of the petition and the date scheduled for presenting the petition to the court for issuance of the writ of inquiry. [27]

The notice of the filing of the petition is in lieu of the summons that is normally issued in civil actions. [28] The manner of service of the notice is not specified in the applicable statutes; however, Rule 71 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure provides that those rules will be applicable to the extent they are not in conflict with or do not contradict or contravene the provisions of the applicable statutes. Therefore, service of the notice, accompanied by a copy of the petition for condemnation, can be accomplished in any manner authorized by Rule 4 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure. A return of the notice, like a return of a summons, should be completed in compliance with Rule 4.03 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure.

If the right to take has not been challenged within 30 days after the giving of notice, the condemner may take possession of the property. If the right to take is challenged, the court must promptly determine as a matter of law whether there is a right to take. If the court determines there is a right to take, it must issue a writ of possessions if necessary. T.C.A. § 29-17-104.

Notes:

[25] The due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution does not permit service by publication where the defendant's name is known or is very easily ascertainable. *Love v. First National Bank of Clarksville*, 646 S.W.2d 163 (Tenn. Ct. App. 1982).

[26] *Baggett v. Baggett*, 541 S.W.2d 407 (Tenn. 1976).

[27] *Griffith and Stokes, supra*, at p. 23.

[28] *Johnson v. Roane County*, 212 Tenn. 433, 370 S.W.2d 496 (1963).

Writ of Inquiry

Reference Number: MTAS-1273

Writ of Inquiry (Jury of View Procedure)

At the time the petition is presented to the court for the issuance of the writ of inquiry, which cannot occur until 30 days after the defendant has been given notice of the filing of the petition, the condemner should submit a motion to sustain the condemner's right to take the property under the power of eminent domain. This motion asks the court to issue the writ of inquiry and fix a time and place for the inquest. Any challenge to the condemner's right to take must be asserted at this stage of the proceedings. [29]

If no challenge to the condemner's right to take is made, the court will sustain the condemnation proceedings and order the issuance of the writ of inquiry of damages. T.C.A. § 29-16-202. This order should recite that:

- The petition for condemnation has been properly filed and notice given to the defendants;
- The condemner has the right to acquire the property as disclosed in the order;
- The clerk should issue a writ of inquiry to appear on a fixed date and place and that no further notice will be given;
- Upon selection of the jury of view the jury will proceed to the property, examine it, and hear testimony of witnesses, but no argument of counsel, and will set apart by metes and bounds the property to be condemned and assess the damages as required by law; and
- That the jury of view will reduce its report to writing and deliver it to the sheriff, who will return it to the court. [30]

If the defendant challenges the condemner's right to take, the court must first resolve this challenge before it may order issuance of the writ of inquiry. T.C.A. § 29-16-202. [31] If the court finds that the condemner has the right to take the property, it will sustain the condemnation proceedings and order issuance of the writ of inquiry of damages. T.C.A. § 29-16-202. The order directing the issuance of the writ of inquiry is not a final order and, therefore, is not appealable. [32]

The writ of inquiry is issued by the clerk and directed to the sheriff, commanding him to summon a panel of jurors to appear on a fixed date and place. T.C.A. § 29-16-202. ^[33] The sheriff thereafter summons a panel from 12 to 15 potential jurors from which the jury of view will be selected. The sheriff should return the writ to the clerk of court, specifying the names of the persons on whom the writ of inquiry was served. ^[34]

Notes:

[29] Wilkerson, *The Institution and Prosecution of Condemnation Proceedings*, 26 Tenn. L. Rev. 325 (1959); Griffith and Stokes, *supra*, at p. 23. [

[30] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 328.

[31] The right to take is considered in detail in *The Right to Take* [1].

[32] *Tennessee Central Railroad Co. v. Campbell*, 109 Tenn. 655, 73 S.W. 112 (1903); *Camp v. Coal Creek & Winter's Gap Railroad Co.*, 79 Tenn. 705 (1883).

[33] As an alternative, the parties may agree on the persons who will serve on the jury of view, or the judge will select the jurors and the names of these jurors will be specified in the order directing the writ of inquiry. T.C.A. § 29-16-109. The sheriff will thereafter serve the writ of inquiry on the agreed-upon jurors.

[34] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 328.

Selection of the Jury of View

Reference Number: MTAS-1274

The jury of view will consist of five persons, unless the parties agree to a different number. T.C.A. § 29-16-108. The jurors must possess the same qualifications as jurors in other civil cases, with the additional qualification that no members of the jury of view may have an interest in a similar case. T.C.A. § 29-16-109. The jurors may be challenged for cause or peremptorily as in any other civil case. T.C.A. § 29-16-108. In the instance where the name of the juror is selected by the court and the juror is unable to attend, the sheriff will select a replacement. T.C.A. § 29-16-110.

View and Report

Reference Number: MTAS-1275

View and Report (Jury of View Procedure)

If the date has not been set by the court, the sheriff must give the parties three days' notice of the time and place of the inquiry. T.C.A. § 29-16-111. ^[35] On the date and time specified, the jury will be selected (if the names of the jurors are not specified by the court or the parties) and sworn to fairly and impartially, without favor or affectation, and will lay off by metes and bounds the property required for the proposed improvement to assess the damages to the landowner. T.C.A. § 29-16-112.

The jury may then receive brief instructions from the court on its duties, which are to go onto the property, to examine it, to hear testimony of witnesses but no arguments of counsel, to assess the damages, and to prepare a report in writing and deliver it to the sheriff. ^[36] The jury of view will then be placed in the charge of the sheriff and will proceed to examine the property. T.C.A. § 29-16-113. The parties and their counsel may accompany the jury of view to the property and put on evidence as to its value, but counsel are not permitted to make arguments to the jury of view. T.C.A. § 29-16-113. ^[37] After the investigation of the property and the testimony have been completed, the jury of view must identify by metes and bounds the property required for the proposed project and must assess damages to the landowner according to the principles discussed in chapter four. T.C.A. § 29-16-113. The decision of the jury of view may be a majority instead of a unanimous decision. T.C.A. § 29-16-115. ^[38] The decision should be reduced to writing, and the report must include a legal description of the property and the amount of the award and be signed by a majority of the jurors. ^[39]

The report should be delivered to the sheriff who returns the report to the court. T.C.A. § 29-16-115. If the parties do not object to the report, it is confirmed by the court upon motion by the condemner.^[40] The court then enters an order confirming the report. T.C.A. § 29-16-116. This order should incorporate the report of the jury of view, should order that the property be divested from defendants and vested in the condemner, and further order that the condemner pay the defendants the amount specified in the report.^[41] The order should also specifically provide for the issuance of a writ of possession to put the condemner in possession, if necessary.^[42]

If there is no dispute as to the proper distribution of the funds to defendants, the order should specify this distribution; otherwise, the court must retain jurisdiction to permit the defendants to present proof on their respective interests and the proper disposition of the award.^[43] This order should also adjudge the costs of the case (normally against condemner) and provide for payment of the members of the jury of view.^[44] The maximum amount of this payment is specified at T.C.A. § 29-16-125.

Notes:

[35] Although the statute does not require notice to be given to parties or agents who are not residents of the county, such notice would be required by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. *Bryant v. Edwards*, 707 S.W.2d 868 (Tenn. 1986).

[36] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 328.

[37] As an alternative, the presentation of testimony may occur at a different location after the jury of view has had an opportunity to inspect the property.

[38] *Mississippi Railway Co. v. McDonald*, 59 Tenn. 54 (1873).

[39] The attorney for condemners normally prepares the report leaving a blank for the jury of view to fill in the amount of the award. *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 329.

[40] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 330.

[41] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 330.

[42] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 330.

[43] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 330.

[44] *Wilkerson, supra*, at p. 330.

Exception and Appeal

Reference Number: MTAS-1276

Exceptions and Appeals (Jury of View Procedure)

Either party may file exceptions to the report of the jury of view, and for good cause shown, the court may set aside the report of the jury of view and issue a new writ of inquiry for a new jury of view. T.C.A. § 29-16-117. Exceptions to the report of the jury of view should be directed toward some irregularity in the proceedings, misconduct of the jury of view, or where the report is founded on erroneous principles.^[45] The court considers the exceptions based on the proof in the record; therefore, an exception on the grounds of inadequacy of the damages would normally be insufficient.^[46] Although no time period is specified for filing exceptions, the appeal from the report of the jury of view must follow the disposition of the exceptions,^[47] and such an appeal must be filed within 45 days of the confirmation of the report of the jury of view. T.C.A. § 29-16-118. It is therefore conceivable that a court would find that exceptions must be filed and disposed of prior to the expiration of the 45-day period.

An appeal is the proper remedy if a party objects to the amount of damages awarded by the jury of view.^[48] The remedies of exception and appeal are cumulative and successive.^[49] A party may file an appeal regardless of whether exceptions have been filed.^[50] Either party may file an appeal within 45 days of the entry of the order confirming the report of the jury of view, and upon giving security for costs obtain a trial de novo before a jury as in any civil case. T.C.A. § 29-16-118.

The condemner who obtained possession under the order confirming the report of the jury of view ^[51] may continue in possession upon filing of an appeal by posting a bond, payable to defendants, in double the amount of the award of the jury of view, conditioned upon the condemner's compliance with the final judgment in the case. T.C.A. §§ 29-16-120; 29-16-122. ^[52] Costs on appeal must be paid by the appealing party in all cases where the petit jury affirms the award of the jury of view or is more unfavorable to the appealing party. T.C.A. § 29-17-119. In all other cases the court may award costs as in other chancery cases. T.C.A. § 29-16-119.

Notes:

[45] *Officer v. East Tennessee Natural Gas Co.*, 192 Tenn. 184, 239 S.W.2d 999 (1951); *Pound v. Fowler*, 175 Tenn. 220, 133 S.W.2d 486 (1939).

[46] *Pound v. Fowler*, *supra*; *Overton County Railroad Co. v. Eldridge*, 118 Tenn. 79, 98 S.W. 1051 (1906).

[47] *Pound v. Fowler*, *supra*.

[48] *Pound v. Fowler*, *supra*.

[49] *Baker v. Rose*, 165 Tenn. 543, 56 S.W.2d 732 (1932).

[50] *State ex rel. v. Oliver*, 167 Tenn. 155, 67 S.W.2d 146 (1933).

[51] See The Right to Take [1] on the effect of such possession on the finality of the court's determination of the condemner's right to take the property.

[52] Counties (and arguably municipalities) are not required to post this bond to obtain possession pending appeal. *Claiborne County v. Jennings*, 199 Tenn. 161, 285 S.W.2d 132 (1955).

Nonsuit

Reference Number: MTAS-1277

Nonsuit (Jury of View Procedure)

The condemner may take a voluntary nonsuit under Rule 41.01 of the Tennessee Rules of Civil Procedure in a condemnation case. ^[53] A nonsuit cannot be taken after the condemner has taken possession of the property following confirmation of the report of the jury of view, leaving nothing to be determined except the amount of compensation due the defendant. ^[54]

Notes:

[53] *Montgomery County v. Nichols*, 10 S.W.3d 258 (Tenn. App. 1999); *Anderson v. Smith*, 521 S.W.2d 787 (Tenn. 1975); *Cunningham v. Memphis Railroad Terminal Co.*, 126 Tenn. 343, 149 S.W. 103 (1912); *Williams v. McMinn County*, *supra*.

[54] *Anderson v. Smith*, *supra*; *Cunningham v. Memphis Railroad Terminal Co.*, *supra*; *Department of Highways and Public Works v. Gamble*, 18 Tenn. App. 95, 73 S.W.2d 175 (1934).

Links:

[1] <https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu/reference/right-take>

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