

OPEN SESSION

The Board of Assessors met on Wednesday, June 1, 2022, at approximately 6:00 PM. Present were Chairwoman Paula Bunker, Clerk Cheryl Smith, Member Deborah Cauley, Principal Secretary Daniela Nilsson, Assistant Town Administrator/Human Resource Director Linda Torres, Town Administrator David Gagne, and Ann Williams. Also present were residents Stephen Currier, Dan Reyes, Denise Reyes, and Marcie Lee. A video recording of the meeting was documented by Community Access Television.

The Chairwoman stated that a vote needed to be taken in Open Session regarding the Open Meeting Law complaints discussed at the previous meeting. Member Cauley made a **motion** to drop both Open Meeting Law Complaints filed by the Chairwoman and the Clerk. Seconded by Clerk Smith. Voted 3-0-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes from the May 18, 2022 meeting. Clerk Smith made a **motion** to accept the Open Session meeting minutes of May 18, 2022. Seconded by Member Cauley. Voted 3-0-0.

Bills Payable and Motor Vehicle Abatements went before the Board for signatures.

Ann Williams came before the Board to interview for the vacant Principal Assessor position. Member Cauley asked if Ms. Williams would be willing to speak with tax payers interested in understanding their assessment. Ms. Williams responded that she normally has an open door policy and will stop what she is working on to discuss the valuation. Member Cauley asked if Ms. Williams believes in tax breaks for large businesses locating to West Bridgewater. The Chairwoman stated that issue would be handled through the Board of Selectmen, not through the Assessors Office. Ms. Williams added that there are no tax breaks to businesses for coming to town, however, split tax rates can help residents by giving them a tax break.

The Chairwoman asked if Ms. Williams was familiar with split tax rates. Ms. Williams confirmed she had worked in two (2) Towns that had split tax rates. The Chairwoman asked if she was familiar with big box stores. Ms. Williams stated her current Town, Hopedale, does not have big box stores but has unique properties such as a Cumberland Farms, Railroad, Airport, and marijuana facilities. She added that for the big box stores you would value them using two (2) approaches and businesses are required to submit Income and Expense forms so their valuation should be undisputed. The Chairwoman inquired about recent changes to class code "504" utility appraisals. Ms. Williams stated the Department Of Revenue suggested using appraisers for the first few years of the new valuation method, since the utility companies are fighting their valuations, and that the process was going well. The Chairwoman asked if Ms. Williams was familiar with Solar and Agricultural land. Ms. Williams stated she was familiar with both in her experience as an Assessor.

The Chairwoman asked what a typical day is like for Ms. Williams in Hopedale. Ms. Williams stated it is dependent upon on the time of the year. She added that currently she was working

on inspections, and had recently wrapped up work for their annual Town Meeting. She added that she often works with other departments. The Chairwoman inquired about the size of Hopedale. Ms. Williams stated the Town has about 2,500 parcels, and she had previously worked in Weymouth, which has about 21,000 parcels.

The Chairwoman asked what her greatest strength is. Ms. Williams stated her years of experience, her contacts and resources, as well as being patient were her greatest strengths. The Chairwoman asked what her greatest weakness is. Ms. Williams stated she spends a significant amount of time running her analytical data annually. She stated it is very time consuming, so it could be viewed as a weakness, since other assessors do not spend as much time on it. She expressed her confidence in her assessments after taking the time to run the data in different ways, multiple times.

Clerk Smith asked how many experiences she has had at the Appellate Tax Board. Ms. Williams stated she had two (2); one (1) was a residential property and one (1) was a commercial property. Clerk Smith asked how long she has been working in assessing. Ms. Williams stated she has been involved in assessing since 2003 but has been an Assessor since 2014, working her way up from a Clerk to an Assessor. Clerk Smith was curious about her inexperience in such a long time as an Assessor. Ms. Williams stated she normally negotiates before going to the Appellate Tax Board, and feels that saves money.

The Human Resource Director stated she recommends Ms. Williams for the Principal Assessor position. She stated her contract would be a 1-year contract, with a salary of \$80,000, three (3) weeks of vacation, and twelve (12) sick days.

Member Cauley made a **motion** to appoint Ms. Williams as the Principal Assessor. Seconded by the Chairwoman. Voted 2-0-1, Clerk Smith abstained. The Board congratulated Ms. Williams on her appointment. The Town Administrator recommended that Ms. Williams attend the Board of Selectmen meeting to ratify her employment, and suggested she could then work with the Human Resource Director and the Board of Assessors to identify a start date that would work for all parties. The Board of Assessors signed the employment contract.

There were no comments during the Public Comment period.

A **motion** was made by Chairwoman Bunker 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 not to reconvene in Open Session. The motion was seconded by Clerk Smith. A **roll call vote** was taken as follows: Chairwoman Bunker = affirmative, Clerk Smith = affirmative, Member Cauley = affirmative. The Board adjourned Open Session and entered Executive Session at approximately 6:25 P.M.

Next Meeting: June 15, 2022

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:

- *Warrants/Bills Payable, Motor Vehicle Abatements, and any miscellaneous administrative documents referenced during the meeting*