

**Town of Groton – Board of Assessors**

**20 July 2017**

Called to order: 7:05PM

Attendance:

Donald Black

Garrett Boles

Jenifer Evans

Jonathon Greeno

Melisa Doig

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the position(s) of assistant assessor, previously held by Jonathon Greeno.

It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager post a job listing for a single position for 35 hours/week.

The option under consideration was to hire two people to fill the 35 hours in the assessor's office: one technical at 20 hours/week (Level 9), and one clerical at 15 hours/week (Level 6). In addition, the technical person would also work 20 hours per /week as the Assistant Town Clerk (Level 6). Two people would share one job, and one person would share two jobs. The discussion and reasoning that led to the motion, include

- Training and credentials require significant hours, and often require the employee to attend multi-day courses at distant locations. It would be difficult for an employee supporting the Assessor's office just 20 hours a week to attend these courses while simultaneously supporting the Clerk's office at 20 hours a week. To attend a course, the 20-hour employee would require coordination with the Clerk's office to cover the missing hours, and if training is required for the Clerk's office, then the vice versa would come into play. The logistics will be difficult. Additionally, there may be possible motivational issues for this level of training. An employee who is supporting the Assessor's office just 20 hours a week may be less motivated to attend week long courses, away from home and family, than a near full-time employee who may be building a career with the certifications.
- The tempo and type of work in the Assessor's office does not lend itself to job sharing. While the Assistant Assessor's job entails both technical and clerical work, it does not cluster into clerical work in the morning and technical work in the afternoon, or any sort of divide that works with job sharing. The taxpayers come in at all hours of the day asking for assistance with forms. While it is possible that 20 hours a week of serious technical work may be sufficient for the Assistant Assessor, the relatively uniform tempo of servicing the taxpayers throughout the entire day makes it difficult for the Assistant Assessor to focus on 20 hours of technical

work. Both Person A and Person B will need to be available for servicing tax payers all day long.

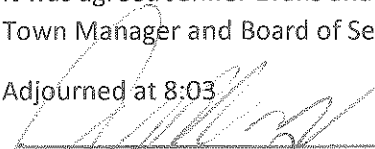


- If the Principal Assessor was unable to work for some period of time, whether due to an illness or family crisis, it would be difficult for the Assistant Assessor to step up and fill the role if the technical Assistant Assessor is only obligated to 20 hours a week in the office, and is also supporting the Clerk's office at 20 hours a week. Person A wouldn't have the time available to fill the Principal Assessor's role, and Person B wouldn't be trained.
- In general, all job sharing positions come at a cost to efficiency. Individuals attack assignments in different ways. Even the best communicator will likely find that misunderstandings occur, resulting in duplicate efforts, and missed efforts. While paying for 35 hours of Assistant Assessor work, job sharing results in a 10-15% reduction in efficiency, making the 35 hours more comparable to 30 hours.
- If Person A is being split between two offices with very different job requirements: technical skills with training requirements as an Assistant Assessor, and clerical skills as Assistant Clerk. It is possible that the person performs very well in one office, but not so well in the other. The Assessor's office could be at risk of losing a valued employee if the Clerk's office isn't happy. Given the training requirements and associated training costs, turnover in the Assessor's office is undesirable. Related is the real possibility that a person who thrives in the Assessor's office, and enjoys the challenge of the training and assessing, may not be happy spending half of their time in a clerical position. If a person truly embraces the assessing job, there is a high risk the person would leave for a full-time assessing job if one were to become available in the surrounding area. Again, that results in undesirable turnover and training costs.
- Good assessments from the Assessor's office results in a very high collection rate from the taxpayers. Poor assessments result in a high rate of abatement requests and Appellate Tax Board cases which typically require legal support. As recently as 10 years ago, the Town of Groton faced significant abatement and ATB cases, with a cost to the town measured in the few hundred, thousand dollar range. The return on investment for having a solid Assessor's office is one of the best investments the town can make.

The board cited the mantra to not be pennywise but pound foolish, then unanimously voted to recommend the position of assistant assessor be filled by one person serving 35 hours/week.

The board also expressed their full support (once again) for the appointment of Jonathon Greeno as Principal Assessor.

It was agreed Jenifer Evans and Jonathon Greeno would write up the concerns and present them to the Town Manager and Board of Selectmen.

Adjourned at 8:03

Date (Approved & Signed)  
8/28/2017