

**Town of Chelsea
Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2011**

Regular Meeting:

1. Call to order:

Chairperson Linda Leotsakos called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

Assessors present included: Linda Leotsakos, Michael Pushard and Ben Smith. Judy Williams, Rick Danforth were also present.

Prior to addressing the agenda items, Linda explained that the purpose of the meeting was to bring the rest of the Board up to date about the work that Thomas Hayes, Assessor Agent, and Linda Leotsakos have been doing. Also, the Board will review changes in the organization of the Assessors' office, including filing of documents.

2. Scheduled Items

A. New layout of Assessors' Office

Linda showed Board members where various forms, documents and correspondence are organized. She reviewed tax maps on which Assessors make notes of changes, possible errors, corrections, etc.; how deeds, Transfers and Mortgage Deeds are filed.

The computer program (TRIO) was demonstrated and Linda explained what information is contained there and how it is used. It is very important that Map and Lot numbers written on documents are double checked for accuracy so that transferred properties are identified correctly when entered into TRIO.

B. Review Assessors abatements related to corrections

John Goraj: He purchased two properties on Nelson Rd. last summer, one of which that had been taxed as two pieces even though owned by the same taxpayer, Leslie French, Map 03 Lot 061, and Map 03 Lot 061ROW. John Goraj was properly taxed for M03L061, but not M 03 L016ROW. The other property M03 L059 is situated within the boundaries of the former French lot, using a right-of-way for access. John Goraj purchased this lot, with buildings from the Residential Mortgage. The Transfer form for this property listed old Map and Lot numbers and the properties were entered using those numbers, rather than the current Map and Lot numbers. This resulted in John Goraj receiving a tax bill for property, M03 L031 that actually belongs to Joan and Bill Rines and they received no tax bill. There have been discussions with Mr. Goraj and Mrs. Rines and they know that corrections need to be made as follows:

- 1) Abate John Goral's assessment for Map 02, Lot 031.
- 2) Abate Residential's assessment for Map 03 Lot 059.
- 3) Abate Leslie French assessment for Map 03 Lot 061ROW.

4) Prepare paperwork for the Supplemental tax bills to Joan and William Rines for Map 03 Lot 031 property; to John Goraj for Map 03 Lots 059 and 061. All parties know these bills will be coming. The Selectmen will act on a Supplemental Commitment so that the Tax Collector can issue the bills.

There was a motion by Ben Smith to approve the three abatements as discussed. It was seconded by Mike Pushard and voted unanimously.

When Robert Swan's property was divided there were property deeds with timber rights, resulting in several documents being recorded. In making the changes to the tax records, Roberta Beaulieu's property was assigned to Andrew Swan, such that he received her bill and she received no bill. To correct this error:

- 1) Abate assessment of this property to Andrew Swan
- 2) Prepare paperwork for the Supplemental tax bills to Roberta Beaulieu for the property. The Selectmen will act on a Supplemental Commitment so that the Tax Collector can issue the bill.

C. Review correspondence with tax payers

Linda reported a request for a letter from Jason Keithly to verify that while he has one lot, he has two addresses due to 911 addressing requirements – M 12, L001 is 3 Peg's Way and M 12, L 001HS is 629 River Rd. He is assessed for two lots because he has two distinct dwellings.

After discussion, Board agreed that Linda, as Chair, could send letters of this nature without waiting for a meeting, but rather report such correspondence at each Assessors meeting. Linda will maintain a file for all letters written so that Mike and/or Ben can review them.

Linda also gave an overview of the meetings with tax payers that she and Tom Hayes scheduled. Examples of issues discussed included minor clerical errors, such as address inaccuracies; concerns about assessments; changes that should have been recorded last year but were missed, etc. In general, these meetings were informative and genial. A list of all taxpayer contacts is being kept, as well as separate files for those issues which ought to be documented. Linda commented that the Town Manager had suggested this approach and it seems to be effective.

D. Develop questions for October 17, 2011 Workshop with Revenue Services

There was discussion about the up-coming Abatement Workshop with Nancy Weeks on October 17th. Linda explained she will have examples of abatement applications and specific questions about how to address those applications. Linda has also developed draft letters of notification to taxpayers. Members felt they had no specific questions prior to the workshop and were looking at this as a "tutorial" experience.

E. Discussion of need for a town wide revaluation proposal

This is a continuing discussion. It is important to provide citizens with information about revaluation. Board members agreed that Linda should see that 100 -200 of the state’s Revaluation flyer be copied and made available at the Town Office and other meeting. The copies will be black-and-white, not color, to save money.

F. Discussion of Assessor’s salary for 2011

Assessors’ salaries for 2011 had been approved by the Board at an earlier meeting: Mike Pushard, \$5000; Carole Swan, \$5000; Tanya Condon, \$2500; Linda Leotsakos, \$2500. Those salaries, with the exception of Carole Swan, have been paid. The Town Manager has not been able to pay Carole Swan because she has not completed required paperwork, despite repeated requests by the Manager for that paperwork.

G. Other Business

The Municipal Valuation Report is due before November 1st. Linda and Ben will meet with Tom Hayes to learn how this is done.

The Maine Tree Growth Roster also needs to be completed and Linda will be responsible for getting that done.

Linda reported that Ariel Survey and Photo has completed several corrected tax maps. Rob Rogers has worked an additional 12 hours since we committed taxes, and this has been very helpful. Linda will work with him to assure that our 2012 budget proposal for mapping is more realistic.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn by Ben Smith and was seconded by Mike Pushard. Vote was unanimous. Linda Leotsakos declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Approved by the Chelsea Board of Selectmen on October 27, 2011.

Linda Leotsakos – Chair

Michael Pushard

Benjamin Smith