

Town of Brunswick
Finance Committee Meeting
November 16, 2023
Assessing/Re-valuation/Property TAX Notes

Taylor Burns, Town Assessor, presented the relationship between state law and local property taxes.

Julia Henze, Finance Director, talked about the Fund Balance.

All documents can be found at:

https://brunswickme.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_11162023-3053?html=true

Questions/Answers:

- What is Quality Rating? It determines if the valuations throughout the Town are as equal as possible. The assessed value is divided by the sales price for each property. Only the central 70% of sales are used because the low 15% and the high 15% are considered outliers and are not considered.
- Why is only 1 year of qualified sales data used? This is written into state law. However, Representatives Ankeles, Arford, and Golek, and Senator Daughtry are working on state legislation to expand this period to 3 or more years.
- Is the number of sales this year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023) - around 300 qualified sales - typical of the number of sales in recent years? It is lower than last year.
- Has the number of out of state buyers changed over the years? This data has just begun to be tracked so it is difficult to say. It will be tracked going forward.
- Is it possible to tell if buyers are people intending to live in a house as opposed to investors? It could be tracked through ownership records. It is not easy to track, however, but it does appear to have increased over the last few years. (From Carol O'Donnell) the Housing Coalition is seeing a number of local sales to 2 LCs that are converting them to short term rentals or substantially increasing the rents to tenants.
- Do funds from one category of the Fund Balance ever move to another category? Yes.
- Does a certain amount need to be kept in the unassigned category? Yes, we have a policy that requires at least 16.67% of general fund revenues (or 2 months of operating costs) must be held as unassigned.
- If personnel positions go unfilled where does that money go? Into the unassigned category.
- Are unassigned funds used for on-going expenses? No, for small one-time projects.
- What is the relationship between the unassigned Fund Balance and the Capital Improvements Program? About \$500,000 is used in the Budget to offset property taxes but most is used for approved capital projects (while maintaining the target balance) to avoid borrowing for small projects.
- When does the School Dept bring their budget to the Council? The School Board runs a similar process to that of the Town and brings their requested budget to the Town Council in early spring.

What happens to the money from the trash bags? It funded the land fill closure and new funds are being considered for solid waste management.

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