

October 22, 2019 Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Chairman Stephen Schmidt and members Susan Reyes and Diane Jacoby.

Also present: Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden and Assessors' Clerk Leslie Bracebridge.

Guest: Town Administrator Rebecca "Becky" Torres.

Chairman Schmidt opened the meeting at 5:00 PM in the Shutesbury Town Hall Assessors office.

Meeting minutes:

The October 8, 2019 meeting minutes were approved as written.

Mail/Email/phone calls/walk-ins:

The Board received an unexpected letter of resignation from member Diane Jacoby, effective November 30, 2019. Becky was invited to join the meeting to discuss what actions should be taken to increase board membership, as there will not be a quorum effective January 1, 2020:

1. Becky will alert the Select Board, find the Assessor job description, and start the search.
2. Kevin will write an employment advertisement and get it to Becky.
3. Assessors will send any suggestions they have for replacement members to Becky.

Department of Revenue (DOR) Course 101, now available online, must be passed before an Assessor can sign DOR required forms.

Review 2019 Annual Report:

Assessors reviewed, edited and unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report.

Review/sign "Chapterland" applications:

Assessors reviewed and signed more Chapter 61 A & B applications as well as applications with which they had questions regarding acreage exclusions at the October 8 meeting. One reason that exclusion acres vary is the zoning at the time the liens were granted, though there are other exclusion amounts that cannot be answered that way. Leslie has begun a complete review of all "Chapterlands" to ensure consistency between liens, deeds, acreages, current ownership, and Vision status. She hopes that all parcels will be reviewed by the end of November.

Update on FY 20 tax rate filings and Classification Hearing date:

As of yesterday afternoon, all papers for the November 12, 2019, 6:40 PM tax classification hearing with the Select Board that are required to be prepared by the Assessors Office were complete and approved by the DOR. Kevin has the newspaper advertisement ready for publication in the Daily Hampshire Gazette. Kevin has prepared a statement for the Select Board, with this year's figures, in a fashion similar to last year's statement. Discussion included Assessor Department awareness of how the tax rate is inching toward the \$25/thousand limit. Kevin will work with Town Accountant Weiss in preparation of the papers that she is required to prepare. After the Select Board votes on November 12, Assessors and Select Board members will go into Gateway to sign off. Kevin intends to also get "wet" signatures on paper from both Assessors and Select Board members as is recommended.

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 hours in advance of the meeting: None.

The next Board of Assessors meeting will be November 12, 2019 at 5:30 PM.

Assessors adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on November 12, 2019,



Leslie Bracebridge
Assessors' Clerk

List of Documents used at the meeting:

1. October 22, 2019 meeting agenda.
2. October 8, 2019 draft meeting minutes.
3. Letter of resignation from member Diane Jacoby.
4. Chapter 61 A and B applications.