

Charlemont Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Date: September 9, 2009

Present: Andrea Santos, Carol Rice and Sarah Reynolds

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

The minutes from July 31, 2009 and August 19th, 2009 were reviewed and signed by the Board. The minutes from June 24, 2009 were emailed to the website.

A motor vehicle excise abatement application was considered by the Board. The bill had yet to be paid but the applicant met special circumstance guidelines that allowed the application to go forward. The Assessors voted unanimously to approve the exemption in the amount of (\$ 53.75).

The Board reviewed the CompReport and a new plan sent from the Registry of Deeds. Ms. Reynolds and Ms. Santos agreed to meet to conduct inspections of farm animals and trailers used as residences within the week. Eight Chapter 61, 61A and 61B applications were considered and all were voted approved. The Board discussed the new application and the confusion that many residents have had filling it out. The Board voted to send an informational brochure next year that explains how to fill out the application. The Board requested that the availability of Chapter and exemption applications be noted in the local paper. A question from a taxpayer regarding the apportionment procedures of a bill received for FY2009 was discussed. The taxpayer believes that the bill was unfairly apportioned. Ms. Stegner was asked to contact the taxpayer for clarification and request any documentation that can be provided. The issue was tabled pending a response from the taxpayer.

A letter from a resident regarding a personal property bill was read aloud and a letter was drafted in response. The resident believes that the personal property bill they received was inaccurate due to non-receipt of declaration form and Farm Status Application. The Board responded that all materials were mailed to the address on file and although the resident missed the deadline, they can apply for the next fiscal year at anytime. Three Farm Status Applications were approved. Ms. Stegner informed the Board that most of the personal property data has been updated and the Board agreed to have their consultant come in to finalize all the data so that Recap can start. A question about change of addresses out of the area prompting a second home personal property bill to be issued was addressed. The Board voted to have change of addresses out of the area to be used as a tool to locate second home owners and decided to assess a personal property bill accordingly.

Five exemption applications were voted approved in the amounts of (3 x \$500 and 2 x \$1000)

The Board members were informed of a change in date for the All Board Meeting to October 5, 2009. The Board of Selectmen requested agenda items for the All Board meeting and the Board of Assessors will be submitting a letter of ideas for the meeting. Ms. Stegner will be attending the Clerk's Conference in Northampton on October 7th, 2009. The record from the Environmental Police regarding registered boats in town was reviewed. Ms. Stegner brought up the issue of receiving compensation for already earned sick days and personal days before the Board of Selectmen switched her to a salary employee without benefits. The Board stated that receiving compensation for those already earned days would be impossible. Ms. Stegner will be converting the current office budget from a paper format to Quickbooks. A phone bill in the amount of \$28.56 and mileage in the amount of \$47.60 was approved. Ms. Stegner has ordered the new printer for the office.

The Board received a request for Block Grant ideas; all items that the Board of Assessors is interested in were already noted in the Block Grant. A letter from the Department of Revenue was read aloud that was a response to the Board's question regarding clarification of the hiring and firing of employees in the Assessors' office. The response was a reiteration of the law that the Assessors were already aware of; the Board decided to resubmit a letter of inquiry with specific instead of general questions regarding the issue. Ms. Stegner informed the Board of a problem with mice in the office. The Board requested a letter be sent to the Selectmen informing them of the problem. The new Tax Maps were looked over and the Assessors were impressed; they unanimously agreed to stay with the same company for the next fiscal year and signed a renewal contract. The issue of having a set of tax maps available for the public in the library was considered and the Board asked that the Librarian be contacted to see if she has room for them.

Ms. Stegner and Ms. Reynolds both passed the Assessors' 101 Course and are certified by the State of Massachusetts. The Assessors were informed of problems with budget issues (items not getting paid, petty cash becoming unreimbursable). The Assessors requested that the accountant be contacted in order to set up an appointment to meet and discuss these issues.

All publications and advertisements were reviewed and filed.

The meeting was adjourned at: 9:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 9, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,

Bree Stegner

Secretary