

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Sawyer Hall
May 11, 2018

Call to Order at p.m. by Robyn Provost-Carlson with Brian DeVriese, Alice Wozniak, Betty Nichols, and Kara Leistyna present.

Review Agenda: No changes.

Inter-departmental communication and procedures and collector software update: Robyn began discussion on ongoing issues between Assessors and Collector and ways to better interface and to discuss updates/concerns regarding software transition. Betty reported that the system from QDS will be available July 1, 2018. They are conducting beta testing for 'bugs.' According to Rebecca Krause-Hardie, there will be no additional charges for the conversion – all costs will be picked up by the Consortium. If ready and tested, Betty feels we should proceed. Robyn added that this is a decision that should be firm and it is important that all entities are in agreement before signing a contract. Discussed compatibility with assessor software. According to Rebecca Krause-Hardie, QDS has assured us that they will be able to import files from the Patriot Software through their administrative software; a bridge. The CAMA assessors software is Tyler and according to Betty, there is a 95% user rate in CT. No one in MA has used it yet. Conway is running testing according to Betty. They are redesigning it for collectors in MA. Betty says that importing an extract from assessors is not difficult. Mike Quinlivan can do this. Betty has been using the current system for 10-15 years and the tax bills are sent without difficulty. Alice is concerned about the unknowns and wonders if collector and assessor new software will connect. Vadar was the runner up for collectors after researching various options. But 8-10 collectors picked Tyler overall. It is said to have versatility and continuity. Alice concerned and requests an intermediary party who oversees processes and that it's integral to the software. Employees may leave and it's important to have continuity. Both feel Vadar is a viable option. Alice has concerns about Tyler and shared that Charlemont is having difficulties with the training. Patriot Collect Pro works well with Assessor's software.

Betty feels the software is not the problem. Discussed inter-departmental issues. Robyn inquired whether the two departments work well together. She added that if the departmental issues are resolved by use of compatible software, does that have value? The conflicts were dissected trying to get to the root of the issues. Again, Alice mentioned the need to identify problems through cross-checking. Alice feels there is no verification process in Heath; Betty disagrees.

Discussed need to properly date bills. Betty described the procedure historically – before computers. Eventually, everything was digitized regionally and the deputy collector took over the printing of the bills. Betty shared that she is uncomfortable guessing the date. The Assessors can get the extract from Jeffrey & Jeffrey, prepare the commitment and warrant and bills can be printed. They get antsy hanging on to the motor vehicle bills. Alice says assessors should provide date. Need verification that warrants add up. Betty suggests importing to Excel. A suggestion was that Jeffrey & Jeffrey include both departments in their correspondence so everyone is aware of action. Betty agrees that nothing should be dated until the Assessors warrant it – if everyone is apprised, that should resolve the need to guess. Alice schedules any changes and she feels there has been delay due to poor communication.

Discussed how to best move through process of warrant, date, commitment, bills, etc. Bills are printed free of charge by Jeffrey & Jeffrey but dates need to be accurate. Alice is concerned about how the departments do not work together. Betty says she feels harassed most of the time. She feels she is not responsible for balancing commitments. If there is a problem, she will certainly notify the Asst. Assessor.

She feels she almost always balances and that Alice has never made a mistake. If she did, Betty would let her know. Betty did not hear from Alice that there was a hold up. Alice reiterated that she wants to work as a team. Betty wants to work individually and deal with problems as they arise. Discussed ways to work together. If both offices use matching software, the two were asked if the problem would be resolved.

The software has been chosen that offers flexibility. The Consortium, according to Betty, can tailor to meet needs. Discussed if the system will let Asst. Assessor know if there's a problem – does the collectorware have an assessor's module. Need a plan to resolve the difficulties and a plan to move forward to resolve issues. Need to decide together how departments can cooperate as a team in order to eliminate chance for error and miscommunication which can cause delay and timing is critical.

Discussed difficulties in getting a quorum for the Board of Assessor's meetings. There is now a full Board. Perhaps develop a policy on how to manage tasks – have a schedule of all steps in writing. If there are extenuating circumstances that may create a delay, be sure both departments are aware so that other arrangements may be made. Better communication is needed – perhaps emails that include both collector and assessors to eliminate the need for any guessing. Does the full Board need to sign the warrants – would that prevent some delay? Betty suggests that Alice reach out to Jeffrey & Jeffrey with any questions.

Discussed conversion of parcels. Decided that early fall would be ideal. Someone will have to be scheduled to do this work. Betty offered Mike Quinlivan to do conversion.

Action Items:

Need to review contract. Alice has questions and will reach out to Rebecca Krause-Hardie directly in an effort to gain further understanding. Betty feels the QDS system is the best option.

The Board of Assessors will meet and discuss procedure and create some sort of policy of how/when to interface with collector on warrant procedure. Betty is happy to check balances.

Communication will be enhanced by including all parties in email correspondence so everyone is apprised.

Again, Betty and Alice disagree. Alice feels there is a need for checks and balances – a neutral entity to verify. Betty feels this is already in place and departments can work out discrepancies together. Alice wants neutrality.

The software matter is on hold until questions are posed and answered and more information is available. Group will meet again after the Assessors discuss development of protocol/policy.

Other Business:

- Utility Assessment: Board, Assessors, Finance Committee will meet jointly and discuss together how to proceed with matter in order to move in same direction.

There being no further business to come before the Board: *On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Robyn Provost-Carlson, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 4:03 p.m.*

Respectfully presented,

**Kara M. Leistyna
Town Coordinator**