

CHARLEMONT BOARD OF ASSESSORS
APRIL 1, 2024 MEETING MINUTES
CHARLEMONT ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Members Present/ Participating:

Anthony Ostroski; Chair, Jacqueline Cashin, Karen Rau

Call to Order

Chair Ostroski called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

#1: Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from their 3/4/2024 meeting. On a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes, as written.

#2: Board Approval/Signatures

The Board reviewed and signed the following (Ostroski motioned, Cashin seconded):

1. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2023 Commitment #7A & #8 and
2. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2024 Commitment #2.
3. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for above MVE commitments
4. Ostroski motioned Cashin seconded to table Chapter 61 applications until next meeting.
5. Monthly list of abatements:
 - a. Real and personal property abatements for March, 2024,
 - b. Statutory property tax exemptions for April, 2024
 - c. Motor vehicle excise abatements for March, 2024.

#3: 7:00 P.M. Appointment; Greg Rowehl, to discuss taxation of unregistered motor vehicles.

Mr. Rowehl attended the meeting to ask the Board if they taxed unregistered motor vehicles in town. The Board stated they don't have the manpower or funds to tax every unregistered motor vehicle throughout town and it wouldn't bring in enough revenue to make it worthwhile. He asked about Brian DuPree's property, which has many unregistered and junk cars on it, said DuPree was issued an enforcement order by the Conservation Commission and provided a copy of a letter from the Building Inspector to DuPree stating that he has over 100 inoperable vehicles with no permit to operate a junkyard business. He asked if he submits a personal property Form 2. Hayden said that DuPree does submit a Form 2 every year and he self-reports and is assessed for the junk vehicles as part of his business. Rowehl asked how they prove the number, make, model, etc. of the vehicles. Towns that do assess these estimate the number and typically assess a standard value per vehicle, but most towns don't bother. Rowehl mentioned he was present at the tax rate hearing and appreciated the work that they put into the presentation at the hearing. Next Rowehl brought up the driveway dispute with his abutters, noting there is an area of "no man's land" between the two properties and asked who is getting assessed for it. Hayden stated it's termed "area in contention" on both recorded surveys, and that each property owner is getting assessed for 1/2 acre of it. Rowehl said it will be resolved in court and thanked the Board for their time.

#4: Board Discussion and Vote

1. Avery's Store updated value. Hayden told the Board that she had made the corrections to Avery's store property, as discussed at their last meeting and that it resulted in a \$46,300 reduction in value. While not an abatement, the taxes will be adjusted in the ensuing fiscal year.
2. Request for property inspection. Hayden said Mary Ledwell requested an interior property inspection at 231 West Hawley Road, as she felt her property value seemed high. The Board will inspect the property.

3. Reschedule property inspections. The Board discussed a date for the abatement inspections from last month, which were cancelled due to the weather. After discussion, the Board decided they will do the inspections on Monday evenings, with McCutchen being on April 22nd at 5:30 p.m. and Svelnis at 6:15 p.m. Kelleher will be on April 29th at 5:30 p.m. and Ledwell will be on May 6th at 5:30 p.m. Hayden will schedule the appointments with the applicants and the Board asked her to email the appointment times to them.
4. Clause 18 exemption requirements. The Board reviewed their Clause 18 policy, and as discussed at the last meeting, felt the income allowance should be increased to 200%. On a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board unanimously voted to raise the income allowance from 150% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, as of the January 1st before the Fiscal Year. They also decided that the annual income is gross income before expenses.
5. Confidentiality agreement. The Town was asked by Great River Hydro to sign a confidentiality agreement regarding their 38D/38F request. Cashin cautioned that all business of the town is subject to the freedom of information act and cannot be confidential except information that would invade individual privacy, trade secrets, public policy development memos and investigative materials. The Select Board has forwarded the agreement to Town Counsel for review.

#4: Review Mail and Correspondence

The Board reviewed the deeds for February and building permits for January & February, 2024.

Adjournment and Enter Executive Session

At 8:07 p.m. on a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, 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 the public, to sign the minutes from their last executive session meeting and to not reconvene in open session afterwards. Roll Call vote: Ostroski-Yes, Cashin-Yes, Rau-Yes.

The next meeting will be Monday, May 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Hayden,
Assessor's Clerk

Documents Viewed in Meeting of 4/1/2024*

1. Agenda for meeting of 4/1/2024
2. Minutes from 3/4/2024 Assessor's meeting
3. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2023 Commitment #7A & #8
4. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2024 Commitment #2.
5. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for above commitments
6. Monthly list of abatements:
 - a. Real and personal property abatements for March, 2024
 - b. Statutory property tax exemptions for April, 2024
 - c. Motor vehicle excise abatements for March, 2024
 - d. June 8, 2023 letter to Brian DuPree from Building Inspector
 - e. 127 Main Street (Avery's) property record card
 - f. 231 West Hawley Rd property record card
 - g. 2023 Federal Poverty Levels

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