

LUNENBURG BOARD OF ASSESSORS

October 16, 2024

BILOTTA ROOM, 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 6:32 PM.

OPENING COMMENTS

- Board

John Rabbitt questions if the Q3 tax bill will be delivered on time. Lynda McQuade states the Vision appraisal will be coming tomorrow, and they hope to get the LA3 entered. She confirms are a lot of towns that have not submitted in Gateway because the vendor is behind.

John Rabbitt asks if the new growth has been certified. Lynda McQuade states the growth can't be entered until the LA3 is submitted.

John Rabbitt inquires if there will be any more information provided to residents about the HERO Program. Lynda McQuade confirms that a letter was sent to everyone that qualified for 22E exemption and were granted an abatement for 1 vehicle. All that's available was the flyer that was mailed.

- Public

There were no comments from the public.

STATUS REPORT FROM PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR

- Status of Exemption Applications, Interim Adjustments/LA3. Other items as needed.

3 real estate abatements for FY 23 were settled and processed totaling \$4,970.36.

There are no outstanding ATB cases.

Motor vehicle abatements letters and certifications for the HERO act were processed. Lynda McQuade has received a few canceled plate receipts without the applications. She has been mailing them back with the application that needs to be filled out.

The FY 25 growth is complete. Vision will be coming tomorrow to finalize.

30 motor vehicle tax abatements have been received in the past month.

The data collector has been following up on the building permits. Once Vision completes their adjustments the data will be added to the database.

John Rabbitt states there was a building that wasn't picked up and hasn't been inspected for some time. There is question if any type of back payment can be received or billed. Lynda McQuade has notified the building inspector.

Goals for rest of month and November include:

- Prepare and complete the classification hearing.
- Submit LA3 and LA4 (LA15 and LA13) in Gateway.
- Interview and hire an administrative assessing assistant.

CURRENT BUSINESS

- Review and Approve Minutes of October 2, 2024 and September 4, 2024
Sarah Cammer wanted to clarify some of the numbers that were on the September 4th meeting minutes.
The approval of minutes from September 4, 2024, and October 2, 2024 were postponed.
- Review and Approve Invoices, Expense Vouchers, Payroll, Billing Errors, Etc.
Below are highlights from the LA4 document review.
 - o There is a total of 5,266 parcels. Of those parcels 3,635 are residential properties and 452 are condominiums.
 - o The preliminary total property tax was valued at \$42,393,589,780 for class 1.
 - o There was a 6% adjustment made on the land curve.
 - o There was no increase on the site index.
 - o The assessment to sales ratio for class 1 is 94%, 3 family homes are 95%, and apartment buildings are 96%.
 - o The median single-family sale price is \$540,000 and the median appraised was \$502,800.
 - o 2 family median sale price is \$457,500 and the median appraised is \$468,000.
 - o 3 family median sale price is \$574,000 and the median appraised is \$542,002.

There was an invoice signed from Vision totaling \$800.

The motor vehicle commitment number 5 for 504 motor vehicle bills totaled \$71,201.89.

The Board reviewed and discussed a property that was damaged by a fire. There was a supplemental bill and based on instructions from the tax collector there was an administrative abatement completed. It turned out that didn't need to be done. The Board signed a void administrative abatement and reversed the abatement.

- Follow-up of Modification of Website -
Complaints received on difficulty finding information on property record card.

John Rabbitt added the 3 previously suggested tabs (motor vehicle excise abatement application, property abatement application and the GIS map).

Brian Laffond suggests that Lynda McQuade bring the changes to Kara McCarthy to update the website.

Sarah Cammer is receiving feedback that people are having a hard time finding the “How to Read Your Vision Card” article.

Brian Laffond states there are forms from 2023 on the website that need to be removed or updated.

John Rabbitt suggests adding a table of contents or site index. Brian Laffond does not believe there is a table of contents on any of the town pages. John Rabbitt made a motion to put in a table of contents. There was a motion to add a table of contents to the lower part of the webpage by Sarah Cammer, seconded by Brian Laffond. Sarah Cammer aye, Brian Laffond aye, John Rabbitt abstained. The vote was 2 yeses and an abstention.

John Rabbitt submitted his resignation to Brian Laffond. Brian Laffond is going to be away for a few days and suggested John Rabbitt resubmit his resignation to the Town Clerk at that time if he still wants to resign.

- Update on Neighborhood Review Team proposal (schedule, membership, charge)
Sarah Cammer confirms that the group met and reviewed the site index 0. There are 570 properties that fall under site index 0 and Sarah Cammer will provide a list and map of these properties. Many appear to be open space and condominiums.

There will be a meeting next Tuesday at 6:30 PM. The agendas are posted, and meetings are on YouTube.

Lynda McQuade will inquire with Mike Tarello tomorrow to discuss whether or not there should be a site index 0.

- Exemption Warrant Articles for Fall Town Meeting
John Rabbitt watched the recent Select Board meeting, and it seems there needs to be more clarity about the warrant article. Adopting 17D, 17E, 17F will allow for COLA adjustments. Once COLA is accepted the Town will not have to come back to town meeting for an increase. The State COLA will be accepted by the Town by default. Every year the State will tell us what COLA is and it doesn't need to be continuously be brought in front of the Town. Sarah Cammer states the point is to try to adjust the cost of living on a regular basis for the community.

Lynda McQuade suggests editing the wording to make it more straightforward and simpler. There is also an option of having a separate handout with a summary that could be distributed at the Town Meeting. She also suggests adopting the wording in the IGR.

Rena Swezey will work on a 1-page summary for the article and the handout will be made later.

POSTPONED TOPICS

- Discuss details and development of Assessing Calendar
- BOA Policies

Brian Laffond has suggested the following policy: Any action initiated by any other Town Department where the Assessors need to act, or vote must be accompanied by a written request and explanation.

There was a motion to add this suggested policy by Brian Laffond, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- Tentative November 6, 2024, and November 20, 2024.
- Tentative Classification Hearing November 5, 2024, or November 19, 2024

CLOSING COMMENTS

- Public
There were no comments from the public.
- Board
John Rabbitt thanks the Board for their work.

ADJOURN

There was a motion to adjourn by Sarah Cammer, seconded by Brian Laffond. All in favor.

The meeting closed at 8:35 PM.