



TOWN OF LUNENBURG
BOARD OF ASSESSORS
P.O. BOX 135
LUNENBURG, MA. 01462

Minutes from the Board of Assessors meeting held: November 3, 2015

The meeting opened at 5:45 pm. Present: Chairman, Louis Franco, Board Member, Matt Papini, Sr., Associate Assessor Rebecca Boucher and Louise Paquette, Administrative Assistant. Board Member, Richard Letarte was not present (attending Course 101).

Board reviewed and approved current expense vouchers, abatements, warrants, commitments, October 6, 2015 minutes & payroll.

Louise presented 24 Statutory Exemption applications to the BOA to review. After reviewing the applications, the Board voted to approve 21 applications totaling \$12,000.00; one application for full taxes to be abated (Veteran 22D) and two applications were denied- (Veteran 22D application and a Veteran 22). In reviewing the Veteran 22D application, the Board discussed the qualifications of granting the exemption. The Board reviewed the DOR's Taxpayers Guide to Local Property Exemptions regarding Veterans eligibility requirements. It states that an applicant must satisfy tests relating to residency, domicile, ownership and service-connected disability or awards. All eligibility requirements must be met as of July 1, of the tax year and applicant must occupy the property as their domicile. In reviewing the application the BOA discovered that the applicant no longer is domicile in Lunenburg. Notification was received from Voter Registration that the Applicant's voter registration status indicated Leominster as her residency as of June 18, 2015. After much discussion the BOA voted to deny this application and will send notification of the denial. The BOA also denied a Veteran 22 application because the applicant did not receive the service-connected disability as of July 1, 2015; notification of denial will be sent.

Released & Revised Chapter Classification Application Reviews & Approvals:

- (1) Chapter 61B (Recreational) : Release of parcel located at 101 Townsend Harbor Road, Map 049, Parcel 3 under Stafford, Marilyn and re-recorded under Stafford, David M., Trustee; Marilyn Stafford 2014 Revocable Trust.
- (2) 61A / Agricultural/Horticultural: Release of parcel located at 100 Townsend Harbor Road, Map 049, Parcel 74 under Stafford, Marilyn and re-recorded under Stafford, David M., Trustee; Marilyn Stafford Revocable Trust

BOA reviewed the Annual Chapter applications: Louise stated that 66 applications were returned and two have yet to be filed. The BOA reviewed all the applications and 61A financial supporting documentation received and voted to grant the chapter classifications. However, the Board voted to discontinue the 61 A classification for property located at 150E & 150 Holman Street for failure to return an application. The Board will be sending notification to the taxpayer informing them that commencing with Fiscal Year 2017,

the property will be reclassified, valued and taxed as residential land at full and fair cash value. The BOA discussed the other Chapter 61A classification property and voted to investigate the reasons why the application was not returned; the land falls under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction and is also under a current Forest Management Program. They voted to table this at this time.

Rebecca spoke with the Board regarding the Classification Hearing which will be held on November 17th. Louise stated that the Hearing Notification will be published in the Lunenburg Ledger. Rebecca stated that Harald has another Classification hearing that same evening and she will be presenting the findings at the BOS meeting recommending maintaining the present single tax rate for commercial, industrial and residential properties. The report (see attachment) supports that on the average a \$1.00 increase in commercial taxes would only levy approximately \$.11 of relief for the average homeowner. She stated that the estimates of tax rates will most likely increase from \$18.32 to \$19.62 per thousand for FY 16 and the average single family home value increased from \$246,347 in Fy15 to \$256,969 for FY16. This equals to an average bill increase of 11.7 %. (FY15 average tax bill of \$4,513.08 to \$5,041.73 in FY16). She explained that of this \$526.65 increase, 66% results from debt repayment for the Lunenburg Middle High School Project, amounting to \$349.48 on the average tax bill.

Rebecca reported that the following reports were approved on October 25, 2015 approved by the DOR :

FY16 Tax Base Levy Growth – LA-13
FY16 LA-3 Interim Year Adj. Rep
FY16 Interim Year Adjustment Report
FY16 LA-4 Assessment /Classification

The Board voted to meet next on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 5:45 pm.

Louise reminded the Board that the Special Town Meeting will be held at the High School on Monday, November 16, 2015 at 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Louise Paquette
Administrative Assistant
Office of the Board of Assessors



Fiscal Year 2016

Tax Classification Hearing

November 17, 2015

Lunenburg Board of Assessors

Harald M. Scheid – Regional Assessor

Rebecca Boucher – Associate Regional Assessor

Louis J. Franco – Chairman

Matthew J. Papini Sr. – Member

Richard H. Letarte – Member

Terminology

The following are definitions of the terms frequently used in the discussion of tax rates.

Levy: The tax levy (or levy) is the amount of property taxes to be raised. The levy amount is determined by the budget. The total amount of the approved budget less revenues from other sources like motor vehicle excise, municipal fees, and state aid is the amount to be raised from property taxation.

Levy Ceiling: The levy ceiling is 2.5 percent of the full value of the Town. Based on the Lunenburg aggregate valuation of \$1,198,728,889 the town cannot levy taxes in excess of \$29,990,108.

New Growth Revenue: Property taxes derived from newly taxable properties like new construction, additions, renovations, subdivisions, and personal property. The assessors have tabulated new growth revenues of \$360,856.

Levy Limit: Also referred to as the "maximum allowable levy", this is calculated by adding 2.5 percent of the previous year's levy limit plus new growth revenue for the present fiscal year to last year's levy limit. Exceeding the levy limit requires an override of Proposition 2 ½.

Excess Levy Capacity: Excess levy capacity is the difference between the levy and the levy limit. The town will have \$790.18 in excess levy capacity.

The Fiscal Year 2016 Levy Limit and Amount to be Raised

The following is a calculation of Lunenburg's levy limit for fiscal year 2016.

Fiscal year 2015 levy limit	\$20,173,974
Levy increase allowed under Prop. 2 ½	\$504,349
New growth revenue	\$360,856
FY2015 Overrides	0
Debt Exclusions	\$2,494,848
Fiscal year 2016 levy limit	\$23,534,027
Levy ceiling	\$29,990,108
Levy to be raised	\$23,536,236.82
Excess levy capacity	\$790.18

Valuations by Class Before Tax Shift

<u>Major Property Class</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Res vs CIP%</u>
Residential	\$1,079,768,102	90.0104%	90.0104%
Commercial	\$65,371,177	5.3988%	
Industrial	\$19,994,000	1.6667%	9.9896%
Personal Property	\$35,078,223	2.9241%	
TOTAL	\$1,199,604,323	100.0000%	

Tax Rates

Based on an anticipate vote to maintain a single tax rate, the Board of Assessors has calculated the following tax rates needed to raise the tax levy:

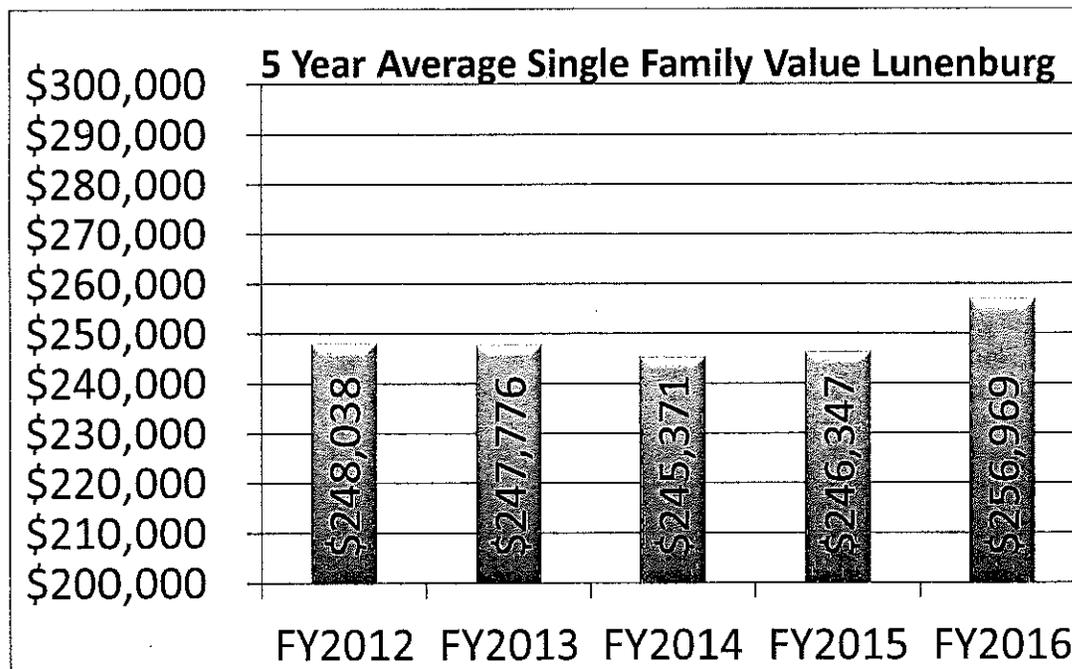
<u>Property Class</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>
Residential	\$18.32	\$19.62
Commercial	\$18.32	\$19.62
Industrial	\$18.32	\$19.62
Personal Property	\$18.32	\$19.62

Note that the FY2016 tax rate is an estimate only and may change upon Department of Revenue review.

Tax Impacts

The residential classes, including single family homes, condominiums, and land will realize modest valuation increases, typically in the 3% range, a positive sign of the real estate market's recovery. Commercial and industrial assessments did not show evidence of a market value increase. Market trends may indicate that different property types may change in value more or less than other property types.

The average single family home value increased from \$246,347 in FY2015 to \$256,969 for FY2016 and the average tax bill increased by 11.7% from \$4,513.08 in FY2015 to \$5,041.73 in FY2016. Of this \$528.65 increase, 66% results from the debt repayment for the Lunenburg Middle High School Project, amounting to \$349.48 on the average tax bill. Individual parcel valuations may vary from the class average due to data updates and corrections, new construction, and the effects of market trends on their specific characteristics.



**TOWN OF LUNENBURG
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on November 17, 2015 at 7:30 P.M. as required by M.G.L. Ch. 40 §56 on the issue of allocating the local property tax levy among the four classes of real and personal property for Fiscal Year 2016. The hearing will be held in the Town Hall, 2nd Floor, Joseph Bilotta Meeting Room, at 17 Main Street, Lunenburg, MA.

Jamie Toale
Board of Selectmen Chairman

Town of Lunenburg

Office of the Board of Assessors

17 Main Street, P.O. Box 135
Lunenburg, MA 01462-0135

Louis J. Franco, Chairman
Matthew J. Papini, Sr., Member
Richard H. Letarte, Member



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Harald Scheid, Regional Assessor
Rebecca A. Boucher, Associate Assessor
Louise Paquette, Administrative Assessor
Sheila Craigen, Assessing Clerk

How do I file for abatement?

The time period for filing abatement applications is after the issuance of the third quarter actual tax bill, mailed on December 31, 2015, and on or before the third quarter actual tax bill due date of February 1, 2016. All abatement applications must be received in the Assessor's Office by 4:00PM or be postmarked by the US Postal Service no later than February 1, 2016.

By filing for abatement, you are appealing the assessed value of your property, not the amount of taxes you are billed. Your assessed value only determines your share of the tax levy. The tax levy is determined by the budget votes at Town Meeting after other revenue sources and expenses are calculated. Filing an abatement application does not stay the collection of your taxes; to avoid loss of appeal rights or addition of interest and other collection charges, the tax should be paid as assessed.

Assessments are based on "Full and Fair Cash Value" defined as the price a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for property exposed to the market for a reasonable period of time. Property valuations for FY2016 reflect the assessment date of January 1, 2015. **The Department of Revenue required us to verify and analyze arms length sales that occurred during calendar year 2014 to determine FY2016 valuations. Therefore, your property valuation is based on the real estate market during the time period of 2014, not on the current real estate market.** Changes occurring in the real estate market subsequent to the January 1, 2015 assessment date will be analyzed for the formation of the next fiscal year's assessments. New construction, including additions and remodeling, is valued according to its condition as of June 30, 2015.

Before filing for abatement, obtain a copy of your Property Record Card online at www.lunenburgma.gov or in the Assessors Office, which contains all the data on your parcel including detailed land and building information. You should review your Property Record Card to ensure that all the data is accurate.

Please note that a complete property inspection will be required upon filing of abatement application. Your abatement application may include data and/or documentation to support your opinion of value. Information on sales data and valuations of properties in the Town of Lunenburg can be found in the Public Information Room in the Assessors Office. Appraisal reports may be considered as documentation to support your opinion of value upon review and determination of inclusion of comparable arms length sales occurring within the same time period on which our assessment is based. The Assessors will request income and expense information from you for investment properties utilizing the income approach to value. Abatements filed on personal property accounts will be required to provide a completed Form of List. After your application is reviewed, you may be asked to supply other additional information.

The Assessors will review and respond to your abatement request within 90 days of your filing. You may request a meeting with the Assessors. The Assessors' decision on your abatement application may be appealed to the Appellate Tax Board 399 Washington Street, 3rd Floor, Boston, MA 02108-5292, telephone 617-727-6234, website: www.mass.gov/atb/index.html. **The Assessors encourage all taxpayers to bring any questions regarding the valuation or abatement process to our attention so we may help you.**