

MINUTES  
TOWN OF MONTAGUE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT  
1 Avenue A (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor) Turners Falls, MA  
November 21, 2016

A meeting of the Montague Board of Assessors was held on Monday, November 21, 2016.

Assessors present: Chairman Paul Emery, Teresa Miner, Ann Cenzano and Karen Tonelli, Director of Assessing. Also present were David Zamojski, Richard Kuklewicz and Jay DiPucchio, Turners Falls Fire District Prudential Committee members. Eileen Tela, TFFD Accountant, was also present.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. The Assessors met with officials of the **Turners Falls Fire District** for the purpose of setting the FY2017 tax rate.

Chairman Paul Emery began the meeting by reading the hearing notice that was published in the Greenfield Recorder. After reviewing the different options available for shifting the tax rate, a motion was made and seconded to adopt a shift of 1.22% (residential factor of 85.5052) for the FY2017 tax rate which was approved unanimously. Upon Motions made and seconded, the Prudential Committee members voted no on Open Space Discount, Residential Exemption and Small Commercial Exemption.

There was discussion concerning the status of the First Light appeals. A hearing date has been scheduled for June, 2017. The Committee members voted to approve that a letter be sent out to First Light to recommend a meeting of all parties in this matter. Karen Tonelli will contact our attorney regarding this letter.

At 1:30 p.m. the board voted to suspend the meeting until 5:30 p.m.

The Assessors reconvened their meeting at 5:30 p.m. Assessors present: Paul Emery and Ann Cenzano. Karen Tonelli, Director of Assessing was also present. The Assessors met with the Montague Center Fire District members for the purpose of setting the FY2017 tax rate. Officials from the **Montague Center Fire District** present were: Chief David Hansen, Committee Members Diane Hansen and Joe Viadero.

Chairman Paul Emery read the hearing notice that appeared in the Greenfield Recorder. After reviewing and giving consideration to the different options available for shifting the tax rate, a motion was made and seconded to adopt a single tax rate for all classes of property for FY2017. Motions was also made and seconded to not approve an open space discount, a residential exemption and a small business exemption.

A discussion took place regarding overlay funds. The meeting was suspended at 6:00 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. the Assessors meeting reconvened. Assessors present were Chairman Paul Emery, Ann Cenzano and Director of Assessing Karen Tonelli. At this time, members of the **Montague Lighting District** were present for a hearing on the tax classification for the FY2017 tax rate.

Montague Lighting District Prudential Committee members present were: Rebecca Sabelawski, Veronica Phaneuf, Mark Fisk, and David Leh. Kathy Peura, MLD Clerk was present as well.

The meeting began with Paul Emery, Chairman of the Board of Assessors, reading the hearing notice that was published in the Greenfield Recorder.

After some discussion, upon a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to have a single tax rate for all classes of property for the FY17 fiscal year. Upon motions duly made and seconded, it was also voted to not have an open space discount, residential exemption or small commercial exemption for FY2017 fiscal year.

A discussion took place regarding the overlay account. The Committee is interested in releasing funds which may be available to put an amount in stabilization or another account that would be used in the future for offsetting the tax rate. Karen explained the new law with respect to combining the overlay into one account and will check with DOR Terry Williams about procedures necessary for the District to accomplish this. Karen will report back to the Committee in January which would be in time for the next year's budget process.

The meeting was suspended at 6:30 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m. the Assessors meeting reconvened at the **Montague Board of Selectmen's** meeting. Assessors present were Chairman Paul Emery, Ann Cenzano and Director of Assessing Karen Tonelli. Board of Selectmen present: Richard Kuklewicz and Chris Boutwell. The newspaper notice of the hearing that was published in the Greenfield Recorder was read aloud. A discussion took place concerning the changes between FY16 and FY17 values. A significant increase in taxable valuation has occurred as a result of a new appraisal performed on First Light's property. Also, Eversource has increased their personal property assessment as well. Upon a Motion duly made and seconded, it was voted

to adopt the same shift that was used last year which was 1.30% (for a factor of .8638) for FY2017.

The Board voted unanimously to not adopt an open space discount, a residential exemption or a small business exemption. The Board of Selectmen asked that more information on the residential and small business exemption be provided for next year's hearing. Selectmen Boutwell also asked that a 3-5 year projection or forecast of tax growth be provided for the FY2018 budget season. A brief discussion took place concerning the pending First Light ATB matters. A member of the audience asked if we thought First Light would contest their FY17 assessment. Karen Tonelli responded affirmatively. Selectmen Kuklewicz suggested that a letter be sent out to First Light signed by the Chairman of the Selectboard, Finance Committee, Turners Falls Fire District and Board of Assessors requesting that a meeting be held to discuss possible resolutions to the pending cases. Karen will contact our Attorney and ask that she draft a letter.

The Selectmen were notified of the Fy2017 current excess levy capacity. The tax classification hearing ended at approximately 7:30.

The Board of Assessors decided to not meet on November 28, 2016. The next meeting will take place on Monday, December 5, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:\_\_\_\_\_

Karen M. Tonelli, M.A.A.  
Director of Assessor

**List of Documents - November 21, 2016 meeting**

FY17 TFFD Tax Classification Presentation document

FY17 MCFD Tax Classification Presentation document t

FY17 MLD Tax Classification Presentation document

FY17 Town of Montague Tax Classification Presentation document