

Board of Selectmen

Steven Lewis, Chairman
Dale Harmon, Vice Chair
Douglas Burnham
Charles R. Cunningham
Stephen W. Ham

Town Manager

James D. Chaousis II



**Town of Boothbay
Board of Selectmen Meeting/Workshop
Wednesday December 3, 2014
5:00 PM
MINUTES**

Call Meeting to order: Chairman, Steve Lewis called the meeting/workshop to order at 5:00PM.

Present: Steven Lewis, Dale Harmon, Douglas Burnham, Charles Cunningham, Stephen Ham, Town Manager James Chaousis II and Assessor Mike O'Donnell

Mr. O'Donnell started the workshop by showing the Selectmen the new tax maps which are now out. The maps show the acreage on the parcels, the layout is improved as well as the shading. The new maps try to show the different types of roads differently. The maps will be in a PDF format by next week. There are irregularities in the maps that will start showing up and will be fixed in an ongoing effort.

Mr. O'Donnell gave the Selectmen a handout and did a power point presentation both on the maps and on Equalization.

Mr. O'Donnell said that equalization is a big deal as it affects everyone in town. He does workshops on this to get Selectmen comfortable with the topic.

An equalization should be done about every ten to twelve years. He reviewed the reasons to do an equalization.

Mr. O'Donnell reviewed with the Selectmen properties that are currently undervalued and some that are overvalued. He says, he talks to people every week that come in and want their property reviewed as they think it is overvalued. He said that most of these are legit abatement requests. He said he has more abatement requests in Boothbay than in all the other towns that O'Donnell's works with.

The cost of an equalization was discussed. If the town switches to O'Donnell for assessing software the cost to maintain would be \$1,500 per year and the town would own the data. This is much cheaper than the current contract with Vision. Mr. O'Donnell said that the Vision software does not line up well with Trio and that the O'Donnell software works well with Trio.

Mr. O'Donnell said since he has been working for the Town for three years now, he knows the Town fairly well and this would make a hands on equalization much easier.

The Quality of Assessments was discussed and Mr. O'Donnell explained about the quality rating, that a rating under 10 was excellent and a rating of 20 or higher would mean that State funding could be cut. The Town of Boothbay is now at a rating of 18.

An equalization would make properties more equitable. Mr. O'Donnell said it isn't a matter of if you will do an equalization but a question of when.

Boothbay has a lot of non-profits, a lot of conservation land which translates into a lot of tax exempt properties.

Mr. Chaousis said he has a plan in his budget proposal to pay for the equalization. It is part of the Capital Improvement Plan.

The Selectmen expressed a concern over the average citizen ending up paying more.

Mr. O'Donnell talked about doing door – to – door visits. He said if a taxpayer is not home or does not want to let them into the house, for most homes they can come up with a reasonable value, within \$50,000 usually. It is the real high end homes that are more difficult to value without going inside.

Dale Harmon said he feels it will be easier to do now than in a few years.

This will be discussed at a future Selectmen's meeting.

Mr. Chaousis said the plow truck that the town just bought came in \$60,000 under budget and he would like to know if the Selectmen would entertain buying a pick-up truck now with that money. The pick-up truck is in the Capital Improvement Plan to be purchased next year.

Mr. Chaousis asked if the Selectmen would entertain the idea of taking the old pick-up and trading for a sedan of the same value. No money exchanged. The sedan would be used by employees to attend training instead of reimbursing employees for gas to attend training sessions.

At 8PM Chuck Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the workshop and Dale Harmon seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0 in favor.