

**Board of Assessors  
December 10, 2015**

**Members Present:** Relf Fogg, Chairperson; Rosemary Stewart; Arlene Fogg; Cynthia Bickford, Assessing Technician; and Connie Twombly, Selectmen Liaison.

Mr. Fogg called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and led those present to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also Present: Donna Martin, videotaping; Dave Lee and Don Stewart.

**Appointment** – None

**Unscheduled Matters/Public Comment** – None

**New Business** – **BTLA Cases Docket No. 27903-14PT and Docket No. 27702-14PT.** Ms. Bickford informed the Board there are two new BTLA cases. One is a property valuation case which will be handled by Rod Wood and the second is currently in litigation with the Town, therefore the Town Attorney will handle this case (regarding property/town line).

**Abatements.** Ms. Bickford asked the Board to abate the following second issue tax bills for the following properties which were taken by a Tax Collector's Deed, all recorded on November 3, 2015. If these properties are repurchased from the Town the taxes will be recouped. The prior property owners have 3 years from the date of deed to repurchase. The abatements are for the following: Map 10, Lot 4, Site 17; Map 8, Lot 20; Map 12, Lot 9; Map 34, Lot 24; Map 180, Lot 72; Map 184, Lot 53; and Map 12, Lot 8. Mr. Fogg moved to abate the taxes for the properties deeded to the Town of Wakefield as tax acquired properties; the deeds were recorded on November 3, 2015. Mrs. Stewart seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mrs. Stewart would like to know the results of the call backs this year. Ms. Bickford will tally the numbers and report back to the Board at the next meeting. Mrs. Stewart states if this is not successful she would like to make a motion to go back to the 5 year process instead of the 10 year cyclical review. She indicated she had spoken with other communities at the class she had attended and the other communities indicated the 10 year cycle is too long. She feels it would be more productive to go back to the old process which is to visit 20% of the properties over a 5 year period.

Mrs. Stewart repeated her motion which was to go back to the 5 year cyclical review. Ms. Bickford asked for verification, and indicated the motion is to go back to the 5 year cyclical review with no call backs. Mrs. Stewart replied no they will just do them in the first year. Ms. Bickford stated there were no call backs done in the past up until this past year. The current procedure is to complete year one and if no one was home send a post card for an appointment on year two and so on, resulting in the 10 year process. Mrs. Fogg wants to table the discussion. Mr. Fogg seconded the motion for further discussion.

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Mr. Fogg requested this item to be added to the next agenda. Mr. Fogg withdrew his motion to second. Motion then fails. The item will be tabled for the next meeting and Ms. Bickford will have the numbers of both the post cards mailed out and the number of appointments scheduled.

**Correspondence – BTLA Decision – Docket No. 27230-13PT.** Ms. Bickford indicated the appeal for abatement was denied. Mrs. Fogg asked for cost in attorney fees. Mrs. Stewart indicated there is no cost for Rod Wood to attend these. Mrs. Bickford believes it was approximately \$1,100.00 for the hearing at the BTLA.

**DRA Community Action Report.** Craig Nichols had stopped by to pick up the USPAP Report for the Statistical Update Rod Wood had completed.

**Sales Information.** Ms. Bickford provided the sales information to the Board.

**Administrative Matters – Board Minutes.** Mrs. Stewart moved to accept the minutes of October 15, 2015 as written. Mrs. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Mrs. Stewart inquired about the date we would receive the full ratio report. Ms. Bickford believes January or February timeframe, but it could be sooner since she filed the report early.

Ms. Bickford informed the public on November 18, 2015 the Board signed off on the equalization report and this has been submitted to the DRA. The Board also approved the Property Tax Warrant (most of us have received our tax bill) in the amount of \$5,938,940.00.

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the contract for Annual Assessing Services by R. B. Wood & Associates, LLC. Mrs. Fogg seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

**Unscheduled matters-** Mrs. Twombly inquired about the BTLA decision and asked how many times it was denied. Ms. Bickford believes it started back in 2011; the residents filed to both the BTLA and Superior Court and the Town mediated both 2011 and 2012 tax years. There was a filing again for 2013 and the decision above reflected the 2013 tax year. Mrs. Twombly also inquired about the legal fees and wanted to know how much this case has cost her as a taxpayer. Ms. Bickford stated the town has paid \$18,150.00 in legal fees for the Pine River Pond group since their initial filings.

Mrs. Stewart pointed out Rod Wood's contract includes that he represent the Town alone for abatements at no extra cost. She also indicated the only reason why there are attorney fees is because someone invited the Town Attorney, the Town Attorney is not required for mediation. Ms. Bickford replied the Town Attorney was involved when some of the residents from Pine River Pond filed to

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Superior Court. She reminded the Board some residents chose to file to the BTLA and other filed to Superior Court.

Mrs. Twombly states there are many people who have a hard time paying their taxes and for them to take on this expense is really a shame. Mrs. Twombly indicated she has been told in the past this would stop and she hopes this will be the end.

Mrs. Stewart believes there are properties on Pine River Pond which are grossly under assessed which is costing the Town hundreds of thousands of dollars and this is what she was trying to correct. Mrs. Stewart stated it is not corrected and she will accept it. Mrs. Stewart indicated she will accept the BTLA decision, but the fact that the Town is losing hundreds of thousands of dollars since 2011 because of poor assessing is a fact and still continues.

**Adjournment** – There being no further business, Mr. Fogg moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 a.m. Mrs. Stewart seconded the motion, which passed 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Bickford  
Assessing Technician

Approval of Minutes:

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Relf Fogg, Chairperson

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Rosemary Stewart

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Arlene Fogg