

CHARLEMONT BOARD OF ASSESSORS
MARCH 4, 2024 MEETING MINUTES
CHARLEMONT ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Members Present/ Participating:

Anthony Ostroski; Chair, Jacqueline Cashin, Karen Rau

Call to Order

Chair Ostroski called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

#1: Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes from their 1/8/2024 meeting. On a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes, as written.

#2: 6:45 Appointment; David Kong, to discuss Avery's store real and personal property tax increases.

Mr. Kong attended the meeting to question why his taxes increased so much this year. He explained that there is no heat, water or plumbing on the 3rd floor and showed pictures of the space, noting he felt this area should be reduced. The Board first explained that the DOR requires the Board to review all properties which have an influence (value decrease) on them to ensure they are justified and consistent throughout the Town. There was a large influence on the building and there was no explanation for it. It was also noted that the inspector was not allowed access to the 3rd floor during his inspection, so he had no way of determining the condition of that space. Therefore, with no justification found for the influence it was removed, bringing the value up considerably. The Board reviewed the pictures and noted it was clearly not a livable area and agreed it would be cost prohibitive to bring up to code. Asked what his plans are, Kong said he'd like to make it usable, but explained that the Building Inspector told him to bring it up to code, it would need sprinklers, which would be expensive. He may see if there is a grant to help with restoring it. The Board said we will correct the property card, which will reduce the value going forward, however it was explained to Mr. Kong that he had missed the abatement filing deadline, so no refund could be issued. Kong also mentioned the personal property card went way up and he didn't know why. Hayden checked and saw that it went up some from the new kitchen/sandwich area he had added, but not considerably. She added that no one had returned the form of list, so it was still showing the previous higher inventory value. She is working with Ken Hall to fill out their personal property Form of List with updates to the inventory and businesses personal property. Kong thanked the Board for their time.

#3: Board Approval/Signatures

The Board reviewed and signed the following:

1. Warrant to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2023 Commitment #7 and 2024 Commitment #1.
2. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for above MVE commitments
3. Fiscal Year 2024 omitted personal property tax Warrants to Collector:
 - a. Kate Klemmer, Divine Structure; account erroneously marked as closed;
4. Fiscal Year 2024 revised property tax Warrant to Collector:
 - a. Andrew Kurowski; revised value due to removal from Chapter 61 classification.

Hayden explained that despite a letter to the new owners detailing the documents needed for the continuance in the Chapter 61 program, there was no response, and with no application in the new owner's names for Fiscal Year 2024, the property will be removed from Chapter 61 and assessed a bill for the difference between the chapterland value and the market value.

5. Assessor's Notice of Commitment to Accounting Officer for omitted and revised assessments.
6. Draft of Assessor's 2023 Annual Report. The Board reviewed and approved the draft report and directed Hayden to submit it.

7. Monthly list of abatements:
 - a. Real and personal property abatements for November, 2023-February, 2024,
 - b. Motor vehicle excise abatements for November, 2023-February, 2024.

#4: Board Discussion and Vote

1. Governor's proposed Municipal Empowerment Act bill. The Board went over the summary of various sections of the Act that relate to assessing. Hayden said the MAAO was asked to comment on the bill, so they sent out a survey asking for comments on the various sections. She had responded to the survey, as DOR gave a very short turnaround time for responses.
2. Email request for Assessor representative on Abandoned and Derelict Properties Committee. Hayden explained that she previously served on the committee, which with assistance from the Attorney General's office, assists Towns with dealing with properties that have fallen into disrepair. The Committee had an initial meeting on February 21st and are compiling a list of properties which may be candidates. She asked if any Assessors were interested in serving. Members said they may try to attend a meeting and Hayden also said she would serve on the committee again.
3. Requests for extension to annual property information returns:
 - a. Academy at Charlemont; extension on Form 3ABC filing. The Academy is in the middle of their audit and didn't have their financials yet and are asking for an extension to the March 1st filing deadline until June 1st. On a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board voted unanimously to approve an extension to June 1st, 2024 on the Form 3ABC filing.
 - b. Great River Hydro; extension on 38D-F real and personal property information request. GRH is also in the process of their audit and doesn't have their financials available yet, and asked for an extension until May 15th. For consistency, on a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board voted unanimously to approve an extension to the 38D-F information request, until June 1st, 2024.
4. Report of new structures with no building permit application. Hayden explained that she received a report of new buildings going up and she didn't find a permit for them on the permitting site; a large barn at 104 West Oxbow Road and a large building/greenhouse at 2143 Route 2. She asked if the Board wanted to go take a look to confirm before she checked with the Building Inspector. Additionally, Jared Bellow's sawmill had burned down, including the solar on the roof. There was no demolition permit taken out, so verification was needed to remove the building from the property card. Cashin confirmed she had viewed this with the owner previously and that it is gone. The Board will go visit the other two properties to check for the structures.

#4: Review Mail and Correspondence

1. Deeds for December, 2023 & January, 2024
2. Building permits for October- December, 2023

Adjournment

At 8:12 p.m. on a motion by Ostroski and seconded by Cashin, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn their meeting and enter into Executive Session for purpose #7; to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements; to deliberate on pending abatement and/or exemption applications, which pursuant to G.L. Chapter 59, Section 60

are not open to the general public, to sign the minutes from their last executive session meeting and to not reconvene in open session afterwards. Roll Call vote: Ostroski-Yes, Cashin-Yes, Rau-Yes.

The next meeting will be Monday, April 1, 2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Hayden,
Assessor's Clerk

Documents Viewed in Meeting of 3/4/2024*

1. Agenda for meeting of 3/4/2024
2. Pictures of 3rd floor space above Avery's store, provided by David Kong
3. Property record cards for Avery's store-2023 & 2024
4. Minutes from the 1/8/2024 meeting
5. Warrants to Collector for motor vehicle excise 2023 Commitment #7 & 2024 Commitment #1
6. Notice of commitment for MVE excise 2023 Commitment #7 & 2024 Commitment #1
7. Warrants to collector for Fiscal Year 2024 omitted and revised tax
8. Notice of commitment for Fiscal Year 2024 omitted and revised taxes
9. Monthly list of abatements, November, 2023-February, 2024
10. Municipal Empowerment Act; Section by Section Summary
11. Email from Town Administrator regarding abandoned and derelict properties committee; 1/17/2024
12. Email from Academy at Charlemont requesting extension on Form 3ABC filing; 2/2/2024
13. Email from Great River Hydro, requesting extension to 38D-F information request; 2/16/2024
14. Deeds for December, 2023 & January, 2024
15. Building permits for October- December, 2023

***Documents are stored in their respective files in the Assessor's office.**