

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 November 5, 2018
5:30pm Old Point Avenue School Meeting Room**

- A. **Salute to the flag:** Meeting was called to order at 530pm
- B. **Roll Call:** Assessors Albert Veneziano, Jack Ducharme, George Elias and David Savage were present. Assessor Ron Moody was absent. Assessors Agent Shirley Bartlett and Town Manager Tim Curtis were also in attendance.
- C. **Discuss acceptance of meeting minutes from October 22, 2018.** Motion to accept by Mr. Elias, seconded by Mr. Ducharme. Motion carries 4-0.
- D. **Old Business** (Assessor's concerns from immediately preceding meeting): None
- E. **New Business**

1. Abatement Requests

- a. **Account #108:** Fulton, Sandy Beach Road: Ms. Bartlett reported that she and the Town Manager had toured the property earlier in the day and found that many of the campsites are still visible although they have not used as sites for over 20 years. There are utility poles with some phone and power lines, most of the power to the sites runs underground and is not working. The Fultons have the property for sale but it is not listed with a realtor and they have not established a firm asking price.

Based on reviewing the property Ms. Bartlett calculated the costs for reducing the base value of each of the 72 campsites by 50%, 75% and 100%. Her recommendation to the Board was to reduce the value of the sites by 75%, resulting in an abatement of \$266,976 for the 2018 tax year.

Mr. Ducharme asked if the assessment of the campsites were consistent with the other campgrounds in town. Ms. Bartlett said that the original value of campsites is consistent with the values at other campgrounds, but she recommends the 75% reduction because they have not been upgraded for many years.

Motion by Mr. Ducharme to grant an abatement of \$266,976 for Account #108 resulting in a reduction in taxes of \$5,739.98. Seconded by Mr. Elias. Motion carries 4-0.

- b. **Account #510:** Fortin/Howes: 8 Preble Ave. Ms. Bartlett reported that according to Maine Revenue a person can continue to receive a homestead exemption if they have the property listed in their name and the enter a nursing

home with the intention to return home. Jean Fortin recently passed away after being in the nursing home for several years. The property is currently listed in the name Deborah Howes and Elizabeth Smith. Ms. Howes applied for an abatement equal to the homestead exemptions for the past three years.

Motion by Mr. Savage to deny the abatement request based on the fact that the taxpayer did not provide sufficient evidence that the property was occupied by the owners/or that the owner was able to come home from the nursing home. Seconded by Mr. Elias. Motion carries 4-0.

- c. Account #3338: Sirois: Horsetail Hill Road. Part of the property from the former Albertson's Horse Farm was sold to Greg Sirois last year and the building on the property was assessed as if it were completed on April first but in fact it was not complete until this past summer. Ms. Bartlett recommended a reduction in value of \$15,100.

Motion by Mr. Elias to approve a value reduction of \$15,100 and a tax abatement of \$324.65 for the 2018 taxes, seconded by Mr. Ducharme. Motion carries 4-0.

2. Supplemental Tax

- a. **Account #1584** Tree Growth Penalty. The property owners have asked the Town to remove all of the acreage from Map 3 Lot 54 from Tree Growth, resulting in a penalty of \$7,660 to be assessed as a supplemental tax.

Motion by Mr. Elias to issue a supplemental tax to account number 1584 in the amount of \$7,660 for 2018, seconded by Mr. Ducharme. Motion carries 5-0.

3. **Update on MPI Hearing before the State Board of Property Tax Review.** Town Manager Curtis reported on three days of testimony in Augusta. The State Board heard from former Madison Paper Manager Russ Drechsel and reviewed an appraisal from Duff & Phelps that concluded the hydro assets were no more than \$32M and the total paper making assets were no more than \$3M (overall value \$35M). Then the Board heard from Mike Rogers with Maine Revenue who helped prepare the Town's valuation in 2016 with a recommended overall value of \$55M. And finally, the Board heard from Mr. Curtis and former Assessor Paul Fortin to explain how the Assessors came to a final value in 2016 of \$72M.

The testimony is complete and both attorneys will review the transcripts and submit final summaries which are like closing arguments. The Board will not meet to deliberate until after the holidays which means a final decision may not be reached until February.

The State Board was very concerned in getting clarification between the three numbers (\$35M, \$55M and \$72M) and most likely will rule in favor of one of those numbers. If they rule in favor of a number other than the value of \$72, the Town will have to reimburse Madison Paper the difference in taxes plus interest.

Mr. Veneziano said his concern was if the board ruled in favor of Madison Paper in February the Town would not have the opportunity to draw on the line of credit after December 31, 2018. The Town Manager said that would be a decision for the

Selectmen to make in December if they wanted to draw an amount from the line of credit before the end of the year and pay it back in the new year.

F. **Assessors Concerns:** None

G. **Citizen Concerns:** Town Manager Curtis brought up a concern from Steve Brown who owns the apartments at 1 Madison Avenue. He was wondering what the tax liability would be if he built a large solar array off site to provide power to his building. Shirley estimated the value of the project to be \$250,000 and a tax of approximately \$5,000 the first year and then depreciated down over a 7 to 10-year period. Mr. Brown said that would be cost prohibitive for him and claimed that other towns don't tax solar panels.

Ms. Bartlett said it was important for the Town to be consistent in valuations of large solar arrays. She does not see the need for taxing solar panels that are attached to homes, but does see the logic in taxing stand alone structures.

H. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:10pm

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