

OPEN SESSION

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
2022 MAY 19 AM 8:31

The Board of Assessors met on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at approximately 6:08 PM. Present were Chairwoman Cheryl Smith, Clerk Paula Bunker, Member Steve McCarthy, Principal Assessor John Donahue, and Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was open to the public via remote participation only. A video recording of the meeting was documented by community access television.

The Principal Assessor read aloud the State of Emergency Public Access Notice from the agenda.

The Principal Assessor stated the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) was holding their annual conference in Boston this year from August 28 to 31. He also announced that the Governor had extended his Executive Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law until July 15, 2022. He added that he was unaware of the extension at the last meeting when he suggested the meetings would return to normal and to move to the Small Conference Room. He stated that when he became aware, he reached out to the Chairwoman who suggested keeping the meetings the same as they have been, but adding it to the agenda for discussion. He advised other Boards had different provisions on their agendas for attending meetings, such as social distancing measures and mask requirements if unvaccinated. Clerk Bunker asked for clarification on whether these were Town of West Bridgewater Boards and if so, which Boards. The Principal Assessor stated they were Town of West Bridgewater Boards, with agendas currently posted on the bulletin board, however he could not recall which Boards specifically. He believed Finance Committee was one of the Boards, and asked the Principal Secretary to check.

The Principal Assessor stated CAI Technologies sent a letter stating customers were being transitioned to a new platform. Member McCarthy asked if there were improvements, because he liked the current website. The Principal Assessor stated some of the upgrades included improvements on responsiveness and security. Member McCarthy inquired on what the cost would be to upload the office Property Record Cards versus the more limited cards available online. The Principal Assessor stated he was unsure of the cost but could inquire.

Warrants/Bills Payable, Statutory Exemption Applications, and Real Estate and Personal Property Abatements, were presented for signatures.

The Principal Assessor stated he still had only received one (1) application for the Principal Assessor Position and suggested updating the job listing since the posting stated it was open until the job was filled but it had an April 1st deadline for priority consideration. Member McCarthy felt the pay could be deterring qualified candidates from applying. Clerk Bunker asked if Human Resources was asked to do a salary survey. Member McCarthy noted that a salary survey would take time and would likely bring the salary to around the current Principal Assessor's salary. However, when annual salary increases are proposed in the budget, it is always problematic. Clerk Bunker stated she did not think it would take much time believing it to

be only a few days. Member McCarthy stated it may not be cost effective and a detailed survey would take much longer because it has to be weighed, such as when comparing houses, things like the workload and amount of staff would need to be considered rather than just calling local communities and asking the Principal Assessor's current salary. The Principal Assessor added that the Town Administrator stated he was in agreement with the salary range. He also stated that the Board of Assessors could negotiate additional benefits. He stated that there were currently five (5) to eight (8) other Assessor positions advertised, and candidates may be interviewing and waiting to hear back from those other postings.

The Principal Assessor informed the Board that he had reached out to the Attorney General's office for clarification on screening applications for the Assessor Position. He stated that under the list of exemptions, purpose eight (8), a preliminary screening committee could meet in executive session to review applications, and they are tasked with presenting at least two (2) applications for the Board of Assessors consideration. He recommended they update the job posting to extend the April 1st deadline to May 1st, so applicants know the job is still open. He suggested calling the one applicant to explain the extended deadline, and advise that the application is still being considered. He also suggested changing the email address to the Human Resource Director's email going forward, and to establish a Preliminary Screening Committee comprised of the Chairwoman of the Board of Assessors, The Principal Assessor, and the Human Resource Director. A **motion** was made by Member McCarthy to make a preliminary screening committee of the Chairwoman of the Board of Assessors, the Principal Assessor, and the Human Resource Director. Seconded by the Chairwoman. Clerk Bunker objected to the committee and advised she would like to be on the committee. The Principal Assessor stated no quorum of any board may be on the screening committee together. Clerk Bunker restated she should be on the Board. She added that she often feels excluded, and would like to be on the committee. She also stated there were communication issues among the Board. The Chairwoman stated she, the Chair, will serve on the committee. The board voted on the original **motion** 2-1-0 with Clerk Bunker opposing. A **motion** was made by Member McCarthy to extend the deadline, and change the email address to the Human Resource Director. Seconded by the Chairwoman. Voted 3-0-0.

Clerk Bunker stated that the Public Records Request she submitted to the Principal Assessor was still not fully received. The Principal Assessor stated he would follow up and finish that conversation with Clerk Bunker.

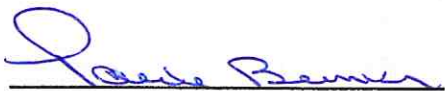
A **motion** was made by Chairwoman Smith to adjourn the Open Session and to enter into Executive Session in order to Review Applications for Abatement/Exemption/Classification relative to Purpose 7, MGL CH 59, section 60; to review and discuss strategy of pending Appellate Tax Board Cases relative to Purpose 3 and 7, MGL CH 59, section 60 - because to do so in open session could be detrimental on the Board's litigating position; and, to reconvene in Open Session at the conclusion of the Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Clerk Bunker. A **roll call vote** was taken as follows: Chairwoman Smith = affirmative, Clerk Bunker = affirmative, Member McCarthy = affirmative. The Board adjourned Open Session and entered Executive Session at approximately 6:40 P.M.

The Board reconvened in Open Session at approximately 7:19 P.M. The Chairwoman was no longer in attendance. Clerk Bunker stated that the Board had abated applications #5, 12, 19, 48, 50-52, 54-66. She added that the Board had denied applications #3, 8, 13, 14,21-47, 49, 53, 84, and 91. Member McCarthy made a **motion** to adjourn. Seconded by Clerk Bunker. Voted 2-0-0. The Board adjourned at approximately 7:20 P.M.

Next Meeting: April 20, 2022

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

Respectfully submitted,



Paula Bunker, Clerk

Prepared by Principal Secretary, Daniela Nilsson

Documents referenced during the meeting:

- *Warrants/Bills Payable, Statutory Exemption Applications, Certificates, and Denials, Statutory Exemption Monthly Lists, Real Estate and Personal Property Abatements, and any miscellaneous administrative documents referenced during the meeting*