

CHARLEMONT BOARD OF ASSESSORS
AUGUST 4, 2025 MEETING MINUTES
CHARLEMONT ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Members Present/ Participating:

Karen Rau: Chair, Anthony Ostroski, Andrea Santos

Call to Order

Rau called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the 7/7/2025 Assessor's meeting were reviewed. On a motion by Rau and seconded by Santos, the minutes were approved, as written. Santos asked if Hayden could email the meeting minutes to the Board in the future, for review prior to the meeting. Hayden agreed.

#1: Board Approval/Signatures

After review, on a motion by Rau and seconded by Ostroski, the Board voted unanimously to approve/sign the following:

1. Warrant to Collector and Notice of Commitment for 2025 motor vehicle excise commitment #4,
2. Monthly list of property & excise tax abatements for July, 2025.

#2: Board Discussion

1. Jonathan Mirin and Godelieve Richard appeal of conveyance tax. Hayden informed the Board that an email was received from Mirin with further information for the Board, he has also contacted the office a few times, offering to clarify or answer questions if needed. She asked if the Board wanted to review/discuss this further. The Board reviewed the email with information on his Bee and Blossom nature study program, which provides financial assistance to a majority of the families who attend. After much discussion as to the various factors contributing to the situation, the Board ultimately held that Mirin still failed to timely file his forest management plan or 61B application when he elected not to continue in forestry. Chapter 61 programs offer preferential tax treatment in return for certain commitments by the landowner in managing their land, and it is ultimately their responsibility to carry out these commitments, including the timely submittal of all required documents; the Board was very hesitant to set a precedence of abating the tax, thereby having to do it for others. Hayden clarified that the Board's denial was for the conveyance tax assessment of \$4,491 and didn't account for the additional \$50.00 penalty certificate fee assessed in addition and wondered if the board wanted to waive that fee. After discussion, on a motion by Rau and seconded by Ostroski, the Board ratified its prior decision and voted unanimously to deny abatement of the \$4,491 conveyance tax, but to waive the \$50.00 penalty tax fee. They signed a letter to the applicants explaining their decision, and a denial notice.
2. Combined quote from Cidare and MAK Valuation. Hayden explained that the two vendors have offered to combine their valuation services into one quote and have one point of contact, to make it simpler and so we'll have one vendor and invoice for all services. The cost will be the combination of their prior quotes; around \$16,000. If they went this route, the Board agreed that a 1-year contract for the first year would be best, so we can all see how it goes. Going forward, they could opt for a 3-year with a set value for the first year and option to renew at a value to be determined upon renewal (dependent upon economic conditions) for the next two. Their current contract with Catalis is \$16,650 per year and their proposed new contract amount is \$11,250 per year for Fiscal Years 2027-2029. No other quotes have come in. While it would be nice to lower their budget and have a set cost for the next three years, there are the scheduling issues they've had with their

current property inspection consultant and also with the personal property inspector needing to be reminded each year to inspect their personal property accounts and losing documents Hayden had sent previously, which would need to be addressed.

3. Data Quality inspections. Hayden explained that their BLA Advisor had questions on some properties that need checking and asked if the Board could check them out. The Board divided up the properties with basic questions and will all inspect together the questions on the Johnson property (26 Riddell Rd.), which needs an interior inspection to determine. The Board set a date of this Friday, August 8th at 4:30. Carlene will contact the owner to try to set up the inspection. Rau will also visit the Sanderson property to get the correct picture of the accessory apartment.

Adjournment

At 8:16 p.m. on a motion by Rau 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: Rau-Yes, Ostroski-Yes, Santos-Yes.

The next meeting is Monday, September 8, 2025.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Hayden,
Assessor's Clerk

Documents Viewed in Meeting of 8/4/2025*

1. Agenda for meeting of 8/4/2025
2. Minutes for meetings of 7/7/2025
3. Warrant to Collector and Notice of Commitment for 2025 motor vehicle excise commitment #4
4. Monthly list of property & excise tax abatements for July, 2025
5. Application for abatement of a conveyance tax, by Jonathan Mirin and Godelieve Richard; 6/12/2025
6. Letter to Jonathan Mirin and Godeleive Richard explaining Board's denial, 8/4/2025
7. Property tax abatement denial notice, 8/4/2025.

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