

Minutes

Board of Assessors

Room 105

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

5:00 PM

The meeting convened at 5:02 PM in Room 105. Present were: Board members: Mary Greendale, chair, and Stephen Wang. Board member Jeffrey Marshall arrived at 5:04 PM. Staff: Kevin Rudden and Sherrie Bates. Guests: Jessica Gallagher and Robin Rosenthal.

1. Mary Greendale made a motion, seconded by Stephen Wang, to approve the meeting minutes for the July 26, 2022 meeting. The motion carried 3-0-1 (Jeffrey Marshall was not present).
2. Kevin Rudden updated the board on the ongoing negotiations with New England Appliance Group of Franklin for a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement to re-locate NEAG's headquarters/warehouse from Franklin to Hopping Brook Road. Kevin Rudden also briefed the board on town officials' August 3, 2022 visit to NEAG's Franklin facility.
3. Jessica "Mimi" Gallagher of 6 Trailside Court and Robin Rosenthal of 7 Trailside Court met with the board to discuss problems they had with the Assessors' Office regarding getting correct information about their respective supplemental property tax bills. Both homeowners voiced concerns that their questions were not resolved in a prompt and courteous manner.

Jessica Gallagher also voiced concerns regarding her valuation dropping since the supplemental bill was issued and wanted to know upon what valuation her preliminary Fiscal Year 2023 tax bills were based. She also requested a written summary of the board's meeting and any promised follow-up actions be sent to her within a week.

Mary Greendale explained that some of the issues occurred during a transitional period in the office and were partially due to overlapping information being entered by

different people into the office's computer system. Kevin Rudden, as department head, said he was ultimately responsible for the errors and apologized to the homeowner for any issues they experienced. He promised to get an answer to Jessica Gallaher's question about her preliminary tax bills when Treasurer/Collector staff returned from vacation the following week.

Kevin Rudden volunteered to draft the update memo and then send it to Mary Greendale. She asked that it be sent to all board members for review before being sent to Jessica Gallagher.

4. Kevin Rudden discussed the possibility of using Joanne Graziano, former head of the DOR's Division of Local Services and now at the Collins Center for Public Management at U Mass Boston, to do a study of the Assessors' Office to recommend proper levels of staffing. Mary Greendale suggested talking to Town Administrator Travis Ahern about the idea.
5. Stephen Wang made a motion, seconded by Jeffrey Marshall, to give Kevin Rudden the authority to sign budgeted contract renewals on the board's behalf during Fiscal Year 2023. The motion carried 3-0-0.
6. Kevin Rudden gave board members a brief update on Fiscal Year 2023 valuation efforts. Calendar year 2021's sales have been stratified and checked to see if they comply with the Department of Revenue's guidelines.
7. Mary Greendale raised the idea of having Kevin Rudden conduct research on what effect increases in the commercial/industrial tax base would have in terms of making any substantial difference in property taxes. The study would include looking at vacant land, current zoning, changes to homeowners' quality of life, etc. The board decided to continue the discussion at its next meeting,

Jeffrey Marshall made a motion, seconded by Stephen Wang, to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 PM. The motion carried 3-0-0.