

1. Please state your department's or committee's charge or job description.

The Board of Assessors is responsible for the valuation of all property in the Town for the purpose of levying the property tax. The money brought in by the Levy makes up 74% of the operating budget of the town. This entails valuing over 5.6 billion dollars of property every year.

The Board is also responsible for Motor vehicle and boat excise tax production, which brings in an additional 3.90% of the budget.

The Board must satisfy Department of Revenue (DOR) guidelines in the valuation process as well as pass a tri-annual re-certification program. The DOR basically performs an audit on our department every three years.

The Board also handles all abatements and exemptions each year and defends valuation issues at the Appellate Tax Board, the state level appeal authority.

In addition the Department maintains the geographical information system, which is used by all departments for abutter lists and property owner information.

2. To whom is your department or committee accountable?

The Board of assessors is a three member elected Board. They are the appointing authority for the entire department, from the Director of Assessing to the part time clerk. The operation of the department is so regulated by the DOR, therefore it could be said that the Board is accountable to the DOR. In the past the DOR have insisted on certain functions to be performed against the protests of the Board and Town.

3. What three things contribute most to the successful functioning of your department or committee?

1. The professional expertise, dedication and commitment of the staff. Three staff members and two Board members have professional real estate licenses from the state and two staff members and one Board member have professional designations in the real estate field.
2. The software used in the valuation process
3. The value of the data used in the valuation process.

4. What three things would you change to bring about more effective functioning?

1. Further education and training of the staff.
2. Up-dated software
3. Less regulation by the DOR

5. What challenges do you anticipate that might impact the work of your department or committee in the future and what changes would you suggest for addressing those challenges?

As the economy rebounds the current staffing and funding levels will not be sufficient to keep up with the increased demands of the market. The inspectional arm of the office is responsible for inspecting every property that pulls a building permit. The building department inspects the property for quality of construction, but this department inspects it for value. As the economy rebounds the number of permits and the magnitude of the projects will increase. We currently have one full time inspector and one at 10.2 hours however that position is slated to be cut to at least 8 hours if not 5.5 hours in Fy 2012. The part time inspector's hours have already been reduced from a high of 18.5 hours two years ago.

The building permit inspections are the basis for new growth. The new growth is the amount of money the town gets to spend over last year's levy after adjusted for 2.5 % under prop 2 and a half. Also the increase permits will limit the number of cyclical inspections performed. The Department is required by law to inspect every property at least once in every 9 year period. Industry standards indicate that the time period should be every 5 years. Our office is currently on a 7 year turn around.

A turn around in the economy will also increase the frequency of transactions in Motor Vehicle Excise. New cars are billed automatically through the Registry of Motor Vehicles, but it also generates abatements for each of the cars sold or traded in. The clerical staff is currently handling the load in this slow market, but the loss of our 15 hour part time clerk last year will make any increase in the volume very difficult to handle..

6. Do you have anything to add?

No, The above statements cover the issues.