



TOWN OF WALPOLE
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Board of Assessors

John R. Fisher, Chairman
Edward F. O'Neil, Member
Robert L. Bushway, Clerk

Town Hall
135 School St.
Walpole, MA. 02081

Minutes of Meeting
November 19, 2019

The Board of Assessors met on Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 6:30 pm.

The following Board members were present: John Fisher, Chair, Mr. Edward O'Neil, Member, Robert Bushway, Clerk. Also participating Dennis Flis, Director of Assessing.

The Board reviewed the FY 2020 informational classification packet in preparation for their Public Hearing Meeting with the Board of Selectmen at 7:00 pm.

The Board reviewed the FY 2020 tax tape schedule and the upgrade of the Vision CAMA software from Vision 6.5 to Vision 8.1. Both projects are currently on schedule.

The Board attended the Board of Selectmen, Public Hearing at 7:00 pm in the Main Meeting Room in the Town Hall to present information for the FY 2020 Tax Classification.

Below are the minutes from the Board of Selectmen Public Hearing:

11-18 Tax Classification Hearing MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to open the Tax Classification public hearing, seconded by Mr. Gallivan VOTED 5-0-0 Jack Fisher, Ed O'Neil, Bob Bushway, and Dennis Flis were present. Mr. Fisher stated we gave you the information of the residential factor. One question people ask is how you determine what we pay for taxes. Valuation is determined as of January 1st beginning of Calendar Year. There are some exceptions for new construction. The Board of Assessors factors the sale analysis of preceding year and characteristics of the individual property. Board of Assessors determines it and it is overseen by the DOR and certified by them. The Residential Tax Rate three elements by three different bodies. Planned expenditures by Town i.e. Tax levy. Determined by Town Meeting (normal expenditures subject to 2 ½ limitations or voters (operational or Capital Expenditure Override). Total Assessed valuation of all Real and personal property. Determined by Board of Assessors certified by MA DOR. Residential Factor Percent of total Residential assessment to be shifted to CIP property. Determined by Board of Selectmen. What you want to do with the residential factor. Assuming you would want to stay with the same residential factor and what that impact will be. On page 2 of the document it explains the single tax rate. For Scenario one, the average

of single-family assessment of \$531.918 would pay approximately \$8,319. For Scenario 2 with the current shift of 1.275 it would cost \$7,973. One question, how do we stand in residential and commercial percentage? We are really squi to residential property. The levy limit in Walpole is \$ 75, 660,94. What we had in the levy last year, plus 2 ½ % and plus new growth, plus any override. It has been like this for 40 years. On page 8 the new growth number for 2020 is a little over 1.5 million dollars. We monitor this during the year and adjust it through the year as needed. That new growth is not finalized until it is approved by the state. Page 13 the shift of 1.275 is an increase of \$258 dollars. Talked about Industrial class. Page 20 shows the top ten taxpayers in Town. Which includes NSTAR, Siemens, Walpole Mall, Hilltop Preserve, Bay State Gas, ALTA Moose Hill LLC apartments, Wal-Mart, Verizon New England and Stop and Shop. We recommend the 1.275 shift. Mr. O'Neil asked if there were any comments from the public. Andrew Flowers Vice Chair of the Finance committee. Wants to thank Dennis and the Board of Assessors. I believed this is an important meeting. My goal is to open up tax relief; there are some residents in Walpole that feel that taxes are a burden to them. Three ways to increase tax relief program, a two-split rate, sending more to Industrial. I do not think business in town need to pay more. Residential exemption my ask is to begin the process for a year from now. To get more resources for the Assessors office and study and estimates for nonowner occupied homes in town. Residents whether they are living in a condo or renting in a home. I spoke to Dennis, small budget increase in the 2020 budget for Assessor, where are the owner occupied homes and non-occupied homes. You are shifting the burden to the lower priced homes and shifting to the higher priced homes. It is just changing how it is distributed. I think it could have a good impact. It could increase rents for renters. We have these new apartments coming on line. Just entertain a residential exemption. Mr. Salvatore questioned what about the fundamental that you would have to raise taxes on others. Mr. Flowers they can kind of rank different taxes. What are the more aggressive taxes sales taxes are. Suggested shifting the taxes to more expensive homes. Mr. Salvatore cant we just spend less. Mr. Flowers that debate it is a fundamental debate. Lets split the debate on how much we should be spending. Mr. Salvatore so the only people struggling are those in lower priced homes. Mr. Flowers I do not shed too many tears for someone living in 1million dollar home. We need to study this. This is a yearlong process. Mr. Salvatore agrees with the concept. Mr. O'Neil we should take a look at it. Mr. Johnson has talked to Mr. Flis about this and I know they do not have the resource for this. We can work with the Assessors. Mr. O'Neil lets get together with a plan of attack. I would be interested in hearing it will look like. Mr. Gallivan in addition to the more targeted raise the cap at Town Meeting. Residential exemption. Targeting groups that may be helped. Mr. Salvatore noted there is different legislation on the hill, local circuit breaker, would allow local communities to help seniors. We think something is coming down the road. Mr. Gallivan asked if there is another option. Mr. Flis told the Board they will keep them informed how the bills are going. Mrs. Mackenzie thinks it is a great idea, are there other towns that have done this, and maybe it will help us. Mr. Johnson last year we looked into it. Mr. Fisher we have a list of 16 communities and they tend to be cities. Towns down the cape that have a lot of Vacation homes. It is not a widespread program and seems to fit certain categories. MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to close the Public Hearing seconded by Mr. Gallivan VOTED 5- 0-0 MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to adopt a shift of 1.275 with a Residential Factor of 0.9587 for Fiscal year 2020 seconded by Mr. Gallivan VOTED 5-0-0 MOTION moved by Mrs. Mackenzie to authorize the Town Administrator to submit on behalf of the Board the LA5 on the State Gateway System, Seconded by Mr. O'Neil VOTED 5-0-