



Executive Summary

City Council Business Meeting

AGENDA ITEM-NEW BUSINESS:	Transition from Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE) to Hennepin County “Open Book”
PREPARED BY:	Kevin Larson, Assistant City Administrator
RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approval of Resolution 2025-1027-01 Limited Transfer of LBAE Authority to Hennepin County OR Resolution 2025-1027-02 Permanent Transfer of LBAE Authority to Hennepin County	

Purpose of the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization (LBAE)

Every April the Maple Plain City Council meets as the LBAE to provide property owners with a fair and objective forum to challenge their property’s assessed value or classification. The board has authority to:

- Reduce or increase individual property valuations, with due notice.
- Change a property’s classification.
- Add omitted properties or improvements to the assessment roll.

Challenges with the Current Local Board Model

While the LBAE plays a statutory role, there are challenges that limit effectiveness:

- The administrative burden for Council members to complete state training and maintain quorum compliance or risk mandatory transfer of powers to the County for at least two years.
- Hearings require members to make technical valuation decisions, sometimes involving neighbors or acquaintances, which can create discomfort or perceptions of bias.
- The board must hear all appeals until adjournment, follow strict notice requirements, and issue written decisions. Hearings can increase procedural complexity and become lengthy, especially if multiple appeals are filed.

Open Book Alternative

Under Minnesota Statute §274.01, Subd. 3, a city may transfer its LBAE powers to the County Board. In this case, Hennepin County provides an Open Book process, where property owners meet directly with county assessors to review and discuss valuations.

- **Benefits for Property Owners**
 - Greater accessibility with multiple countywide meeting locations and virtual options.
 - Extended hours, flexible scheduling, and one-on-one meetings with appraisers.
 - Less intimidating than a formal board hearing, with questions often resolved immediately.
 - Errors in property data can be corrected on the spot.
 - If dissatisfied, owners still retain the right to appeal further to the County Board of Appeal and Equalization (CBAE) or to Tax Court
- **Benefits for the City**
 - Removes the administrative and training burden from Maple Plain's elected officials.
 - Reduces confrontational situations between residents and council members.
 - Increases efficiency by relying on Hennepin County's appraisal expertise and technology.
 - Allows council time to focus on other city governance priorities

Options for Maple Plain

1. Keep the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization authority with the Maple Plain City Council.
2. Limited Transfer of Authority to Hennepin County (Resolution 2025-1027-01):
Transfer LBAE powers to Hennepin County for a minimum of three years. This allows Maple Plain to reassess after 2028 whether to return to local control or continue under county management.
3. Permanent Transfer of Authority to Hennepin County (Resolution 2025-1027-02):
Transfer LBAE powers to Hennepin County indefinitely. Maple Plain would no longer convene as a local board, and appeals would permanently be handled under the county's Open Book framework.

Recommendation

Based on best practices and county support, transitioning to the Open Book system with Hennepin County is strongly recommended. Based on previous LBAE meetings and Maple Plain City Council workshops, staff recommend the City of Maple Plain permanently transfer the authority of LBAE to Hennepin County.

Exhibits

1. Resolution 2025-1027-01 Transferring LBAE to Hennepin County limited time
2. Resolution 2025-1027-02 Transferring LBAE to Hennepin County permanent
3. Hennepin County 2025 Open Book Memo
4. Hennepin County Open Book Discussion
5. MN Dept Rev BoAE Handbook Excerpt Purpose of the board
6. MN Dept Rev BoAE Handbook Excerpt Duties of the board
7. MN Dept Rev BoAE Handbook Excerpt Best practices
8. MN Dept Rev BoAE Handbook Excerpt Alternative methods of appeal