

TOWN OF MADISON - PUBLIC NOTICE

The Inhabitants of the Town of Madison are hereby notified of a public meeting, The time, place and purpose of which are as follows:

**MINUTES
BOARD OF ASSESSORS
Monday October 17, 2016
5:30pm Old Point School Meeting Room**

- A. Salute to the flag: Meeting was called to order at 530pm
- B. Roll Call: Assessors Al Veneziano, Jack Ducharme, Paul Fortin, Mike Edgerly and Ron Moody were present, along with Town Manager Tim Curtis and Assessing Agent Shirley Bartlett. Attorney David Silk with Curtis Thaxtor was also in attendance.
- C. Discuss acceptance of meeting minutes of September 26, 2016: Motion to approve the minutes by Mr. Moody, seconded by Mr. Fortin. Town Manager Curtis asked for a small grammatical change on page 2. Motion carries 5-0.
- D. Old Business (Assessor's concerns from immediately preceding meeting): None
- E. New Business
 - 1. Discuss Residential Abatement Requests

Motion by Mr. Fortin to approve an abatement request from Robin Pellerin (Acct #2162) for a reduction in value of \$44,400 and a reduction in taxes of \$932.40, seconded by Mr. Ducharme. This property was taxed twice and should all be included in the same account. Motion carries 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Fortin to approve an abatement request from Kevin & Richard Vining (Acct #245) for a reduction in value of \$15,000 and a reduction in taxes of \$315.00, seconded by Mr. Moody. Motion carries 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Moody to approve an abatement request from Darrell Holt (Acct #2207) for a reduction in value of \$15,000 and a reduction in taxes of \$315.00, seconded by Mr. Fortin. Motion carries 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Fortin to approve an abatement request for personal property owned by Caterpillar Financing Services (Acct# P488) for a reduction in value of \$18,900 and a reduction in tax of \$396.90, seconded by Mr. Edgerly. This equipment should have been included in BETE. Motion carries 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Fortin to approve an abatement request for personal property owned by Hughes Network Systems (Acct #P422) for a reduction in value of \$1,000.00 and a reduction in tax of \$21.00. Motion carries 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Ducharme to approve a supplemental tax bill for Wells Fargo Financial Leasing which will result in a value increase of \$1,800.00 and an increased tax of \$37.80, seconded by Mr. Fortin. This will correct a BETE exemption that did not qualify. Motion carries 5-0.

Shirley Bartlett also informed the Assessors that there were a few requests from home owners who had sold their properties but had not informed the Town that their homestead exemption should carry forward to the new property. The consensus of the board was that Ms. Bartlett should not be spending too much time and energy trying to chase down home owners, but rather it is the property owner's responsibility to notify the Town of such a change.

Ms. Bartlett also mentioned that it would be interesting to see the results of this year's sales analysis to see how home sale figures are matching up with assessed values across the board.

2. Attorney Interview

The Town Manager had invited David Silk with Curtis Thaxter to come and speak to the board about the possibility of his firm representing the Town in the defense of the Assessors denial of an abatement request from Madison Paper Industries. Mr. Silk told the board that he has 31 years of legal experience, 25 of which is specialized in working with towns and industries regarding tax assessments.

He most recently was part of a team that represented the Town of Skowhegan in their abatement process with SAPPI. He is familiar with the area mills and the hydro components that are associated with them, especially in Madison.

Assessor Veneziano asked if there were any conflicts of interest with Mr. Silk or his firm. Mr. Silk said he ran a conflict check and there is none with either Madison Paper nor with the attorney representing the mill.

Assessor Ducharme asked Mr. Silk what his won/loss record was on cases. Mr. Silk said he has won more than he lost, but each case is different and winning is a relative thing in these cases. Mr. Silk said the burden of proof is on the tax payer to prove that the assessment is categorically wrong.

The Town Manager asked what Mr. Silk's working relationship with Bill Van Tuinen has been. Mr. Silk worked with him in Skowhegan's case and has also worked opposite Bill in other towns. He reported that he has great respect for Bill and he believes that Bill has mutual respect for him. Mr. Silk has seen Bill testify before the State Board and has been received well before them.

Assessor Moody asked what Mr. Silk would bring to the table for assets to best defend the Town. Mr. Silk said that he is familiar with the process and has the respect of the State Board and would seek to bring people forward that can testify as experts on the valuation of the property. Each Town is different and each case needs a specific strategy.

Mr. Silk gave an overview of the process before the State Board and also shared information on the process of applying to the state for relief through the sudden and

severe programs. Finally, Mr. Silk said his role is to advise and help the board make educated decisions, figuring out together what the best strategy is to pursue. His billing rate is \$275 per hour. He mentioned that once the Town received notice back from the State Board that they have received notice from Madison Paper they have 20 days to send a standard response.

F. Assessors Concerns: Mr. Fortin asked about the assessment for the former stick mill on Water St and the condition of that property. The Town Manager and Assessing Agent will report back at the next meeting.

G. Citizen Concerns: None

H. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:27pm