

City of Berlin, NH

Board Of Assessors

Minutes of Meeting

November 29, 2018

Location: Assessor's Office, City Hall



Present: Robert Goddard, Chair of Board of Assessors
Mark Eastman, Member of Board of Assessors
Kem Rozek, Member of Board of Assessors
Rob Tozier, KRT Appraisal
Jim Wheeler, City Manager
Patty Chase, Finance Director
Bryan Chevarie, Assessing Coordinator

1) **1) CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM.

2) **ROLL CALL & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Robert Goddard – In attendance
Member Mark Eastman – In attendance
Member Kem Rozek – In attendance

Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance at this time.

3) **REVIEW & APPROVE MINUTES DATED NOVEMBER 15, 2018**

The minutes of the meeting of November 15, 2018 were sent to the Board prior to this meeting. Mark Eastman made a motion to accept and seal the minutes as typed. Kem Rozek seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

Chairperson Robert Goddard called for the meeting to go into non-public session. Member Mark Eastman made a motion to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) "Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person,..." Member Kem Rozek seconded this motion. All concurred. The Board of Assessors went into non-public session.

RESULT OF NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Kem Rozek made a motion to go into regular session and to seal the documentation provided as the information is confidential material and not right to know for issues discussed under RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Mark Eastman seconded the motion and stated that the Board was now in public session.

In the non-public session the Board discussed a tax deferral for Shirley Love of 691 Fourth Avenue with her representative, Attorney Ruth Heintz of NH Legal Aid. The parties also discussed the associated BTLA hearing upcoming on December 5, 2018 for Ms. Love's 2017 tax deferral application and a potential settlement of the matter.

Chair Robert Goddard made a motion that the Board of Assessors will defer the 2016 outstanding real estate taxes, plus associated interest, penalties, and other costs in hopes that it gives Ms. Love additional time to better her situation. This is conditional upon this settlement agreement resolving BTLA Docket No. 29029-17EX and therefore the 2017 taxes and related interest, fees, and other costs will not be deferred. Additionally, the parties agree to calculate the 2016 taxes at a 5% interest rate. This interest rate caveat of the agreement is contingent upon the City of Berlin's Finance Department giving their blessing to the situation. Member Mark Eastman seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion carried. Attorney Ruth Heintz will advise her client of the proposed settlement and will contact Bryan Chevarie with the result. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that the BTLA is advised of any signed settlement agreement.

4) STATISTICAL UPDATE

Chair Robert Goddard gave a recap of the events that had led up to this evening in regards to the statistical update of residential values in City of Berlin for the 2018 tax year. There are two main concerns the Board has with the update – the land model is too small in quantity to be confident in and the “plug-ins” have noted inconsistencies that need to be addressed. Members of the Board were in agreement that they are uncomfortable with the new values and need to feel more prepared to answer taxpayer questions should they arise before giving the update their blessing.

Rob Tozier explained some of the nuances of his recalibration of the Berlin assessing model. He noted that the new values may present varying percentage-based changes versus the 2017 values, however, they are much more consistent on a dollar-by-dollar scale. When he performed his analysis he found that older homes are currently assessed well below the market (81-83%) whereas newer residences are closer to where they should be (95-98%). This is the reason why homes built before 1960 will tend to see a greater increase in value when compared to those built more recently.

Rob Tozier also detailed his findings and methodologies when he examined structures based on size. His findings indicate that properties that have less than 1,600 square feet of effective area need to be brought to market (77%) at a rate that exceeds larger properties (88%). These statistics are based on median ratios after analyzing arms-length-transactions that have recently occurred in the Berlin market.

A discussion ensued relating to arms-length-transactions and if there are any additional land sales that should be included in the analysis as the land component of the model is a significant driver of the new values. Robert Goddard will furnish Rob Tozier with specific sales that he believes should be examined and added to the model if appropriate. At this time Jim Wheeler and Patty Chase gave a brief overview of the City's cash flow status and will plan to take any necessary steps in case tax bills are not sent out in the near future.

5) OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business at this time.

6) MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no member comments at this time.

7) **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Kem Rozek. Mark Eastman seconded the motion.

The meeting ended at 6:20 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Bryan Chevarie, Assessing Coordinator

* Note: These minutes are unofficial until they have been accepted by the Board of Assessors by motion.