

December 8, 2020 Board of Assessors VIRTUAL Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Chairman Jeffrey Quackenbush and member Howard Shpetner.

Members Absent: Susan Reyes.

Also present: Administrative Assessor Kevin Rudden and Assessors' Clerk Leslie Bracebridge.

Chairman Jeffrey Quackenbush opened the meeting at 6:32 PM online using ZOOM Meeting ID 813 3625 8081, Password 6SWcLk.

The November 9, 2020 meeting minutes were edited and approved, and the November 17, 2020 meeting minutes were approved as written.

Motor Vehicle and Trailer Excise Commitment #6: Dated November 18, 2020 in the amount of \$3,733.42 was approved for Assessors' signature stamps.

The following Accountant Report was approved for signature stamps:

- **Motor Vehicle Abatements:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Abated</u>
2020	November (2020)	\$175.45

No Board member objected to Leslie's proposal, that in keeping with previous documents coming in during COVID, she will use Board members' signature stamps to approve incoming exemption applications on routine applications, for applicants who have previously received the exemption. She will bring new applications, and any questions to the Board for their approval/consideration.

The FY 20 Annual Assessors Report as drafted by Kevin with edits from Board members was approved.

Administrative Assessor's Report:

1. **A new local abatement form**, intended to supplement the Department of Revenue (DOR) abatement application received first review. Since some of the boxed text was illegible once emailed, and since Kevin has received more ideas from other towns, which use a local supplemental abatement application form, Kevin will make some adjustments to the form and send it out as a PDF for consideration and approval at the next Assessors' meeting.
2. **The tax classification hearing was re-opened, and a new tax rate set at the November 24, 2020 Select Board meeting**, reflecting DOR's higher values figure. The final tax rate dropped by 5 more cents from the figure used on November 17, to a DOR approved rate of \$22.61/\$1000 of valuation for FY 21. There have been some challenges related to the Assessors' valuing Vision program getting the information to the Collector's billing Point program. As of tonight, there is 1 last problem to resolve. Kevin thinks that he knows where the problem lies and hopes that the bill in error can be manually corrected and then mailed.
3. **A level-funded budget has been submitted to the Finance Committee**, except for an increase for MainStreet Maps Inc. due to a task of reporting E-911 numbers, which they have been doing as a courtesy for the last 7 years but can no longer afford to do for free. There was also an increase to the Vision maintenance line. Kevin will meet with the Finance Committee in January to review the Assessors' department budget request.
4. **Kevin requested permission from the Board to draft a letter to the Planning Board** reiterating Kevin's concern with the new Solar Bylaw amendment. Kevin had previously

brought his concern to the Planning Board that 1 of the solar districts within the bylaw was completely on state-owned land, and another consisted primarily of state-owned land. If a solar project were built on state-owned land, the revenue from that project would go to the state, not to the town. Kevin would like to see the revenue from any solar project in Shutesbury go to the town, not to the state, and would therefore like the Planning Board to make adjustments to their allowed solar districts. Since the Planning Board may be revising the amendment at the next Annual Town Meeting, Kevin hopes to be heard through a letter. No member objected to Kevin proceeding with the letter.

Board member questions and comments: Howard inquired as to how soon in-person meetings might resume. With the up-tic in COVID numbers in our town and state prompting resumed higher precautions, no one predicts in-person meetings to be happening soon.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5:30 PM on January 12, 2021. Kevin will contact Board members if anything comes up requiring a meeting sooner. Leslie described the tax commitment warrants, receiving the Board's understanding that it may be possible to authorize with signature stamps in December for Assessors' review and approval at the January 12 meeting, but it is possible a short end of December meeting will be necessary.

Assessors adjourned at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on January 12, 2021

**Leslie Bracebridge
Assessors' Clerk**

List of Documents used at the meeting:

1. December 8, 2020 meeting agenda.
2. November 9 and 17, 2020 draft meeting minutes.
3. November MV Excise tax abatement summary to the Accountant as detailed in minutes.
4. Motor Vehicle and Trailer Excise Tax Commitment #6.
5. Draft FY 20 Annual Assessors' Report.
6. Draft local abatement application supplemental form.