

Minutes - Board of Assessors Meeting – July 14, 2022

Present: Walter McDonough was present via Zoom. Arthur Tzouros was present at the Town Hall.

Absent: Barry Pollack.

Others: David Davison ATM/Finance, Chip Davis, Director of Assessing (retired), Melissa Motta, Director of Assessing.

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 8:35 a.m. The meeting was recorded by Zoom.

All votes taken during this meeting were by roll call.

8:37a.m. **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. McDonough, seconded by Mr. Tzouros, to approve the minutes from the prior two meetings. The motion carried 2-0.

8:39a.m. **Update on Open Appellate Tax Board (ATB) Cases**

Ms. Motta noted there are 7 upcoming ATB cases, 6 commercial, 1 residential, 4 by two attorneys, 3 by a third attorney.

Mr. Tzouros asked if 7 cases was typical, and Mr. Davis answered that there are usually between 5 and 10 cases each year. Mr. Davis outlined the ATB process.

Ms. Motta noted that up until a decision is rendered by the ATB, the Town has an opportunity to negotiate a settlement if warranted.

Mr. Davis explained that preparation for a commercial case can be expensive for both sides, so agreeing on a settlement can be a prudent decision to make.

8:44a.m. **Overlay Surplus**

Mr. Davison stated that Kate Fitzpatrick, Town Manager had requested a release of \$3 million from the Overlay account, and reminded the Board that the Overlay account is to reserve funds for possible payout of exemptions, abatements, ATB settlements, and ATB decisions.

Mr. Davison stated that as of June 30, 2022, uncollected real estate taxes for FY2021 and prior years totaled \$6,972. Taxes that are uncollected due to a tax deferral agreement and have a recorded lien total \$1,929,000. Outstanding Personal Property Tax for FY2021 and prior years totals \$827,000. Overlay reserve for ATB cases is estimated at 10% of the original tax plus interest, or \$275,028. The total potential liability is estimated at \$3,038,000.

Mr. Davison stated that the Overlay Balance as of June 30, 2022 was \$5,900,000, and that the Town Manager is requesting a release of \$3,000,000 from Overlay, which would leave a balance in Overlay of \$2,900,000, which he thinks is adequate, and that the Overlay will be replenished when the FY23 tax rate is set in December.

A motion was made by Mr. McDonough, and seconded by Mr. Tzouros to approve the Overlay request. The motion carried 2-0.

8:53a.m. **General Updates & Scheduling**

Mr. Davison stated that he has requested that Mr. Davis assist and train Ms. Motta on the Tyler CAMA system, answer any questions related to open ATB cases, and answer any other questions that may arise. Mr. Davis agreed to continue to assist until at least the end of calendar year 2022.

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Ms. Motta stated that she is on day 4 of her role in Needham, and that Mr. Davis, the Assessing Staff, and all others in Town Hall have been very helpful. Ms. Motta stated that she has already been talking with taxpayers about their property and assessment, and that the conversations have gone well.

Mr. Davison stated that he did not foresee the need for a Board meeting until October, unless there were any issues with the ATB cases.

Mr. Davison stated that the Tax Classification Hearing with the Select Board was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday December 6 at 6p.m. Mr. Davison stated that Needham has been at the full shift from residential to commercial since the early 1990s.

8:58a.m. **Unanticipated Topics**

None

8:50a.m. **Motion to Adjourn**

A motion was made by Mr. McDonough, and seconded by Mr. Tzouros to adjourn. The motion carried 2-0.

9:00a.m. **Meeting Adjourned**