



## *Town of Panton Chartered 1761*

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### APPRAISAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2021, 5:00 PM TOWN HALL

Attending: In person - Bob Groff; Paula Moore; Paul Sokal; Dave Sullivan; Via Zoom – Maggie Catillaz. Guest: Howard Hall

The meeting was called to order by Paula Moore at 5:00 pm.

Election of Committee Chair - Paula moved to nominate Paul Sokal as the committee chair. Maggie Catillaz seconded the motion. The committee expressed its intention to have the chair participate equally in all discussions. The motion passed.

Purpose of the Committee - Committee members shared their thoughts. All expressed the desire to understand and describe the appraisal process, ensuring that it is transparent, consistent and fair.

As a town lister, Dave Sullivan also wanted to focus on the upcoming town-wide appraisal process, which is done every ten years. He suggested that we could advise the selectboard on the hiring of a professional appraiser for that process and that the committee might have a role in the process. He also wants to examine the grievance process, detailing the documentation a homeowner can bring to the proceedings.

Introduction to the Appraisal Issues – Maggie noted that there are two parts to an appraisal, the land and the homestead. She is concerned that there is subjectivity in assessing the land and a sense of unfairness. Her interest is determining the land value and mentioned the formula for assessing lakefront footage. Dave told the committee that in the 2012 town-wide assessment, Panton was divided into five “neighborhoods.” He wondered if this practice should continue.

Dave explained that Appraiser Lisa Truchon determines a property assessment using a computer-assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) software program. There are 45 tables and at least 30 values an appraiser determines in the process. An example of a value is the evaluation of a home’s roof, deciding its age, type and condition. Dave felt the committee should see a demonstration of how the CAMA program works.

Dave also explained that all the town's property values are included in the Grand List, which is submitted each year on 4/1. If a new house is not finished, the assessor makes a judgment on the percentage of completion at that time.

The town does not use market values in determining an appraisal because there are so few property comparables within Panton. The town uses the cost of construction for the appraisal. The more complicated the system, the less transparency. Dave felt we should provide input about the method of appraisal the town should use for the upcoming ten-year town-wide appraisal.

Because each assessor evaluates property differently, Dave felt it was critical for a new appraiser to disclose to the town the criteria and formulas used for the process.

Paul said he was interested in property classified as "Current Use" and wondered about auditing those properties. Dave explained that Current Use properties are handled by the state and not towns.

Dave suggested demonstrating the CAMA program for the committee at its next meeting. He will send the group a sample lister card with identifiable information redacted.

Paul requested that we all use our Panton town email addresses for conducting committee business. Neither Maggie nor Paula has a town email account. Paul will talk to Maggie McCormick about obtaining accounts for them.

Dave concluded by emphasizing the importance of this committee's work because it involves money. We recognize that tax bills are a significant factor in people's lives. We want an appraisal process that is as fair and transparent as possible.

The next meeting was tentatively set for Wednesday, August 18 at 5:00 pm.

Dave moved and Bob seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:14 pm.

Minutes taken by Paula Moore

Approved by the committee at its 8/18/20 21meeting