

CHARLEMONT BOARD OF ASSESSORS
OCTOBER 7, 2024 MEETING MINUTES
CHARLEMONT ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Members Present/ Participating:

Jacqueline Cashin: Chair, Anthony Ostroski, Karen Rau

Call to Order

Chair Cashin called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

#1: Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from their 9/9/2024 meeting. On a motion by Cashin and seconded by Ostroski, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes, with a minor font edit.

#2: Board Approval/Signatures

The Board reviewed and approved/signed the following:

1. Tax map maintenance invoice.
2. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2024 Commitment #5.
3. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for 2024 excise Commitment #5.
4. Monthly list of real, personal property & motor vehicle excise abatements for August & September, 2024.
5. Hayden asked the Board to approve an abutter's list request form she had drafted. After review, the Board approved the form for use and posting to the town website.

#3: Board Discussion and Vote

1. New permitting extract and upgrade to AP5 software. Hayden reported that the cooperative inspection administrator called a meeting with Assessor's offices to discuss the new building permit software they are implementing. There will be changes to the Assessor's extract they request annually; several new fields are not present in their current AssessPro software, so Hayden sent a template of the new report and a request to Catalis for the modifications. Catalis first sent an email that the modified report will incur a cost and they will follow up with a quote from their sales manager. The following week they emailed that they are no longer making changes to classic AssessPro (our current version) as they are phasing it out and having customers upgrade to AP5, the newest version. They asked to have a discussion with Assessors about an upgrade and offered to make the permit extract changes complimentary with the upgrade.

They have been trying to get us to upgrade for a couple years, but the Board was not in favor of undergoing another conversion, and due to the cost of initial upgrade and annual fee increase, we have declined. Hayden said that she has not heard great things about AP5 from some other towns, with one reporting a loss of their data. She said Catalis' decline to modify the building report feels like a way to compel us into upgrading, but acknowledged that, as with their prior State CAMA system, they will eventually be forced to move to another solution. She presented the Board with the prior quotes they received for the upgrade; one for on-premise and one for hosted (AWS), although this pricing may no longer apply. Funding of the upgrade was discussed and it was noted that the Fiscal Year 2025 budget was already set and funds were not appropriated for this. Fiscal Year 2026 is our certification year, which is hectic enough without adding a database conversion into the mix, so the soonest practicable date would be Fiscal Year 2027 (July, 2026). In the meantime, Hayden said she has found a way to modify the existing building permit extract to the inspection program's new specifications. The Board was ok with this, as long as she didn't mind doing the work-around.

The Board agreed to a meeting with Catalis to discuss timing and pricing of the AP5 upgrade, possibly via Zoom at their next meeting on Monday, November 4th at 6:45 p.m. Hayden will check with Catalis and notify the Board.

2. New structure with no building permit; a new building was observed at 37 Schaefer Way; a permit for a shed was applied for in 2022 but had not been issued. Rau wasn't comfortable inspecting the property alone and had not entered the property but observed a building, which appears mostly complete. A recheck of the online permitting site shows the permit has an issue date of September 26, 2024, however the status is "owner confirmation pending" so we will notify the Building Inspector the building has been constructed, and it will be inspected by our consultant with the other annual permits.
3. Large building/greenhouse at 2143 Route 2; there has been no response from the owner to the request for property inspection, but the property is due for cyclical inspection next year and will be added to the others to be inspected by their consultant.
4. Cyclical Inspections of vacant properties; Rau reported that no structures were found on two properties she checked on Thunder Lane (16/17 & 16/18), and one had a shed that she will get the measurements for (15/1.1).

Ostroski took cards for two properties on East Oxbow Road (9/47 & 9/48) to get a picture of a building on one and check for any other buildings.

Adjournment

At 7:22 p.m. on a motion by Cashin and seconded by Ostroski, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn their meeting and enter into Executive Session for purpose #7; to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements; to deliberate on pending abatement and/or exemption applications, which pursuant to G.L. Chapter 59, Section 60 are not open to public inspection, to sign the minutes from their last executive session meeting, and to not reconvene in open session afterwards. Roll Call vote: Cashin-Yes, Ostroski-Yes, Rau-Yes.

The next meeting will be Monday November 4, 2024. The tax rate hearing is tentatively scheduled for Monday, November 24th, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Hayden,
Assessor's Clerk

Documents Viewed in Meeting of 10/7/2024*

1. Agenda for meeting of 10/7/2024
2. Minutes from the 9/9/2024 meeting
3. Tax map maintenance invoice, dated 10/1/2024
4. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2024 Commitment #5, dated 10/4/2024
5. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for 2024 excise Commitment #5, dated 10/4/2024
6. Monthly list of real, personal property & motor vehicle excise abatements for August & September, 2024, dated 10/7/2024
7. Request for Certified List of Abutters form
8. Email from Catalis Tax & CAMA, dated 10/1/2024
9. Quotes for AP5 upgrade, dated 7/12/2023
10. Building permit application for 37 Schaefer Way, dated 6/24/2022
11. Property record cards for:
 - a. (3) Vacant land parcels on Thunder Lane (16/17, 16/18, 15/1.1)
 - b. (2) Vacant land parcels on East Oxbow Road (9/47 & 9/48)

***Documents are stored in their respective files in the Assessor's office.**