

## OPEN SESSION

The Board of Assessors met on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at approximately 6:04 P.M. 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 there are no appointments with Taxpayers tonight. There are generic placeholders on the agenda and the Taxpayer that was set for 6:15 cancelled. He also stated the Statutory Exemption applications are due by April 1<sup>st</sup> and that Town Hall remains closed to the public unless an appointment is made.

The Principal Assessor informed the Board that the Annual Town Meeting was scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 P.M. in the Middle/Senior High School Gymnasium. He also stated that the warrant was now open and will close on March 26th.

The Principal Assessor presented the revised Fiscal Year 2022 budget. He noted that line 5309, Consultant Services, has an increase of \$7,500 due to the Department of Revenue determining it would require appraisals on all 504 utility properties, there being three in West Bridgewater, to properly determine their assessed value. He further explained that The Department of Revenue had gone back and forth on this topic and last year it determined that only cities and towns in recertification needed to comply with this new regulation but now it is a regulation for all cities and towns going forward. The Principal Assessor stated that it had slipped his mind while preparing a level funded budget but he remembered it before presenting the previously approved budget to the Board of Selectman. The Chairman stated that he remembered some talk of this mandate last year but then it only was brought up again right before the meetings with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committees. Member Bunker asked why this was not discussed at the last meeting. The Principal Assessor stated it was before the Board today and asked for approval of the revised budget. A **motion** was made by the Chairman to accept the revised FY22 budget as proposed at \$248,002.00. Seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 2-1-0, Member Bunker opposed.

The Principal Assessor stated that in talking with Patriot Properties regarding the appraisal of the 504 Utility properties, he was informed an update is due for the software used in the office. The upgrade is normally \$14,800 but he was offered a discounted rate of \$12,250. The Principal Assessor stated that it would require a revision for the budget, and it may not be

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appropriate for this year. The Chairman asked if it could be done at a later time and the Principal Assessor stated it could. The Principal Assessor asked the vendor if this upgrade could qualify under the CARES act and was told they would look into it. Member Bunker asked why he thought it may qualify and the Principal Assessor stated the technology could help keep him out of the field and was why he asked. Member Bunker agreed that using technology would streamline the process and would be better. The Chairman stated a formal discussion had not taken place yet in regards to whether the Principal Assessor would be in the field this year and asked to have that topic revisited at a future meeting.

The minutes from November 4, 2020, November 18, 2020, January 1, 2021, and February 3, 2021 were sent via email to the Board for review. The Chairman made a **motion** to accept the minutes from November 4, 2020, November 18, 2020, January 1, 2021, and February 3, 2021. Seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 2-0-1, Member Bunker abstained because she had not fully reviewed the minutes.

Real/Personal Tax Abatement/Exemption Applications/Certificates of Denials were presented for signatures.

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 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 6:17 P.M.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at approximately 6:42 P.M.

Member Bunker made a **motion** to abate applications #1, 12, 29, 35, 36, and 37. Seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 3-0-0.

Member Bunker asked about the Patriot upgrade price discussed earlier and if that was an annual figure. The Principal Assessor stated it was a one-time cost to upgrade.

The Chairman made a **motion** to adjourn. Seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 3-0-0. The Board adjourned at approximately 6:45 P.M.

Next Meeting: March 17, 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:*

- *Statutory Exemption Applications, Abatement Applications, Fiscal Year 2022 budget, Patriot Properties upgrade proposal and other administrative documents referenced during the meeting*