

TOWN OF LYME
Select Board Meeting
Thursday, February 8th, 2023
6:30 PM
Approved: February 23, 2023

The following people were present for part or all of the meeting: Select Board members Judith Brotman, Benjamin Kilham and David Kahn; Administrator Dina Cutting, Clerk Jordan Toland
Public: John Biglow, Sue MacKenzie, Janet Williams, Michael Whitman, Janet Mitchell, Richard Jones, Jennifer Boylston, Kathy Green (Zoom), Rich Brown

The Board is meeting in person at the Town Offices located at 1 High Street and via Zoom.

1. At 6:30 PM Mrs. Brotman opened the special meeting of the Select Board. The main purpose of the meeting is to discuss the petitioned warrant article, and for the Board to recommend or not recommend the article. The petitioned article is asking Town Meeting to vote for a Full Statistical Revaluation, with funding for this revaluation of \$55,000 to come from the Property Reappraisal Capital Reserve Fund.
2. Mrs. Brotman expressed her concern for the cost estimate the petitioners have provided for conducting a Full Statistical Revaluation. Mrs. Cutting received an estimate from Vision and it significantly exceeds the estimate amount given by the petitioners. Mrs. Brotman expressed that the Board has been very diligent in keeping the budget down, and feels this request for a revaluation is premature and would not be an efficient use of our funds. Mrs. Brotman would like to wait for this volatile market to settling down before performing a Revaluation.
3. Mr. Kilham reiterated that the Board members have been working hard to keep costs down. Mr. Kilham expressed his belief that performing a revaluation so quickly would most likely not address the petitioners' concerns. There is no guaranty of the results. Mr. Kilham explained that the petitioners bring up a point of fairness in taxes. Property Tax is regulated by the state. Mr. Kilham suggests that people should go to the state with this problem to try and resolve the issues in a proper manner. Mr. Kilham stated that we should not expect different results from a second revaluation when the market is showing the same trends.
4. Mr. Kahn agrees with Mrs. Brotman and Mr. Kilham. Mr. Kahn stated that he was uncomfortable with the fact that he feels this petition warrant article is asking the Board to "put their thumb on the scale" to try and achieve a result that seems fair to the petitioners. That is not the way property tax is supposed to work. He also noted the data from the revaluation in 2021 is with in an acceptable range confirmed as by the DRA.
5. At this time Mr. Kilham made a motion to Not Recommend the petitioned warrant article. Mr. Kahn seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor by roll call vote.
6. Mrs. Brotman read a draft letter from the Board to the Budget Committee. (The document is posted on the Town of Lyme Website with the minutes). Mr. Kahn and Mr. Kilham agree with the contents of the letter.
7. The Select Board then opened up the meeting to public comment:
 - Mr. Biglow wanted to clarify what the petition warrant article was asking for and the cost associated with it. Mr. Biglow believes the petition is asking for a "Full Statistical Revaluation" and the cost is estimated at \$55,000. Mrs. Brotman recognized that she had mistakenly believed the petition was proposing a "Full Revaluation". The quote Mrs. Cutting received from Vision was for a Full Revaluation totaled \$99,500.00.

- Mrs. Cutting notified all that an estimate of a full revaluation was requested because it was understood the petitioners were going to ask for that.
- Mrs. Williams stated that during the Department of Revenue Presentation, the DRA's recommendation was for this type of revaluation. Mrs. Brotman clarified that while specific questions were answered, the overall goal of the presentation was to give an overview of the general assessing procedures. It was not to address individual concerns specifically towards the Town of Lyme revaluation.
- Mr. Brown stated that he feels the discrepancies are not random. He believes the higher valued properties increased less than lower valued properties. Mr. Brown feels that the factors that went into the CAMA model produced the inequity. Mr. Brown stated that residents have requested information from the town and they have not received all of it. Mr. Brown asked specifically about the sales list used for the revaluation and the reasons as to why or why not a sale was used. Mrs. Cutting clarified that this document was sent to Ms. Quinton.
- Mr. Kahn noted this there seems to be confusion as to what are a full statistical revaluation, a full revaluation, and some other property revaluation systems that are being discussed. The Board would like these various property valuation systems to be clarified so everyone is talking about the same thing.
- Mrs. Brotman stopped the conversation here since there will be time during the Budget Committee meeting to hear more on the topic. Mrs. Brotman restated that the Board feels a Revaluation is not in the best interest of the town at this time.
- Mr. Kahn understands the concerns and frustration of the residents, but Mrs. Cutting and the office staff have been working hard to provide any and all factual information available to them to help with the residents' concerns. The town is more than willing to provide the public information, but when it becomes such a high volume of requests that office staff cannot perform their regular responsibilities it becomes a problem.
- At 6:49 PM Mrs. Brotman moved closed the special Select Board meeting. Mr. Kahn seconded the motion. Voted unanimously in favor by roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jordan Toland