

WISCASSET BOARD OF SELECTMEN,
BOARD OF ASSESSORS AND OVERSEERS OF THE POOR
JUNE 28, 2011

Present: Chairman Judy Colby, Bill Curtis, Pam Dunning, Vice Chairman David Nichols,
Ed Polewarczyk, Town Manager Laurie Smith and Assessors' Agent Sue Varney

1. Call to Order

Chairman Judy Colby called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

3. New Business

A. Abatements: Meet with Assessor's Agent to review and act on nine abatement requests

4. Richard C. French (U01-030, Acct. #1163)

Because Mr. French and his attorney Eliot Field were present, this request was taken out of order. Field contended that the barn on the property, which is now used as showroom space for part of the year, was over-assessed, as it has no heat, insulation or plumbing, although there is a monitor heater. Sue Varney will recalculate the value of the barn/store frame without plumbing or insulation and the item will be on the agenda for the July 5 meeting.

1. Rusty and Susan Bryant (R03-047-A, Acct. #2215)

Varney recommended the value on this property be lowered as it is undeveloped. **David Nichols moved to approve the abatement in the amount of \$18,000 in valuation resulting in a refund of \$266.40 for tax year 2010. Vote 5-0-0.**

2. Constance Heilman (R05-001, Acct. #701)

This property belongs to the town and the total should be abated to clear the books. **Pam Dunning moved that this abatement be approved resulting in \$711.08 removed from the record in order to clear the books. Vote 5-0-0.**

3. Kenneth L. Gray & Mary Havens (R05-116-015, Acct. #767)

The dock and float has been moved and assessed to the subdivision association and the value should be removed from this account. **David Nichols moved to approve the abatement in the amount of \$2,250 in valuation resulting in a refund of \$33.30. Vote 5-0-0.**

5. Gail White (U01-125, Acct. #1263)

This property has no attic. **Bill Curtis moved to approve the abatement of \$7,100 in valuation resulting in a refund of \$105.08 for tax year 2010. Vote 5-0-0.**

6. Dorothy Holbrook (U06-019, Acct. #1523)

Applicant has contested the value as too high and she has been unable to sell her property. The land valuation factor was decreased from 75% factor to 60% in 2008 to recognize the town pump station location nearby. Varney said the property value is consistent with other property along this section of Route 1. **David Nichols moved to deny the abatement. Vote 5-0-0.**

7. Ruhle & Sons (Shaw's Supermarket) (U17-001-A, Acct #1770)

Varney said the applicant requested using the income approach as a basis for valuation; however, the town attempted this several years ago without success, as businesses did not cooperate by submitting income tax returns. She recommended that the town assess the base commercial value for two acres of commercial prime and assess the remaining 7.10 acres as commercial rear land. She said this would be consistent with the new McDonald's assessment across the street. This would result in an abatement of \$14,000. The board asked how much of the 7.10-acre rear land would be buildable, and if there was the possibility of expansion if the maximum lot coverage had not been reached. **Judy Colby moved to deny the Ruhle & Sons abatement for lack of information. Vote 5-0-0.**

8. Mark Buscanera (Personal Property Acct. #7)

This business has closed. **Pam Dunning moved to grant the abatement for Mark Buscanera resulting in \$41.92 removed from the record in order to clear the books. Vote 5-0-0.**

9. John R. Pray (Personal Property Acct. #271)

This business has closed. **Pam Dunning moved the abatement be approved resulting in \$38.22 removed from the record in order to clear the books. Vote 5-0-0.**

Varney said the County Commissioners had ordered the board to abide by the DEP ruling with regard to R-7A, Lot 72, Mason Station, LLC, and drop the value from 50% factor to 25% factor. The board signed the necessary documentation.

Laurie Smith said valuations in the village area had not equalized to current market values, and because of the economy, forced sales or foreclosure sales did not reflect the true market value of properties. In addition, she said property owners in the village felt their properties were being valued much higher than properties in other parts of town. She said it was difficult to make recommendations on valuing property because trends were not evident; however, in order to respond to the citizens on the issue, the board should consider this when going to commitment and setting the mill rate.

Varney said all coastal towns are having the same problem and she is attempting to see how other towns are handling this situation. The last revaluation was in 2007 and no factoring either up or down had been done since. Factoring was discussed but it was determined that decreasing the property values would only lead to increasing the tax rate. Pam Dunning recommended that rather than reassessing all properties, the town deal only with those property-owners who were complaining and could file for an abatement if they felt their property was not fairly assessed.

Smith said it was important for the board to consider the issue because abatements had not been budgeted and would be a major factor to cash flow.

B. Discussion of Hart property clean-up bid

The board had discussed at the previous meeting the request for proposals for the sale and clean-up of this property and whether deed restrictions or conditions on a purchase and sale agreement were necessary. Smith said according to Town Attorney Dennis Jumper, deed restrictions could be used to require that the land be used for residential property; however, to require a certain type of development, i.e. six-lot subdivision, would have no impact and there would be a deed restriction that would affect the future sale of the property. Considering future tax value to the town and exploring development potential, Smith said, was less important at this time than selling the property. She recommended amending the RFP to retain the first two paragraphs (price and assessment) and the last paragraph (reserving the right to refuse any and all bids). A time limit for clean-up was also recommended with extensions possible. **Ed Polewarczyk moved to accept the first two paragraphs of the Town Manager's proposal**

(the bid information and hiring of a private consultant), to add a clean-up date requirement with a one year limit, which the selectmen would have the ability to extend under extenuating circumstances, and to retain the last paragraph reserving the right of Wiscasset to refuse any and all bids. Vote 5-0-0.

4. Adjournment

At 7:30 p.m., **David Nichols moved to adjourn. Vote 5-0-0.**