



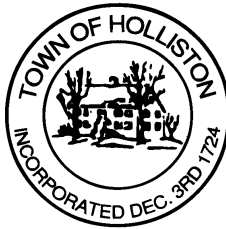
Approved: 8/25/2016

Holliston Board of Assessors  
August 16, 2016  
8:00 AM Selectmen's meeting room #105

The meeting of the Board of Assessors was called to order at 8:00 AM.  
Present were: Brian Loughlin, Chair; Peter Barbieri, Vice Chair ; John Cronin, Clerk  
Kathryn Peirce, Principal Assessor; Don Clarke, Assistant Assessor

Ms. Peirce provided information from the state regarding new law ~~%~~ Municipal Modernization Act+. This law will provide a change in the frequency of Certification of local property assessments from 3 to 5 years. Details of these and other changes effecting assessing are attached.

- The Board acted on the following:
- Approved earnings worksheet for pay period ending 8/19/2016.
- Approved (2) Motor Vehicle Excise Re-Commitments totaling \$5.00 (#20140280) and \$47.50 (20150806).
- Ms. Peirce provided read only access password to Mr. Loughlin for the State's Gateway system. Mr. Cronin declined to have one made up for him, and Mr. Barbieri will not utilize his existing access to Gateway (was unaware access was available to him). This system provides users information on valuations to the State DOR. Ms Peirce currently controls all information into this system on behalf of the Board of Assessors.
- Ms. Peirce produced statistics for Neighborhood 31 for discussion. Board of Assessors reviewed sales and ratios.
- Ms Peirce informed the Board that she has received over 20 applications for Principal Clerk. Interviews will be held next week.
- The Board approved meeting minutes of 7/12/15, as amended; and 7/19/16. 3-0-0 Motion made by John Cronin, second by Brian Loughlin. All in favor.
- The Board approved meeting minutes of 8/2/16 as amended; with a vote of 2-0-1. Motion made by John Cronin; second by Peter Barbieri. Mr. Loughlin abstained. Motion carried.
- The Board approved meeting minutes of 8/9/16 as amended; motion made by Peter Barbieri, seconded by Brian Loughlin; Motion carried. Mr. Cronin abstained; vote recorded 2-0-1



Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM Motion made by John Cronin; second by Peter Barbieri; all in favor and the motion carried. 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted;

John Cronin, Clerk

Attachment to minutes:

## **IMPORTANT MAAO UPDATE!**

### **Groundbreaking Bill Signed into Law!!!**

#### **Municipal Modernization Act Passed By Legislature & Signed into Law by Governor Baker**

#### **Measure includes scores on initiatives supported by MAAO**

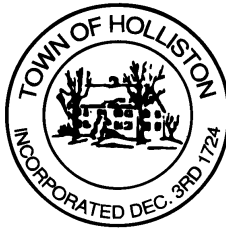
The groundbreaking Municipal Modernization Act has been passed by the Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Baker Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>.

The law includes scores of initiatives supported by MAAO that we advocated for inclusion in the bill. A number of these measures will have significant positive impact in the work we do.

Governor Baker filed the Municipal Modernization Act, H. 3905 earlier this year. MAAO was at the announcement press conference of the bill. The bill originally included 23 initiatives in 52 sections of the bill that MAAO supported. The Act was broken up into 5 separate bills (H. 3906, H. 3907, H. 3908, H. 3909, and H. 3910) assigned to their Committees of subject matter. MAAO testified and had extensive meetings with Committee chairs and key legislators on issues important to the organization.

Please find below a summary of the provisions of the bill. We will be presenting these in more detail at our Fall Conference in October and will be putting additional information on the MAAO website.

#### **Highlights include:**



## **Certification of Local Property Assessments**

Changes from 3 years to 5 years the frequency of certification of local property assessments. Cost-effective for community and DOR. Municipalities still have to value all property each year and get those values approved by DOR only the certification process changes.

## **Supplemental Assessments**

Currently if the total value of a parcel of property increases by more than 50% state law has assessors send a supplemental tax bill under MGL Chapter 59, Section 2D. This bill would exclude the value of the land from the formula, so that if the value of the improvement increases by 50%, regardless of the land value, cities and towns would issue a supplemental bill. The same addition to two different homes may be exempt from the supplemental bill solely based on the land value of that home. The bill also allows communities to more easily help homeowners in cases of damage or disaster. If a property is damaged due to disaster or storm, a families' abatement shouldn't be predicated on the value of the land if 50% of the value of their home has been destroyed. Will lead to fairness and consistency for taxpayers.

## **Exemption Applications**

Makes consistent the application deadline for property tax exemption to April 1 for communities that bill quarterly. Passed for City of Boston last session, would lead to consistency for taxpayer.

## **Commercial Fishing Exemption**

Increases from \$10,000 to \$50,000 the value of the property tax exemption for boats, nets and gear used in commercial fishing. Eliminates requirement that income must be derived solely from commercial fishing to be eligible for the exemption. Currently fishermen must have a boat and equipment of \$10,000 or less for eligibility for an excise tax exemption-- this changes the value limit of boat and equipment to \$50,000 or less.

## **Single Overlay**

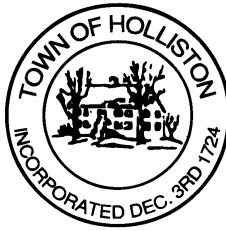
Each fiscal year communities carry a line-item in their budgets to pay for cases in which a property tax refund must be given. Under current law they must carry a line-item for every separate fiscal year and get local approval to move the funds. This measure allows communities to treat the overlay account as one continuous account as opposed to multiple separate accounts each year.

~ Example: A community has a property tax challenge before the Appellate Tax Board from 2011.

The ATB rules in favor of the property owner, but there are insufficient funds in the 2011 account to pay the refund. The community must get local approval to move funds from another year (with excess funds) to the 2011 account to pay a refund.

## **Appeals**

Prohibits a property tax appeal at the Appellate Tax Board if a taxpayer has not paid their 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter taxes. Current law requires that you have to pay the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter on time. This measure requires that you must pay all quarters on time. Under every other type of tax (income, etc.) the payer must be up-to-date in their payments in order for an appeal to proceed forward.



### **CPA Surcharge Exemptions**

If your community accepts the provisions of the CPA, people can file for an exemption from paying that provision if they are in hardship or age. This sets a due date for filing that application. Exempts applications from records law, consistent with all other exemptions. Will lead to efficiency in process and awareness for the taxpayer.

### **State-Owned Land Valuation**

Creates a formula to set the value of state owned land in communities. The formula will derive the value instead of municipalities having to develop and prove to DOR on the re-certification year. It will save money and time at DOR, eliminating an extensive certification process every three years. Reduces a complicated process to a simple formula that will be easy to understand and that everyone can understand.

### **Abatement on Low Value Lands**

Allows Assessors to abate the taxes due on a property of low value after the Collector determines the cost to collect the tax is greater than the tax itself.

### **Approval of Forms**

Allow municipalities to be more user-friendly in their tax forms.

### **Affordable Housing Abatements**

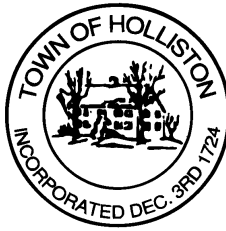
Allows the municipality to implement the affordable housing abatement agreements the same way as brownfield abatements are done. Will lead to efficiency in municipal government.

### **Residential Exemption**

This will help keep long-time residents in their homes. Via local option increases from 20% to 35% the residential property tax exemption for homeowners that make their house in that community their domicile. In some communities (such as coastal wealthy communities) there is a demand for property by non-domicile (seasonal homeowner) that is driving up values and making it hard for long-time homeowners to afford the property taxes. Current law allows an exemption of up to 20%, this changes it to 35%. The amount of the total exemption is transferred to the non-domicile homeowners.

### **DOR's Authorization to Assess owner unknown**

These sections would eliminate DOR approval that there is no identifiable owner of a property. If Assessors cannot identify the owner of a property they must prove to DOR they cannot find the owner.



### **Apportionment Appeal**

Extends from seven to thirty days the time period within which a taxpayer may appeal an apportionment decision.

### **Betterment Suspension**

Provides local control to award exemptions for seniors for increased property tax assessments due to betterments.

### **Prisoners of War Exemption from Motor Vehicle Excise**

Eliminates the requirement that a veteran must have a POW plate to receive an auto excise tax exemption.

### **Betterment Installments**

Dictates that a community can charge any level up to an additional 2% interest rate above the community's borrowing rate for the project on a betterment improvement. Taxpayer fairness- right now the rate is set at 5% unless the city or town has voted to adopt the alternative of 2% above borrowing. With low interest rates there is a significant gap between the fixed rate of 5% and the rate the community is paying. If the alternative has been voted the 2% required above borrowing can be greater than the rate itself. This allows the municipality to set any rate up to 2% above borrowing.

### **Charitable Exemption Technical Correction**

Technical change. Corrects two references in the charitable exemption for real property to local adoption of a "paragraph." The local adoption should be of the "sentence."

### **Mortgagee Abatements**

Technical change. Moves filing deadline for abatement to be consistent with the abatement period.

### **Appellate Tax Board Jurisdiction requirements**

This section allows taxpayers to be on time with tax payments if they can prove that they mailed the payment with a mailing service in addition to the USPS cancellation prior to the due date of the taxes. It gives no definition of who chooses an acceptable mailing service.

### **Allows commitment books to be stored in electronic form**

This section allows Assessors to keep Commitment Books in electronic format and no longer requires a printed copy.