

LUNENBURG BOARD OF ASSESSORS

APRIL 22, 2024

LOWER LEVEL, RITTER BUILDING
960 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE

Present members: Chair Brian Laffond, Vice Chair Sarah Cammer, Clerk John Rabbitt, Principal Assessor Lynda McQuade, Assessing Consultant Rena Swezey

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at 6:30 PM.

OPENING COMMENTS

- Board
There were no comments from the Board.
- Public
There were no comments from the public.

STATUS REPORT FROM ASSESSING CONSULTANT and NEW PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR.

Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey started to review the 102 building permits from 2021 to 2023 to assure the information has been included in the Vision appraisal software.

The first batch of motor vehicle abatements and trailer excise tax abatements totaled \$11,218.36 for the month of March.

Both Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey went through commitment number 2 of motor vehicle abatements. There were 889 bills of commitment totaling \$285,816.11. There was one bill for commitment number 9 of 2022 totaling \$77.98.

A new zoning map was provided to the Police and Fire Department.

The office now has access to NEAR map. The drawback is the data is from March of 2023.

Both Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey have completed the abutters list starting in March until the current time.

Brian Laffond states that most abatement applications for 2023 were kept in the office but there are three that were taken out of the office and are now missing.

So far, 6 applications for abatement requests for 2024 have been received. Rena Swezey states there was 1 abatement that included 140-150 parcels. Lynda McQuade has been receiving many calls relating to the Q4 bills. Brian Laffond discussed that the Board did not put an explanation letter in the Q4 bills but will do so as needed in the future.

CURRENT BUSINESS

- Review and Approve Minutes of: Jan. 8, 2024, Jan. 22, 2024, Jan. 29, 2024, Feb. 5, 2024, Feb. 12, 2024, Feb. 26, 2024, March 04, 2024, March 12, 2024, March 18, 2024, April 01, 2024

There was a motion to accept the January 8, 2024, minutes with amendments by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the January 22, 2024, minutes as written by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the January 29, 2024, minutes as written by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the February 5, 2024, minutes as written by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the February 12, 2024, minutes as written by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the February 26, 2024, minutes with amendments by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the March 4, 2024, minutes as written by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the March 12, 2024, minutes with amendments by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the March 18, 2024, minutes with amendments by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the April 1, 2024, minutes with amendments by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

- Review and Approve Invoices, Expense Vouchers, Payroll, Billing Errors, etc.

There was a motion to accept the invoices dated March 15, 2024, for the amount of \$14,484.88 and the invoice dated April 9, 2024, for the amount of \$2,632.89 for services provided by Vision Government Solutions for the completion of our 5-year reevaluation by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor. Included in the invoices was a bill for three copies of the 5-year reevaluation from Vision. One copy is available to check out at the Assessor's Office, one copy is

available to check out by the Lunenburg Public Library, and the last copy will stay in the Assessors Office for office use.

A bill from MFS was reviewed and signed for ATB cases totaling \$1,800. There was a motion to accept the bill from MFS for the classification hearing and the ATB cases dated March 10, 2024, by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

A quarterly bill was received from MLS for account access from April 1 to June 30. There was a motion to pay the \$87 invoice from MLS by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

The next bill is from CAI for the site index totaling \$1,400. There was a motion to accept the bill totaling \$1,400 by John Rabbitt, seconded by Brian Laffond. All in favor.

The warrant was signed to collect the motor vehicle excise for commitment number two totaling \$285,816.11. There was a motion to accept the bill by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

Commitment 9 bill for 2022 was received totaling \$77.98. There was a motion to accept the bill by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the abatement totaling \$403.32 by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

A total of 98 motor vehicle abatements were processed totaling \$11,283.12. There was a motion to accept the 98 motor vehicle abatements by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

An abatement settlement of \$8,672.95 was received. There was a motion to accept by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

- Review revisions to 'How to Read Your Vision Card'

After reviewing there were some minor changes in the dates to be corrected. Sarah Cammer will get the document posted to the splash-page.

John Rabbitt suggests creating a table of contents.

- Status of Roll out of Website Improvements

John Rabbitt was waiting for additional information from Brian Laffond and Sarah Cammer.

John Rabbitt is hoping the website will go live by the end of the month. When it goes live there will also need to be tests to confirm all the links are working correctly. Originally, John Rabbitt thought this would be completed by the middle of April but confirms this will be done before the town meeting.

- Progress on developing FAQ's from Citizen's Questions

Multiple lists of questions have been created. The next step is to discuss what questions need to be forwarded to the consultants to answer and which ones the Board can answer.

Rena Swezey suggests looking at frequently asked questions and answers on other town web-pages.

- Status of the 5 Year Revaluation, including the 9 DLS Directives.

- Determine how / when best to attack each of them (includes Neighborhood review, Cyclical and Interim reviews).

Department of Local Services directives include:

- Cyclical inspection through RFP
- Income/expense data
- Land schedule
- Personal property/second homes
- Sales verification
- Neighborhood review

Sarah Cammer will write up and draft a formal document stating what the intentions of a Neighborhood Review subcommittee will be. This will be reviewed at the meeting on May 6 along with the neighborhood review.

- Lessons and potential solutions from 2023 experience – Jack Rabbitt

John Rabbitt reviewed data dating back from January of 2023 and created a list that was sent to the Board members. There is some confusion because John Rabbitt did not provide any solutions and just gave historical observations.

Sarah Cammer states what John provided is a reaccounting and speculation about what happened and is not based on a review of what has been done this year.

- Clarification of our current situation regarding Exemptions.

Lynda McQuade spoke with Jim Crowley who is an attorney for the Department of Revenue regarding 41C. For 41C to apply you must be 70 years old as of July 1 and the exemption amount is \$750. For 2024 we must go by the income limitations which is \$315 for single person and \$396 for a married person. The asset limitation for a single person is \$527 and a married person is \$727. COLA must be adopted to have 41D as an exemption. That will then allow for COLA yearly and be able to follow the legislature income limitations.

- Investigations are ongoing so we are ready for ATM. We may want to do a full review / summary

Brian Laffond has put together a calendar of important events and due dates.
The investigation is still ongoing.

- “White papers”: Board of Assessors Communication – Jack Rabbitt

Both Brian Laffond and John Rabbitt spoke with the town’s legal counsel. John Rabbitt states there is a way to have the white paper process and make it work. White papers can be created individually, and it can be posted before the meeting as long as there is no debate and in a public place.

Brian Laffond spoke to town counsel, and it was recommended to bring an item to a meeting if you want to share and then come back and discuss it at the next meeting to come to a conclusion.

FUTURE TOPICS

- “Work Breakdown Structure”
- BOA Policies

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- May 6, 2024
- May 20, 2024

CLOSING COMMENTS

- Public
There was no public comment.
- Board
There was no Board comment.

Motion to enter into executive session not to return to open session by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt.

The public session closed at 9:33 PM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION