

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

September 2014

Judy Mathiau

Tax Bills Mailed – the 2014/2015 tax bills were mailed during the second week of September. There were several technical issues that prevented us from mailing the bills earlier as we had hoped. A few bills have come back unopened due to improper mailing addresses but some were redirected.

Inventory Update – There were several calls and visits regarding the assessment changes as a result of the update project. Unfortunately, we ran out of time and was unable to send notices as is our policy. Taxpayers received their new values without prior notice but for the most part were satisfied with the reason for the change. It is difficult to understand that a small component of the property may change the assessment, but we found many errors in the record and had to correct them. Examples include roof style, number of bedrooms and baths, etc.

Position Opened – Michelle Fenlason resigned her position as assistant to the assessor and code officer, therefore we quickly placed an advertisement for a new hire and received 36 applicants. In the October report, I will announce the new employee. Needless to say it has been extremely busy in the office these past few weeks, with lack of coverage.

Abatements and Supplements – At the end of September, I had issued \$5,053.00 in abatements and \$869.75 in supplements. One of the supplements was a tree growth withdrawal penalty.

Training – In the beginning of September, I attended a three day conference held by the MAAO (ME Association of Assessing Officers). This was well attended and the classes were very good. One class dealt with the communications between code and assessing. Another class covered the legalities of easements and rights of ways and paper streets. The last day brought Geoff Herman from MMA and David Ledew from Property Tax in Augusta. The two speakers talked mostly on the BETE exemption and the work that their office is doing to improve the statutory language.

Paper Streets – one project I hope to work on this winter is to create an inventory of all streets located in Winslow that are 1) part of an approved subdivision; 2) not accepted as a public way by the town and 3) undeveloped. According to Maine law, a proposed, unaccepted way prior to September 29, 1987 is deemed to be vacated UNLESS, an extension was filed in 1997 by the municipality. The extension is good for 20 years, with an expiration date of 2017.