

MINUTES
TOWN OF MONTAGUE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT
1 Avenue A (2nd Floor) Turners Falls, MA
June 1, 2020

A meeting of the Montague Board of Assessors was held via Zoom on Monday, June 1, 2020. Assessors present: Ann Cenzano and Karen Tonelli, Director of Assessing. Chairman Paul Emery attended the meeting remotely. Also present remotely were Kip Komosa, Natalie and Clifford Spatcher. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Emery at 3:30 p.m.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2020 meeting as well as the Executive Session meeting of that same date. The Board voted unanimously to approve as printed.

The Board reviewed the letter sent by Clifford and Natalie Spatcher regarding their application for Chapter 61A. Clifford explained that he had spoken with the Clerk at the ATB who indicated the statute states that if the board did not take action within a specific time frame the application is approved. Karen explained the reason why the Board denied the application and asked if they felt they met the two year requirement and Clifford responded that the land had been farmed by Natalie's family for many years prior. Karen suggested that she should inspect the property and report back to the Board at their next meeting.

Henry Komosa had sent an email stated he disagreed with the Board's decision to remove the remaining parcels he owns from Chapter 61A. He asked what the Board based their decision on. Karen explained that topography, brush and trees would have prevented the minimum of 5 acres necessary to be actively devoted to agricultural. The Board did not feel there was any reason to change their decision.

The Board signed Fy2020 Warrants to the Collector For Additional rollback taxes due on Parcel 51-0-100 as follows:

Town: \$2,966.28
MCFD: \$ 207.71
MLD: \$ 14.33

The Board signed a Proforma Tax Warrant for 41K Street – a former church (tax exempt) That was recently purchased Taxes Due To Town: \$817.09; TFFD: 131.61.

The Assessors voted to deny a MVE application submitted by CAB East LLC due to late filing date. The Assessors also voted to deny a MVE application submitted by Michael Boulanger because he leased the vehicle and is not the owner of the vehicle.

The Board signed MVE commitments for 2014 for \$87.92 and 2013 for \$14.58.

The Assessors signed monthly summary of abatements issued in April, 2020 totaling \$11,092.73 for FY2020 real estate and \$893.71 for **2020** Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes.

The Assessors signed monthly summary of abatements issued in May, 2020 totaling \$0 for real estate and \$870.13 for **2018** MVE; \$1,748.65 for **2019** MVE and \$1,764.30 for **2020** MVE Taxes.

The Assessors reviewed the income and expense spreadsheet prepared by Karen relative to a tax agreement for the solar facility which will be built on the Burn Dump (Phase 2). Kearsarge will be capping the land fill area which contains approximately __- acres. The solar facility size is 2.8 MW and will have battery storage capacity as well as a canopy with parking under it.

The Board members reviewed the Memorandum of Agreement prepared by the Gill Assessors relative to sharing costs and other details for the FY2022 hydro facility appraisal. Contrary to Karen's conversation with Gill Assessors Tim Storrow and Lynda Hodsdon Mayo, the language in the agreement reflected a cost split of 85/15. Conversations at the meetings held with the four towns regarding this issue were very clear in that all towns would bear equal costs in the appraisal. Based upon Gill's prior agreement of equal sharing of costs, the Board is not interested in signing this agreement. Karen will inform Lynda.

On a related matter, Karen proposed to the Board that we consider a multi-year appraisal for the valuation of the two hydro facilities beginning in FY2022. The benefit would be two-fold in that the appraisal cost would be spread out over five (5) year period of time making the annual costs lower and secondly, we would have current and up-to-date valuations each year which is crucial in this energy market and especially in light of the new 5 year certification period. Both Ann and Paul agreed that this would be beneficial to Montague and Paul indicated that it would appeal to Gill in that a 50% share of the appraisal costs would be much lower for them. Karen will work this language into the bid language. She is planning to get this out to bid no later than September, 2020.

After review of the applications and documents submitted, the Board voted to deny the following exemption applications due to lack of qualification:

Edwin Fronckus 20 Ferry Road
Mary Poirier 250 Turnpike Road

The Assessors reviewed the six (6) applications for abatements submitted by Richard Champoux. All are for vacant land located in the Montague Center area and all are landlocked parcels that Mr. Champoux purchased from the town many years ago. Karen provided the Board members with sales data for land that has sold in the past two years in Montague Center. In all cases, the land has sold for higher than the assessments (in some cases much higher). A review of the property cards for each parcel indicates a reduction from the land schedule due to the access issues:

45-0-39	95% off prime & 35% off residual
47-0 -10	90% off prime & 35% off residual
35-0-39	95% off prime & 35% off residual
53-0-005	95% off prime & 35% off residual with an additional 25% off for topo
52-0-020	95% off prime & 35% off residual with an additional 10% off for topo
24-0-15	95% off prime % 95% off residual

Due to the significant reductions that are already being applied and the sale prices of land in the area, the board voted to deny all abatement requests submitted by Mr. Champoux.

The Board voted to grant an abatement to Kevin ORourke for property he purchased at 9 T Street. Mr. ORourke has received ZBA approval to renovate this former garage/warehouse to a residence. Karen conducted an inspection recently and the remodeling is still in process. Mr ORourke has reframed and replaced with roof. An abatement will adjust the taxes due to a change from the commercial rate to the residential rate.

Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the regular session meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen M. Tonelli, M.A.A.

Approved:_____

List of Documents

Monthly summary March, 2020

Cornell Consultants Contract

MVE 2020 Warrant

MVE recommitments (2014)

Chapter Applications and related chapter documents