

OPEN SESSION

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2021 MAR - 1 AM 9: 22

The Board of Assessors met on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at approximately 6:11 PM. Present were Chairman Steve McCarthy, Clerk Cheryl Smith, Member Paula Bunker, Principal Assessor John Donahue, and Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was closed to the public. However, the public was allowed to listen to the meeting via teleconference and to view a recording of the meeting via community access television.

The Chairman announced that the meeting was being recorded by community access television. The Principal Assessor read aloud the Board of Assessors' State of Emergency Public Access Notice from the publicly posted Agenda stating that, due to the increasing concerns surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting would be open to the public through remote participation only. The remote access information was also read aloud.

The Principal Assessor stated that Applications for Abatement of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes are due by February 1st and Applications for Statutory Exemption are due by April 1st. He informed the Board that there will be a zoom meeting of the annual Plymouth County Assessors Association Legislative Breakfast on January 22nd at 9:00 A.M. Additionally, the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers is conducting Course 102 - Income Approach, Course 5 - Mass Appraisal, and Course 6 - Valuation Administration via zoom and that Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson had signed up for Course 102 and Course 5. The Principal Assessor also stated that Town Hall remains closed to the public except by appointment.

The Principal Assessor read a notice to residents of West Bridgewater from the Town Clerk stating that there was a misprint on the back of the 2021 Annual Census/Street Listing Form and although it says if you have an asterisk next to your name, you are a voter in Randolph, it is just a typo and residents are registered to vote in West Bridgewater.

The Principal Assessor stated that he had received an email from the Board of Selectman stating they were forming a PILOT committee and would like a member from the Board of Assessors to be on the committee. The Chairman stated that he could not make the time commitment and asked if any other Board member would be interested. Member Bunker volunteered. The Chairman made a **motion** to nominate Member Bunker to the PILOT committee, seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted unanimously.

The Principal Assessor stated the operating budget is due January 27th and it would be appropriate to make a motion to adopt the budget or make revisions. The Chairman added that there had not been salary information in the previous draft form. The Principal Assessor stated that the Clerical Salaries were not on the original draft because their contract was still in negotiation but he had been advised to budget for a 2% increase for Fiscal Year 2021 and any appropriate step increases for Fiscal Year 2022. The Chairman was pleased the budget showed just over 1% increase from last year. The Chairman made a **motion** to accept the

proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget, seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 2-0-1, Member Bunker abstained because she had some questions.

The Principal Assessor reminded the Board that their appointments with the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee were approaching on February 17th at 7:30 P.M. and February 18th at 7:25 P.M., respectively. The Principal Assessor also stated that at a recent meeting some comments were made that there were errors on the draft of the Annual Assessors Report he drafted, but after reviewing it with the clerical staff, nothing was found. The Chairman stated that he had noticed something minor, such as a comma, and thought he had sent the revision, but it was nothing that needed to be corrected. The Chairman made a **motion** to accept the Annual Assessors Report, seconded by Member Bunker. Voted 3-0-0.

The Principal Assessor stated next on the agenda was roll over of vacation time that Member Bunker had asked to put on the agenda. Member Bunker stated that she had asked for a list of vacation dates taken by the Principal Assessor and was waiting for it. The Principal Assessor gave the Board a list of vacation dates for 2020 and copies of the payroll sheets. While putting together documents for the meeting, he discovered he was due 6.5 vacation days rather than the 5 days he had requested. Member Bunker asked that he put that request in writing. Clerk Smith asked if it needed to be put in writing again since the 5-day request had already been made and this was just an adjustment due to an error. The Principal Assessor asked that the board make a motion for the additional day and half owed to him and then he would write up the paperwork needed. Clerk Smith made a **motion** to approve the rollover of the additional day and a half, seconded by the Chairman. Voted 3-0-0.

Member Bunker stated that the Principal Assessor is entitled to take vacation but questioned if he let the Board know when he was taking vacation. The Principal Assessor stated that he notifies the board in many ways such as in person, in email, or in a meeting. Member Bunker stated that she has no email requests that pertain to the list of vacation dates provided. The Principal Assessor stated he could check his email but had nothing with him tonight. Member Bunker stated she wanted to straighten this out going forward when vacation time is coming so there is no confusion. The Chairman stated that he is not confused by vacation time taken by the Principal Assessor and feels it is tracked well by the payroll department. The Principal Assessor stated that he feels he does notify the entire board through any means possible. He added that he does not discriminate or go behind anyone's back. Member Bunker stated she feels she is omitted from some of these conversations.

The Principal Assessor stated that Policy 2019-4 was on the agenda tonight to suspend the policy since it laid out the conditions of keeping minutes by Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson while she was a part time employee so it is no longer relevant since she is now full time. The Chairman made a **motion** to suspend the policy, seconded by Clerk Smith. Member Bunker asked why it wasn't eliminated all together since it named the Principal Secretary specifically and it could be re-written if needed in the future. The Chairman stated that it was just a housekeeping issue and could be re-written in the future if needed even if it was suspended. Voted 2-1-0 opposed by Member Bunker.

Bills Payable, Statutory Exemption Applications and Certificates, Monthly Motor Vehicle Abatement Certificates, and Property Tax Deferrals were presented for signatures and the Principal Assessor stated there were two documents that needed all three signatures of the Board because it was being notarized by the Town Clerk.

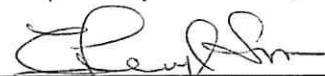
A **motion** was made by the Chairman to accept the minutes from the December 2, 2020 open session meeting, seconded by Member Bunker. Voted 3-0-0.

A **motion** was made by Chairman McCarthy to adjourn the Open Session and to enter into Executive Session in order to Review Applications for Abatement/Exemption/Classification, relative to Purpose 7, MGL CH 59, section 60, to review and discuss strategy of pending Appellate Tax Board Cases, relative to Purpose 3 and 7, MGL CH 59, section 60, and to Review the Principal Assessor's Employment Agreement , relative to Purpose 2, MGL CH 59 section 60, and not to reconvene in Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Clerk Smith. A **roll call vote** was taken as follows: Chairman McCarthy = affirmative, Clerk Smith = affirmative, Member Bunker = affirmative. The Board adjourned Open Session and entered Executive Session at approximately 6:37 P.M.

Next Meeting: February 3, 2021

I certify that the minutes of this meeting are true and accurate to the best of my recollection.

Respectfully submitted,



Cheryl Smith, Clerk

Prepared by Principal Secretary, Daniela Nilsson

Documents referenced during the meeting:

- *Bills payable, Statutory Exemption Applications, Monthly Motor Vehicle abatement certificates, Property Tax Deferrals, and other administrative documents referenced during the meeting*