

Charlemont Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Date: July 31st, 2009

Present: Andrea Santos, Carol Rice and Sarah Reynolds

The meeting was convened at: 6:30 p.m. In attendance was Jean Brisson, a member of the Select Board.

Minutes from June 3rd, 2009 were approved by the Board and minutes from May 6th and May 27th, 2009 were emailed to the website.

Two motor vehicle abatement applications were approved in the amount of \$23.75 and \$5.00. A letter to a motor vehicle abatement applicant was drafted explaining the valuation of vehicles for the purpose of excise. A letter to the Shelburne Board of Assessors thanking them for an explanation regarding change of garaging forms was drafted and signed by the chairman. Changes of garaging forms were signed by the Board members to be submitted to the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

A Chapter 61 application for fiscal year 2011 was approved for land on Maxwell Road. The Board approved in a split vote, to raise the soil ratings of Chapter 61 land from below average to average; this change will result in a higher tax burden for those residents with land in Chapter. The CompReport for June and the building permits for March, May, and June were reviewed by the Board members. The Board received a question from the Tax Collector about a tax bill for a foreclosed property; the question was tabled pending more information. Verification of ownership and value of a property was reviewed and signed by the Chairman. An issue regarding a late submission of form 3ABC was discussed and the Board decided to consult the Department of Revenue attorneys about denial of the application for timeliness since the impact to the Town could be very significant. The Board of Assessors submitted paperwork to the State for reimbursement of tax loss due to purchase of property by the State. The Board of Assessors reviewed the sales of calendar year 2009 and voted not to do an interim year adjustment.

Ms. Santos and Ms. Reynolds agreed to make a date and time to assess all farm animals in town to insure accuracy of tax records before the actual 2010 are mailed. Two farm status applications were approved and farm owners were sent notice of action letters. A question regarding the items of taxation for personal property by a town resident was considered and the Board drafted a letter of explanation to the resident. The Board will be requesting the consultant to code out all farms bills as they are now exempt for FY 2010.

The office purchased \$281.00 worth of postage. Two phone bills were approved in the amounts of \$27.84 and \$26.07. The Board received the commitment and deed books from the bindery, as well as the small tax maps and CD from the mappers.

The Registry of Deeds sent a letter stating that they will require self-addressed stamped envelopes starting September 1, 2009 for all documents to be returned to the town. Two letters from the Attorney General were read aloud regarding a question submitted by the Board. The Attorney General stated that the Board's question was not under their jurisdiction but instead, the Department of Revenue's. The Board will resubmit the question to the Department of Revenue. The Assessors have received notification that Ms. Reynolds is certified for classification hearings. The Board voted to not bind the preliminary tax bill commitments but to still keep them on hand for at least 2 years. The Board voted against joining the International Assessors Association. Two assessors committed to attend the Franklin County Assessors Association Dinner. All Board members chose not to attend the Municipal Finance Seminar. Two Assessors plus the secretary committed to attend the Municipal Law Seminar.

The Board of Assessors voted against recommending two local options to the Board of Selectmen. The Chairman signed a letter to the Board of Selectmen recommending that the Town hold a special town meeting to consider making the Traditional Line the line between Hawley and Charlemont. The Assessors' consultant came to the office and updated fiscal year 2010 values; he also made recommendations on valuation of sheds and porches. The Board requested that the Building Inspector be contacted for the feasibility of the installation of a new file cabinet.

Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Stegner will both be attending Course 101 at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. The office will be closed during the training week. The invoice for the training was approved by the chairman and submitted to the accountant. The Board was informed of a new accounting procedure. Mrs. Rice was concerned that the new accounting procedure would cause hardship for residents awaiting an abatement. The Board was informed of an All Board Meeting scheduled for September 17, 2009. The Assessors will submit meeting topic ideas to the Board of Selectmen including: The process of complaint by residents, follow-up from other Boards, and the suggestion of a flow chart for different processes requested by residents.

The Board of Assessors are in receipt of one request for updated tax map pages; the Board will give the requesting Board a copy of the updated pages once the full-sized maps are received. Ms. Stegner informed the Board of a problem with the current office printer and not having access to the town hall fax machine when the executive secretary is not in the building. The Board requested that Ms. Stegner find quotes for a new printer that has fax capabilities. The Board voted to provide a key to the Selectmen, per their request, if one Select Board member will be responsible for the key and sign a statement of liability. The Select Board member in attendance said that she would not take responsibility for the key. Ms. Stegner informed the Board that the change in her status from hourly to salary will not affect the amount of weekly hours that she works.

All publications and advertisements were reviewed and filed.

The meeting was adjourned at: 9:45 p.m.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, August 19th, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Bree Stegner

Secretary