



Worcester County Assessors Association Newsletter

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President's Message

Arthur Holmes, MAA, Southborough

CSC written by the Executive Director, Rebecca Krause Hardie, Treasurer/Collector, Town of Royalston.

"Nearly 20 years ago, the Community software consortium was formed out of a DOR "CAMA" initiative and organized as a 'municipality' under Mass General Law. Extremely affordable dues were established to pay for up-grades and to maintain software. During that time and continuing up to the present, the DOR has maintained a strong relationship with the CSC and continues to provide user support. Other vendors provide support for applications, hosting, cost tables, etc. The CSC Board hired an Executive Directory in 2013 to help them manage the day-to-day operations of the consortium, and to provide on the ground leadership and focus.

The CSC's mission has been, and continues to be, to provide affordable technology solutions for its members. If it makes sense for its

My appreciation goes out to the Officers, Executive Board and Committee members for their support during my term as President.

I also want to thank the members and guests who attended the various programs.

As I mentioned in the prior newsletter, times are changing.

Retirements, Re-organization, Lay-offs are occurring across the Commonwealth including the Department of Revenue's Bureau of Local Assessment.

In addition to the above, the Community Software Consortium (CSC) will no longer receive support from the DOR. I received several calls from towns affected by the event. I told them I would be following up on this.

Attached is a summary of the

(Continued on page 4)

Legislative Report - September 2015

Linda Swadel, Westborough

Kind of a quiet time at the State House, especially during the month of August. Things should start picking up now that the summer is over, and I expect that any bills not yet heard will have hearings scheduled soon.

By now you have probably all seen our legislative agenda for the current session so I won't spend a lot of time on it. All of our bills were sent to the Revenue Committee. Some have had hearings and we have testified at every hearing to date. None of our bills have as yet been reported out of the Revenue Committee.

H2483: Clarification of who/what should be exempt with regard to solar. Hearing was 6/2/15.

H2491: Clarification of the "every-year's-a-reval-year" issue with regard to Chapter applications. Hearing was 6/2/15.

H2462: Standardizes filing date for personal exemptions to no later than April 1st. No hearing yet.

H2504: Boat bill reporting and collection fixes. Hearing was 5/12/15.

H2513: Right of First Refusal for exempt property. Hearing was 4/7/15.

H2586: Assessing condo development rights. No hearing yet.

H2537: Excluding land value from supplemental tax assessments. No hearing yet.

A couple of bills not filed by us that we have been following:

H2512: This bill would repeal MGL Chapter 59, Section 38D. In other words, no more I&E's. Crazy, huh? The bill is before Revenue and has not had a hearing yet but we are ready for it when it does. We have written testimony in place ready to submit and will most definitely send someone to testify against passage of this bill.

S1539: Would change the application dates for Chapter 61A and 61B. The bill was heard on 6/2/15. Filed on behalf of the Farm Bureau, the original bill would change the application date to February 1st. We have been working closely with the Senate Chair of Revenue Committee's office (Sen. Rodrigues) and have come up with a compromise date of December 1st.

We have also been working with Senator Rodrigues office to offset some totally unsubstantiated comments about our boat bill sent to the Revenue Committee as written testimony from the MMTA (Mass Marine Trade Association). They have been very vocal in their opposition to any change to the current method of taxing boats and we have been spending a lot of time shooting holes in their arguments.

We have been to the State House on several occasions over the summer to review our legislative agenda with several Legislators – mostly with their staff, actually, which is fine. Your Legislative Committee, with Charlie and Kathleen's help, is working very hard to keep on top of everything that might affect us in any way and will continue to do so, as always. In the meantime, if you have questions or need any information on anything legislative don't hesitate to contact either me or any member of the Committee. We are here for you...

In closing, for those of you who may not already know this I will be retiring at the end of November. For that reason this is most likely my last legislative update for WCAA. I need to say what an honor and a privilege it has been to represent our County on this Committee for the past many years. Legislation pertaining to our Association has become somewhat of a passion for me, and I thank the WCAA for allowing me to become our liaison on the MAOA Legislative Committee – I think it was in 1991... yikes! So I leave you with my heartfelt thanks for the support you have always given me, the many interesting questions over the years, and for the friendships I will have forever.

xxoo
Linda

Deadline For Signup Extended Until Monday



Worcester County Assessors Association *Serving Sixty Cities and Towns*

Fall Symposium
Thursday, September 17, 2015 – 8:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Wachusett Country Club
187 Prospect Street
West Boylston, MA 01583

6 Credits for this Workshop

8:30 AM – REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST
Assorted Pastries and Desserts, Coffee, Tea and Juice

9:00 – 10:30 PM - Master Your ATB Negotiations

Speaker: Michael Flynn, M.A.A. – City of Newton Commercial Assessor & Immediate Past President of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers

10:30 – 12:00 PM - Cell Tower Valuations & ATB Case Study

Speaker: John F. Ryan, CAE

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM – LUNCH BUFFET

Sautéed Chicken Piccata, Sliced Roast Sirloin with Mushroom Sauce, Baked Vegetable Lasagna, Baked Fresh New England Haddock, Steamed Broccoli Spears, Garlic Mashed Potatoes & Dessert Tiramisu

1:00 – 2:30 PM – High Performance Homes, How are they different?

Speaker: Nathaniel Cramer, B.L.A. Certification Advisor

2:30 – 4:00 PM - Learn how to use the new LA3 Macros and why you want to use them!

Speakers: Bruce Morgan, Cert Gen RE Appraiser, DOR Bureau of Local Assessment & William Mitchell, R.M.A., M.A.A.

Registration: \$45.00 Per Person For WCAA Members
\$50.00 Per Person For Non-Members.

REGISTRATION WITHOUT PAYMENT AND ANY NO SHOW WILL BE BILLED ACCORDINGLY.
CANCELLATION – NO REFUND

PLEASE REGISTER BEFORE SEPTEMBER 9th, 2015. Checks should be made payable to:
W.C.A.A.

Send payments to: Teri Gonsalves, c/o Board of Assessors, 74 Hopedale St., Hopedale, MA 01747
(508) 634-2203 Ext. 224, **Fax #** (508) 634-2200 **or e-mail to:** terigonsalves@hopedale-ma.gov

If you submit this registration for payment, fax or mail a copy of it indicating that the check is being processed so that your registration is received on time.

No phone reservations.

PLEASE RESERVE _____ PLACES FOR _____
(Municipality/Company)

ATTENDING:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email Address</i>

members, then the CSC will do it. It has significant assets, and the leveraging power of 67 communities, including 12 in Worcester County.

In the last 4 years, the CSC has received nearly \$500,000 in community Innovation Challenge grants that have resulted in the creation and implementation of a powerful cloud based Assessing/Collection system. To date, nine of our member communities have moved to the Cloud environment and several others are in the process of doing so. In 2014 the Assessors allocated dues to create a new state-of-the art Public Access system which is launching shortly. This new low cost public access system will easily be the best system currently available to both CSC members as well as communities using other assessing vendors.

Early in 2015 the CSC's Board of Directors was notified that the state early retirement program (ERIP) was likely to affect the DOR's ability to provide the current level of user support in the future. Their support is continuing for at least a year, if not beyond. Even so, the CSC is concerned that this level of support is likely to drop again in the future as other DLS staff retire, or job responsibilities shift. The CSC has met with DLS staff to discuss these concerns and to explore alternative strategies.

Research is currently being done to determine the options and the best strategy going forward. DLS Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin & his staff, and MASS-IT personnel are assisting the CSC in this process. The CSC will finalize plans early in the fall of 2015 with implementation prior to FY 2017.

Some of the current options include:

- Contracting out support services to one or more outside vendors**
- Converting CAMA system users and related support to another vendor**
- Converting to the planned new DOR CAMA system, contingent upon:**

**It being rebuilt (as planned) as part of the Gateway Upgrade
DOR makes the system available to cities and towns**

Provision is made for support and integration with other systems

- Community Compact Initiative: The CCI allows the Governor's Office to work more closely with municipalities to help them get assistance in order to achieve best practices in key areas such as regionalization. A secondary benefit is that Compact Communities receive incentive points on various state grants.**

As always, the guiding principle is what is in the best interest of its members with emphasis on fiscal feasibility in a time of tight municipal budgets."

Annual Meeting, December 2, 2015, Salem Cross Inn, 5pm.

Plan to be there as we will have further information to present on CSC and all other issues.





EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

By Kathy Stanley



I can't believe its September already and summer is dwindling as we prepare for tax rate setting season. For me, it looks to be a long one with additional meetings to come before we can get a balanced budget. Change is in the air though and I look forward to hearing more about what is happening at the state level and how it will impact our field.

The education committee has strived to provide the most up to date information, offering the most requested classes asked for on our last survey. At Arthur Holmes suggestion, a telephone survey of all 60 towns in Worcester County, revealed that many of you prefer day-time classes to evening. As a result, we changed the September evening meeting to a fall symposium. Timing of course is the key to these things and in the end there were some unavoidable conflicts. It will all work out and we will learn for the future. I thank you all for your continued support in our endeavor to make quality classes available to all.

The clerk's meeting in May was very successful with over 40 members enrolling at the Shrewsbury town hall. This was our second "free" class offered. True to his word, Bill Mitchell showed up with actual surveying equipment and we were able to line up and have a look/see at what surveyors really do in the field. I have always wanted to do that and everyone had fun taking turns looking! It was a very informative

session on reading deeds, sales codes and macros. Lane Partridge was with us for the morning and the two of them together are a good pair and very entertaining, many thanks to both.

Our September 17th Fall Symposium is filling up quickly and we are very excited to have such a great group of widely knowledgeable and qualified speakers with us, including a representation from the BLA. Mike Flynn, John Ryan, Nate Cramer, Bruce Morgan and our very own Bill Mitchell will be speaking at the event. Topics covered, in order, will include the Art of ATB Negotiations, Cell Tower valuation, what's new in Green Construction and the all new Macros/sales coding are all up for discussion.

Please mark your calendars for our annual meeting which will again be at Salem Cross Inn on December 2nd. New this year will be additional meal choices to go along with the always popular Drover's roast.

The WCAA education committee is here to serve the Assessing field in the best way possible. We welcome and look forward to any suggestions and ideas for classes that you may have. And don't forget if scholarships are needed, please feel free to apply.





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*****REMINDER SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE*****

T. M. Gonsalves

The Worcester County Assessors Association has available funds for scholarships. To apply you only need to be a paid member of the WCAA, the scholarships are available to new and seasoned office staff and Assessors. A community may not receive more than one scholarship in a given year. The maximum amount of any awarded scholarship cannot exceed \$450. The scholarships are available for the summer conference and the classes offered at UMASS each summer. However, a scholarship can only be used for tuition not room and board.

If you have a financial need for a scholarship please complete an application (found within the end of the news letter) and send the completed application to

**WCAA Scholarship Committee
Arthur Holmes
P O Box 3387
Fayville, MA 01745-0387**

Continuing education is important to Assessors and the office staff. By attending workshops, meetings and conferences you have the opportunity to share your knowledge and experiences, as well as learning various ways to deal with some of the unique and sometimes interesting problems they we encounter.

The WCAA Board would like to thank all of the members for their participation in our origination.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 17, 2015—Workshop

Location Wachusett Country Club

Macros, Cell Towers valuation, the Art of Negotiations and what's new in Green Construction

December 2, 2015—Annual Meeting

**Annual County Meeting
Salem Cross Inn**



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WORCESTER COUNTY ASSESSORS ASSOCIATION**SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

The Worcester County Assessors' Association Scholarship Fund was established to help Assessors or their office staff, who are members of the WCAA further their knowledge in the field of assessing when they have no funding available to them in their own budgets. These scholarships are available for all courses that offer credits towards a designation or recertification, including IAAO courses.

Scholarships cover the cost of tuition only. Scholarships are awarded during the year and are based upon financial and educational need.

Scholarship Conditions:

- ☐ Applicants must be employed by a town/city participating in the WCAA
- ☐ Scholarships are open to new & seasoned office staff and Assessors
- ☐ Scholarships are for course tuition only, not room & Board
- ☐ Only one scholarship will be available per community
- ☐ \$450.00 will be the maximum amount an applicant will receive

Please Complete the Following:

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ MI: _____

Business Address: _____ City/Town: _____

Business Phone: _____ Position: _____

Home Address: _____ City/Town: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Home Phone: _____

How Long Have You Been in the Assessing Field? _____

Do You Have Your MAA Designation? _____

Which Course Do You Wish to Take? _____

What Are the Course Date(s) and Location(s)? _____

What is the Cost of Tuition/Registration? _____

How Much Money is Budgeted for Educational Purposes in Your Dept? _____

Why Do You Wish to Take This Course, and Why Do You Need A Scholarship? _____

(Attach Additional Sheets if Necessary)

I Hereby Certify That the Above Information is Accurate & Complete.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ Date: _____

Mail To: WCAA Scholarships, c/o Auburn Assessors, Attn: Cynthia Cosgrove, 104 Central St, Auburn, MA 01501

Treasurers Report

Treasurer - Teri Gonsalves, Hopedale
(Information as of August 31, 2015)

Account Balance as of March 31, 2015

	\$12,098.05	
Income 3/1/15 - 8/31/15	\$3,559.00	
Total	\$15,657.05	\$15,657.05

Less Expenses 3/1/15 -8/31/15	\$5,674.06	\$9,982.99
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Available Checking Account Funds as of 8/31/15		\$9,982.99
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Certificates of Deposits (6 month CD)

Milford Federal Savings & Loan Association	8/31/2015	\$16,883.36
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Savings Account

Milford Federal Savings and Loan Association Account (opened 10/3/08)	8/31/2015	\$1,121.30
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Total Cd and Savings Value		\$18,004.66
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Total available cash as of 8/31/2015		\$27,987.65
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Statement (August 31, 2015)

Account	Income	Expense
Deposit (Course 2 from 4/2014)	\$225.00	
Deposit (2015 Dues)	\$202.00	
Deposit Cash (guest at E Meeting)	\$14.00	
Deposit (PP Workshop)	\$421.00	
Deposit (Course 5)	\$1,100.00	
Deposit (Newsletter Ads - 4 Accounts)	\$500.00	
Deposit (Clerks Meeting - free to members)	\$228.00	
Deposit (County Meeting)	\$795.00	
Deposit (50/50 County Meeting Raffle)	\$74.00	
Cindy Cosgrove (BJ's items for Course 5)		\$100.00
O'Connor's E-Board Meeting		\$256.26
MAAO (Course 5 text books)		\$2,000.00
Lane Partridge (Course 5 instructor)		\$812.35
Brookfield Orchards (County Dinner Meeting)		\$51.00
Cardmember Services (sympathy & get well arrangements)		\$135.24
Stop Payment Fee ck # 456 - (amount subtracted from check reissued to J Antho-		\$25.00
J Anthony's Grill (May Dinner Meeting - reissued check)		\$905.74
MAAO (Scholarship -M Oliver Summer Conference)		\$175.00
UMass Conference Services (Scholarship J Navarro)		\$267.80
Chris Reidy (gift cards for 6/10/15 Clerks' Meeting)		\$40.00
K. Stanley (food Clerk's Meeting 6-10-15)		\$505.64
Gregory Tyler (Scholarship for Umass Course 101 Class)		\$400.00
adjustment from statement		\$0.03
Total	\$3,559.00	\$5,674.06



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Worcester County Education Committee Association

2015 OFFICERS

President: Arthur K. Holmes, MAA, Southborough
Vice-President: John Valade, MAA, Worcester
Treasurer: Teri Gonsalves, MAA Hopedale
Secretary: Priscilla A. Johnson, MAA, North Brookfield

Executive Board: William Mitchell, RMA, MAA, Leominster
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Kathy M. Stanley, MAA, Paxton
Rosemary Scully, Holden

Past President: Cindy Cosgrove, MAA, Auburn

Newsletter Editors

Lisa Berg—Dudley lisab@dudleyma.gov

Cindy Cosgrove, Auburn ccosgrove@town.auburn.ma.us

Your Ideas and Input
are always
Welcome!

