

December 18, 2024 Board of Assessors VIRTUAL Meeting Minutes

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

Also present: Assessors' Clerk Leslie Bracebridge.

Guests: Interim Town Administrator Gabriele Voelker opened the Zoom application, greeted Assessors, and passed the hosting tasks to Member George Arvanitis.

1. **Chairman Howard Shpetner opened the meeting at 6:30 PM** online using ZOOM Meeting ID: 861 6856 2529, Phone: 1.929.205.6099, Passcode: 684178.
2. **A motion was made and seconded to approve the October 16, 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 reports:**

- **Motor Vehicle Abatements:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Abated</u>
2024	October (2024)	\$11.65
2024	November (2024)	\$75.00
2024	December (2024)	\$49.94

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>
November 25, 2024	6 th for 2024	\$4,213.21

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

5. **A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the following FY 25 commitments:**

<u>Commit. Date</u>	<u>Commitment</u>	<u>Total Commitment Amount</u>
December 11, 2024	Actual Real Estate	\$2,740,842.75
December 11, 2024	Actual Personal Property	\$187,536.98
December 11, 2024	Actual CPA Surcharge	\$31,924.10

Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

6. **A motion was made and seconded to approve Assessors' Form 1 calling for personal property forms of lists and 3(ABC) lists including amounts of receipts and expenditures for Assessors' signature stamps:** No changes were offered. Approved as provided: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

7. **A motion was made and seconded to take the following actions relative the Chapter 61, Ch1A, and 61B applications for Chairman Shpetner to sign before a Notary and for use of signature stamps:**

- Motion to release a classified tax lien on property previously owned by Robert and Margaret Gage, T-8, located on Sand Hill Road, as the property was sold to the Town of Amherst. No changes were offered. Approved as provided: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.
- Motion to abate a real estate tax in the amount of \$322.61 on property owned by Robert and Margaret Gage, T-8, located on Sand Hill Road, as the property was sold to the Town of Amherst. No changes were offered. Approved as provided: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.
- Motion made to approve three 10-year Ch. 61 Forestry renewal applications, and approve one Ch. 61 Forestry application of land previously under Ch.61, but now with new owners, and corresponding new liens and releases to be filed at the Franklin Registry. Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.
- Motion made to approve 1 annual Ch.61A renewal application, and 1 Chapter 61A renewal application under new ownership, and corresponding lien. Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.
- Howard will communicate with Administrative Assessor Burgess about communicating with a property owner about a late Chapter 61A application on a property previously considered for a 3(ABC) application.
- Motion made to approve 12 Chapter 61B Recreation renewal applications. Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

7. Old and New Business and updates:

1. The FY 25 Exemption applications have been mailed out to all people who have previously requested or qualified for personal exemptions. Any applicant can request an application right up to the April 1 due date. Since completed exemption applications are not public documents, they cannot be reviewed or discussed at open meetings. Therefore, the following procedure was developed: The Administrative Assessor will review and approve (or deny) the applications. The Assessors' Clerk will prepare the public monthly Accountant's Report for the meetings based on the Administrative Assessors' recommendations. The Assessors will go to the Assessors' office individually to review all paperwork and approvals, as desired, prior to the meetings. Once the Accountant reports are approved at a Board meeting, the Assessors' Clerk will prepare, mail, and distribute approval certificates, and the corresponding Accountant reports using the Assessors' signature stamps.
2. Assessors reviewed a draft FY 2026 department budget, as they will meet with the Finance Committee on January 7, 2025. As a member of the Finance Committee, George is seeking more information on PILOTS, anticipated revenues, and new growth. The 2 Roy Bishop lines will be combined into one as requested. Howard will communicate with Administrative Assessor David Burgess regarding George's questions. Leslie will call Vision to get exact budget numbers for FY 2026.
3. The Technical Information Release TIR-24-10: Annual Update of Real Estate Tax Credit for certain Persons Aged 65 and Older, reports that for tax year 2024, the maximum credit amount is \$2,730, up from the \$2590 Circuit Breaker Tax Credit amount in use for FY 2025. The amount was \$1100 when the town considered approval of the Means-Tested Exemption in 2018. The Assessors will need to request a warrant article on the 2026 Annual Town Meeting Warrant to extend the exemption in FY 27.

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

1. A motion was made and seconded to approve an unpaid vacation for Assessors' Clerk Bracebridge. Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.
2. Interim Town Administrator Gabriel Voelker has announced that expense reports will now be online at Shutesbury.org, for all departments to access at any time at their convenience: 3rd tab on the top drop-down menu, and click on “departments.
3. Assessors agreed that for the purpose of hosting Zoom meetings, George's will be the primary email address, and Howard's will be the back-up email address as requested on a survey distributed by then Interim Town Administrator.

9. Schedule Next Meeting: Meetings were scheduled for January 15, 2025 at 6:30 PM and February 12, 2025 at 6:30 PM. If there is not enough business to require a January meeting, with David's approval, Leslie will contact Assessors to cancel the January meeting.

10. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 7:55 PM: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on January 15, 2025,

Leslie Bracebridge
Assessors' Clerk

List of Documents used at the meeting:

1. December 18 2024 meeting agenda.
2. October 16, 2024 draft meeting minutes.
3. Summaries to Accountant as detailed in minutes.
4. Actual FY 2025 Real Estate, Personal Property, and CPA Commitments to Collector
5. MA Dept. of Revenue Form.
6. Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B lien certificates,
7. Draft FY 26 budget.
8. Zoom questionnaire.