

**CHARLEMONT BOARD OF ASSESSORS
JANUARY 30, 2017 MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present:

Karen LaClair, Chair, Jacqueline Cashin, Anthony Ostroski.

Call to Order

Chair Karen LaClair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1: Board Discussion/Amendment of Financial Hardship Exemption Policy

The Board reviewed their previous Financial Hardship Exemption policies. After discussion, all agreed that with changing economic times, some changes and clarification was needed to their existing policy. With regard to age, after discussion, the Board felt that an applicant would need to be 60 years old to meet the age requirement. With regard to the annual income and asset requirements, the Board decided to use the government poverty guidelines and asked their Secretary to look up the poverty rates on Mass.gov. The annual income amounts will be less expenses. The Board agreed that the liquid assets amount will remain at \$5,000. Next the Board discussed the current policy of only allowing this exemption one time per applicant/household. After discussion, the Board decided that they would typically allow the exemption only once, but would agree to consider the additional need for the exemption on a case by case basis. On a motion by Ostroski and seconded by LaClair, the Board voted unanimously to make the amendments as noted to their Financial Hardship Exemption policy. Hayden will bring the amended policy to the next Board meeting for signatures.

2: Board Discussion/Amendment of Abatement Application Policy

The Board discussed the current policy in place on property tax abatement applications that all taxes must be paid in order for the Board to consider an abatement application. It was noted that the Board had recently allowed an abatement without requiring the taxes be paid first, as the overvaluation was due to an assessment error. After discussion, on a motion by LaClair and seconded by Ostroski, the Board unanimously voted that only in situations where an over-assessment was due to an error in the assessing department, they would not require that the taxes be paid first. The Tax Collector will notified that an application is pending before the Board so that no late fees will be assessed. The Board discussed the same requirement that taxes be paid with regard to motor vehicle abatement applications. After discussion, the Board decided to make no change to this policy on motor vehicle abatement applications.

Adjournment and Enter Executive Session

At 7:40 p.m. on a motion by LaClair and seconded by Ostroski, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn their regular meeting and enter into Executive Session, pursuant to General Laws Chapter 59, Section 60, in order to deliberate on pending abatement and/or exemption applications, with the intent to not return to open meeting afterwards.

Roll Call:

Voting yes: LaClair, Cashin, Ostroski

Voting no: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carlene Hayden;
Assessorø Secretary

Documents Viewed in Meeting of January 30, 2017*

1. 2008 and 2011 Assessor's policies on Clause 18 Financial Hardship Exemption
2. Suggested changes/clarifications needed to Clause 18 exemption
3. Suggested options for property tax and motor vehicle excise abatement policy

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