

# **SHELBURNE BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **January 22, 2020**

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The meeting was called to order on Wednesday January 22, 2020 at 4:01 p.m. by Alan Coutinho. The meeting was held in the Board of Assessors Office.

Present: Alan, Coutinho, James Richardson (arrived 4:05 p.m.), Shawn Allen, Jennifer Morse

#### **Minutes**

Minutes of January 8, 2020 were reviewed and approved by Alan and Shawn

#### **Signatures – None**

#### **Shelburne Fire District**

Jenn shared that she had talked with Jan Morin at the Shelburne Falls Fire District in regards to how the tax rate setting process and accounting functions were handled. An email was sent by Jenn to all board members and Jim Wholey with the details of the conversation dated January 15, 2020. \* Jim Richardson entered meeting. It was decided after discussion to ask the Shelburne Fire District Prudential Committee to join the Assessors to discuss the clerical assistance and accounting functions of the District.

#### **Budget 2021**

The Contracted services budget was presented to the board. There is a reduction in the utility appraisal by using a different vendor for services. There is an increase of \$1800 in the assessing services contract – Jenn believes she can get the number reduced by doing all data entry and by completing the LA4, LA13 and LA15 in house. She is not comfortable with Personal Property inspections and the LA3 – sales comparison but is willing to do the clerical support for the LA3. The budget will be presented with the increase but may be reduced in the near future.

#### **Update from Other Boards/Committees**

The Open Space Committee has brought to the attention of the office a discrepancy in Map 15 in regards to parcel identification. Jenn had the mapping company make the changes and is still looking into ownership of one parcel. The tax billing software is correct and no changes were made. Jenn thanked Larry Flaccus for bringing it to the attention of the board since we strive for accurate data.

#### **Forest Management Plans/ Chapter Land**

Richardson – Forest Management Plan – Amendments – Alan Coutinho closed the door and discussion was had on member Richardson's Forest Management Plans. Mr. Richardson stated that he had a call into the DCR office because he is unable to locate the information they sent to him regarding amending the plans. Alan and Shawn both expressed their concern since this has been happening for months and concerns over Mr. Richardson needing to be held accountable and follow the laws. Jenn shared that several months ago DCR had reached out to all communities requesting better communication regarding Forest Management Plans and ownership to hold all property owners accountable. Jenn offered to contact the Forester who did the plans to give them the property information so the plans can be corrected. Shawn suggested that he was prepared to make a motion to remove the land from 61A classification. Mr. Richardson shared that he would not be able to afford his land if it was removed from classification and that the 61 program was put into place to conserve open space as much as it was to give property owners a tax break. It was agreed that Mr. Richardson will have until Wednesday February 12, 2020 to get the plans in or he will be removed from classification for FY2021. Shawn suggested that the land could be placed in 61B until the Forest Management Plans were completed. Mr. Richardson was not in favor of taking the suggestion 61B action.

Iwanowicz – Forest Management Plans – The mapping company was unable to make any changes to the maps after reviewing all abutter's deeds and land surveys. If the property owner disputes the assessor's tax maps and acreage he will have to get a land survey done and register it. Jenn mailed the property owner a Chapter Land scenario of what full taxation and Chapter 61B alternatives would look like. Jenn will mail the property owner a letter again to request a decision before February 12, 2020 or the land will be removed from classification for Fiscal Year 2021 due to no Forest Management Plan. Jim stated that the property owner was considering going to full taxation.

**Exemption** - A senior exemption was granted in the amount of \$500.00 for application 17 -2020 Town and the amount of \$189.84 Fire District.

\*Exemption applications are not open to public inspection MGL Chapter 59, Section 60

#### **Assistant Assessor Updates**

TIF Agreements Expired: Ashfield Stone and Gitsis Realty agreements expired in Fiscal Year 2020. The Sweetheart TIF agreement will go into place for Fiscal Year 2021. Jenn has not heard from the building inspector's office regarding the status of building permits.

Interim Town Administrator position – Jenn shared that she had been appointed interim town administrator in Ashfield until they can find replacement. Office hours will be altered for the next 6-8 weeks beginning the week of February 10, 2020. When office hours are put into place it will be published on the Town Website, Greenfield Recorder and in Town Hall.

**Next Meeting – February 12, 2020 at 4 p.m.**

**MOTION: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:39 p.m. Vote 3-0**

Respectfully Submitted:

Jennifer Morse  
Assistant Assessor  
January 23, 2020

#### **Document List**

Minutes of January 8, 2020 – draft  
Email regarding Shelburne Falls Fire District conversation  
Contracted Services Budget – FY2021