

## **Charlemont Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes**

Date: September 10, 2008  
Present: Carol A. Rice, Michael E. Kane and Andrea Santos

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The meeting was convened at: 6:25 p.m.

The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the Assessors' meetings on August 21, 2008.

The Board revisited a real estate abatement application from a property owner who stated that their land was overvalued. The Assessors had sent a letter to the property owner requesting clarification of the parcel in question. The property owner came into the office and discussed the matter with Ms. Stegner. Ms. Stegner explained the standard valuation process for the town of Charlemont and the property owner withdrew their abatement application. The Assessors had previously sent a letter of clarification to a property owner who had expressed concern and confusion about the switch from semi-annual to quarterly tax billing. The property owner's response was still unfavorable. The Assessors offered to make an appointment with the property owner to discuss the matter further. A draft of the policy for the Real Estate Exemption/Deferral Hardship Clause (18A) was reviewed by the Board; no changes were requested and at the next meeting the Board will vote and sign it.

Four Motor Vehicle abatement applications were voted on and approved in the amounts of \$235.52, \$24.79, \$9.17, and \$33.33. A request for an abatement due to the inability to drive a motor vehicle and the sale of said vehicle to an out of state party was tabled and a request sent to the party for documentation regarding the plate return to the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Motor vehicle abatement certificate #1213 was signed by the Board. The Warrant and Commitment for Motor Vehicle Excise Commitment #4 in the amount of \$11,280.78 was voted and signed by the Board.

The Assessors reviewed the Comp Report and Building Permits for July. The Board decided against advertising real estate tax deferral option for seniors but will provide information on an "as requested" basis.

A Real Estate abatement application for a reduction in value due to the removal of a trailer was reviewed and discussed by the Board. The Assessors voted to take no action on the abatement application (it will be deemed denied after 90 days) but will remove the trailer from the valuation of the property before the values are set for the mailing of the actual bills in January. A letter to the property owners explaining this decision will be drafted. Two administrative abatements in the amounts of \$50.62 & \$279.46 were approved for the sale of parcels to a tax exempt school. The Assessors reviewed the report from the telephone company that states the value of their personal property (telephone poles, wires, etc) located in Charlemont. The total value is under the minimum assessment value of \$2500 and will be exempt from personal property tax. A tax payer's question about whether a reverse mortgage is still considered a mortgage for personal exemption purposes was tabled until clarification can be obtained from the Department of Revenue. The Board approved press releases to the Recorder and Independent regarding the availability of Chapter 61a & 61b applications, as well as, personal exemption applications.

The Board received a request from the Plainfield Assessors' office for copies of campgrounds in the Charlemont area. The Assessors will be mailing the information that the office has on those parcels. Three abutter's lists were requested from the office since the last Assessors meeting. The Department of Conservation and Recreation was contacted regarding the mailing of letters to Chapter 61 owners

about the change to the "forest products cut" tax to a higher tax rate. The DCR did not do a mailing so a letter will be drafted detailing the change and will be sent to all Chapter 61 land owners. All the Chapter 61a & b applications were mailed out to local property owners and are due back by October 1, 2008. The Assessors reviewed content of other Assessors websites and decided to update the Charlemont website to include links to commonly used applications and a Frequently Asked Questions page. The bill for the Assessors' consultant was reviewed, voted, signed and submitted to the Accountant. The Assessors discussed other options for Gloria Jean's retirement party; Mr. Kane and Ms. Santos plan to meet with the Fantucchios to discuss options.

The Board was made aware that their consultant's mother had passed and decided to send him a bereavement card. The Board tabled the issue of binding all Minutes until the cost is tabulated. The Assessors voted against receiving copies of the Bill of Sale of Personal Property from the Registry of Deeds. A memo from the Board of Selectmen regarding the possibility of changing the title of the Assessors' Secretary was read aloud and filed. The Board rescinded the decision of purchasing the MAAO directory in order to save money. The issue of storage of permanent records was brought up and the Board discussed options such as fire-proof file cabinets as possible budget items in the fiscal year 2010 budget. The memo about the new phone system was read aloud. The Assessors phone number did not change and it was listed on the federal do not call list. The Board is aware that the drum on the printer is damaged and a decision was made to use the printer until the printing looks unprofessional before considering purchasing a new printer. Assessor course 101 is being offered this fall in Hyannis; the course is going to be passed on for reasons of distance. The Assessors requested more information on the MAAO fall conference in Williamsburg to see if of the conference can be attended on only one day and how that reduces the cost of attendance.

All publications and advertisements were reviewed and filed.

The meeting was adjourned at: 8:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held September 24, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

Bree Stegner

Secretary