

**Board of Assessors**, February 02, 2021

Present: Michael Colaneri, Richard Cohen, D Barnes

Also present: Greg Orcutt, Doug Ruskin, Doug Finn, John Christensen, Clark Rattet, Jen Rand, Skipper Manter, Alexandra Pratt, Bruce Stone, Wendy Nierenberg, Janice Haynes and other audience members who did not speak.

Time: Feb 2, 2021 06:15 PM

**Meeting ID: 896 8718 4615 Passcode: 918989**

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The Board of Assessors met with the Finance Committee to discuss their concerns with budget line item 5305, \$30,000 legal fees for fiscal year 2022.

The principal assessor gave an overview of the function of the Assessor's department including the setting of the tax values and annual tax rate connected to the raise and appropriate amount of the operating budget. (Average of raise and appropriate=80% of the operating budget yearly).

As discussed the Assessing department has submitted an expense and legal budget request that has been level funded for the last three fiscal years. At the town meeting for fiscal year 2021 a motion was made to decrease the legal line by 50%. The motion passed. The Board of Assessors does not support the lessor amount that would be in place to cover legal liabilities that may arise from yearly abatement appeals of value.

The Board of Assessor believes, based on their experience and responsibility to defend the approved \$3.2 billion town value, the \$30,000 annual request to be reasonable. Any budgeted monies not utilized from this line item are annually returned to the general fund.

The Board would appreciate the Finance Committee's support but will continue to request what they feel is proportional to the potential liabilities the Town may face in legal fees supporting the approved values in court.

The principal assessors answered concerns and questions regarding what had been discussed. The offer to meet with the Finance Committee in the future to review the classification hearing/residential exemption yearly function was discussed. The Finance Committee will contact the office to arrange a future meeting.

The Board of Assessors thanked the Finance Committee and left the zoom meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted  
D Barnes, Principal Assessor, MAA

Approved:

