

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS' MINUTES
COMMUNITY ROOM – POLICE STATION
TUESDAY – OCTOBER 14, 2003**

The meeting called the meeting to order at about 8:30 a.m.

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

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of the September 9, 2003 meeting were accepted as presented.

Public Comment/Correspondence

None

Excise

The Assessors signed the September 2003 *Monthly List of Abatements, Motor Vehicle and Trailer Excise*: \$1,465.95 from the Levy of 2003. No abatements were processed from the Levy of 2002.

Abatements/Appellate Tax Board Hearings Decisions, Ect.

The Board discussed the cases that will be heard at the ATB November 19 & 20, 2003.

- 20 Ardsley Road – Shrair
- 124 Barrington Road – Calabrese
- 206 Colony Road - Pacella
- 906 Longmeadow Street – Bay Path College
- 942 Longmeadow Street –Robin
- 243 Pendleton Lane - Ciejek
- 650 Wolf Swamp Road – Cardaropoli

Measure & List

Bob has been in contact with one of the likely vendors for the measure and list who indicated that there was no rush to publish an RFP; it could be published towards the end of the year with work to commence in April or May of 2004 with monies from the fiscal 2004 budget.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILOT) & Bay Path College

Bob updated the Board regarding a proposed PILOT program for Bay Path College. Presently only Mental Health Association makes a payment in lieu of taxes to the town. They own 675 Williams Street and 460 Longmeadow Street. Their payment is about 50% of what the full taxes would be if they were not exempt. Susan Wright gave Bob a copy of Deerfield's town report that he distributed to the Board. Article 8 indicated that Deerfield Academy, a private school and other charitable entities donate \$99,520 to the town.

A copy of a November 2002 article in The Beacon was also passed out. This article stated that Harvard University has agreed to make annual payments in lieu of property taxes to

Watertown for a 30-acre parcel it owns in the town. The article went on to say that although Harvard is not required to pay property taxes, it makes similar contributions in Cambridge and Boston where it also owns property. Bob Leclair also reported on an informal survey he took through the Assessors' chat group regarding the topic of PILOTS.

- **Medford** has Tufts University and there is no program yet.
- **Eastham** has no private schools that this would apply to.
- **Watertown** has no specific rules but mentioned that some towns apportion the tax amount that covers safety/highway/administration/etc. of the town and apply to the exempt value of the entity.
- **Nantucket** has a local housing authority and they tax based on 50% of the prior year's tax rate plus \$100 per room.
- **Haverhill** has nothing.
- **Barre** is discussing the issue with Harvard University regarding some housing and vacant land in the town.
- **Lowell** had what was perhaps one of the more interesting ideas (according to RL). They calculate the area of the city and divide that square footage by the tax levy to arrive at an "adjusted" tax rate (theirs was \$.17 for FY2003). Then, a letter is sent to the various charitable organizations requesting that they participate in their "PILOT PROGRAM. The assessor indicated that this has worked for the last four years. It is strictly voluntary and they get quite a few payments.

Bob indicated that he plans to poll the various assessors during the MAAO seminar that he is attending for the next three days.

Misc.

- The special town meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, November 18, 2003 at 7:30 p.m. in the gym of the high school. Warrant articles are due by October 24, 2003. At this time the Board does not intend to have an article on the warrant.
- Bob Leclair was notified that the "Supplemental Tax Assessment" program was voted down by the Selectmen and notice of such was sent to the DOR.
- Ninety-two resumes for the secretarial position were received. Almost a dozen applicants were interviewed and a woman by the name of Dawn Eggleston was selected. Two of the candidates did not show up for a scheduled appointment. Several who were called appeared to have no recollection of ever having applied for the position! Dawn was able to start work on Tuesday, September 23, 2003, the week that Ann Hubbard was out due to a death in the family.
- Bob is scheduled to attend an assessors' seminar at Jiminy Peak beginning this afternoon and continuing all day Wednesday and Thursday morning.
- A list of 339 building permits inspected by Bob with dates, assessments, increases in value, etc. was distributed to the Board for review. A few large negative changes were questioned and will be reviewed for the next meeting.
- A copy of the 2003 "Classification" packet was distributed to the Assessors. This information is reviewed and presented with a recommendation by the Assessors to the Board of Selectmen each year in order to set the tax rate and determine if there should be one rate for all property classifications, or a "split" rate. A brief discussion took place about the fact that a higher tax rate for commercial and industrial property does

not generate any additional revenue for the town. A split rate shifts more of the burden of taxes to the commercial/industrial and personal property owners while providing “minor” relief for the residential property owners.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:20 a.m.

**Next Meeting: – Monday, November 3, 2003
Community Room of the Police Station**

Respectfully Submitted,

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