

## Assessment Process

The Assessors are required by Massachusetts Law to list and value all real and personal property. For Fiscal Year 2018, assessed values in Massachusetts are based on “full and fair cash value,” or 100 percent of fair market value as of 1/1/17.

Assessors are required to submit these values to the MA Department of Revenue for certification every three years. We are in the process of completing our recertification for FY 2018. Our appraisal company, the Board of Assessors, as well as the Department of Revenue, do a comprehensive review of sales and the market and thereby reassess various areas of the Town where the need is indicated.

**The Assessors do not raise or lower taxes.** The Assessors do not make the laws which affect property owners. 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 a property. The tax rate is determined by all the taxing agencies within the Town and is the basis for the budget needed to provide services, such as schools, roads, fire, and law enforcement, etc. The tax rates are simply those rates which will provide funds to pay for those services.

The market value of your home can increase even if no improvements are made to the property. The market value can also decrease after making improvements. To arrive at “full and fair cash value” for a property, the Assessors must know what “willing sellers” and “willing buyers” have done in the market place. The Assessors also must collect, record and analyze a great deal of information about property and market characteristics in order to estimate fair market value.

The object of the revaluation program is to estimate “full and fair cash value” as of January 1 (known as the “assessment date”) prior to the fiscal year that starts on July 1. For example, the assessment date for Fiscal Year 2018 is January 1, 2017 and the Fiscal Year goes from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

When market value increases, naturally, so does the assessed value. If market value decreases, so does the assessment. The Assessor has not created the value. Value is determined by recorded transactions in the market place. The Assessor simply has the legal and moral responsibility to study those transactions and appraise property accordingly.

**Proposition 2 ½ places constraints on the amount of the levy (money raised by taxes) raised by the Town and on how much the levy can be increased from year to year by the Town. It provides the Town with annual increases in the levy limits of (1) 2.5 percent, and (2) an additional amount based on the valuation of certain new construction and other allowable growth. It does not limit the increase of an individual tax bill.**

If an opinion of the value of a property differs from the assessed value, the taxpayer should collect the pertinent data to support the opinion and file for an abatement.

Information is available on the Online Property Viewer at [www.weymouth.ma.us](http://www.weymouth.ma.us) or on the public access computer on the first floor of Town Hall.

Keep in mind that 2016 sale prices, condition, and location are critical factors in the valuation process. An appeal is based upon assessments, not taxes.

The application for abatement must be filed with the Board of Assessors at Town Hall no later than February 1, 2018 or have a United States post office postmark of no later than February 1, 2018. The information regarding the filing of an abatement application is also on the tax bill. The Board of Assessors has until May 1, 2018, to review the abatement applications and may request an extension, if necessary.

If an abatement is approved, the taxpayer will receive an abatement certificate indicating the amount of the abatement. If an abatement is granted after a bill is paid in full, the taxpayer will automatically receive a refund check.

If an abatement is denied, a notice so indicating will be mailed. The taxpayer may call (781-682-3852) and set up an appointment to meet with the Board of Assessors to discuss the reason for the denial **or** the taxpayer may appeal to the State Appellate Tax Board (617-727-3100) within three months of the date of the Assessors decision.

The Town does offer exemptions to help those who are blind; veterans with a service connected disability; surviving spouses; and those over age 70 that meet certain asset and income requirements. There is also an exemption from the Community Preservation Act tax surcharge available to low-moderate income citizens. A homeowner over the age of 65 meeting certain income requirements may also defer their taxes, which puts off payment of taxes until the home ownership is transferred.

For more information on these exemptions, please call 781-682-3852.

