

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
November 15, 2011**

Present at the meeting that was held at the Stow Town Building were Selectmen Charles Kern, Thomas Ryan, James Salvie, and Laura Spear.

Also present was Administrative Assistant Susan McLaughlin.

Mr. Bernklow was absent.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the annual public hearing on the Town's tax classifications and, after a presentation by the Board of Assessors, to vote on the classifications for fiscal year 2012.

At 7:00 p.m., Mr. Salvie opened the public hearing by stating its purpose and reading the legal notice below:

Notice Of Tax Classification Hearing

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Town Building, 380 Great Road, Stow, MA on the issue of tax classification. The purpose of the hearing is to allow taxpayers the opportunity to present their views on whether or not Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Open Space and Personal Property should be taxed with one rate for all property classes, or to use different tax rates for different property classes.

The hearing will include a presentation by the Board of Assessors outlining the options available under Chapter 40, Section 56 of the Massachusetts General Laws. At the conclusion of the public hearing the Board of Selectmen shall determine whether or not tax classification shall be applied for the Fiscal Year 2012 tax rate. Currently the Town taxes at a single tax rate for all property classes. All concerned taxpayers are encouraged to attend to present their views orally or in writing.

If there are questions about the hearing, please contact the Assessors' Office at 897-4597.

James H. Salvie
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

Posted 10/14/11

The Stow Independent
One time: 10/19/11 issue

One resident was in attendance: William Byron of Gleasondale Road. Louise Nejad of Packard, an assistant assessor, was also present.

Chair of the Board of Assessors Dominick Pugliese, accompanied by Principal Assessor Dorothy Wilbur and Board member Michael Dugas, presented the assessors' recommendation and their rationale.

Ms. Wilbur began the presentation by explaining why a special meeting for the hearing was needed in mid-November this year. It is in order to get the rate approved by the Department of

Revenue and then to issue the tax bills on time. She thanked the Board for holding a special meeting to do this.

Mr. Pugliese presented the assessors' recommendation for fiscal year 2012: to retain a single tax rate for all classes of property, i.e., residential, commercial, and industrial, and personal property. Because Stow has so few businesses, increasing the commercial/industrial rate would have a significant impact on business, while providing relatively little relief to residential property owners. The tax rate for FY 2012 is \$17.09, up \$0.04 from last year, mostly due to the cost of the school building project.

Using a "What If" scenario worksheet to illustrate his points, Mr. Pugliese showed that an \$0.88 reduction in the tax rate for Residential property would require a roughly \$9.00 increase in each of the other three rates. For example, with the average value of a Stow home at \$429,000, this small decrease in Residential would save the owner \$300 for the year, while costing Bose and the shopping center more than \$100,000 in additional taxes. He noted that, for these reasons, the Board has chosen to use a single rate in past years.

Mr. Pugliese said that, furthermore, the businesses in Stow are no burden to public services, as they are in some towns. Hudson and Sudbury, for example, have a large number of businesses, which, in turn, use more town services. For this reason, they split the rate.

For these reasons, the Board of Assessors believes that a single rate is best for Stow.

At 7:12 p.m., there being no questions from the selectmen or attendees, Ms. Spear moved to close the public hearing; Mr. Ryan seconded; and all voted in favor.

Ms. Spear then moved to adopt the Board of Assessors' recommendation to have a single tax rate for residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property for FY 2012; Mr. Ryan seconded; and all voted in favor. The Board members signed the Classification Tax Allocation form for Ms. Wilbur to submit to the Department of Revenue.

Mr. Ryan asked if there is a way to offer lower rates to long-term residents to make staying in town more affordable. Mr. Pugliese explained that properties are assessed for market value every three years now, so this is not really viable. Ms. Wilbur said that there are tax exemptions for people in financial need.

At 7:16 p.m., Ms. Spear moved to adjourn; Mr. Ryan seconded; and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan McLaughlin
Administrative Assistant

Approved as amended, November 22, 2011