

What Does the Assessor Do?

The Assessors are required by Massachusetts Law to list and value all real and personal property. The valuations are subject to “ad valorem” taxation on the assessment roll each year. The “ad valorem” basis for taxation means that all property should be taxed “according to value”. Assessed values in Massachusetts are based on “full and fair cash value,” or 100 percent of fair market value. Assessors are required to submit these values to the State Department of Revenue (DOR) for certification every third year.

A revaluation is an analysis of all assessments in the town conducted under the direction of the Board of Assessors. The Board is state certified whose duties are to discover, list and value all real and personal property in a uniform and equitable manner.

The law requires that property be valued from actual or best information. We will review your assessment based upon existing records and sales of properties similar to yours.

All Assessing staff carries a picture identification card. Our telephone number is 781-293-5259 if you need verification of the ID and why they are at your property. To ensure accurate assessments, it is to your advantage to allow the Assessors or their personnel inside your property when an inspection is required for cyclical, building permit review, new construction, additions, extensive remodels, etc. By denying an inspection, you may lose some rights if you feel the need to appeal your assessment.

The DOR has required an annual review by all communities so the property assessments are reflective of “full and fair cash value”. The Town of Hanson Assessors has adopted this process between certification years and adheres to the required certification standards. The market activity is reviewed, categorized, and analyzed to maintain property values between certification years thereby reassessing each and every year. Market activity can be defined as arms length transactions between “willing sellers and buyers”, executed lease agreements, and current construction costs. This annual property review is conducted so the property owner pays only his or her fair share of real or personal property taxes.

What the Assessor DOES NOT do?

The Assessor does not raise or lower taxes. The Assessor does not make the laws which affect the property owner. The Assessors’ Office has nothing to do with the total amount of taxes collected. The Assessor’s primary responsibility is to find the “full and fair cash value” of your property, so that you may pay only the fair share of the taxes.

The Massachusetts Constitution requires that direct taxes on persons be proportionately and reasonably imposed. In addition, the Declaration of Rights, Part 1, Article 10 requires each individual to bear his fair share of the public expenses. The Board of Assessors is required to annually assess taxes in an amount sufficient to cover the State and Local appropriations chargeable to the Town. The tax rates are simply those rates which will provide funds to pay for town services such as police, fire, schools, libraries and roads.

What is Proposition 2 ½?

Proposition 2 ½ places constraints on the amount of money raised by taxes (the levy) and how much the levy can be increased from year to year. The statute provides annual increases of the levy limits as: (1) prior year levy times 2.5 percent, and (2) an additional amount based on the valuation of certain new constructions and other allowable new growth. Under no condition can this allowable new growth be the result of a property revaluation and/or update. In no event may the levy limit exceed the levy ceiling of 2.5 percent of the total full and fair cash value of the Town.

How is Your Assessment Determined?

To arrive at “full and fair cash value” for your property, the Assessors must know what “willing sellers” and “willing buyers” are doing in the market place. The objective is to gather the most current information and data on the cost of construction, changes in use and economic conditions which may affect property value. The Assessor collects records and analyzes a great deal of information about properties and market characteristics in order to estimate the fair market value. The market estimate or assessment should reflect the status of the property as of January 1. For example January 1, 2015 is the assessment date of Fiscal Year 2016.

What is Market Value?

State law requires that your property be assessed at market value, full and fair cash value. Market value is defined as the amount a typical, well-informed purchaser would be willing to pay for the property. For a sale to be a market value (arm’s length) sale, the seller must be unrelated, the seller must be willing (not under pressure) to sell, the property must be on the market for a reasonable length of time, the payment must be in cash or its equivalent, and the financing must be typical for that type of property. Property foreclosures and bank sales are not considered “arm’s length” transactions.

What is a Revaluation?

A revaluation is an update of all assessments in the town conducted under the direction of the Board of Assessors. The Board of Assessors are state certified individuals whose duties are to discover, list and value all real and personal property in a uniform and equitable manner. The Board is not involved in the collection of property taxes.

Who will do the Revaluation?

The staff of the Assessors’ Office does the revaluation of all Residential property. The Assessor/Appraiser has many years of experience in property assessment and is familiar with the real estate market in the Town, and the Board of Assessors hires consultants to assist with the field review of all Commercial and Personal property in Town.