

**JOINT BOARD
OF THE TOWNS OF
SUNAPEE, NEWBURY AND NEW LONDON
MARCH 17, 2015
NEW LONDON TOWN OFFICES**

Present: Dennis Pavlicek (Newbury Town Administrator), Ed Thorson (Newbury Selectman), Tina Helm (New London Resident), Donna Nashawaty (Sunapee Town Manager), Normand Bernaiche (Chief Assessor), Kristen McAllister (Assessor), Kim Hallquist (New London Town Administrator), Janet Kidder (New London Selectman), Amy Rankins (Assessing Coordinator)

Absent: Rem Mastin (Sunapee Resident)

Donna Nashawaty called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Copies of the agenda, previous meeting minutes and current budget were distributed.

Update Board members for 2015: it was determined that Janet Kidder's term will be over in 2015. The Board thanked Janet for her service.

Minutes of December 3, 2014: Donna Nashawaty made a correction in the second to last paragraph, changing "anonymously" to "unanimously." Ed Thorson made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Tina Helm. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget Recap (2014 Final)

Mr. Pavlicek presented the budget. He reported that the Worker's Compensation line was overspent due to changing to a fiscal year. The new budget year went from January through December to July through June. Late in the second quarter, a payment will be due, which will be slightly higher.

Mr. Bernaiche stated that the training line was under budget; however, there are upcoming seminars where the funds will be utilized. He also stated that there will be an additional \$800 added to the budget for Cartographic programming changes. The changes related to ease of use of the GIS online database for revaluation purposes and public research.

Mrs. Nashawaty inquired as to whether the other communities were experiencing less foot traffic since the online GIS database has been established. All three communities agreed that it is less and are pleased that more real estate agents are comfortable utilizing the website and enjoy the capability of printing maps and assessment cards from their own computers. Ms. McAllister stated that she receives many phone calls and directs people to the on-line system. She is amazed at how many of our neighboring communities do not yet have this capability, which is why it is not uncommon to have to wait for an assessment card to be mailed.

Mrs. Nashawaty stated that the Town of Sunapee is presently operating under a default budget after the Town's did not pass and that it is imperative that the assessing line item remains under budget. Mr. Pavlicek stated that this should not be an issue, as he is constantly monitoring budget expenditures. He mentioned that at Newbury's town meetings, he ensures that the public is aware

that the joint assessing budget is divided among the three towns. He believes that since Mr. Bernaiche and Ms. McAllister have good relations with the public, the Newbury portion of the budget is rarely questioned. He reminded the board that as stated in the original contract, any community can remove themselves from the joint assessing program with stipulations.

Quarterly Recap

Mr. Bernaiche stated that New London received 30 abatements for 2014 and many of them were from individuals who tend to apply every year. He was recently notified that New London is being held in contempt for a past appeal of one of the lakefront properties. The owner is claiming that the assessment should have remained the same as what the court ordered after the revaluation had taken place last year.

Mrs. Kidder asked if the majority of the abatements were for waterfront properties. Mr. Bernaiche stated that yes, most of them were, in addition to areas where there were recent sales. Mrs. Kidder inquired about the percentage of abatements versus the number of properties in New London. Mr. Bernaiche stated that it was less than 1%.

Mrs. Nashawaty inquired as to whether or not communities are judged on their entry rate for revaluations. Mr. Bernaiche stated that since the Department of Revenue keeps good track of how the assessors conduct revaluations, the entry rate is not considered. Mr. Pavlicek opined that since the three communities maintain the same staff, this assures continuity and he believes this is why the abatement numbers are not substantially higher. In this regard, Mr. Bernaiche stated that in Newbury, the assessors recently met with the owners of the local golf course regarding their assessment. Because of the good relationship that Newbury has with this establishment, the assessors were able to work with them on an assessment that all parties felt was fair and equitable, without having to take the matter to court.

Ms. Hallquist stated that the New London Board of Selectmen denied the Carr property abatement the previous evening. The residence on this property burned in July, 2014 and the owners were seeking an abatement for good cause shown due to the home being completely destroyed.

Mr. Bernaiche stated that Sunapee is gearing up for their revaluation this year and are busy gathering data. Various cost studies are being conducted for many of the buildings, which will help as the revaluation gets underway. Mr. Bernaiche stated that because these studies are very similar in all three towns, the data from one is very helpful for the others. Building permits are also being reviewed in all three towns in time for the April 1 reassessment date.

Mr. Bernaiche announced that the Town of Newbury won their recent BTLA case.

Staff Training

Mr. Bernaiche informed the Board that back in November, the assessing staff met to review sales letters and other correspondence to ensure continuity among the three towns and clerks. The meeting was quite productive and several documents that are utilized by the three towns were updated.

Mr. Bernaiche stated that it is the hope of the assessing staff that New London will soon be remapped, as the current base map is incorrect, and after that point, staff may begin scanning and digitizing plans.

A representative from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission was invited to provide more in-depth training on the ArcView program last Thursday in Sunapee. The training consisted of how to correctly plot various plans and current use land on the program.

Ms. McAllister announced that the State of New Hampshire will be conducting another “fly-over” this year, which means that pictures of the state will be taken from the sky, via aircraft. This process used to be scheduled every ten years but now it is taking place every five, with no cost to the communities.

Mr. Bernaiche stated that he and Ms. McAllister will be attending the NRAAO Conference in May of this year, in New Hampshire. The agenda being offered will be robust and an excellent training opportunity for the assessors.

Other Business

Mrs. Nashawaty asked Mr. Bernaiche about the current status of the pole tax. Mr. Bernaiche stated that about 70% of Fairpoint’s poles will be exempt but he is not sure of the poles owned by other utilities. It is the understanding of the assessors that any pole that is 30 or more years old will be exempt from tax. This topic led to a discussion about current town tax rates for each of the communities.

Mrs. Nashawaty stated that since there are many similarities with Sunapee, she had recently been invited to the City of Portsmouth to discuss educational funding issues.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at 8 a.m. in the Town of Newbury.

Chair Nashawaty asked for a motion to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) to discuss the employee evaluation of Kris McAllister. Dennis Pavlicek moved to enter nonpublic session and Kim Hallquist seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Hallquist – yes, Kidder –yes, Helm- yes, Nashawaty – yes, Thornson – yes, Pavlicek – yes. The Board entered nonpublic session at 9:15 AM.

Having no further business before them, Dennis Pavlicek moved to adjourn the meeting and Ed Thornson seconded the motion. All were in favor, the meeting adjourned at 9:27 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy A. Rankins
Assessing Coordinator

