

LUNENBURG BOARD OF ASSESSORS

JUNE 3, 2024

BILOTTA ROOM, LUNENBURG TOWN HALL
17 MAIN STREET

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.

DETERMINE BOARD OF ASSESSORS ORGANIZATION FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR

There was a motion to nominate Brian Laffond as Chair by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to nominate Sarah Cammer as Vice Chair by John Rabbitt, seconded by Brian Laffond. All in favor.

There was a motion to nominate John Rabbitt as Clerk by Sarah Cammer, seconded by Brian Laffond. All in favor.

OPENING COMMENTS

- Board

John Rabbitt was reviewing the gateway assessment management tool and Sheila is still listed. John Rabbitt questions if a form needs to be filled out to update the information. Lynda McQuade confirms that Becky Boucher had just sent an email to update the directory this morning.

John Rabbitt thanks Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey for their compassion and kindness when dealing with taxpayers.

- Public

There was a resident in the audience that was looking to discuss an abatement. Brian Laffond states this will be discussed once we enter into executive session.

STATUS REPORT FROM PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR.

- Status of Abatement and Exemption Applications. Other items as needed.

Lynda McQuade states the Assessor's Office has received 42 real estate and personal property abatements and has completed 39. Some of these were reviewed last meeting, some will be reviewed this evening and a few will be delayed until inspections can be done and recommendations made.

An omitted bill totaling \$8,688.42 was mailed out on May 28th for the building portion of a newly constructed home that was missed in FY 24.

Lynda McQuade states there has been an unresolved issue relating to the responsibility of prelim and actual billing. There is conflict between whether this should be handled by the Assessor's Office or the Tax Collector's office. There is a consultant from MUNIS coming in next Friday, he will be assisting the town in the billing process. Rena Swezey states that in the past the Tax Collector has been the one who handles the billing. Sarah Cammer questions who usually handles the billing in other towns. Brian Laffond stated that Lynda and Rena looked into 10 other towns and found that all but one has the Tax Collector complete billing. Sarah Cammer questioned if the Tax Collector bill issue has been escalated and Lynda McQuade confirms that the Town Manager is aware.

Last week interviews were conducted for the Administrative Assessing Assistant. There were 4 applicants who were then narrowed down to 2. A decision is expected in the next week.

Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey have been continuing to review the 102 building permits from 2022 and 2023 to assure they are all included in Vision.

The upcoming goals are to complete the 3 remaining FY 24 real estate and personal property abatements, review building permits, and work on FY 25 growth.

Lynda McQuade will be attending the MAAO summer conference from June 24th to June 27th in Plymouth.

CURRENT BUSINESS

- Review and Approve Minutes of May 20, 2024. Executive Session May 20, 2024
There was a motion to approve the amended regular meeting minutes by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor. Executive Session minutes not yet available.
- Review and Approve Invoices, Expense Vouchers, Payroll, Billing Errors, etc.
There were no documents to review or sign.
- Update on Neighborhood Review Team proposal (schedule, membership, charge)

Sarah Cammer states she is still looking for a Realtor to join the Neighborhood Review Team.

A Doodle Poll will be sent to the people who have volunteered to discuss potential meeting dates. Sarah Cammer anticipates these meetings will likely take place over Zoom.

It's anticipated that this review team will wrap up by the end of summer. The first few weeks of meetings will be an intense review of previous information. Between weeks 4 and 8 the team plans to review neighborhoods and make recommendations.

John Rabbitt and Lynda McQuade will reach out to some Realtors that they are familiar with.

- Brief Status of Roll out of Website – Test Plan, Release Schedule
John Rabbitt wants to have a discussion next week regarding the website. The intentions are to get the approval from the Board to take the next steps.

Brian Laffond requested that John Rabbitt send the link to the test site to the Board again.

POSTPONED TOPICS

- Discuss details and development of Assessing Calendar.
- Update status of investigation regarding Exemptions: including 17C, 22,37, 41C, (and potential 41D)
- BOA Policies

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- June 10, 2024
- July 22, 2024
- August 19, 2024

CLOSING COMMENTS

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

John Rabbitt is going to be meeting with Attorney Adam Costa to review the 41A deferral process and share gathered information.

John Rabbitt will converse with Attorney Adam Costa to better understand communicating without violating any open meeting law privileges.

John Rabbitt also spoke with Becky Boucher about Clause 41A. She is only aware of 1 Massachusetts town that has adopted the Clause 41A.

According to John Rabbitt, Becky Boucher was unaware of House Bill 3911. John Rabbitt requests Brian Laffond speak to Heather Lemieux about how this is going to work.

Rena Swezey and Lynda McQuade are going to the Worcester County Assessors Association meeting on Thursday in Shrewsbury. Attorney James Crowley, from the Department of Revenue, will be there giving a presentation about exemptions. They will look into getting up-to-date information, as well as further information on House Bill 3911.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was a motion by Sarah Cammer to suspend open meeting and enter into executive session not to return to open session after executive session, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

The meeting closed at 7:14 PM.

ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to enter executive session under Purpose 7: "To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements".