

ASSESSOR'S REPORT APRIL 2022

Judy Mathiau, Assessor

Audra Fleury, Clerical Assistant

Certified Ratio. The good news this month is that the State's official sales ratio declaration for the Town of Winslow allows us to certify at 97% instead of 96%! That means that the homestead exemption will be at 97% and will be applied in the amount of \$24,250. The veteran exemption will be \$5,820 and blind exemption at \$3,880.

In addition, all personal property assessments will be reduced by 3%, as well as utility properties including CMP, Brookfield Hydro, Summit Natural Gas and BD Solar. Tree Growth and Farmland current use values will also be reduced by 3%.

Next year at this time, our full revaluation will be in place to get us back to 100%. If the reval was not implemented, then Winslow very well would have to certify at 80% next year.

New Property Tax Laws. The Legislature has enacted a few new laws. The two that I feel has a direct impact on Winslow is:

- 1) For an owner to withdraw from farmland under the previous law, the penalty would have been 5 years' worth of back taxes (that they had saved.) This was an enticement to enroll, because the withdrawal penalty was not as extensive as other current use programs. Unfortunately, the new law now states that farm owners will be penalized the same as other programs, like tree growth, at a much higher rate.
- 2) Beginning in 2022, the reimbursement to towns for the homestead exemption will increase 3% every year until it reaches a 100% reimbursement. Last year we received 70% from the State, this year we will receive 73%.

Training. The Central Maine Group of Assessors held a day long training via ZOOM with topics covering the impact of values of properties close to a Solar farm; a session on the best practices for sending a "706-A" request, which is a tool used by Assessors to inquire as to the nature and value of large-scale commercial properties. At the end of the day, I presented on "Current Use Penalties".

I also attended a two-day remote conference sponsored by VISION, our assessment software company. They held several modules on learning the background of the system and how configure settings to meet our needs. We are also able to change the look of the property record card. Both of these require a separate application, which I do have, so that was very helpful.

Personal Property Returns. Audra has worked steadily on the personal property submissions. May 1st (extended to May 2nd), is the deadline for submission of both the annual declaration and Exemption application (BETE.) To date, we have received $\frac{3}{4}$ of the returns.