

LUNENBURG BOARD OF ASSESSORS
March 12, 2025

BILOTTA ROOM, LUNENBURG TOWN HALL
17 MAIN STREET

Present members: Chair -Brian Laffond, Vice Chair -Sarah Cammer, Clerk -John Rabbitt,
Principal Assessor -Lynda McQuade

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at 6:30 PM.

OPENING COMMENTS

- **Board**

John Rabbitt shared that Rep. Margaret Scarsdale shared a helpful flyer at the circuit breaker conference. This flyer identifies why a circuit breaker is used.

John Rabbitt is also working with the Ledger to get the conference reported.

John Rabbitt has started to develop an Organizational Metrics format for future review.

Brian Laffond states the Town Caucus on Monday nominated him for the 1 year open position on the BOA. There is still no nominee for the 3 year position.

- **Public**

There were no comments from the public.

STATUS REPORT FROM PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR.

- Status of FY2025 Abatement Applications, Vision Property Record Cards Update Issue with CAI. Other items as needed.
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- Lynda McQuade provided the following updates:
 - 2 abutters list were received.
 - An additional 4 exemptions are awaiting approval from the Board
 - To date 126 real estate exemptions have been received.
 - 125 motor vehicle excise tax abatements have been received.

A total of 37 real estate and property abatements have been received. Of that a total of 11 have been granted totaling \$8,796.66, 9 have been denied, 13 to be reviewed tonight in Executive Session and 4 are awaiting additional information.

3-chapter land applications were signed. There was a motion to approve the chapter land application for Highland Road by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. Sarah Cammer aye, John Rabbitt aye, Brian Laffond aye.

Lynda McQuade states that cyclical inspections begin on March 18th. A letter has been uploaded to the website and the police with the representative's vehicle information. Brian Laffond questions why the Board did not approve or have any involvement with the letter. This letter will not be mailed to homeowners. The inspection includes measuring and looking at the home exterior. If the homeowner does not want them to enter for an interior inspection that is their decision, and they are not required to. The DOR requires cyclical inspections to ensure that the property record cards are correct. We will be notifying homeowners when these inspections are expected.

There have been issues linking parcels from Vision to CAI. Currently, the office is unaware of how many parcels have been affected.

RE: Chapter Lands (land previously held in Chapter 61): Second Request letters have been sent by Robin Nano to property owners of Chapter Lands who have not yet applied for this year. Original deadline was March 1, 2025. New deadline of April 10, 2025. If no response, the land will revert to full valuation. John Rabbitt suggested a written policy. Brian Laffond stated this is the de facto policy, but agreed we should document the policy. We have also reviewed Chapter Lands for liens as every parcel in Chapter should have a lien.

There are several new applications for Chapter Lands.

Motion by Sarah Cammer to approve 8.9 acres on Island Road for Recreational purposes (61B). Second John Rabbitt. All in favor.

Farm land (61A) approval delayed: Not eligible until June, 2026.

Lynda McQuade spoke to the DOR representative regarding HERO Act abatements. The Town needs to issue a physical bill and subsequently execute an abatement in order for the town to be reimbursed by the state.

Goals for next month include:

- Continue inspections
- Track the FY 2026 growth
- Scheduled abatement inspections
- Finalize real estate abatements
- Update FY 2025 chapter land applications in vision

CURRENT BUSINESS

- Review and Approve Minutes of February 19, 2025, October 16, 2024, October 2, 2024, and Executive Sessions of December 10, 2024, January 22, 2025, and February 5, 2025, February 19, 2025.
- There was a motion to approve the minutes from October 16, 2024, by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.
- There was a motion to approve the minutes from February 5, 2025, by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.
- There was a motion to approve the minutes from executive session from February 5, 2025, for release by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.
- There was a motion to approve the minutes from executive session from February 19, 2025, for release by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.
- Review and Approve Invoices, Expense Vouchers, Billing Errors, etc.
There were 2 invoices from CAI that were signed by the Board. \$3,000 for support renewal and an additional \$3,400 for the revision of the maps that were recently submitted.

The quarterly renewal subscription for MLS was approved and signed.

Abatements for motor vehicle excise taxes were signed totaling \$16,063.18.

- Senior Means Tested Exemption/H.3911 Plan.
Lynda McQuade provided an application. A time will need to be scheduled for the Board to vote on income and asset limits. Additionally, it needs to be determined if the average is going to be a single-family home.
- Neighborhood/Site Index Review/Plan in response to DOR Directives Starting Point.
There is a plan in place to get money into the capital plan that will be used to start correcting the neighborhood situation that the state mandates to be fixed.
- Status of Homeowner Letter for Issues with Deeds.

Lynda McQuade provided a new letter addressing incomprehensible deeds. This was reviewed by the Town Council and gives the Assessor's Office the ability to send back any deeds with errors.

There was a motion to approve the letter as policy by John Rabbitt, seconded by Sarah Cammer. All in favor.

- Assessor Website.
Sarah Cammer is in the process of revising "How to Read your Vision Card". LA 15 for 2024 and 2025 needs to be added to the website.
- Tax Billing Issue.
Lynda McQuade spoke to Counsel from DOR, and they referenced a statute that

states the assessor should not be involved in the collection of taxes. In the past, the office receives the data from vision, a file is created and submitted to the DOR. That file is then emailed to the tax collector and added to MUNIS.

John Rabbitt proposes having a joint meeting with the attorneys, the Assessing Board, the Town Manager, and the Finance Director.

- FY 2026 Overlay.

So far this year the exemptions and abatements total \$128,967.40.

Brian Laffond suggests an amount between \$175,000 to \$200,000. This would ensure enough money to support abatement applications and exemptions. There was discussion about possible outstanding ATB, none are currently expected.

There is a motion to approve the overlay amount of \$175,000 by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt. All in favor.

- Clause 41 and 17 Assets/Income Level Adjustment Exemption Warrant.

The warrant is still in front of the Town Council and no response has been received.

POSTPONED TOPICS

- BOA Policies.

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- March 19, 2025, April 2, 2025, April 16, 2025.

CLOSING COMMENTS

- Public

There were no comments from the public.

- Board

John Rabbitt spoke to a resident about the deferral process. The applicant has completed the circuit breaker and filed taxes with the circuit breaker. They are still working with their mortgage holder.

ADJOURN

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting and enter executive session not to return to open session after exiting executive session by Sarah Cammer, seconded by John Rabbitt.

Unanimous approval.

The meeting closed at 8:55 PM.