

**Sterling Board of Assessors
Room 109, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling MA 01564
Minutes of Meeting January 25, 2016**

Present: Donlin Murray (Don), Chairman
Michael Rivers (Mike), Vice Chairman
Robert Cutler (Bob), Clerk
Harald Scheid (Harald), Contract Regional Assessor
Becky Boucher (Becky), Associate Regional Assessor
Debbie Dreyer (Debbie) Assistant to the Assessor
Guest: Taxpayer Roger Williams (Mr. Williams)

Meeting Opened at 7:30am

Roll Call & Approval of Agenda

Rivers present, Cutler present, Murray present - along with Harald Scheid, Becky Boucher & Debbie Dreyer & guest Roger Williams.

MOTION: Mike made a motion to add the guest's name to the agenda & accept the amended version, 2nd by Bob, all in favor, aye.

Payroll, Payables, Statutory Exemption list, any abatements, warrants were signed.

NEW BUSINESS

Meet with taxpayer to discuss his Chapter 61A denial – Mr. Williams presented his situation to the Board – In 2007 he had close to 20 acres, the DCR took about 8 acres from the bottom of the pond & he cut away a couple of acres for his daughter. The town expanded his house lot to 2 acres (originally 1.5 acr) leaving him with 4.6 acres (hayed by his neighbor) which falls below the required 5 productive acres for Chapter 61A. There's also an acre & a half in the middle that Mr. Williams says is owned by both Mr. Williams & his neighbor. Mr. Williams' Chapter application was denied last year giving him till this application period to correct any issues – nothing was changed & his application was denied this year. In 2007 his son-in-law surveyed the land & came up with a discrepancy – he feels there's more acreage than shown on the GIS maps. We base our decisions on the best information available – our assessors' maps have been fairly reliable. Mr. Williams has applied for an abatement. The question is whether he should pay a surveyor to verify acreage for his Chapter application or go forward for an abatement based on his land being unbuildable. Mr. Williams has already been in touch with the Conservation Agent Matt Marro who walked the land with him & said it was unbuildable - we would need a letter confirming this.

Approve minutes **MOTION:** Mike made a motion to approve the minutes of the 12/17/15 meeting, 2nd by Bob, all in favor, aye.

Executive Session

Vote: Executive Session

8:04 EXECUTIVE SESSION - Don made a **Motion** to go into executive session under M.G.L. C59; S60 & M.G.L. 214 S1B, Clause(7) to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law: ~ for the purpose of reviewing real estate abatement applications & personal property exemption applications & their supporting documentation so that identifiable confidential information shall not be made public.

Roll Call Vote with Rule of Necessity: Rivers aye, Cutler aye, Murray aye

The Board convened in Executive session at 8:04am and reconvened in public session at 8:17am.

Final Budget Review – The budget has been submitted to Fin Com with a note saying the BOA may have some changes - the Board is still reviewing the cost for putting the assessors' field cards online.

MOTION: Mike made a motion to add the field cards online if the cost is no more than \$200, 2nd by Don, all in favor aye.

MOTION: Bob made a motion to approve the budget with the addition of \$200 for putting the field cards online, unless it's more and then the budget will be approved as submitted – 2nd by Mike, all in favor aye.

CONTRACT REGIONAL ASSESSOR (RRG) UPDATE

This is the time of year that the Form of List applications & the Income and Expense returns are coming in. This will be an interim reval year since we just came off of a full reval. We don't have a sense yet if whether the market is drifting - seems to be a static market; no dramatic changes. We'll have a better idea in a few months when we start looking at the assessment to sales ratio. We're still reviewing the abatement applications. We'll be starting the periodic inspections again once the weather gets better. Becky's working on the map changes.

Future agenda items: R.E. & P.P. abatement applications, any remaining Chapter issues, final review/online field cards

Next meeting: Monday Feb 29 @7:30am

Bob made a motion to adjourn the meeting @8:45am, 2nd by Mike, all in favor aye.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Dreyer
Assistant to the Assessor