

From the Town's Web site:

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 27, 2008
6:00 P.M. – MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM
MULVEY MUNICIPAL CENTER**

7. Assessor – Continued Discussion Re: Appeals. (Ivan Kovalanka, Bd. of Tax Review.

First Selectman Bishop stated that this item was discussed at a previous meeting regarding appeal decisions made by the Assessor and the rationale for these decisions. He also presented correspondence from the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers, Inc. stating that there will be a panel of three assessors who will review the assessments and share their conclusions in person, through a written report or both. There are no financial implications to this service. Ivan Kovalanka said that according to what transpired at the last meeting, he was to provide documentation showing that his decisions were not made in an arbitrary manner and to provide the number of tax review decision over-ruled by the Assessor. He explained that the Board of Tax Review follows certain methodology and the Assessor has the right to set the grand list. Mr. Kovalanka said that he overturned 7 of the 62 appeals and that CAAO will look at all the records and offer their findings based on information from both the Assessor and the Board of Tax Review.

Some members of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Tax Review disputed the numbers provided by the Assessor. A discussion followed regarding these numbers.

Theresa Thomas, Chairman of the Board of Tax Review explained her job as Chairman of the BOAA, and listed her credentials. She read letters she received from concerned residents.

Jack Philbin, a member of the BOAA said that he has served on this Board for 16 years and gave his credentials. He stated that the Assessor's actions negate the work of the Board of Tax Review and if this process continues, his volunteer efforts will be finished.

Jeffrey Kriete presented articles that appeared in the New London Day regarding the same situation in the town of Montville.

Comments were received by many in the audience regarding this matter. It was stated that most assessors abide by the decision of the Board of Tax Review. Many felt that the process or laws should be changed and others felt they were treated rudely when they approached the Assessor. It was suggested that the Assessor should send a letter with each notice explaining the reason for the increased assessment. Reference was made to those residents who are not in town during the winter months and are unable to file an appeal within the designated timeframe and others felt this process needed more oversight by the Selectmen.

The meeting was closed to public comment.

Selectman Crawford stated that he had two problems. The first was the lack of a user-friendly nature at the Town Hall, second was the re-examination of appeals. Selectman Crawford asked the Assessor what prompted him to alter the decisions by the Board of Tax Review and Ivan stated that after he reviewed them he had to account for changes made to the property.

Selectman Farrell said that she feels the Board of Selectmen should take a stronger stand in support of the BOAA and unless there is evidence of changes to the property or new information the decision of the BOAA should stand. She stated the Board should provide the Assessor with guidelines.

Selectman Crawford explained that according to State Statute, this Board does

not have the legal authority to oversee this process but does feel that no letters should be sent without documentation for why the assessment has changed. First Selectman Bishop felt these comments and suggestions were a big step in trying to correct the problem. He also stated that he is disappointed by statements that the Town Hall is not user friendly and believes that the employees strive to do their best.

On a motion by Selectman Crawford, seconded by First Selectman Bishop, it was VOTED unanimous to adopt the position that when an assessment is changed or a decision by the Board of Tax Review is over-ruled, notices to the property owner will include a letter from the Assessor with an explanation for the increase in assessment.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

SPECIAL MEETING - APRIL 10, 2008 - 7:00 P.M.

NORTH CONFERENCE ROOM / MULVEY MUNICIPAL CENTER

Corrections to Minutes of Special Meeting 3/27/08

Page two/Paragraph 7

Delete "instead of the First Selectman"

Change all "Board of Tax Review" to read Board of Assessment Appeals.

"He later stated 196 letters were sent from the Assessor's office."

Page three/Paragraph 2

Add "The Board of Selectmen noted that nine letters were received."