

# HOUSE BILL 331

Overview of Village Dissolution

## **PURPOSE**

HB 331, effective **April 9, 2025**, amends multiple sections of the Ohio Revised Code—including **703.31, 703.32, 703.33, 703.31**, and **2981.x**—and enacts a new section, **703.331**, to **modify how village dissolutions are handled and how public notice must be provided for that purpose.**



# **NEW TRIGGER MECHANISM (SECTION 703.331)**

Starting April 2025, a **county-level evaluation** must occur after each decennial census. Specifically, by the **last day of the year following the release of Census results**, the **county auditor, the county treasurer, and one county commissioner** (selected by the board) jointly must...


1. Review each village in the county (or the largest-population portion, if the village spans counties) over the prior 10-year period to determine whether:

- The village provided – or contracted to provide – at least five of these services:

- Police protection
- Fire-fighting
- Garbage collection
- Water service
- Sewer service
- Emergency medical services
- Road maintenance
- Park or recreational services
- Human services
- A public library (operated solely by the village)




- **At each election** where a village position was on the ballot, **at least one candidate appeared** on the ballot



2. Send a **written information request** to each village prior to beginning the evaluation. The village has **30 days** to respond with supporting materials (service delivery documentation, budgets, ballot info, etc.), and then **10 more days** if county officials need additional information

3. **Notify the village's legislative authority** of the evaluation findings by **December 31** of the year after census data release.



4. If a village fails the test (i.e., lacking services or missing candidate), the county officials must **file their finding with the county's Board of Elections.**

The Board of Elections must then place the question:

*“Shall the village of \_\_\_\_\_ surrender its corporate powers?”*

**on the next general election ballot (provided at least 90 days have passed since filing)**



If the voters approve, the Board of Elections Certifies results to the **Secretary of State, Auditor of State, and County Recorder**, all of whom must record the outcome.

**IMPORTANT:** This evaluation process is **in addition to** the existing voluntary dissolution procedures under section 703.33 (e.g., dissolution petitions initiated by village electors or legislative authorities).



**ROLES:  
COMMISSIONER,  
AUDITOR, TREASURER  
– COUNTY PERSPECTIVE**

# COUNTY AUDITOR

- Co-leads the **10-year village evaluation**, verifying service provisions against budgets and records.
- Prepares and organizes **village service data**, budget documents, and candidate information.
- Participates in the **joint determination** regarding adequacy of services and candidate presence.
- Assists drafting the **written evaluations** and ensures the **findings are submitted properly** to relevant parties (village legislative authority, Board of Elections).

# COUNTY TREASURER

- Equally responsible in the evaluation alongside the auditor and commissioner.
- May assist in analyzing **financial aspects** of service delivery (e.g., funding levels, budget allocations).
- Helps craft or review the **written findings**, ensuring clarity in financial/community service implications.
- Participates in the **notification process** and coordinates with other officials to ensure formal filing.

# COUNTY COMMISSIONER

(Designated Member)

- Represents the **board of county commissioners** in the evaluation trio.
- Brings **board oversight** and local governance insight into the evaluation.
- Helps interpret **local conditions and political context** in verdicts (e.g., population shifts, historical village service patterns).
- Assists in officially **notifying** the village authority of findings and coordinating with the Board of Elections if dissolution is triggered.



**WHAT THESE DUTIES  
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# WHAT THESE DUTIES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE

- **Post-Census Trigger**

After the latest federal census results (say, Summer 2031), the county team has until **December 31, 2032** to complete evaluations.

- **Data Gathering Phase**

Auditor and treasurer request info from villages by a set date in 2032. Villages supply relevant documents within 30 days. If necessary, county officials issue follow-up requests—with responses due in 10 days.

# WHAT THESE DUTIES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE

- **Review & Determination**

The auditor, treasurer, and commissioner assess whether villages met the “five services” and “candidate on ballot” criteria. Document the evaluation in writing.

- **Notifications & Filings**

If a village is found lacking, the county officials notify its legislative authority by the year-end, then file the finding with the county Board of Elections.

# WHAT THESE DUTIES LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE

- **Election Process**

Board of Elections places the surrender question on the next general election ballot (not before 90 days after filing).

- **Post-Election Actions**

If dissolution is approved by voters, the Board of Elections certifies to Secretary of State, Auditor of State, and County Recorder. Those offices record the results; county officials may assist in transition planning or records transfer, though statute does not explicitly assign post-certification duties to county auditor or treasurer.