

April 16, 2025 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.

1. Chairman Howard Shpetner opened the meeting at 7:00 PM online using ZOOM Meeting ID: 818 2317 9883, Phone: 1.929.205.6099. Howard identified all people present and announced that the meeting was being recorded.

2. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Feb. 12, and the March 27, 2025 meeting minutes:

No changes were offered. Both were approved as written: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

3. Old Business Updates from meeting minutes review:

Howard: Offered to contact Roy Bishop Associates to determine if they are able to provide the administrative assessing services needed by Shutesbury after June 30, 2025.

April: The Personnel Board will review and update the Administrative Assessor job description on April 24.

Leslie: Will review the job description with David for possible updates and send suggestions along to April.

George: Suggested that even if not available Bishop Associates might be asked to offer any leads.

Perhaps Bishop Associates could train someone interested in the position through the FY 26 recap.

David: Someone needs to formally call RRG; Howard offered to call them.

4. Personal Exemptions: The following actions, based on prior review of non-public documents were made:

- Real Property Exemptions:**

<u>Map & Lot</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Clause</u>	<u>Approved/Denied</u>	<u>Certificate Date</u>
F-12	201 Leverett RD	22	Approved	April 16, 2025
R-9	118 Baker RD	22	Denied	

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

5. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax

Abatements, as listed on the March 2025 Accountant Report: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

6. 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>
2025	March (2025)	\$1,624.77

- Real Property Exemptions:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Exempted</u>
2025	March (2025)	\$0.00
2025	April (2025)	\$400.00

- Community Preservation Act Exemptions:**

<u>Commit. Year</u>	<u>Report Date</u>	<u>Total Amount Abated</u>
2025	March (2025)	\$0.00

The “zero” reports were created so that finance officials would know that reports had not been overlooked.

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

7. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps the following Motor Vehicle

<u>Commitment:</u>	<u>Commit. Date</u>	<u>Commitment #</u>	<u>Total Commitment Amount</u>
	March 24, 2025	2 nd for 2025	\$34,373.88

No changes were offered. Motion approved: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

8. A motion was made and seconded to approve for signature stamps 2 Chapter 61B renewal applications (D-107 and ZM-15) and 1 Chapter 61B confirmatory lien release (H-46): Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

9. A motion was made and seconded to recommend to the Select Board the following warrant articles for the May 31, 2025 Annual Town Meeting:

Article 1: To see if the town will accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22I, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F by the percentage increase in the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the previous year as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue, to be effective for the applicable exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025.

Article 2: To see if the town will accept General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22J, which authorizes an annual increase in the amount of the exemption granted under General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 22, Clause 22A, Clause 22B, Clause 22C, Clause 22E and Clause 22F by **(50 to 100% - Select Board to vote the amount for the warrant article)** of the personal exemption amount, subject to the conditions in Clause 22J, to be effective for the applicable exemptions granted for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2025.

- The options for these increased benefit amounts for statutory Veterans exemptions are made possible by August 2024 legislation: An Act Honoring, Empowering and Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans (“HERO” Act) Chapter 178 of the Acts of 2024.
- The additional cost of the increased benefits to Veterans will be fully assumed by the town, and not reimbursed by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR).
- The wording for the articles is as recommended by the DOR, Division of Local Services (DLS) in Bulletin-2024-5.
- The increase of the benefit amount in article 2 can be anywhere from 50 to 100%, and is to be decided by a vote of the Select Board for placement on the town meeting article. Using a financial analysis provided by David, **a motion was made and seconded that the Assessors recommend the amount be 100%, if the Select Board seek Assessors’ input: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.** The percentage will remain constant unless a new recommendation is made by the Select Board and then approved at a subsequent town meeting.
- If both articles pass at Town Meeting, based on David’s analysis, which was based upon the most recent number of eligible veterans, the approximate impact on tax revenue would be a \$4,000 decrease.

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

1. The DOR is offering a Zoom presentation entitled “*The Role of Assessors*” on Thursday April 17 from 10 AM to Noon. It is by pre-registration. Leslie pre-registered so any Assessor wishing to watch the program in real time, can do so by coming to the office, and/or, if provided by DOR, a link will be sent to Assessors after the Zoom presentation, to view at their convenience.
2. New Town Administrator Hayley Bolton will be holding a Department Head meeting on Tuesday May 6 at 9:30 AM. Assessors are invited, as are David and Leslie.

11. Schedule Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 at 6:30 PM.

12. A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:07 PM: Arvanitis - aye, Stein – aye, Shpetner – aye.

Respectfully submitted, as approved on May 14, 2025,

**Leslie Bracebridge
Assessors’ Clerk**

List of Documents used at the meeting:

1. April 16 2025 meeting agenda.
2. February 12, and March 27, 2025 draft meeting minutes.
3. Summaries to Accountant as detailed in minutes.
4. Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Commitment 2 to the Collector
5. MA Dept. of Revenue Division of Local Services Bulletin-2024-5
6. Financial analysis prepared by Administrative Assessor, David Burgess