

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS' MINUTES
COMMUNITY ROOM – POLICE STATION
MONDAY – NOVEMBER 17, 2003**

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

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

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of the November 3, 2003 meeting were accepted as presented.

Public Comment/Correspondence

None

Abatements/Appellate Tax Board Hearings Decisions, Etc.

The Assessors were informed by the Assistant Assessor that he has prepared appraisal reports for six cases scheduled to be heard in Springfield Wednesday and Thursday (20 Ardsley Road and 124 Barrington Road on November 19, with 120 Greenacre Avenue, 206 Colony Road, 942 Longmeadow Street, and 243 Pendleton Lane on November 20, 2003).

Bob indicated that the assessed values in these cases are readily defended because the property values are in line with sales (as they should be). When doing a mass appraisal, the computer model is adjusted to reflect the changes in the market, however when appearing at the ATB, an individual appraisal is required which cites specific sales in comparison to the subject.

Town Meeting and Warrant

Bob reminded members of the Board of the town meeting to be held the next evening at the high school.

Tax Rate Setting Procedures

The LA-4 and LA-13 that were signed at the last meeting were signed again with slightly in case they have to be resubmitted with adjusted amounts. Brenda Cameron from the DOR/BLA notified Bob on November 12 that these two forms were approved. The following day Bob received a copy of a letter addressed to the Collector from Dave Martel indicating that town owned property at 463 Maple Road had been sold effective November 10, 2003 (the so called Venti property). Apparently there is a provision in the law that states the current year's taxes must be paid at closing. That is, town owned property is returned to the tax rolls immediately and is not subject to the usual date of July 1 for determining its status as is the case with non-town owned property. (For example ATB case involving Bay Path College and property they own at 906 Longmeadow Street.) Bob will call Brenda Cameron to find out how this change of status is handled.

FY2005 Budget

Bob informed the Board that the town accountant suggested that two budgets be submitted. One budget with "level services" which will need to be higher than the target amount

suggested by Appropriations (due to raises, cost of living and return of furlough money) and a second budget indicating where cuts would be made to achieve a level budget.

One suggestion Bob had is to transfer the licensing fee (\$3,700) for the assessing software to the IT department. According to the IT director, licensing agreements for the accounting software and others is paid through the IT department budget. Alternatively, staff hours would need to be reduced to some degree to achieve the targeted number.

Misc.

- Bob is scheduled to attend a presentation on personal exemptions for the elderly given by the Wilbraham Assessors following this meeting. The Assessors have been asked to put together a similar presentation for the senior center in Longmeadow in January.
- The Assessors are scheduled to attend the Selectmen's meeting December 1, 2003 at 7: 00 p.m. in order to discuss and make a recommendation regarding the adoption of a single or split tax rate. A copy of the public notice that was sent to the Republican newspaper for a November 21, 2003 publication date was reviewed.
- Bob informed the Board that the new e-mail system does not allow for delivery of messages and attachments as requested by the Department of Revenue. Both the town administrator and the IT coordinator have been notified, however, there does not appear to be an easy or quick fix to this problem.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:10 a.m.

**Next Meeting: – Monday, December 1, 2003 – with the BOS
Community Room of the Police Station**

Respectfully Submitted,

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