

**BOARD OF ASSESSORS**  
**January 4, 2012**  
**BEDFORD TOWN HALL**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Bruce Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

**ROLL CALL:**  
Members Present Chairman, Bruce Murphy; Richard Boffa, and Associate Assessor Bruce Morgan.

**MINUTES:** The minutes for the meeting of December 28, 2011 were provided. Richard Boffa made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Bruce Murphy. A unanimous vote was taken on the motion to accept the minutes as written.

**ROLL CALL:** Clerk John Linz arrived at 7:05.

**GUESTS:** Ron Cordes arrived at 7:12.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. John Linz asked for a brief summary of abatement inquiries/applications to date. A discussion followed regarding the living area at Huckins Farm condos because of documentation brought forward by one of the owners and research done last year and again recently by Assistant Assessor Robert Hilsinger. There are significant discrepancies between the Master Deed and recorded plans. John Linz suggested that other towns be surveyed to learn their policies. Bruce Murphy noted that the town should continue to rely on the Master Deed unless the Appellate Tax Board (ATB) issues a decision to the contrary. Richard Boffa will check the policy in Brookline. John Linz suggested that ATB cases be reviewed to see if they have decided on this issue in the past.

Bruce Morgan informed the Board of a major error in the living area of a house in town that was brought forward by the property owner. The Board agreed that it was important to determine if it is a systemic or individual error in the database.

2. Bruce Morgan informed the Board that Personal Property tax bills were issued to accounts with values less than \$2,000 despite a new policy not to do so. Bruce Murphy suggested that owners be contacted by letter and told that the accounts will be abated in full. John Linz and Richard Boffa agreed. Concerns were expressed about the procedures that led to the mistake, and a meeting with the Tax Collector was suggested.

3. Bruce Murphy shared copies of the eight-page presentation he had prepared for the public explaining increased values and taxes for FY12. Minor changes were suggested by John Linz, Richard

Boffa, and Ron Cordes. Bruce Murphy agreed to make changes and send the revised copy to Bruce Morgan for posting on the web and to make copies for distribution in the Assessors' Office and Finance Department.

4. The FY13 preliminary budget provided by the Finance Committee was reviewed and shows a \$4,500 increase for the Assessors' Office. A discussion followed on the possible need for funds for property inspections, appraisals for commercial properties, and for contracts with Patriot Properties if necessary. It was noted that it may be possible to get a reserve fund transfer for appraisals. Maintenance agreements for the office copier and printers were also questioned.

5. Bruce Morgan asked the Board for feedback regarding the possibility of one or both of the administrative assistants in the office doing residential condominium inspections. It was suggested that a meeting with Assistant Town Manager Jessica Porter be held to discuss the issue.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. John Linz had reviewed the state's IGR regarding Exemption Clause 18A, Temporary Hardship Deferral. Bruce Murphy noted that the IRS has guidelines defining "financial hardship," which he suggested is the most important criterion to be met by an applicant. John Linz will prepare a first draft of guidelines for the Board's review.

**ONGOING BUSINESS:**

1. Signatures for exemptions were completed as required.

**Adjournment:**

Being no other business, John Linz made a motion to adjourn the Open Meeting. The motion was seconded by Richard Boffa. There was no discussion on the motion and all members present voted affirmative with the motion. The meeting was adjourned 10:19 PM.

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Bruce Morgan, Associate Assessor

Approved by the BOA January 11, 2012

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John Linz, Clerk