

Assessors Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2015

Meeting was held on Thursday February 5, 2015 and called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Sandy Lilly  
Present: Sandy Lilly (SL), Rick Chandler (RC), Donna Sarro (DS), Jennifer Morse (JM)  
Audience: Robin Sherman, Deb Nicholson

**Signatures- All documents signed by all members unless otherwise noted**

Monthly List RE/PP – January 2015 – Levy Year 2015

Monthly List Motor Vehicle – January 2015 – Levy Year 2014

Warrants to Collect – Revised

Warrant to Collect Motor Vehicle Commitment #7 and Commitment #1

**Minutes**

A motion was made by SL and seconded by DS to accept the meeting minutes from January 12, 2015.

**Vote: SL- Aye, DS- Aye 2-0**

RC arrived to the meeting at 6:07 p.m.

**Appointments**

Robin Sherman representing the Ashfield House LLC – Rural Development Inc. was present to discuss the FY2015 abatement request filed on January 20, 2015. The application was read aloud by SL including the reason abatement sought – RDI's opinion of the value has not changed since it conducted an appraisal to support its 2012 abatement request. Improvements to the property have been completed, but it is not clear whether this will result in break-even operations, and the property is not in the position to repay loans or contribute to reserves for capital improvements in the future. RDI would be happy to provide more information and to meet with the BOA to discuss operations of the property and our opinions in the value. RDI is also willing to negotiate the value of the property with the town. Attached was a copy of meeting minutes giving Ms. Sherman the authorization to represent the Ashfield House.

Ms. Sherman expressed that there was no desire for a legal battle and they would be willing to negotiate a price similar to 2012. She stated that they would be willing to provide financial documentation. She explained that there are restrictions on the rents that can be charged and that it is not a normal property. Ms. Sherman explained that there is over a million dollars in liens on the property so it would not sell for full value.

SL read aloud and gave Ms. Sherman a copy of the email from the Department of Revenue stating that the Board of Assessors could not set the FY15 value of the Ashfield House LLC based on the negotiated value of \$475,000. That the building must be assessed at full value or the income approach. Duane Adams from Mayflower adjusted the value for FY15 based on the income approach. RC suggested that perhaps each side would get an outside appraiser. The Ashfield House LLC believes the current value of the property to be \$210,000.

SL will contact Joanne Graziano of the Department of Revenue for clarification and next steps. SL explained the steps for abatement to Ms. Sherman.

A motion was made by RC and seconded by DS to defer decision until after more investigation. **Vote: SL- Aye, RC- Aye, DS- Aye 3-0**

Ms. Sherman and Ms. Nicholson left the meeting.

## **Old Business**

Release Lien – Lenny Roberts - JM explained to the board that Mr. Roberts lawyer recommends removing all liens on the property. Mr. Roberts is selling 8 acres that have not been in Chapter 61 but show on the recorded liens of 1989 and 2002. Both liens releases can be placed on one document as verified by the Registry of Deeds. JM reached out to Assessor Alice Wozniak from Heath on guidance as to how to move forward. Mr. Roberts will have to provide the Board of Assessors with a map/survey showing the land sold and will have to place a new Chapter 61 Lien on the remaining acres. The 8 acres being sold do not have a rollback tax as they are taxed as LUC 106 – outbuildings. **The release lien was signed by all members of the board and notarized by JM.**

Buckland Ashfield Town Line – At this time the question has been posed to the head of the Massachusetts GIS program. The original letter from Franco and email from Pam went to the legal division of the DOR to Joanne Graziano of the DOR/DLS to the Mass GIS.

ATB Luce vs. Ashfield - The ATB split the difference of the value of the property. **The abatement certificate was signed by all members of the board.**

Budget FY2016 - Discussion on the Budget for FY16 included an increase in the Assessors Clerk hours from 15 to 19 per week. JM stated that this would allow more office hours, time for projects, filing, data entry, property card storage and deed binding, mapping projects, etc... JM expressed the interest in learning more about the appraisal and value setting. The BOA was considering a new software system that would allow data entry from the field but Ashfield does not have the current cell service for this program. The proposed budget was sent to Mary for submission. The BOA will meet with the Finance Committee and Selectboard at 7 p.m. on February 17, 2015.

Town Report 2014 - Annual town report was reviewed and sent to the municipal assistant clerk.

## **New Business**

None

## **Other**

FRCOG Inspection Program- Jim Hawkins stated that FRCOG does routinely check on open permits that have not obtained a certificate of occupancy. He also stated that it is the responsibility of the Board of Assessors to alert his office of any property owners who are living in a property that has not received a certificate.

FCAA Dinner on January 22<sup>nd</sup> - Discussion on the FCAA Dinner and presentation of the Hawley ATB case was enjoyed by all. JM stated that a future meeting may include a presentation on Chapter Lands.

## **Next Meetings:**

February 17 - 6 p.m. regular meeting and 7 p.m. meeting with the Finance Committee and Selectboard  
February 18 - 8:30 a.m. Call to order at Town Hall followed by field visit to 376 March Road for 9 a.m.  
March 2 – 6 p.m.

A motion was made by SL and seconded by DS to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m. and enter into executive session – reasoning: exemptions and abatements, and not to return to the regular meeting. **Roll Call Vote: SL- Aye, RC- Aye, DS- Aye 3-0**

Submitted:

Jennifer Morse (Assessors Clerk)  
February 10, 2015

Approved: 2/17/15 Vote: 3-0