



The Town of Franklin

P.O. Box 209, Route 3, Vermontville, NY 12989 • 518-891-2189 • Fax: 518-891-6389 • www.townoffranklin.com



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Town of Franklin Board Meetings

Minutes Of The Information Session On Assessment Revaluation And Special Town Board Meeting - February 23, 2011 - 7:00 PM

Board members present:

- Supervisor Arthur P. Willman, Jr.
- Councilman Allen Berg
- Councilman Clifford Smalley
- Councilman Donald Hamm
- Councilman Bradley Merrill

Others Present:

- Assessor Douglas Tichenor, Town Clerk Sandra Oliver, Dick Jarvis, Bob Marrone, Donald Goff, Frances Oliver, Susan Grenier, Helena Hough

1. CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Arthur P. Willman, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, the Town Clerk called the roll and introduced guests and as Coun. Hamm was 5 minutes late, declared a quorum was present.

INFORMATION SESSION ON ASSESSMENT REVALUATION

Supv. Willman introduced Assessor Douglas Tichenor who recently completed a revaluation of all parcels in the Town of Franklin. Mr. Tichenor reported he is ready to mail Assessment Full Disclosure Notices to all property owners next week with an explanatory cover letter.

1. NEW TAX RATES BASED ON REVALUATION.

He then explained how the new tax levy amounts were accomplished: The 2011 tax levy amounts for town and county and the 2010 levy amounts for school were extended over the new assessment figures and recalculated. Taxpayers will see the new tax rates in their 2011 school tax bills. Overall new tax rates are:

	PRIOR	INFO	CURRENT	(NEW)	YEAR	INFO	DIFF
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	YEAR						
Taxing Jurisdiction	Taxable	Rate	New Levy	New Taxable	New Rate	New Actual Levy Prior	From 2010 Tax Roll
Ausable School District	437,770	26.726070	11,698.00	1,484,800	7.878502	11699.87	-1.87
Saranac Lake School District	138,375,581	15.350748	2,124,963.00	276,45,930	7.686416	2,124,168.71	794.29
Malone School District	826,380	28.605758	22,200.00	1,525,701	14.550689	23639.2	-1,439.20
TOWN	138,794,264	7.274434	1,009,284.00	277,829,539	3.632745	1009649.66	-365.66
COUNTY	139,016,611	7.317310	1,016,824.00	278,229,454	3.654624	1017227.88	-403.88

2. COMPARISON OF NEW ASSESSMENT RATES AGAINST OLD RATES.

Assessor Tichenor reported the changes in assessment rates by property class and number of parcels (tax dollar change in tax dollars comparing the change from 2010 vs 2011 rates in Roll Section 1):

# Parcels In Pty Class	Decr Less than \$500	Decr \$300-\$500	Decr \$300-\$100	-\$100-\$100	Incr \$100 to \$300	Incr \$300 to \$500	Incr more than \$500
FARM 12	0	0	2	9	1	0	0
RESIDENTIAL 906	165	113	202	220	100	37	69
VACANT 499	16	39	97	274	39	6	26
COMMERCIAL 2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
PRIV FOREST 102	9	6	23	41	3	2	18
TOTAL 1521	192	150	324	554	143	45	113

The preceding table excludes utilities, special franchise, railroad and exempt parcels; it also excludes State-owned land. Mr. Tichenor noted that State-owned land value rose considerably, however, he opined that he believes residential properties showed more of a decrease than increase.

3. REVALUATION AND PROPERTY VALUES IN THE TOWN.

The last time a revaluation of assessments was performed in the Town of Franklin was in 2003. The revaluation was twice postponed - in 2009 and again in 2010. From 2003 through the first half of 2008, Mr. Tichenor saw property values double. Since the second half of 2008, when the current economic downturn began, sales have flattened. Properties in the Town run the entire gamut from small parcels with modest trailers to estates on waterfront and then to agricultural properties and to large tracts of private forest land. Included also is a large amount of State-owned and conservation easement land. In order to develop a format for comparable sales, he researched sales figures from 2007 and found comparable properties in the Town as well as in surrounding communities.

Mr. Tichenor commented that properties in the northern end of Town were selling differently than those closer to Saranac Lake. The northern part of the Town seems to have lower selling prices. Lots in the southern end of Town are assessed for \$500/acre for the first acre. Swamp land assessed at \$100/acre.

4. CHANGE IN STATE REAL PROPERTY AID TO MUNICIPALITIES.

Mr. Tichenor opined the State of New York will decrease its aid to revaluating towns, however, it will honor agreements for the present. NYS currently pays to Towns \$5 per parcel in a revaluation year and \$3-\$4 in not-reval years. It is unknown how much this will decrease.

5. MAKE APPOINTMENT WITH ASSESSOR TO DISCUSS NEW ASSESSMENTS.

Once property owners review their Assessment Full Disclosure Notices, if they have questions or corrections, they are encouraged to make an appointment to see Mr. Tichenor. He will meet individuals at the Harrietstown Town Hall, 39 Main Street, Saranac Lake, NY 12983. Please telephone (518) 891-0436 for an appointment. He will meet with property owners between March 7 and 25, 2011, Mondays through Thursdays, 9:00AM to 4:00PM.

6. CHANGE IN DATE FOR GRIEVANCE HEARINGS - TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2011.

Mr. Tichenor requested a local law be adopted by the Board changing the date for grievance hearings on assessments. To be in conformance with Real Property Tax Law, he requested the language of the new local law be "the first Tuesday after the fourth Tuesday in May."

7. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Q/C: Coun. Smalley requested an explanation of the 30% County tax increase to the Town.

A: Assessor Tichenor replied that since the Town had not performed a revaluation of assessments since 2003, the County used the equalization rate of 56%, determined by New York State, as opposed to the 58%

Assessor Tichenor determined, to calculate the 2011 tax levy. This means the Town's value increased, as well as its share of County expenses and chargebacks. Therefore, the County estimated full value of the Town using ratio _____. NYS derives ratios based on sales. As ratios drop, the value of the Town rises, as does its County share ratio. The County tax rate was higher in 2011 than in 2010 because the Town's value rose in 2010 and the County required more tax dollars. However, he noted, the Town is not driven by equalization rates.

Q/C: Coun. Hamm asked whether the 2% State-imposed tax cap will be a reality.

A: Mr. Tichenor indicate he did not know yet.

Q/C: What about school taxes? How much will they go up?

A: Mr. Tichenor replied he could not formulate an answer that question yet as the School District budget had not yet been adopted. [N.B.—see Table #1 above]

Q/C: How do you determine land value?

A: The difference between an assessor and an appraiser is that the appraiser looks at value as a whole. The assessor looks at land plus total. I review sales of residences on, say, 5 acres. I also review vacant land sales in similar neighborhoods, as well as those in similar towns. In the Town of Franklin 1 acre lots sell for \$20,000 and \$15,000. I value the first acre at \$20,000 and the second 25 acres at \$500/acre for a large parcel. For example, a house on the first acre of the primary site is valued at \$40,000; then the raw land is added in at the same scale. Determine cost and add in depreciation. Another example, take a sale. The scale on land back land value out of sale price and that's the building value. My goal is to gain equity on the roll.

Q/C: Coun. Berg asked a question regarding, as an example, two 8-acre parcels. One parcel per APA requires 8 acres per home; the second 2 houses on 8 acres.

A: Mr. Tichenor replied that he doesn't value individual buildings. He does the same with agricultural sites, which values the current use of the land.

Q/C: Do you assess each lot?

A: I assess parcels that sold. Waterfront is always higher. Right now, I am at odds with the State regarding Kushaqua - it is waterfront land and is valued the same as the Stickney Point Subdivision. Lots sell concurrent with how they are classified by APA.

Q/C: Where do you find your comparable sales?

A: Mr. Tichenor replied he will provide a list of comparable sales.

Q/C: Is there is a computer system which provides sales search? A: Mr. Tichenor responded that although it is not kept current, the Franklin County GIS system has assessment information.

Q/C: Can we come to grievance hearings to get our assessment lowered?

A: Mr. Tichenor answered that the best way is to meet with him prior to Grievance Day. He will meet with property owners at the Harriestown Town Hall, 39 Main St., Saranac Lake, from 9:00AM to 4:00PM March 7 through 25, 2011. Please make an appointment and bring with you any supporting documentation, like a current independent appraisal. Property owners will derive a clearer understanding of the assessment process and revaluation. If after meeting with the Assessor, the property owner is still not satisfied with the assessment, he/she may certainly submit a grievance form.

In conclusion Mr. Tichenor stated if he implements this revaluation, new assessment values will first show in 2011 school taxes. If he does not implement it, the Town will revert to its old equalization rate. However, if he in fact implements it, the Town will be at 100% of value.

Supv. Willman thanked Mr. Tichenor for his information and for appearing at the information session. He requested a motion to adjourn the information session Motion (B.Merrill-C.Smalley m/s/p) ALL AYE.

SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER.

The roll having been called, the Pledge recited and guests introduced, Supv. Willman called the special board meeting to order.

2. CHANGE DATE OF GRIEVANCE HEARINGS

Supv. Willman requested a motion for a resolution introducing proposed local law #1 of 2011, to change the date of Grievance Hearings on Assessments from the first Tuesday in June to the first Tuesday following the fourth Tuesday in May so as to be in conformance with State law. Motion (C.Smalley-A.Berg m/s/p) ALL AYE

RESOLUTION NO. 9 CONFORM DATE FOR GRIEVANCE HEARINGS ON ASSESSMENTS WITH STATE LAW
WHEREAS, Local Law #2 of 2002 sets forth the Town of Franklin's Grievance Hearings on Assessments date as "1st Tuesday in June"; and WHEREAS, the Town desires to conform with New York State Real Property Law; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board will introduce proposed local law #1 of 2011 setting forth Grievance Hearings date as "the first Tuesday following the fourth Tuesday in May."; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Supervisor is authorized to request the Attorney for the Town to draft such proposed local law.

Those voting aye:

Supervisor Arthur P. Willman, Jr.
 Councilman Allen Berg
 Councilman Donald Hamm
 Councilman Bradley Merrill
 Councilman Clifford Smalley

Those Voting Nay:

None

Those Absent:

None

Those Abstaining:

None

3. FRIENDS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY - HUD GRANT APPLICATION

Supv. Willman stated that due to public interest and need, Friends of the North Country will be applying for a HUD grant on behalf of the Town. The grant deadline is the end of May, and will cost the Town \$1,000 to \$1,500. Friends will hold a public hearing at 6:00 PM on Wednesday March 9th, just prior to the monthly Board meeting. If the Town is awarded the grant, repairs/replacements will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Postcards will be mailed next week advising certain property owners of the grant application. Supv. Willman requested a motion for a resolution approving the application for the grant and scheduling the March 9th public hearing. Motion (B.Merrill-A.Berg m/s/p) ALL AYE.

RESOLUTION NO. 10: PURSUE HUD GRANT APPLICATION THROUGH FRIENDS OF THE NORTH COUNTRY AND SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARINGS WHEREAS, residents and homeowners in the Town of Franklin have expressed need and interest in a building improvement grant; and WHEREAS, Friends of the North Country, Keeseville, NY, will apply for and administer the grant application from U.S. Dept. of Housing & Renewal; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Board agrees to pursue the grant application and authorizes the necessary expenditure of funds for same (between \$1,000 and \$1,500); and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Town Board hereby schedules the first public hearing on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at 6:00 PM at the Franklin Town Hall and the second public hearing on Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at 7:00 PM at the Franklin Town Hall and authorizes the Town Clerk to publish and post such notices.

Those voting aye:

Supervisor Arthur P. Willman, Jr.
 Councilman Allen Berg
 Councilman Donald Hamm
 Councilman Bradley Merrill
 Councilman Clifford Smalley

Those Voting Nay:

None

Those Absent:

None

Those Abstaining:

None

Coun. Berg asked who decides which municipality is awarded grant funding, and Supv. Willman replied that HUD makes the decision. Coun. Hamm suggested that the Board create a list of priorities, such as, first - heat/septic/water and second, weatherizing, including siding, chimney repair and furnace replacement. The Board concurred it was a good idea.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss or conduct, the meeting adjourned at 9:28 PM. Motion (C.Smalley-A.Berg m/s/p) ALL AYE

Respectfully submitted, Sandra J. Oliver, Town Clerk

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