

MEMORANDUM

To: Buckland Board of Assessors
From: Pam Guyette, Director of Assessing
Date: January 30, 2020
Re: Wage increase

It will be twelve years this July 7th, since I was hired to work in the Assessors' office.

In that time, I have earned the designation of a Massachusetts Accredited Assessor (MAA). There are only 465 Assessors in the entire Commonwealth that hold this designation (7 in Franklin County and 16 in Hampshire County). To earn this designation, you must have more than 185 hours of classroom instruction and a final exam in each of the 7 modules:

- Course 101, Assessment Administration: Laws, Procedures and Valuation
- Course 200, Principles of Assessing Procedures
- Course 1, Comparable Sales Approach to Value
- Course 2, Cost approach to value
- Course 3, Income Approach to value
- Course 4, Mass Appraisal for Ad Valorem Taxation
- USPAP (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice)

To maintain this designation, I must also attend various workshops, conferences and classes each year to earn continuing education credits. I have taken courses ranging from DLS Legislative updates to conflict resolution and First Amendment rights and office safety. Many of these topics I have shared with my co-workers upon my return to the Town Hall.

I have been complimented for my knowledge and pleasant demeanor while working in a position that can be challenging and is often spent dealing with less than happy taxpayers. I pride myself on being a "team player" within the town hall and happily assist other departments and provide my extensive knowledge of the town to serve my co-workers and the public. I have filled in for the Administrative Assistant when she has been out on medical leave twice in the past. I also assist taxpayers with issues when the Collector is out of the office. I have been trained as an Election Warden and attended 2020 Census training with the Town Clerk.

My performance evaluations have always been excellent. I have consistently received top scores in all categories. In an office staffed by one person, I have always made sure to provide as much service as I can to the public and the town. During my recent 12-week medical leave, I came back in two weeks post-surgery to attend the annual classification hearing to ensure that it went smoothly and didn't delay the tax rating setting process.

I am currently the Vice President of the Franklin County Assessors Association and have been a guest speaker at the annual summer conference of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers. I am happy to represent Buckland, even though no one in the Eastern part of the state ever knows where that is!

As you know, the Assessors' office is a very critical part of the town's function. You have heard the expression "The Buck stops here", and quite the opposite is true for my office.... The "Buck" indeed STARTS with us. Timely, accurate assessment is the first line in generating revenue for the Town to operate. The assessors' office is responsible for the valuation of real and personal property for the purpose of levying the property tax. This requires technical training, taking responsibility for maintaining assessments at full and fair cash value and meeting the Commissioner of Revenue's Recertification requirements of property valuation every five years, and interim valuations every year.

Other than COLA raises, the last salary adjustment that I received was six years ago (2014). My job is classified as Tier 7. The range of salary that was listed for this tier back in 2014 was \$20 to \$24 per hour. I am being paid less per hour than both the Treasurer/Collector (\$24.77) and the Town Clerk (\$24.68). My hourly rate of pay is \$22.41. I have been in this position longer than the Treasurer/Collector, and it is my understanding that the individual that replaces the Town Clerk upon her retirement in June, will come in at the same rate of pay as their predecessor. I feel that the scope of my job is of no less significance than the other two positions and believe that the pay should be at the very least, the same.

Director of Assessing	Tax Collector/Treasurer	Town Clerk
\$22.41	\$24.77(+2.36)	\$24.68 (+2.27)

The FRCOG wage and salary survey for FY2020 has the following rates of pay for other Director's of Assessing with similar credentials to mine (they hold their MAA):

Town of Colrain	\$27.16 (Based on an annual salary of \$39,549 and working 28 hours per week)
Town of Heath	\$30.00 (Given this information by the assessor)
Town of Deerfield	\$28.85 (40 hours per week)
Town of Erving	\$27.65 (25 hours per week)
Town of Montague	\$38.84 (Based on annual salary and working 35 hours each week)

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request. Please let me know if you have any questions, and I look forward to discussing this issue with you further during our next board meeting.