



Kristen D. Wheeler, Chair
Virginia A. Powell, Member
Devin Sprecker, Member
Thomas P. Browne, Chief Hearings Officer

Board of Tax Appeals

Laura Kelly, Governor

MEMORANDUM

To: House Appropriations Committee
Re: FY22 Supplemental Budget Request to Support Additional FTE for IT Support
Date: March 14, 2022

Chair Waymaster, Vice Chair Hoffman, and members of the Appropriations Committee,

The Board of Tax Appeals respectfully submits this written response to questions raised by the Committee during its March 2 meeting. BOTA's FY22 Supplemental Request was for \$44,550 of SGF funding to fund an IT Manager position from February through June 2022.¹ Because the position has not been filled, the Committee requested a revised figure reflecting fewer months of employment. The FTE position of IT Manager, as recommended by the Governor, is a monthly expense of \$8,910. If the position was filled at the end of March, BOTA's FY22 Supplemental Request could be reduced to \$35,640.

The Committee also asked questions about the Board's previous capability to hold remote hearings. The Board utilized existing funds to install audio and video equipment in its main hearing room in February 2022.² Until that time the Board had **no** remote hearing capability in its regular division. The Board's inability to offer remote hearings during the high points of the Covid-19 pandemic frustrated taxpayers and contributed to multiple continuances of cases. The Board seeks to prevent that situation in the future as well as offer additional options to taxpayers for whom travel is a barrier to asserting their right to a hearing in regular division matters. The Board needs a full-time IT manager if it is to begin consistently offering remote hearings because OITS has indicated it cannot fulfill that support role.

BOTA's IT Manager would also be responsible for many other tasks involved with oversight of an IT infrastructure that has not been significantly upgraded since 2008, including redesigning the Board's website, managing upgrades of the Board's case management and document management systems, and performing a cost/benefit analysis of various electronic filing and fee payment platforms. The Governor recommended upgrading BOTA's initial request to an IT Manager position because these responsibilities require an individual with more experience and a greater level of skill in high-level systems analysis.

The Board is grateful for the time the Committee has spent considering its budget request and would be happy to provide any additional information necessary to support the Committee's decision.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen D. Wheeler, Chair

Jody Allen, Executive Director

¹ BOTA's requested FTE salary began in February 2022 because that is when the supplement request was submitted. Although BOTA initially intended to hire someone immediately, it has been reluctant to make a firm offer of employment without formal approval of the budget.

² BOTA's audio and video equipment were installed by an outside vendor at the direction of the state's OITS. Although OITS will continue to provide some services to BOTA, it supports BOTA's request for a full-time IT position and believes that BOTA has such substantial IT support needs that the services will not overlap.