

## October 16, 2024 DRAFT Board of Assessors VIRTUAL Meeting Minutes

**Board Members Present:** Chairman Howard Shpetner and Members: J. April Stein and George Arvanitis.

**Also present:** Administrative Assessor David Burgess, and Assessors' Clerk Leslie Bracebridge.

**Guests:** Town Collector: F. Ellen McKay.

**1. Chairman Howard Shpetner opened the meeting at 6:31 PM** online using ZOOM Meeting ID: 836 2478 5270, Passcode: V7U3mN. Phone: 1.646.558.8656, Passcode: 651606.

**2. A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 11, 2024 meeting minutes:** No changes were offered. Approved as written: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

**3. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the following Accountant report:**

**Motor Vehicle Abatements:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Abated</u>
2024	September (2024)	\$637.94

No changes were offered. Approved as provided: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

**4. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the following motor vehicle commitment:**

<u>Commit. Date</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Total Commitment Amount</u>
September 25, 2024	5 <sup>th</sup> for 2024	\$6,588.90

Collector McKay offered that the First Commitment each calendar year is always the biggest, with subsequent commitments often the result of mid-year car sales, trailers and motorcycles. She stated that the town may see 2200 registrations annually. Approved with no changes offered: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

**5. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the following complete Chapter 61 applications as reviewed by Assessors' office staff, and available for Assessors' office reviews:**

Two Chapter 61 10-year Forestry renewals, with an Assessors' signature needed on the 10-year certificates, Two Chapter 61A Agricultural annual renewals, with one being a deed transfer from the deceased owner to the children, and thus needing an Assessor's signature on the new lien certificate to be filed at the Franklin Registry Five Chapter 61B Recreation annual renewal applications. Arrangements will be made for Howard to come to the office to sign all certificates as required, and as voted. Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

**6. A motion was made and seconded not to approve an application for 3(ABC) status for 45 Schoolhouse RD as reviewed and recommended by the Administrative Assessor:** The application did not meet the statutory requirements of a charitable organization. Arvanitis - Aye, Stein – Aye, Shpetner – Aye.

**7. FY 25 Means-Tested Exemption Updates:** The Select Board voted to award 50% of each individual Circuit Breaker Credit, which applicants received on their own individual 2023 Massachusetts Income Tax Returns, as the amounts for their Town of Shutesbury Means-Tested Exemptions.

**8. FY 25 Tax Rate updates including preparations for the Select Board Tax Classification Hearing:**

- The Tax Classification Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, October 30 at 6:15 PM:  
David will make the Assessors' presentation and provide informational documents for the Select Board. There will be a split in the rates in order to compensate for the Means-Tested Exemptions: One rate for Commercial, Industrial and Personal and a higher rate for Residential properties.
- The state has additional PILOT money to distribute to cities and towns this year:  
Some Western MA Assessors feel the state valuation formula for Western MA state-owned land to be unfairly biased in favor of Eastern MA municipalities; DCR lands are more fairly compensated.

**9. Future host for the Assessors' meetings after the Town Administrator change:** Assessors will wait for more direction from the Interim Town Administrator, the Town Clerk, or the Select Board. Until these decisions are settled out, as a last resort, Assessors can resume in-person meetings, if need be.

**Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting:**

1. Collector McKay summarized a Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) initiative to pass the burden of assessing the values of, and the billing and collecting of unregistered vehicles onto municipalities. She credited objections from the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers, and the Massachusetts Collectors Association for causing the RMV to “back-off” this pursuit at present. Collector McKay cautioned that Assessors and Collectors need to be watchful of similar RMV initiatives that do not include input from the respective Associations.

**Schedule Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 4, 2024 at 6:30 PM.

**A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 7:30 PM:** Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

**Respectfully submitted, as approved on December 18,2024,**

**Leslie Bracebridge  
Assessors' Clerk**

**List of Documents used at the meeting:**

1. October 16, 2024 meeting agenda.
2. September 11, 2024 draft meeting minutes.
3. Summaries to Accountant as detailed in minutes.
4. Calendar 2024 Fifth Motor Vehicle Commitment to Collector