

Minutes

Board of Assessors

Room 105

Tuesday, January 31, 2023

5:00 PM

The meeting convened at 5:02 PM in Room 105. Present were: Board members: Mary Greendale, chair, Jeffrey Marshall (arrived at 5:11 PM) and Stephen Wang. Staff: Kevin Rudden and Sherrie Bates.

1. Stephen Wang made a motion, seconded by Mary Greendale, to approve the minutes for the January 24, 2023 board meeting and the January 24, 2023 executive session, as well as releasing the executive session minutes to the public. The motion carried 2-0-1 (Jeffrey Marshall was not present for this vote).
2. Bryan Clancy, president of the Holliston Housing Trust, met with the board via ZOOM for about 30 minutes to explain the town's various efforts to create affordable housing. Holliston has 4.8% of its housing deemed affordable, versus the state's 10% requirement to avoid Chapter 40B developments. In addition to affordable units in condo developments, there are some individual houses throughout the town. Holliston has an inclusionary bylaw. An effort to allow accessory dwelling units (in-law apartments) met with little interest.

Mary Greendale asked whether there is a way to lower the costs of renting apartments via subsidy or tax exemptions/abatements to make them more affordable, and whether doing that had to be permanent. Bryan Clancy said the idea of temporary subsidies would have to be studied. Kevin Rudden said state law provides no abatements or exemptions for this.

3. Board members signed Motor Vehicle Excise FY2022 Commitment #7, dated January 31, 2023 for \$13,879.00 and signed Motor Vehicle Excise FY2023 Commitment #1, dated January 31, 2023, for \$2,023,250.75.

4. Kevin Rudden reported that Town Administrator Travis Ahern met with him today and acknowledged the concerns voiced in the proposed FY2024 budget narrative, but felt the \$36,500 in proposed new spending was too high and would have to be trimmed.

Board members discussed how and when to discuss making the case that the funding is needed to bring the department up to the level where it can meet the DOR's directives on an ongoing basis. Mary Greendale noted the department has been underfunded chronically for years. Jeffrey Marshall asked whether the DOR would be satisfied if we were making progress toward completing its directives if we cannot meet all of them. Kevin Rudden said the DOR will be given an interim progress report during the setting of the FY 2024 tax rate. He said additional funds should be looked at as an investment, not an expense. Stephen Wang said he had difficulty in determining which, if any, requested new funding could be reduced. Kevin Rudden felt the next step would be to see what items Travis Ahearn trims from the budget request and proceed from that point. Mary Greendale said that Travis Ahearn, at the board's January 24, 2023 meeting had said Assessors could discuss their budget with the Select Board when it meets with other financial departments.

5. Kevin Rudden presented costs of sending "impact letters" notifying property owners if their assessments increase by various percentages. The board's consensus, voiced by Mary Greendale, is that while it is a "nice idea," no action should be taken unless the department's budget can support it.
6. Stephen Wang made a motion at 6:16 PM, seconded by Jeffrey Marshall, to enter into an Executive Session to discuss confidential exemption and abatement application information, with the intent to return to public session only for the purposes of adjourning. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried 3-0-0.
7. The board returned to public session at 6:40 PM. Stephen Wang made a motion, seconded by Jeffrey Marshall, to ratify the actions taken during Executive Session. The motion carried 3-0-0.

Stephen Wang made a motion at 6:41 PM, seconded by Jeffrey Marshall, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 3-0-0.