

Charlemont Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Date: May 23, 2007

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

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

Since James Heist had an appointment with the Board for 6:45, materials pertaining to the issues were reviewed. Mr. Heist arrived in the Town Hall early and was invited to talk with the Board before his scheduled time. Separate notes of the discussion are on file.

The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the May 9, 2007 meeting. The minutes of the April 25, 2007 meeting have been e-mailed to the website.

Mike Quinlivan, our D.O.R. Computer Technician from the Worcester office, was in our office this morning updating the C.A.M.A. software with the latest Community Software Consortium updates. He changed the time of the virus scan and set up an automatic backup that can be copied onto a CD on a regular basis and kept off-premises. There are some issues that will need to be addressed: 1) The current computer set-up is 4 - 5 years old and will need to be replaced before it crashes. He suggested that funding be included in our FY 2009 budget request and hope the current system will continue to be operational. 2) The disk drawer would not open to release one of his CAMA CDs after it had been updated; it may have been a "hiccup" but we should watch it. 3) He checked the wires behind the hard drive and found that there was no wire that connected to Carbon Copy for D.O.R. access to our computer. When the Selectmen moved their office to the front of the building, the fax machine was also moved; that was the line that we would have used. Our telephone line could be used, but it would not enable anyone in the office to have communication with the D.O.R. person working in our computer. 4) The Assessors Office may need a dedicated telephone line for the purpose of D.O.R. access (limited availability of technicians to come to the office to fix problems can make this a necessity). Also, a new program to replace Carbon Copy (our current software) will be required in the future.

The following revaluation update was presented: The list of individual issues presented by our certification advisor, Mr. Keefe, was reviewed and the notes on each item discussed by Mrs. Purinton. A copy of the list will be given to Mr. Bishop. Mr. Keefe will not be back to the office until he is called for our certification review. Mr. Bishop will be called to see when he plans to work in Town. Work has begun on updating the FY 2008 assessment of the campers in the campgrounds.

A person doing research on Zoar Road property assessed to Bear Swamp Power Company provided some information to our office regarding an assessment issue. The Board reviewed it and Mrs. Rice signed a letter to the Planning Board requesting a copy of a variance for the MCI station on Zoar Road.

Mrs. Hathaway reported a property that does not have a "good" mailing address; the bills are returned and have not been paid. A recent transfer in the area provided information regarding the ownership of that parcel and the name of the sole trustee. After discussion the Board agreed that the record will be updated for FY 2008 with the sole trustee's name and mailing address on it and requested that a letter be prepared to that sole trustee informing him of the issue. Another deed issue was an incorrect street number listed on a recent deed. Mrs. Hathaway was able to pinpoint the incorrect number as the former rural mailing address number. The Board said to prepare a letter to the attorney's office that prepared the deed informing them of the error.

The forest products cut taxes for calendar year 2006 were prepared with a May 28, 2007 issue date. The Assessors signed the warrant and commitment in the total amount of \$2,289.95 (taxes = \$2,214.95 and late fees assessed = \$75.00). The bills and commitment pages were hand-typed for the Tax Collector. The Board signed a special warrant for a person who included the check for his late fee of \$35.00. This was the second commitment for Fiscal Year 2007; the first for calendar year 2005 was prepared in August, 2006. A Chapter 61 property owner responded to a letter from the Assessors regarding the lack of forest products cut declared when his property was scheduled for harvest several years ago; the company doing the harvest was unable to do it until now. The request from Mass. Forestry Association for a listing of property owners of 20+ acres in Charlemont was canceled; they obtained the information from another source.

Three motor vehicle excise abatement applications were approved and the abatement certificates also signed.

The Tax Collector forwarded an e-mail that she received from the owner of a camper requesting information on transferring her unit to someone else. Mrs. Rice signed a letter telling her that the sale must conform to State regulations for the sale and transfer of the title. The Assessors will need the name and address of the new owner of record and the date of the transfer. The buyer and seller will also have to come to an agreement on the payment of the personal property tax bill. There was also a letter from DirecTV regarding the FY 2006 personal property tax that Mrs. Hathaway has been trying to collect. DirecTV claimed that the customers owned the equipment at that time and so it does not have any tax liability. The Board wondered if it is uncollectible and requested that Roy be asked about this issue.

The Certified Telephone & Telegraph Valuations for FY 2008 were downloaded from the DLS site; also included were the addresses for companies and providers. They will be filed for FY 2008 assessment. The FY 2008 Senate Ways and Means Local Aid Proposals were not downloaded because there were no changes.

A notice was received online from Kirsten Shirer Taylor regarding a new monthly CSC/DLS newsletter Tech Talk, which was downloaded. There was also an alert regarding Image Maintenance and a follow-up. These will be kept on file with the CSC software information, even though we do not have photo capacity.

The tax map update documentation was forwarded to the Sewall Company. A letter with an estimate of \$875 for the work was received between meetings. Mrs. Rice was called since the estimate was more than the budgeted amount of \$800; she said to sign the approval and have the updates done as submitted. The balance will be taken out of the Assessors Expense Miscellaneous account. On May 22 the updated maps were received and reviewed. There was one issue on Map 13; the approval sheet was returned to the Sewall Company with the details and a follow-up telephone call made.

Each Assessor received a bar-coded membership card from the M.A.A.O. to be used at all M.A.A.O. functions.

The IBM Selectric typewriter will be brought to Mohawk Office Equipment for cleaning and servicing.

Mr. Kane plans to attend the FRCOG Regional Assessors Services meeting at the Court House on May 24 at 5:30 p.m. Reservations have been submitted for the Assessors and secretary for the June 12 F.C.A.A. Summer Meeting to be held in Sunderland. The guest speaker's topic will be "Changes to Chapter Land Law ". No one plans to attend the M.A.A.O. Summer Conference in South Yarmouth from June 19 – 22.

A letter was received from UMass Extension regarding a new website ACORN for information on the Highlands area: forestry, maps, etc. A sheet was provided with small tear-off tabs with the website

address; it will be posted on the office bulletin board since there is already one on the Town Hall hallway bulletin board.

The March/early April COMPreport was reviewed. The May issue of City and Town was downloaded; the main subject was the Equalized Valuations for 2006 and related articles. The May issue of The Beacon was received.

The office received notice of an open house on May 18 at Baker Office Supply.

The Assessors discussed the summer meeting schedule. The following meetings were set up: June 13, July 11 and August 15. Notices will be placed in the newspapers and posted on the bulletin boards at the Town Hall and on the office door. The Town Clerk will receive a copy and the webmaster will also be informed. The office will be closed from June 4 – 8; notice of the closure will accompany the summer meeting schedule notice and it will also be placed on the answering machine message.

The issue of the campers still remaining at the Indian Plaza was brought up. The Board has attempted to list and measure the remaining campers twice and has been put off for various reasons. Since all units were to have been removed per the Planning Board by April 15, the Assessors voted to assess two units that are visible for a valuation of \$5,000 for FY 2008 personal property. A letter will be prepared for the next meeting informing the owners.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Jean Purinton

Secretary