



# THE PORTNOFF REPORTER

FALL 2018

## COLLECTING ABATEMENT OF NUISANCE COSTS



It's bad enough that a municipality has to take action to abate a public nuisance in the first place, but then being stuck with the unpaid costs of the abatement adds insult to injury. Fortunately, there's a remedy for municipalities when property owners refuse to pay their abatement of nuisance costs. Under the Municipal Claims and Tax Liens Act (MCTLA), abatement of nuisance claims can be collected in the same manner that Portnoff Law Associates collects other delinquent municipal accounts, such as trash, sewer and water fees, and delinquent real estate taxes.

By utilizing the procedures of the MCTLA, municipalities can take action to prompt payment while shifting all costs of collection, including third party attorney fees, to the delinquent property owner. With the potential of additional fees and costs being added to the delinquent account, property owners quickly learn that paying off the delinquency is their best course of action.

There's no reason to allow your delinquent abatement of nuisance accounts to remain uncollected. Proceeding under the

MCTLA creates strong incentive for property owners to pay off their obligation quickly, while allowing the municipality to receive 100% of the delinquent balance owed. To learn more about the MCTLA, contact Portnoff Law Associates today at (800) 561-7989 or sanderson@portnoffonline.com.



PORTNOFF  
LAW ASSOCIATES, LTD.

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Montgomery County: 2700 Horizon Drive, Suite 100, King of Prussia, PA 19406

Lehigh County: 1030 West Walnut Street, Allentown, PA 18102

Beaver County: 902 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Aliquippa, PA 15001

Tel. (800) 561-7989 • Fax (484) 690-9307 • Web [www.portnoffonline.com](http://www.portnoffonline.com)



## THE PORTNOFF REPORTER

**Michelle Portnoff, Esquire, Publisher**  
**Kevin Buraks, Esquire, Editor**  
**Contributor: Ryan Moyer**

### In Print

Portnoff attorney Kevin Buraks penned an article titled “Collecting Delinquent Real Estate Taxes – You Have Options” that was published in the September 2018 edition of *Pennsylvania Borough News*, the official magazine of the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs.

### In Person

Portnoff representatives were at the PA Association of Municipal Administrators (PAMA) 59th Annual Conference at the Desmond Hotel in Malvern, PA.

Aug.  
2018

If you are interested in having Portnoff Law Associates make a presentation at your next conference or event, please contact us at (800) 561-7989.

### Local Event Idea



#### Upper Darby International Festival September 22, Upper Darby, PA

Upper Darby’s International Festival is coming back to 69th Street for its second year! The festival is a celebration of the township’s rich cultural diversity through food, music and merchandise. A number of local restaurants, representing the diverse ethnic populations and nationalities of Upper Darby, have committed to taking part. There also will be a packed roster of live performances. The festival will be held on Saturday, September 22 from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. (rain date is Sunday, Sept. 23). For more information, go to: [www.facebook.com/UDIntlFestival](http://www.facebook.com/UDIntlFestival).

## Notes of Appreciation

Portnoff Law Associates frequently receives thank you notes from property owners who appreciate the professional manner and courtesy with which they were treated during the collection process. Recently, the notes of appreciation have been flowing in, not just from property owners, but also from title insurance companies and Portnoff’s own clients!

#### Property Owners:

Thank you so much for helping me out. I am trying to get everything payed up to date since [my husband] passed away.

A property owner from Broomall, PA

Thank you for your help & kindness. Have a great day.

A property owner from North Braddock, PA

#### Title Insurance Companies:

Thanks Joseph Marshall – another great job by you and your Portnoff team... We appreciate all your help with this pesty title stuff.

A title insurance company from Reading, PA

#### Clients:

Thank you for all your work on this file. I am a fan of Portnoff. We simply could not collect on these seriously delinquent accounts if not for the legal firepower and persistence Portnoff brings.

Charlotte Gehman,  
Administrator at the  
Municipal Authority of  
the Borough of Elverson

I give these folks my highest recommendation. They’ve helped two municipalities in which I’ve worked to address these difficult situations. You are in good hands!

Tommy Ryan, Township  
Manager of Worcester  
Township

## Employee Spotlight

### Bruce Adams



For the past eleven years, Bruce Adams has been in charge of training new employees and providing technical support for Portnoff Law Associates. Bruce has been well groomed for the challenge, graduating with an economics degree from Harvard and serving as a technology coordinator for both the Haverford School and Moorestown Friends School.

Bruce’s experience in the school setting has allowed him to create an excellent training program to help prepare attorneys, paralegals, legal assistants and members of the financial services and office teams to become proficient with Portnoff’s collection software and succeed at their jobs. When asked what he likes most about his job, Bruce replied: “I enjoy learning new things and I enjoy sharing what I have learned. My goal is to help other people grow, be more aware and be successful.” Bruce jokingly refers to himself as a “professional know-it-all,” but he has become a great resource and mentor to the firm’s new employees. “I really enjoy helping others be effective users of technology, to allow them to transfer as cleanly as possible into their job.”

In his personal life, Bruce enjoys frequently attending the orchestra, going to movies, exercising and walking (and is a leader of the firm’s Walking Club). Bruce also has impressive musical talents, both as a composer and a part-time professional singer. Bruce sings regularly at a Philadelphia church and is available for weddings and other significant life events!

## PA Municipal Acronyms

<b>GFOA-PA</b>	Government Finance Officers Association of Pennsylvania
<b>PA-AWWA</b>	Pennsylvania American Water Works Association
<b>PAMA</b>	Pennsylvania Association of Municipal Administrators
<b>PASBO</b>	Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials
<b>PMAA</b>	Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association
<b>PSAB</b>	Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
<b>PSATS</b>	Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors
<b>PSBA</b>	Pennsylvania School Boards Association

## Customer Service 101

Respectful discourse with the public should be a cornerstone for every municipal entity. Local governments are created by the people and for the people. As such, every constituent should be treated with the utmost courtesy and respect. However, the questions that are often posed are “What to do when the resident does not treat municipal employees with the same courtesy and respect?” and “How should we handle a constituent who thinks it is reasonable to verbally insult elected officials at a public meeting?” The answers are simple: double down on your courtesy and respect. Killing constituents with kindness is never a bad approach, especially at public meetings. The message carried by the rude and discourteous taxpayer is often lost, with the public left remembering how respectfully and patiently the municipality handled a challenging situation.

Public officials can help themselves by creating specific rules for public comment to which all attendees must abide. These rules can include: (i) specifying who is permitted to speak at public meetings; (ii) setting the length of time that a member of the public is permitted to speak; (iii) designating the specific times during the meeting when public comment will be permitted; and (iv) determining how the municipality will handle discourteous attendees during the meeting. By having specific rules in place ahead of time, the municipality can be assured that all residents will be treated equally, while still providing the municipality with the tools needed to help defuse difficult and potentially embarrassing situations.

## New PLA Attorney

Portnoff Law Associates is proud to announce that attorney Kyle Miller has joined the firm. Residing in Chester County with his wife and three children, Kyle received an undergraduate degree in economics from Johns Hopkins University and his law degree from Drexel. Kyle is the primary attorney in charge of Portnoff’s western Pennsylvania clients.

## Hiring Portnoff

Portnoff Law Associates represents over 140 municipalities, school districts and municipal authorities across 23 Pennsylvania counties. Portnoff’s proven collection process can be tailored to meet your specific collection needs, and we are available to meet with you to discuss the benefits of our services. If you are interested in hearing more about how Portnoff can help maximize your delinquent collections at minimal cost to your municipality, please contact us at (800) 561-7989 or sanderson@portnoffonline.com.





2700 Horizon Drive, Suite 100  
King of Prussia, PA 19406  
www.portnoffonline.com  
(800) 561-7989

**CONTACT PORTNOFF LAW ASSOCIATES TODAY TO REFRESH THE WAY YOUR CONSTITUENTS RESPOND TO YOUR EFFORTS TO COLLECT DELINQUENT MUNICIPAL FEES AND REAL ESTATE TAXES!**

With almost 30 years of municipal collection experience, Portnoff Law Associates currently represents over 140 municipalities, school districts and municipal authorities across Pennsylvania in the collection of delinquent:

- Real Estate Taxes
- Abatement of Nuisance Fees
- Tapping Fees
- Trash Fees
- Sewer Fees
- Water Bills



Michelle Portnoff, President  
Portnoff Law Associates

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