

LUNENBURG BOARD OF ASSESSORS
July 29, 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.

OPENING COMMENTS

- Board
There were no comments from the Board.
- Public
Carl Luck, 50 Sunset Lane, requested a meeting last month with the Principal Assessor, Lynda McQuade, to determine the specifics of the abated value of his property at 30 Sunset Lane. Additionally, Carl Luck wants to get an explanation of how the final 2024 tax amount was determined. He states that the main area of interest was clearly aligned with the Principal Assessor's job description under essential functions. Carl Luck is hoping to schedule a working session with the Board and look into the details of his tax assessment calculations.

STATUS REPORT FROM PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR.

- Status of Abatement and Exemption Applications. Other items as needed.
 - o Below are updates from the Principal Assessor
 - Inspections for the 3 remaining real estate and personal property abatement have been completed and are awaiting approval from the Board.
 - The FY 24 omitted and revised values and roll back taxes in gateway were submitted to the Department of Revenue.
 - The excise tax commitment number three has been processed. This consisted of 626 bills totaling \$130,636.42. These bills were mailed out on July 22nd.
 - 115 motor vehicle excise tax bills abatement applications were received.
 - 7 abutters list requests were processed.
 - 6 supplemental bills totaling \$26,452 were completed and are awaiting approval from the Board.
 - Review of building permits is ongoing.
 - Both Lynda McQuade and Rena Swezey interviewed an Administrative Assessing Assistant and a Data Collector.

John Rabbit questions if the Board will be able to interview the candidate for both jobs. Lynda McQuade states they can bring the 2 candidates in to meet the Board.

As it related to interviews, Sarah Cammer suggests the Chair of the Board be included in making recommendations. Brian Laffond refers to the people who are managing the office and their ability to make recommendations on a candidate. Brian Laffond doesn't believe the Board should be involved in hiring candidates.

CURRENT BUSINESS

- Discussion about request from Carl Luck:
“to understand the details of how each of the considered, and not considered adjustment actors effects the assessment. This could be as simple as looking at the Vision factors/tables applied and/or doing some real time, one by one, impact analysis by methodically changing factors and noting what part of the Vision card calculations are affected and by how much.”

Brian Laffond refers to Mass General Law Chapter 59 Section 52C that states we do not provide behind-the-counter access to the public. The request to review the software cannot be fulfilled. Brian Laffond called the Town Counsel and confirmed that cannot be fulfilled and they are also concerned about setting a precedent about potentially providing access to confidential town data. Brian Laffond is awaiting a written opinion from the Town Counsel.

Carl Luck agrees with the Town Counsel and states that he just wants to know what the impact of certain factors that would only require viewing the output of the system. Carl Luck doesn't want access to the town data. He is inquiring about the impact of factors such as gas stove versus fireplace, old kitchen versus new kitchen. Carl Luck believes those updates should have a reasonable influence but only had a 0.9% impact. He just wants to know what factors contribute to the calculations.

Brian Laffond sent the entire thread of emails to Town Counsel and awaits their response.

Lynda McQuade agreed to go through Carl Luck's property record card individually and show the values. Lynda McQuade states that the email seemed like he was talking about the Vision appraisal which would fall under the scope of the Board.

Carl Luck is asking to review the updates and enter them one at a time to see if there is any impact. He only wants to know what the incremental impacts are.

The Board will await a response from the Town Counsel.

- Review and Approve Minutes of June 10, 2024. Minutes of Executive Session of June 10, 2024

There was a motion to accept the minutes as written and amended from the June 10th executive session meeting by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

There was a motion to accept the minutes from June 10th with John Rabbitt's addition by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

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

4 invoices were approved and signed

- Vision Government Solutions had a bill for a report review of the LA3 totaling \$1,000.
- Annual software support fee from RRC for \$2,000.
- 2 Invoices from MFS for \$600 and \$1,500.

Rena Swezey shared a document from the Law Office of Thomas Gibbons relating to 3 parcels on Kilburn Street. The parcels are going to be coming out of 61B and going into residential property. Sarah Cammer would like to hear from the Open Space Committee before deciding. This was tabled to the next meeting.

Motor vehicle excise tax abatements were signed for commitment number 3.

42 real estate and personal property abatements were processed and signed by the Board.

- Update on Neighborhood Review Team proposal (schedule, membership, charge)
So far, there has been one meeting. Sarah Cammer will reach out to the team to schedule the second meeting.

- Brief Status of Roll out of Website- Test Plan, Release Schedule

John Rabbitt is currently working on a site map.

Brian Laffond suggests putting the 3 issues (organization chart, work breakdown structure, and the site map) aside and start rolling out the website. The 3 issues will be revisited.

There was a motion to publish the website as soon as possible and pull out the 3 components by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

POSTPONED TOPICS

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

John Rabbitt has been researching exemption 41A and has contacted the town of Plymouth and their lead assessor has provided a pile of information. John Rabbitt plans on building a flow chart and continuing research.

- BOA Policies

Brian Laffond has been creating the agendas for meetings for the past year. He believes this is the function of the Principal Assessor and suggests that Lynda McQuade start making the agendas in September. This would also include the logistics for arranging the meetings, i.e. room, Zoom, video.

Brian Laffond suggests having meetings 2 times a month starting in September.

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- August 19, 2024
- September 16 -Tentatively scheduled
- September 30 -Tentatively scheduled

CLOSING COMMENTS

- Public

There were no comments from the public.

- Board

There were no comments from the Board.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was a motion to suspend open meeting and enter into executive session not to return to open session after executive session by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor. The meeting closed at 8: 23 PM.

ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION – Suspend open meeting and enter into Executive Session, not to return to Open Session after exiting 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".

ADJOURN