

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS' MINUTES
COMMUNITY ROOM – POLICE STATION
MONDAY – APRIL 28, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m.

Assessors Present: James J. O'Connell and Jerry B. Plumb Jr.
Absent: David D. French
Also Present: Assistant Assessor Robert P. Leclair

Acceptance of Minutes

The minutes of the April 22, 2003 meeting were accepted as presented.

Public Comment/Correspondence

- Mr. Biggins of 52 Redfern Drive sent a letter to the Assessors “appealing” their decision to deny his application for abatement of real estate taxes and requesting additional information. The ATB cover sheet from the internet with phone and fax numbers, address and web location was sent out by Bob Leclair.
- Bob received an email from the webmaster for the Town of Longmeadow asking that approved minutes be forwarded to him for posting on the site. The Assessors are agreeable and this will begin with the minutes of the April 22nd meeting.

FY2004 Budget

- Appropriations' Committee meeting is scheduled for this evening at 7:00 p.m. in the COA dining room. Bob is planning to attend.
- The Assessors discussed warrant article 15 that requests partial funding of a “measure and list”. Assistant Assessor Leclair informed the Board that the cost of the project will increase if there is a “favorable” vote on article #16 submitted by Appropriations that discontinues funding for the website.

About \$2,500 was “saved” on the fiscal 2003 update by having the staff do the data input of physical changes that resulted from the field review. It is anticipated that the physical inspections (of the measure and list) will generate at least twice the data entry as the field review (done from the street while in the car) and therefore, twice the expense. Bob does not think that the staff will be able to do the data entry if the website is not available for homeowners, lenders and real estate agents to look up information. If the clerical staff is constantly interrupted with phone requests previously handled by the web site they will not have the time for data entry (or cause an overtime situation). The overall effect of discontinuing the expense of the web hosting will result in an increased expense for fiscal 2004 and 2005 and again in fiscal 2006 when the next update/certification of values takes place.

(The state requires that all properties be physically inspected on a 9-year cycle. The inspection consists of measuring the exterior of any structure on the property as well as going through the interior and listing the features of the improvements such as

number of bedrooms, baths, interior floor cover, finished basement rooms, quality and condition, etc.)

Abatements/ATB

- Assessor Plumb updated the Board regarding negotiations taking place between him and a representative of the owners of 167 Dwight Road.
- Bob distributed the latest abatement spreadsheet that lists each application, date received, Assessor's decision, date of decision, valuation change if applicable, change in tax dollars, etc. Not including today's meeting, almost \$50,000 in taxes has been abated.
- A letter dated 4/18/03 was received from town counsel Dave Martel on 4/22/03 after the Board's last meeting. This letter indicated that Bay Path has received a favorable decision from the Appeals Court on the property located at 33 Farmlea Road that it should be exempt from real estate taxes. Attorney Martel says in the letter that he is not recommending that the Board seek further review and the Assessors are in agreement.
- The Application for 901 Shaker Road was submitted by an agent, without authorization on January 31, 2003, denied by the Board on March 12, 2003 and certificate of denial mailed March 19, 2003. Agent authorization was received by certified mail on March 28, 2003. It is the Assessors' belief that this is an invalid application and Bob will check with Dave Martel to see if the appeal to the ATB can be dismissed.

Misc.

- LA-3 Report for February shows 29 transfers of ownership, however, only 7 are arm's length. These sales indicate that the median assessed value is at 82% of the sale price of homes that transferred in February.
- The Appeals Court decision that 33 Farmlea Road be exempt from property taxes raised the question that perhaps Bay Path should be approached by the Selectmen and Assessors to make a payment in lieu of taxes (P.I.L.O.T.). Jim O'Connell related that he recalls when Joanne Knight was chairman of the Board of Assessors, she and a member of the Board of Selectmen approached Bay Path about a P.I.L.O.T. The Assessors plan to discuss this issue at a future meeting.

Executive Session

A vote was taken to enter into executive session to review abatement applications. James O'Connell – yes, Jerry Plumb – yes.

Abatement applications reviewed and voted on in executive session are as follows.

Approved (Real Property)

- 245 Maple Road
- 90 Pendleton Lane
- 31 Willow Brook Road

Denied (Real Property)

- 53 Green Meadow Drive

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:30 a.m.

Next Meeting: – Because the town election is being held in three weeks and there is no urgent business at this time the Board has not set a date for the next meeting. The Assessors indicated that they are available via email, or telephonically if needed.

Respectfully Submitted,

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