

Sterling Board of Assessors
Room 109, Butterick Municipal Building, 1 Park St., Sterling MA 01564
Minutes of Meeting Sept 19, 2016

Present: Donlin Murray (Don), Chairman
Robert Cutler (Bob), Vice Chairman
Richard Sheppard (Dick), Clerk
Rebecca Boucher (Becky), Associate Regional Assessor
Debbie Dreyer(Debbie) Assistant to the Assessor

Meeting Opened at 7:33am

Roll Call & Approval of Agenda

Sheppard present, Cutler present, Murray present - along with Rebecca Boucher & Debbie Dreyer

MOTION: Dick made a motion to accept the agenda, 2nd by Bob, all in favor, aye.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Review & approval of previous (8/15/16) meeting's minutes

MOTION: Dick made a motion to accept the 8/15/16 meeting minutes, 2nd by Bob, all in favor – aye.

Statutory Exemption list approved & signed

Review Chapter application Statement of Income Requirement

Don was contacted by an attorney regarding the wording of “Statement of Income” on our Chapter application that said we require copies of federal and state tax income returns to verify income. The attorney said this had never been on the application before, but yet it has been on it for many years. The Board of Assessors can request either federal or state tax forms to verify farm income. We can change the wording on next year’s application to say just that we request verification of income.

MOTION: Bob made a motion to change the income verification request as noted for next year’s application, 2nd by Dick, all in favor aye.

Contract Regional Assessor (RRG) Update

Periodic Inspections

Becky said we’re doing just a little less than 500 periodic inspections. Generally inspectors are only comfortable doing residential inspections, but we do need some commercial done in order to keep our dates up so we inspect our every property in town at least once every 9 years. When Becky made the query to do the inspections she came up with about 70 commercial and/or industrial properties that need to be inspected. Dave Hurlbut who is doing the residential periodic inspections isn’t comfortable doing commercial. Becky contacted Ed Bonnell & he said he would be able & willing to do them. The question is - does it fit in our budget - it was trimmed by \$1,000 for this year. The inspection would consist of a revised photo to verify square footage & condition of the building – estimating it would take 3-4 days @\$16/hr – about \$300-\$400. Don will ask the Finance Committee for \$500 to cover this expense.

Carlson Forestry Plan

This past year all the 61A & 61B lands have been researched & verified. Becky is now looking into all the forestry land which only has to be renewed every 10 years. Previously, the all the Chapter applications were filed in folders for the year they were submitted – so if you pulled a property file it was basically incomplete because the Chapter apps would be in all different folders making it difficult to keep track of who should & shouldn’t be in Chapter. The new filing system would put the applications in each property’s folder making it easier to research & especially easier to audit the forestry plans for expiration. Still much re-organizing to do, but we’re getting there. In this process Becky has come across some forestry plans that are up this year & letters were sent.

John Carlson's forestry plan is up this year – on checking his file, the only plans in it were either old or undated. When Becky tried to call his forester, she found out that he died & there was a reference to someone who was now covering. Becky called the new forester covering, but hasn't heard back from him yet. Becky has put together a spread sheet of all the Chapter land & this now will be kept updated & the applications will be compared with this every year as they come in.

Chapter 61B Policy

The Kroll case was just heard in ATB court – we don't know the outcome yet, but the results will determine whether or not we have to re-visit our draft 61B policy.

LA15 Interim Year Adjustment, LA4, Assessment Classification Report

Becky's been working on the depreciation tables – the values right now are at assessment/sales ratio .948 (aiming for .95). Our timeline is right on line for Oct. 1st.

Agenda for next mtg: Vote for Classification, Chapter land review, signatures for Gateway

Next meeting: Monday, Oct. 17th @ 7:30am

Dick made a motion to adjourn the meeting @8:40am, 2nd by Bob, all in favor aye.

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Dreyer
Assistant to the Assessor