

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 25, 2025**

Present: Michael Pelton-, John Dillon, Michael Hernandez, Robert Hetrick, Jr., Tim Lavoy, Rick Sharr (joined at 6:15 p.m.), Jim Tripp

Staff: Richard Lasky (Town Assessor)

1. FIRST SELECTMAN CALL MEETING TO ORDER

First Selectman Michael Pelton called the Special Meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. in the Buck-Foreman Community Room located at 265 Main Street, Portland, Connecticut.

2. HB 7067: ASSESSMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES FOR PROPERTY TAXATION

Michael Pelton introduced the meeting dealing with tax bill HB 7067 pertaining to the assessment of motor vehicles for property tax. He turned the meeting over to Rich Lasky, the Town Assessor, to discuss and answer questions regarding the pros and cons of the bill.

Legislation passed the bill in March giving towns the option to change the depreciation schedule for motor vehicles. He said vehicles have always priced off of NADA. The State capped the mill rate. During the pandemic years, there was a shortage of new cars and the value of used cars skyrocketed. The tax bill ended up being higher than before. The State started to reform the evaluations and passed HB 7067 this year. Instead of pricing 70% of the retail value they will use the straight-line depreciation schedule. The first year will be 85%, Year 2 will be 80% and then it continues down till the 5th year.

He shared the depreciation schedule and told how the assessments would be calculated. Real estate went up because of Brainerd Place. Most towns have 15-20% decrease in the grand list. We had about 15. The towns can use a different depreciation schedule with Bill HB 7067. Instead of using 85%, they can now use 90%. In year 15, they will bottom out at 20%. It's not a lot of tax money for vehicles. Rich referred to a chart that shows the current schedule and the modified schedule.

Michael Pelton said it balances out. It takes tax from the real estate tax and puts it toward the motor vehicle tax. The average tax should be going down maybe 1-2%. With the new bill, it will bring the real estate tax down but the car tax will go up a little bit. People should not see too much of a difference in their tax bills. The trucks are tricky to price re the MSRP.

There is also an exemption in the bill for veterans. Rich was asked what other towns are doing. Rich replied that it is about 50/50 right now. It is shifting from the residential side to the motor vehicle side. It is always the unknown that makes people nervous.

Michael said the BOS needs to decide what they want to do. Jim Tripp said he thinks when look at the numbers, there is a significant shift in property taxes and he thinks moderating it would be helpful, given the option that if there are problems, we can revert back next year. John Dillon agreed with Jim, again with the understanding that we have the option to pull the plug next year. He was wavering but he understands it better now. The other members agreed that it makes sense. The legislature fixed what they broke. Michael Hernandez said he doesn't like the valuation of the cars but he likes that we can revert back.

Michael Hernandez made a motion that the Town of Portland adopt HB 7067, Assessment of Motor Vehicles for Property Taxation, it was seconded by Jim Tripp. The vote was called:

Yea: John Dillon, Michael Hernandez, Tim Lavoy, Michael Pelton, Rick Sharr, Jim Tripp

Nay: none

Abstained: Robert Hetrick

Motion Carried.

John Dillon stressed the importance of getting this onto the town website with an explanation in layman's terms. This is important for clarity and transparency.

3. ADJOURN MEETING

John Dillon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Rick Sharr, all were in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hoy

Sharon Hoy, Board Clerk