

TOWN OF LUNENBURG
BOARD OF ASSESSORS
P.O. BOX 135
LUNENBURG, MA 01462

Minutes from BOA (Board of Assessors) meeting held: April 25, 2023.

Location: In person at the Lunenburg Town Hall and broadcast over the Lunenburg Public Access Channel:

The meeting was opened at 3:02 PM

Members Present: Chairman Richard Letarte, Board Member Kevin Fish, Board Member Christine Higdon, Principal Access CJ Carroll, Interim Principal Assessor Rena Swezey, Administrative Assessing Assistant Sheila Craigen.

Public Comment

Phyllis Luck - 50 Sunset Lane- shared that she sent a letter to the board on April 14th with suggestions that may help the abatement process run smoothly. Some suggestions included making the inspection report and suggested property values be made available to the property owner. Phyllis raised questions about how the abatement process will be discussed/finalized, when will residents to informed on how the abatement process will work, and if there are any opinions about the suggestions listed in their letter. The board members stated that these questions will be addressed during the executive session today.

Carl Luck – 50 Sunset Lane – has raised concerns that the above questions are not appropriate for the executive session. He believes the questions posed by Phyllis would violate open meeting law if discussed during an executive meeting and should be discussed in an open session. Unless there is discussion about a specific abatement information should be made available to the public and believes the executive sessions should be recorded and made available to the public. Carl did agree that the executive session should be used to discuss abatement on non-lake properties. The board doesn't have any response to the raised questions as they are awaiting the report and will investigate the open meeting laws. John Rabbitt doesn't believe that discussing the abatement process would constitute or divulge any personal data which would be the reason for going into executive session. John Rabbitt also expresses that he wants citizens to be able to participate and see as much information excluding any personal data. A motion to tape the executive session and be made available at a later point was approved by Kevin Fish, seconded by Richard Letarte. Carl thanks the board for making as much information available during the public comment.

Lou Franco – Select Board Member - shares his information in relation to what should be discussed in the nonexecutive session versus the executive session. Lou states that anything that goes to procedure and any deliberations you have to the process is public discourse. He

proposes the board makes a pledge to avoid certain topics within the executive session that may be proper for public meetings since they are not supposed to discuss anything outside of the scope of what was going to be discussed on the agenda. Kevin Fish has no objection to having those discussions in public sessions.

Nate Cramer – MFS, Inc. - has a drafted report that includes specific properties, but it is willing to pull specific information from the report to make it publicly available. The drafted report was sent to the board for feedback, questions, comment, or concerns. Nate Cramer wants to review and discuss feedback with the Board of Assessors prior to the report being released. Lou Franco agrees that general impressions can be brought up without names and addresses and that general trends can and must be discussed. Richard Letarte agrees to discuss specific addresses only while they are in the executive session. Kevin Fish states the report will be made public once it has been finalized. Richard Letarte asks Nate Cramer several questions including whether the homeowners be issued a revised tax bill, whether the homeowners be advised of the new value prior to the subsequent abatement issue, and when will the full report be completed. Nate Cramer states after the edits from today's meeting are updated then the report will be complete. Previously, Nate Cramer wanted to submit the report to the Department of Revenue since they will be seeing the reports in the fall to review but doesn't feel that needs to be done prior.

Dave McDonald – 155 Island Road – agrees that more information can be made available to the public while certain information should remain confidential. Dave thanks Christine, Nate, and the board for their hard work. He suggested that the public comments should be limited to 3 minutes and there should be some research done regarding rules.

The signing of expense vouchers, motor vehicle abatements, and payroll by Richard Letarte and Kevin Fish.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn and enter into executive session and not return to the open meeting by Kevin Fish, Seconded by Richard Letarte. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM.

Executive Session

Executive session minutes will not be released.