

Selectmen Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 13, 2002

Attendance: Ada Brown, Chairman; Betty McDermott; Christine McClellan; Michael O'Donnell of O'Donnell Associates; and Don Willard, Town Manager.

1. Call to order. Ada Brown called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm at the Town Office.

2. Certified ratio for 2002.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell explained that presently the ratio is 102% and we must be within 10% of what the State considers our sales ratio. They say it is now 90%. He recommended changing the ratio to 95% which would maintain the level of Veterans' and Homestead exemptions. He added that it was the Selectmen's prerogative to set this amount as long as it's within 10% of what the State shows.

MOTION: Ada Brown motioned to set our level at 95%. Seconded by Betty McDermott.

VOTE: Unanimous.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell noted that this level will be included in the commitment papers which should be before the Selectmen by their first or second meeting in September. He also added that it is evident that our sales prices are higher than Raymond's assessed values on properties.

3. Scheduling the Equalization Program.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell said that O'Donnell's cannot do a quick turnaround revaluation. He said that it would take at least two years. Mr. Willard added that a Request for Proposal would state the time expectations and a schedule. Mrs. McClellan felt that Raymond should proceed. Mr. O'Donnell said that they should decide for what services they will be asking. Mr. Willard thought that a complete revaluation was necessary but with a reasonable approach. He asked for Mr. O'Donnell's recommendation. Mr. O'Donnell said he would prepare an outline. Mr. Willard asked if they could see some sample RFP's which O'Donnell might have. Mr. O'Donnell agreed. Mr. O'Donnell continued that if the revaluation is a two year commitment then there is time to see what the sales trend will be and value the properties accordingly.

MOTION: Betty McDermott motioned to recommend a two year time span for the revaluation. Seconded by Christine McClellan.

VOTE: Unanimous.

4. Staffing the Assessor's Office.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell questioned whether having an outside assessor's agent was to be continued or whether Raymond needs an in house person. He said that they began working for Raymond in 1995 with the volume going up. The growth continues and he feels in the future O'Donnell's won't be able to handle Raymond's office work. He added that the assessing was not a problem but that the record keeping and office work was. He felt the options were: 1) in house assessor, 2) shared assessor with another town, or 3) use O'Donnell's with in house assessing office staff. He felt that O'Donnell's could rearrange their service to fit Raymond's needs. Mr. Willard explained that the influences will be for the mill rate to go up as the exemptions go down until the revaluation which should lower the mill rate but in his experience with time the mill rate will begin to climb once again. Mr. O'Donnell noted that their contract is actually from September to September because that is when the commitment papers are annually dealt with. Mr. Willard recommended keeping the services of O'Donnell Associates and increasing the in house staff to help them. Mrs. Brown noted that our services may change with the possible addition of services for Frye Island.

5. Computer equipment and office space.

DISCUSSION: Mr. O'Donnell liked the recent changes to the Assessing Office for equipment and the valuable addition of Amanda Simpson to the staff. Mrs. McClellan felt that discussion with the entire town office staff was necessary in order to prioritize what Raymond needs and changes to be made. Mr. O'Donnell felt that Raymond should complete and get working what it already has before it engages any new projects naming the GIS system as something which is nice but not very practical at this point.

6. Adjourn.

MOTION: Christine McClellan motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Betty McDermott.

VOTE: Unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT: Ada Brown adjourned the meeting at 5:10 pm.

Louise H. Lester
Town Clerk