

BOARD OF ASSESSORS
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 5^h at 7 pm
380 Great Rd, Stow MA
Whitney Room 1st Floor

Call to order at 7:02 PM.

Cindy Cummings (Member), Leonard Golder (Member), Thomas Ryan (Chair), Kristen Fox (Principal Assessor) & Lauren Field (Assistant Assessor) were present.

Public Comments & Chair Comments: There were none.

All votes were unanimous by roll-call.

Discussion/Vote: Invoice from Vision for October 2023 Interim for \$1,000. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion/Vote: Meeting Minutes from 11/7/2023. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion/Vote: Motor Vehicle Warrant, 6th Commitment for \$24,393.74. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion/Vote: Motor Vehicle Abatement Report for November for \$735.56 Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion/Vote: Boat Abatement Report for November for \$66.00. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion: FY2024 Actual Tax Bills will be run on 12/12/23, requiring BOA signatures before end of the month. The board agreed to meet 12/18/23 to review and sign the warrants and commitments.

Discussion/Vote: 61A Chapter Applications. 9 applications were presented to the board for approval. 8 applications were approved and signed as written. 1 application was conditionally approved pending all requirements were fulfilled. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion/Vote: 61B Chapter Applications. 5 applications were presented to the board for approval. Cindy Cummings made motion to approve, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Discussion: The board discussed finalizing formal requirements for the Veteran Work Off Program, which is distinct from the Senior Work Off Program. The board agreed to review current Veteran Exemption requirements and table a vote for a future meeting.

Discussion: The board discussed the FY2025 Budget. Kristen Fox informed the board that she is still waiting to hear back from two vendors for projected price increases. There is concern about Nearmap's increased price and whether it can align with current budget restrictions.

Discussion: The board discussed the Selectboard's announced policy about recording meetings. As an elected board the BOA is presently exempt from required recording, however the board discussed future arrangements. The board discussed the option of not to record until further notice, citing several concerns about this policy including the sensitive nature of Board matters, lack of availability of meeting rooms where recording set up is enabled, concern about discouraging concerned residents from participating, and the potential high costs associated with setting up recording equipment including additional laptops, cameras, and storage software for fulfilling the recording requirement, none of which the Board's current budget can address. Leonard Golder made a motion to not record meetings until further notice, seconded

by Cynthia Cummings. Vote passed unanimously.

Other Business: Leonard Golder inquired if there was any possible monetary incentivization or penalty that the Assessors could impose on tax payers to encourage them to allow Assessors access to their home, citing the recent difficulties the Assessors have encountered with balancing resident's right to privacy and keeping records up to date. Kristen Fox advised a monetary incentive would be illegal. She also advised against imposing any such measures, as there are already protocols set up by law in place to allow Assessors to estimate condition and other factors in lieu of being allowed on the property. Kristen Fox also pointed out that refusal to allow Assessors on the property bars property owners from receiving an abatement from the Appellate Tax Board, which intended as penalty.

Executive Session -- Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21.a(7) and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59 Section 60, to discuss FY24 personal exemption applications & pending abatement litigation at 8:43PM.

Cindy Cummings made a motion to enter executive session at 8:29, seconded by Leonard Golder. Vote passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: 12/18/2023 at 7 PM in the Whitney Room.

Respectfully submitted,



Lauren Field, Assistant Assessor of Stow