

Charlemont Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Date: January 9, 2008

Present: Carol A. Rice, Michael E. Kane and Andrea Santos

The meeting was convened at 6:30 p.m.

The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the December 26, 2007 meeting. The minutes of the December 12, 2007 meeting have been e-mailed to the website.

The minutes of the Salary Commission were received and reviewed. The Assessors noted that much of the previous information will either be abandoned or redrafted. Another issue discussed at the previous meeting was the research into a new computer system. The specifications required by the Community Software Consortium were faxed to a representative at Dell computers on Monday. A follow-up call was placed this afternoon to see if the fax had been received and was readable and if Dell will be able to assist us; no return call has been received. Mr. Kane suggested that another call be placed to Dell and that we should have an account number assigned to us.

A letter was received from the Bureau of Local Assessment regarding our FY 2011 certification recommendations. The items specified as needing special attention will be covered as part of our usual revaluation contract. The letter will be placed in the revaluation folder for future reference. Mr. Bishop returned the office's call; we are to call him the beginning of next week so that he can schedule a day to come finish the "clean up" work and miscellaneous reports and items on which the Board has requested his assistance. He will pick up a copy of the building permit summaries for calendar year 2007 so that he can begin, weather permitting. Mr. Bishop will be asked what our office needs to do to have our data ready for quarterly tax billing.

The Chairman approved the post office box rent for payment. It was noted that the amount increased for this year; the increase amount will not be represented in our FY 2009 budget request since it was submitted in November. The accompanying letter with the new annual amount will be filed in the FY 2010 budget request folder. The Board reviewed a form from the Registry of Deeds inquiring which documents we want mailed and billed to us during 2008. After discussion, it was decided to include all of the documents listed.

The Tax Collector forwarded an index card with a note on it included with a tax payment. The property owner had questions about the retirement income allowed under Clause 41C. A letter will be prepared for Mrs. Rice's signature and she will be contacted when it is ready.

Mrs. Rice signed two letters to the campground owners requesting their assistance with people who have left the campgrounds or have campers left there over winter for the first time. A listing of those that are currently in the Assessors' records was included for deletions or additions. Since a full list and measure was done in each campground last year, an update will be done this year. The fine cooperation received from the campground owners makes this possible.

A camper owner left a message for the Tax Collector but no contact number. The message was forwarded to the Assessors Office for response. The Board discussed the issues and approved a letter, which Mrs. Rice signed; the personal property bill is correct since the unit was in the campground on January 1, 2007. A form of list for FY 2008 was just received; it did not contain any information useable for assessment so it will be filed as received late.

The annual farm plate exemption applications (Form 126A) were reviewed by the Board. Nine were approved, one denied due to being filed late and one application was not returned at all. Therefore, two farm plates will receive excise bills when the Section V bills are issued during calendar year 2008. Mrs. Rice signed a letter to the filers of the denied application to let them know they will receive the bills.

The Assessors went over the FY 2008 abatement applications filed to date; the deadline is tomorrow and two are still outstanding. A worksheet was prepared for each Assessor to use during discussion. One personal property abatement was approved administratively since it was a computer data error. The abatement certificate was also signed. The items assessed did not belong to that person so Mr. Bishop's help will be enlisted to determine who owns them so that an omitted assessment can be made to the correct owner. The Board requested Mr. Bishop's input on six of the applications. Work will begin on the applications at the next meeting.

The recently-voted policy regarding taking and maintaining minutes by the Selectmen was reviewed. The Assessors follow the policy that was voted already. The Assessors discussed the drafts of minutes and voted unanimously not to provide a draft to the Executive Secretary. The policy will be placed into the reference notebook in the Assessors Office. A copy of the Mullin Rule Certification was also provided to the Assessors Office. After discussing the import of the certification, it was decided to create a folder for it and to include it in the reference notebook, also.

Property owners came to the office last Friday with issues regarding two separate parcels. They had assumed that they were assessed for an Owner Unknown parcel that abuts their house lot because the old tax bills listed two separate land designations. The designations were actually the developed homesite and the vacant land that went with the parcel. The unknown parcel was assessed separately. When their deed was checked, there was no acreage listed at all; the description was not especially helpful. The only acreage was on the real estate sale notice when they purchased the property 20 years ago. Since they have had full use of the unknown parcel, the information available will be forwarded to tax mappers in the spring to have them update the parcel. The corrected acreage will be assessed for FY 2009. A matter of their second parcel was brought up when a copy of an older tax map was used at a public hearing and it did not match the current plan of that lot. The current tax maps match the plan that they have. The Board discussed the issue of tax maps being used for purposes other than assessment. A letter was prepared and signed by Mrs. Rice notifying all Boards, Departments, Commissions, etc. that might use the tax maps that the tax maps are for assessment purposes only and are inadmissible as property lines or for conveyances. The copies of the letter will be distributed at the Town Hall or mailed.

The Assessors' Secretary Job Description updated as of this date (detailed version) was reviewed and signed by the Board. A copy will be given to the Executive Secretary to replace the one on file. The Assessors discussed the ad for the newspapers for the secretary's job. After changes were made a final copy was printed. The Board wants it published as soon as possible in the local newspapers so that the process can begin.

A tentative processing schedule for 2008 motor vehicle excise was received. The first commitment of 2008 will be due in our office any time.

The building permit summary and the use and occupancy summary for December, 2007 were reviewed and will be filed for future reference. A question was raised about another property that is proceeding with more construction than their building permit stated. The Building Inspector's office will be called to see if another permit has been issued since December.

The Department of Revenue has scheduled Certification Preparation Meetings for communities that will be undergoing revaluation for FY 2009. The schedule of dates, times and locations was received. The Community Software Consortium sent notification of a group training in Springfield on February 21. No one will attend; Mr. Bishop does many of the procedures being covered. The January 2008 issue of

Tech Talk was downloaded. There was an article on the expected life-span of computers and some things that can shorten that expectancy. A timeframe for replacement was also mentioned.

A telephone call was received from the company from which the Assessors purchased the RV Blue Book last year; the cost is \$69.95 plus shipping and handling. The Board felt the issue purchased last year is useable this year also. The company will be called to let them know.

The December issue of the M.A.A.O. NewsLetter was received by each member. There was an article on FY 2008 Certification Land Review, which would have been helpful to our office had it been received in the spring of last year. The January issue of The Beacon was also received.

Miscellaneous ad and offers will be recycled.

The Assessors were reminded of the Selectmen's workshop on January 10. One Assessor hoped to attend.

The next Assessors meeting will on January 23, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Jean Purinton

Secretary