

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS' MINUTES
COMMUNITY ROOM – POLICE STATION**

MONDAY – OCTOBER 4, 2004

Assessors Present: Chairman Jonathan L. Fein, Scott C. Bush and James J. O'Connell
Also Present: Assistant Assessor Robert P. Leclair

Assessors' Chairman Fein called the meeting to order at about 8:30 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of the September 7, 2004 meeting were accepted as presented.

Correspondence/Mail

None

Public Comment/Correspondence

Louis Robin of 942 Longmeadow Street attended the meeting to speak with the Assessors. Mr. Robin wanted to express his concern that a Fiscal 2003 abatement application that was settled at the courthouse in Springfield was not automatically applied for Fiscal 2004.

The Board discussed the issue with Mr. Robin and reviewed possible methods of addressing the situation. Since the town is doing an Interim Year Adjustment, any negotiated value for fiscal 2004 would not be valid even if there had previously been an agreement. This will be the case going forward. Previously, ATB decisions/settlements could be carried forward until the next certification year which occurred at three year intervals.

Excise

The Assessors signed the September 2004 *Monthly List of Abatements, Motor Vehicle and Trailer Excise*: \$240.00 from the Levy of Fiscal 2003 and \$1,004.49 from the Levy of Fiscal 2004 for a monthly total of \$1,244.49.

Old Business

Bob Leclair met with the Finance Committee the evening of September 13, 2004. The Finance Committee has asked that department heads be present at meetings where they are making Reserve Fund Requests. Bob was requesting funds to pay a consulting fee for the recently mandated Interim Year Update by the D.O.R. This request should have been on the warrant of the annual town meeting in May, but was taken off. Now the request is looked at as an emergency and an unforeseen event when it never should have been viewed this way.

Appellate Tax Board (ATB)

Notification from the ATB regarding Ruth's House (780 Converse Street) was received (October 1, 2004) scheduling a hearing for November 29, 2004. Bob contacted Dave Martel about this notice. Dave is meeting with appraiser Mike Crowley who is representing Ruth's House. We will have a better idea if this case will go forward once this meeting takes place. A settlement may be reached if the two sides are not too far apart.

Measure and List

Bob has met several times with the Vision supervisor for the project, Dave Arnold about data collection concerns. Things like “Airport”, “Small Bedroom”, on a 680 square foot house and “Undersized Bedroom” were a few of the comments being written on the property record card by the data collectors.

Interim year adjustments

Gary Fields was able to come to the office on September 8, 2004 and begin the fiscal 2005 interim year adjustment process. Land values were adjusted, “outliers” examined, ratios analyzed, base rates changed, etc. All of the sales had already been reviewed and organized and by the end of the day, all adjustments were complete. An examination of income and expense statements did not require that commercial property be adjusted. Recent rental agreements did not show a significant amount of increase to justify a change.

Miscellaneous

- The accountant is leading a search committee for new software to handle payroll, accounts receivable, etc. The Assessor’s Office is involved with certain sections such as Real Property Abatements, Excise, and bill generation for real and personal property.
- Bob attended DOR Seminar “What’s New in Municipal Law” on September 24, 2004 in West Springfield.
 - At the seminar it was mentioned that the provision of Section 8 of Chapter 58 is now discretionary with the Board of Assessors. Previously, written permission of the DOR was required.
 - A provision in the statute now allows motor vehicle excise abatements to be processed three years from the due date instead of December 31 of the year following the year of issuance. Also, if an overdue bill is paid, an abatement application can be submitted up to one year from the date of payment.
- Bob also distributed two “opinion” letters from the packet of information at the seminar. One opinion dealt with conservation restrictions, and one dealt with the effect of an Appellate Tax Board decision.
- A request for FY2006 Triennial Certification will be made at the “special” town meeting in November. This will require issuing an RFP and determining the more reliable/lowest bid. If the award is made to VISION, provisions must be made for software upgrading and Internet hosting.
- Tax Deferrals – Two individuals have requested that their taxes be deferred. Bob discussed his concern with the Board that the contracts be set up carefully and with the help of town counsel, Dave Martel.
- Applications for Classification as Recreational Land were received by the two golf courses in town – Longmeadow Country Club at 400 Shaker Road and Twin Hills Country Club at 700 Wolf Swamp Road. The Board voted, Jonathan Fein – yes, James O’Connell – yes, and Scott Bush – yes to allow the use under Chapter 61B Recreational Land for fiscal 2006. Bob will notify the applicants of the Boards decision.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:40 a.m.

Next Meeting: – Monday, November 1, 2004 8:30 a.m.
Community Room of the Police Station

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert P. Leclair, CMA, RMA, MAA
Assistant Assessor