

Board of Assessor's Minutes
July 20, 2010

Members Present: Arlene Fogg, Chairperson; Relf Fogg; Rod Wood, Contracted Assessor and Cynthia Bickford, Assessing Technician.

Also present was Barbara Barney.

Mrs. Fogg called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Mrs. Fogg led those present in the pledge of allegiance.

Appointment

Wakefield Tax Map 72, Lot 11. Barbara Barney had filed for an abatement for 2009, which was denied. She has since filed to the Board of Tax & Land Appeals. The meeting was ordered by the Board of Tax & Land Appeals in order to attempt to settle the matter before a hearing is scheduled.

Ms. Barney states she is here to work things out regarding the 2009 property tax bill. It is Mr. Wood's understanding that the Board of Tax & Land Appeals is requiring settlement meetings prior to scheduling hearings for all cases. Ms. Barney states she had submitted an appraisal as well as an opinion of market value from her realtor. She informed the Board her home was on the market for a short time. She claims her 2009 tax bill was based on 2008 values. Mr. Wood reviewed the assessment card with the Board.

The bank appraisal established a value at \$148,000 after a new deck had been constructed in 2009. Mr. Wood claims the appraiser used foreclosures for comparables. Ms. Barney states that is all that was out there for comps. Mr. Wood states the foreclosures do not show what the actual market is. Ms. Barney states there were no sales within the six-month timeframe the appraiser could use except for foreclosures.

Mr. Wood stated the values were not adjusted in 2009. He explained the budget committee did not chose to fund an adjustment of values, therefore the values used were 2008 values and the 2009 sales ratio was determined to be 105.6%.

Ms. Barney argues the Town was still using 2008 values in 2009, when they were aware the values had significantly dropped.

Ms. Bickford informs Ms. Barney that as long as the values are equitable across the board the values are fair and equitable. Mr. Wood explained when the values drop across the board typically the tax rate increases, which means you will still typically pay the same amount of taxes.

Mr. Wood informed Ms. Barney he will be adjusting values for September 1, 2010.

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Mr. Fogg asked Mr. Wood if he would be using a sales analysis to adjust values for the 2010. Mr. Wood stated he would conduct a sales analysis in order to establish values for 2010.

Mr. Fogg believes the inaccurate part is when Ms. Barney paid for an appraisal and the appraiser used foreclosures for comparables. Ms. Barney questioned the appraisal when it was complete and the appraiser stated she should be dealing with the Town. Ms. Barney feels there has got to be a place where it evens out, either with the appraiser or with the Town.

Ms. Barney was trying to refinance at a lower rate. She asked the bank to reevaluate the appraisal and the comps and the bank refused. Ms. Barney argued you could look at it both ways; the Town did not adjust values when the market was on a decline. Mr. Wood informed Ms. Barney the state conducts an equalization every year, which measures the sales ratio and the uniformity of assessments. The state determined the sales ratio at 105.6% for 2009, which under the state standards is still equitable. He explained as long as everyone is being treated the same throughout the Town it is equitable.

Due to the fact the budget committee had removed the money to complete the statistical analysis and adjust values accordingly the values from 2008 were used for the 2009 tax year. Mr. Wood explained that if the same amount of money were needed to run the town and the assessments all dropped, the tax rate would increase to raise such funds.

Ms. Barney claimed if homes are being foreclosed and people aren't paying their taxes then the town is already out money. Ms. Bickford informed Ms. Barney that a typical foreclosure is due to not making your mortgage payment. Most mortgage companies escrow the taxes and therefore, the mortgage company typically pays the property tax. People that are losing their homes to foreclosure are not making the mortgage payment. Ms. Barney states she was not aware of this information.

Mr. Fogg states he believes the budget committee was in the mindset of the less spending the town does on a whole the easier it is on the taxpayer. It may be wrong to believe that but that is his personal belief going through the budget process, the less you spend the less the taxes are.

Ms. Barney feels if people are having hard times you have a reduced rate, then when times are better you increase it again. Mr. Wood states it all comes down to spending, if people don't reduce spending, the tax rate will not be reduced.

Mrs. Fogg states all towns are governed the same.

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Mr. Fogg asked Ms. Barney if she were offered \$175K would she consider the \$175K offer? Ms. Barney replies she is on a private road, there is no maintenance and she receives no services from the town.

Mr. Wood asked Ms. Barney what she feels the fair market value was for her property on April 1, 2009? Ms. Barney states she is not qualified to make that decision. Mr. Wood then asked what would she sell the property for? Ms. Barney states when she had the property on the market she would have sold it for \$189K which was her bottom line.

The realtor told Ms. Barney she would need to drop the price to \$149K in order to sell the property. Ms. Barney states she does not have to sell her house and she was not willing to sell it for \$149K. Mrs. Fogg asked if a realtor dictates what you would list your property for? Mr. Wood states you should get multiple opinion of values, the realtor's will typically fluctuate on an opinion of value.

Ms. Barney was not aware the money was taken out of the budget to adjust values in 2009. It was frustrating for her to see her home appraise out over \$200K in 2008 and then drop to \$148K in 2009. Mr. Wood feels if the appraiser had spent a little more time looking for true arms length sales or gone back a few more months and did a time adjustment she would have seen better results.

Ms. Barney decided to withdraw her application to the Board of Tax & Land Appeals. Both Mr. Wood and Ms. Barney signed the BTLA settlement form.

Outstanding Business

Wakefield Tax Map 204, Lot 5. Discussion took place on how to proceed with the issue; the office has received conflicting advice.

Mr. Fogg moved to forward the documentation to the mapping company according to RSA 31:95-a; Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Abatement

According to Mr. Burden, owner of the mobile home located on site 35 in Lake Ivanhoe Campground the unit was demolished back in 2009. The assessing firm confirmed the unit is no longer there.

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the abatement in the amount of \$53.00, Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

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Intent to Cut

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the "Intent to Cut" for Wakefield Tax Map 85, Lot 1, Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Current Use Application

The Board reviewed a revised current use application for Wakefield Tax Map 59, Lot 2 and Map 75, Lot 37. The land is already in current use. The owner's have recently hired a forester to complete a stewardship plan and would like to file a new application to reflect the stewardship plan. *Mr. Fogg moved to approve the application for current use, Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.*

Correspondence

The Board was provided with a copy of the memo sent to the Planning Board from the Assessor's Office regarding the Belleau Lake Property Owner's Association selling "water access".

Minutes

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the June 15, 2010 minutes as written; Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Mr. Fogg moved to approve the June 22, 2010 minutes as written; Mrs. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Adjournment

Mrs. Fogg moved to adjourn at 10:05 a.m.; Mr. Fogg seconded. Motion carried 2-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Bickford
Assessing Technician

Approval of Minutes:

Arlene Fogg, Chairperson

Relf Fogg

David Stevens