

MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF ASSESSORS & BUDGET COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING

Date: March 18, 2025

Time: 4:00 PM

Meeting called to order by: Steve Carr, 1st Assessor

IN ATTENDANCE

Steve Carr, Joanne Taylor, Rodney Varney, Ethna L. Thompson
Evelyn Beaulieu, Sharon Dingfelder

ABSENT

Mickey Haas

OPEN MEETING

Opened meeting at 4:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- First meeting, no prior minutes available.

Continuing Business

- None

New Business

- Budget Process Overview
The boards briefly discussed the budget documents provided for review. This year, the budget has been organized into distinct departments to provide a clearer picture of service costs.
- Current Fiscal Year Budget Check-In
The board conducted a brief review of year-to-date expenses.
- Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Proposed
 - Departmental Proposed Numbers
The board reviewed each line item, discussing proposed adjustments and key considerations:

- Moderator Line – Adjustments made to ensure sufficient funds for the annual town meeting and a potential special meeting.
- Heating Fuel (Dead River) – The Board directed the Clerk to look at Pre-buy options.
- Postage – The Board directed the Clerk to look into a postage meter.
- Deeds & Transfers – The Clerk indicated she did not believe this was a necessary cost line, she believes all of these records are available online now or in electronic format. She will follow up with the Assessors Agent.
- Town Office Repair & Maintenance – It was a general recommendation that this line be increased to \$1,000, with mention of sump pump needs.
- RFPs for Services – There was a discussion that certain products and services should be reviewed every three to five years and the RFP process should be implemented for those.
- Sludge Site Funds – To be moved to surplus at the fiscal year-end.
- Contingency Fund – The Clerk indicated she believed the contingency fund was not treated as a special reserve account and thought perhaps it's best to put it under the administrative budget. She will reach out to the auditors for feedback.
- Forest Fire Account – The Board directed the Clerk to determine if there is a required balance that must be maintained in this account.
- Excise Tax & Road Capital Improvement Reserve – Unclear if the town needs to raise an additional \$25,000 or simply transfer earned revenue; to be revisited at the next meeting.

- Revenue Projections

We did not touch on revenue projections.

- Transfers In/Out

While net budgeting (deducting revenues from expenditures before determining the tax levy) has been the Plantation's standard practice, it is not the recommended approach. Transitioning to gross budgeting (where all appropriations are raised through taxation and revenues are accounted for separately) in a single year could significantly impact the tax rate by increasing the amount raised from property taxes.

To avoid a sudden spike in the mill rate, the clerk has continued to apply both transfers and carry-forwards to offset expenditures. Further discussion may be needed to determine the best approach for transitioning to gross budgeting in a way that minimizes tax rate fluctuations.

- Carry Forwards
See Transfers In/Out note above
- Key Budget Priorities and Goals
The board discussed the need to establish a Capital Roads Improvement Reserve and a Property Revaluation Reserve to better plan for future expenses.

Roads & Infrastructure:

- A \$3 million (+/-) bridge/culvert project on Edelheid Road is anticipated.
- \$40,000 in culvert projects are planned for the upcoming spring.

Property Revaluation:

The current revaluation is estimated to cost \$74,000. The board plans to establish a dedicated reserve fund to raise funds annually, allowing for more frequent revaluations. More frequent revaluations help ensure fair and accurate property assessments, keeping valuations aligned with market trends. Waiting 10 years or more between revaluations can result in sudden, drastic assessment increases, leading to unexpected tax burdens for property owners. Establishing these reserves will help ensure financial stability and prevent large, one-time tax impacts on residents.

Other Business

Next Meeting Date

➤ Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 4:00 PM

Adjourn Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM