

A special meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Thursday, March 7, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Patricia Piecuch recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Patricia Piecuch; Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr. led in the Pledge to the Flag.

The roll call was taken with 11 members of the Board of Aldermen present; Alderman Gidge, Alderman Schmdit and Alderman Lopez were recorded absent. Alderman Harriott-Gathright arrived after roll call (7:10 p.m.)

His Honor, Mayor James W. Donchess, and Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton were also in attendance. We also have with us this evening CFO John Griffin and Chief of Staff Kim Kleiner.

President Wilshire

Alderman Lopez did inform me that he was unable to be here this evening.

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Lori Wilshire, President, Board of Aldermen

Re: Special Board of Aldermen Meeting

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication and placed it on file.

MANAGEMENT AUDIT REPORT FOR THE ASSESSING DEPARTMENT DATED MARCH 1, 2019

President Wilshire

At this point I will turn it over to you Mayor.

Mayor Donchess

Thank you very much Madam President. We are here tonight, and as you said I am here with CFO Griffin and Ms. Kleiner to present the audit of the Assessing Department which was initiated earlier this year and was completed recently. I think you all got copies of the written audit maybe last Friday via e-mail and I assume you've at least had a chance to look at it. I think what the audit sets forth is a number of steps that we can take, hopefully in the immediate future, to streamline and improve our assessing function. If some of these steps, you as the Board of Aldermen need to approve, we hope that you will do that with dispatch, so that we can begin as quickly as possible undertaking the various improvements that are outlined in the audit.

Mr. Griffin and Ms. Kleiner are going to talk about more of the details but I thought I would take a few moments to kind of set the stage for what we are talking about. First the audit was done of the Assessing Department in Nashua. The Assessing Department did not do the recent revaluation; that was done by KRT. Because of issues that we had identified actually together, we discussed this when the money was appropriated to bring KRT in, we decided to go outside the City for the evaluation to engage an expert assessing firm, KRT, who had extensive experience in New England and in New Hampshire to do the work. There were various reasons for that and I believe it was the right decision because the work that they did, I think the facts show are very sound. They have come up with a very consistent set of results and they did a very thorough job. They visually inspected every property; now of course they did not go into the properties, but they visually inspected every property. Working with the personnel office in terms of identify any discrepancies that are visually apparent from the outside of the building, because Lynn in the Assessing Office routinely reviews photographs to determine if there is anything visible on the outside that is not in the property records, I think they were able to

certainly identify any errors that might have existed with respect to the external portions of the structures, the size, the decks and all that.

We have received about 250 or something less than 300 abatement requests. This is a typical number for the revaluations that have been done over the years. As you know this was a State-ordered revaluation; the State Law says that every City and Town has to do one every 5 years. This was conducted in 2018 and the last revaluation was in 2013. So the number of abatement requests that the City has received is typical for the last few, except that in 2005 which was several revaluations ago there were 1,500 abatement requests at that time. And when the last full measure and list was done which was in the early 90's, I'm not sure of the number, but there were a lot, a lot more than 300. So I don't think that anything out of the ordinary has occurred with respect to people seeking, thinking or believing that their new assessment is incorrect and seeking a review of the decision through the process that is available to them which is of course the Board of Assessors then to the Board of the Land & Tax Appeals at the State Level or the Superior Court.

Of course everybody has a right to file an abatement and anybody who disagrees with their assessment hopefully will have done that. Certainly reasonable people can often disagree about what an assessment is; it is a science but not an exact one, especially when we are talking about more properties that are more unique, properties that aren't exactly like the house or the condo next door. There are often good faith disagreements about what assessment should be and that is the reason for the appeal process; so that someone who is outside the City or outside the Assessing Office and ultimately outside the City can review the facts and determine what the proper assessment, at least in their judgement, should be.

There are a number of I think significant recommendations made in the audit. One of those involve, and you'll get the details from Mr. Griffin and Ms. Kleiner, but the larger ones that I thought were worth mentioning myself are as you know, the audit recommended that we eliminate the Chief Assessor position and instead return to the system of, and I will discuss this in a little more detail, of having many of the departments in City Hall that work together, run by a new administrative services director. The Administrative Services Director is a position that was first established during the administration of Maurice Arel in the late 70's to help bring more effective management to City Hall Departments. The City Administrative Services Director as the audit recommends would oversee a number of internal functions as it did before, Assessing, Personnel, Purchasing, Risk, the City Clerk and others that are within City Departments, GIS, IT. The Administrative Services Director was a position in City Government through the Administration of Maurice Arel, through my first administration, through Wagner, Davidson and Streeter.

Then Mayor Lozeau early in her tenure decided that at least in the way she wanted to run City Government, this was not a necessary position and she preferred to have something called City Stat and the Administrative Services position was removed and instead a City Stat Director was established. Then after a few years, apparently it was decided that City Stat was not necessary and for cost savings measures that position was removed. But the Administrative Services Director was not re-established. Now the people who have served in that position over the years have tended to be people who know City Government very well, but who have had a business background or some management background. The first Administrative Services Director who served for some period of time was Russ Marcoux who had been on the Board of Aldermen, he had worked for Purity Supreme and had an accounting background. He moved on and later Maureen Lemieux came in as Administrative Services Director after having served I think a short time on the Board of Aldermen, someone with another business accounting background. Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja probably knows her from Ward 8. She served with I think very great skill for quite a while, but when the position was phased out, she took a job as CFO I believe for the City of Newton, Massachusetts and still works there and very successfully.

So that is the history of the position. The point here is to, and I will address the assessing function in a minute, but the point is, at least of what we proposed now, is a few things. Number one, all of these functions needs to work effectively together, IT, Assessing, GIS, the Building & Planning people as well. These are people who need to work together in order for City Government to function most effectively. When the Administrative Services Position was eliminated, all of these functions were transferred to the CFO, in our case Mr. Griffin. The

problem with that is that the CFO's primary responsibility is to manage the finances of the City; to do the budget, to manage the annual audit that takes place, to do the so-called CAFA which is the Annual Financial Report, to generate all the financial reports, to pay the bills, to do all of the financial functions that a City of this size requires. And when these extra responsibilities beyond really what a CFO should be doing were transferred to Mr. Griffin, the CFO, I think it was intended as a kind of a temporary fix, but it became permanent. I know he wasn't particularly looking for this and it put him in a position where he could not give sufficient time and attention to these additional functions that were placed under his responsibility because still his primary job is all the financial work and the budget and the other things that I've mentioned.

I think as you have seen him come before you over the years on the budget issues and financial issues that often come to the Board of Aldermen, you understand that he is very capable as a financial manager and as a financial planner. But I think putting all of this under the CFO was in retrospect a mistake and really the Administrative Services Director is a position and responsibility that we should return to. So the two personnel recommendations that the audit recommends is the elimination of the one job and the creation of the other which is a basically cost neutral transition because the salary for an Administrative Services Director might be slightly higher but is approximately equivalent to what the Assessing Manager made which is more than \$100,000.00.

Now you could ask, well how would the City function without an Assessing Manager? Well first of all, the Administrative Services Director would now take much more direct responsibility and involvement in the Assessing function. Number two, there is a supervisor assessor, certified as a supervisor in the Assessing Office who can serve as sort of a working supervisor. And number three, as we all move forward on this project together, if we think that we need more fire power, more expertise in the Assessing Office, we can contract with an outside firm to provide some degree of assessing oversight. Now this is not actually a new idea; when Brian McCarthy was still with us and when he was president we, on several occasions, talked about the possibility, and this is before the revaluation was certainly over and maybe even before it began. We talked about the possibility of phasing this position out and bringing in a contract manager. The fact is that the last time this position went open, there was only one meaningful applicant and really the City, if we were going to fill the job, had really no choice on who to hire.

So I think if we monitor the management carefully, if the new Administrative Services Director does that and implements the recommendations in detail that are going to be discussed by the other two people, we can quickly, with reasonable dispatch improve and strengthen the assessing function of the City.

Now another thing, another big recommendation that is being made is that we undertake a full measure and list assessment. That means go out and inspect all the properties internally, seek to inspect all the properties internally. That is an expensive proposition, but I believe we should undertake it. It costs between \$1 million and a million and a half, but probably closer to \$1.5 million but this could be done over several years in preparation for the next revaluation. A problem that we have both in terms of the property records but also just in terms of perception is that the City has done no full measure and list since the revaluation of 1992. But this revaluation began in 1990 or 1991, the last full measure and list when believe it or not, I was the Mayor. So the last time a full measure and list was done, I was basically responsible or in charge of the City while it was being undertaken it was not actually implemented or did not go into effect until '92, it took quite some time, I think 18 months to accomplish it. It was a bonded project and it went into effect in 1992 but that was the last time it was done. Other community, no question about it, have done this more frequently; Manchester has done it a couple of times since that time.

So that is a recommendation that we should undertake and in my view is worth doing. So if we create the new position of Administrative Services Director to make sure that all of these functions are working together effectively, if we remove the Assessing Director, we monitor it, we retain the flexibility to bring in by contract more assessing management if that is necessary and implement all of the other recommendations which I think you are going to hear about; I think we can make great progress in terms of the function and in terms of restoring any loss of public confidence in the function. But I would return to the point that the revaluation itself

done by KRT is sound, has achieved equity between properties which is the underlying purpose of a revaluation; at least equity within the data we have. Maybe that equity will be improved by the full measure and list revaluation or inspection that we undertake. But at least given what we have now, the relative equity within the properties has been achieved by the full measure and list.

And I guess in terms of how we should proceed, I would ask this, we have faced more controversial issues than this before. I mean certainly we have heard some valid criticism regarding some of the things that have occurred in the Assessing Office. But we have faced more and the audit bares that out. But we have faced more controversial issues than this before. So if we are going to move forward as a community as I hope we will do, I think it would be better and more constructive that no one use sort of flaming rhetoric, hyperbole about what is going on. No one down in the Assessing Office, in my opinion, intentionally did anything wrong or committed any kind of malicious acts. They might have achieved an assessment or arrived at an assessment that people disagree with or maybe that is incorrect, but it was done in good faith based upon the expertise of the people down there. They are public servants who have been working for the City; they are not highly paid, they do the best job they can and like any umpire, they are probably right most of the time, but occasionally a ball gets called as a strike and occasionally a strike gets called as a ball. But that is inherent in sort of the human condition. So I think our task as leaders of the City, mine as the Mayor, should be to work with the people down there, give them more tools, improve their software, you will hear all of the details and listen to the remarks and comments as we have done and move forward with as much unity as we can with as much goodwill as we can, mutual goodwill, so that as a community we can achieve an assessing function that is effective, which has public confidence and which will achieve at least the greatest degree of accuracy that within an exact science is possible.

So with that I turn it over to Mr. Griffin and Ms. Kleiner. I am available for questions but probably it is best just to get the whole thing out. Why don't I turn it over to Mr. Griffin and Ms. Kleiner to talk through any of the details; they obviously can answer your questions as well.

Kim Kleiner, Chief of Staff

Good evening, thank you for having us. If it pleases the Board I would like to walk a little bit through the methodology used for the audit. I want to state that this is a common methodology that is used with any management audit report. This was not designed by us although this is a structure that I have used before, generally most used in inventory management, purchasing, receivables, I've seen it used in production efficiencies, things of that sort. So when you get to the back and you are reading through the questions, those questions were not designed by us, they are designed by a group that puts together management audit reports and they are from a set of questions that commonly used and that I've used before in other audit reports.

So Mr. Griffin and I started the process shortly after the Mayor instructed us to do so last November. We conducted interviews with the questions that you see in the back of the report with every single employee in assessing, including the Chief Assessor. They were separate interviews, Mr. Griffin conducted a set and I conducted a set and they were very thorough. We then moved from assessing all the internal policies within the Department and the individual employee's knowledge of such policies. We moved through policies and standards that are written by the International Association of Assessors and we looked at those in comparison to ways that our internal policies were written.

We then looked at different operational procedures and the way that work was flowing through the department between different employees. We studied the Board of Assessor meeting minutes and agendas, their board packets, we worked through budget information, we had consultations with various other City departments including IT and we consulted with various outside organizations and consultants that we've dealt with, Patriot Systems, KRT, CDM Smith. From there, we quickly then moved to looking at what we could find for various best practices, which is a common procedure. We sat with many of our internal employees in IT and worked through how the system flows and our data flows from various organizations. So you have Assessing, then you have the tax system, you have building permits that are feeding all these systems have to interact and we

wanted to see how that was doing. So often when you have data and it is moved from a variety of different software systems, the more systems that data is being flown through or entered into manually, the more areas that you may have room for error.

What we saw is there were a number of software systems that were still being used within the City even after we had bought and implemented Patriot Systems and now we have bought and implemented MUNIS. Older systems that really can be eliminated and should, and we recommended should be at this point. So that was quite a process working through all those systems, seeing how those systems worked. We then sat with individual assessors and walked through how they work through their day and what they see and how they walk through an assessment on the system, the AssessPro System. We then looked at how the public may view their individual property cards. So we have a system that is on our web site and we looked at how that flowed and what does that look like and is that giving the same information and can that be done more effectively and more transparently. So we reviewed those systems as well.

We then started to come up with what we saw as some of our observations during both the organizational, meaning the employee part of the audit, as well as the policy review, as well as the information system review. Those you can find on Page 18, I'll speak to just a couple of them and then let Mr. Griffin fill in. The Assessing Department itself works on two different major functions; you have the administrative staff that deals with the abatements and the exemptions and customer service. Then you have the assessors which are both residential and commercial. What we saw was that they really operated quite independently of each other; there was no staff meetings or organizational meetings where they all came together to share information although it is one process. So that was one of our areas where we started to look at whether they are actually sharing information effectively within the Department. We didn't feel that was being done the best way that it possibly could.

Generally it was much better for efficiency purposes if anyone within the function should have some knowledge of what others are doing; and especially how it affects what they are doing. So we didn't feel that knowledge was there within the Department. They also had some limited communication amongst each other. They didn't, although they were aware of the overall departmental mission, individual objectives and functions they seemed to operate quite independently. There didn't seem, and you'll see in the questions, a good set of the questions is about ways to improve. So generally you look at an organization and is there some way that they are sharing internally improvements and ways to improve. So generally you look to your staff that are performing functions on ways to improve their function and we didn't really see that that was happening. Of course the staff meetings weren't happening so there was some lack of communication there and they weren't really looking as to ways that they could improve not only their function, but the functionality of the department.

There was some absence of internal policies, absence of internal training, they were sending people to State trainings which is very good but internally, they were not training. And when you are looking to have an organization and making sure that they are all dealing with the same objectives, you would normally see some internal training amongst the Department. So part of the policy part that I want to speak to tonight is we at the same time that we were conducting this audit, there had been a Committee formed to look at policies throughout the City and that consists of CFO Griffin, myself, Director Budreau and Counsel Dory Clark. We had begun already looking at policies. So one of the policies that we saw before we had even started the audit was the mileage reimbursement and you will see that noted in the audit report. We have actually come up with a policy for that, we meet again tomorrow and then we expect to bring that forward to the Mayor. That was not something that was just to this Department. We had already discovered that we needed to have a policy that handled all of our staff that uses their personal vehicles. I'll let CFO Griffin see if there is anything from here that I have forgotten.

John Griffin, CFO

Thank you Ms. Kleiner, thank you for allowing us to come before you. A couple of things leveraging off what Mayor Donchess said, we are expected to file a USPAP Manual, which is about 4 ½ inches thick, 700 pages tomorrow, basically recapping all of the things that went into the revaluation. That's a document that is required

by the State Department of Revenue Administration and how it will go is this; we will submit it, KRT will bring it to the folks at DRA in Concord tomorrow, they will have a four to six week period to review, make any suggestions to KRT who are the author of that document. Then we will get that document delivered. We had a meeting with the Board of Assessors today and that document I look at as very critical to us moving forward in that I firmly believe that we could have a public/private meeting where KRT would come in and explain, not all 700 pages of course, but explain their methodology because a lot of the good questions that have been asked by a lot of different people in this proceeding is things like use of effective year built. That's basically the key ingredient to recapturing depreciation; use of MLS data, sales data, qualified sales data versus non-qualified.

As the Mayor indicated, we've got a veteran staff in the Assessing Department and they've been trained over the course of time and they use these tools the way they've been trained. So there is probably an opportunity to leverage off the knowledge of the KRT team and make some changes on kind of the nuts and bolts of how you calculate assessments. But what Ms. Kleiner and I came up with was kind of a notion that on the assessing side, we have kind of offloaded that to the State level. So when I figured out what the training was, it is more keeping up with typical State training which is getting familiar with code changes, State Laws, etc. The assumption is, is that by looking at the, and it is very difficult for me to look at it but the USPAP Manual, not the one I just described but the one that guides the conduct of assessors, it is quite complicated. So there is an International Association of Assessing Officials that basically sponsor that book and it is an international book.

I think I would just like to say that that report that we are anxiously awaiting for, I think that is going to shed a lot of light on how things are conducted. The other thing I recommended and you'll see it in the recommendations is we've got kind of a complicated way of describing things to people; whether it is effective year build, cost doesn't equal value; value doesn't equal cost and also confused a little bit by building permit data where an individual who pulls a building permit isn't really bound to bring in the work order or the quote from the builder or the contractor. So I'm not sure we've got a tight grip, I am not criticizing any departments, I'm not sure that we have a system in place, at least on the assessing side to basically challenge values that have been put on building permits. The other thing is we are really struggling with the ability to get into a house even when they pull the building permit but certainly if they don't pull a building permit, we may not know they've ever done anything. So as the Mayor indicated, the full measure and list hasn't been done since 1992 but started earlier than that. But great questions this morning if you can only get into 30% of the houses is that good enough and our expert KRT says that is the reality of the business we are in, but it worthy of a shot to at least update as many cards as we can.

These cards, if you think about it, these property cards of almost 28,000 parcels, they've been ebbed and flowed over decades of building permits, revaluations, changes and as the Mayor indicated, one of our team members through pictometry, we can look with a fly over, we can look to see at least on the outside what has been added and we've done a great job of capturing value in there, whether it be a deck, swimming pool, a filled in swimming pool to subtract, etc. So I think that is the thoughts that I have with regard to how we move forward.

Another touching point on the software, Ms. Kleiner and I brought all the team in, assessors, IT, GIS, etc and we've kind of cobbled together a bunch of disparate software systems and just to shed some light on that – the Admin System was run on what was called the VACS, so if you remember Digital Equipment Corporation, they created the VACS, software ran on it. And I remember in that time period, I think it was like everybody is your own programmer. Fortunately we have one person in the office, IT that knows how to program Admins. So if you recall, 2 years ago, we went to MUNIS Tax Billing. We kept Admins as the link between AssessPro and MUNIS. We need, as Ms. Kleiner says, we need to use the horsepower of Assess Pro which was installed in 2005, created in 2000. There certainly have been upgrades but the Patriot Property President doesn't push us on it but we have to more effectively use that for abatements, exemptions and credits, things of that nature because that should be a direct feed through the MUNIS which basically all the software that we have both Lawson and MUNIS there are upload capability through Excel. So I'm not saying we are going to be able to feed from Admins into MUNIS but we can at least eliminate the Admins function. And that's where Ms. Kleiner

was talking about dual entry; if we put the abatements in Admins and we put the abatements in the AssessPro we are constantly trying to make sure and validate that both systems have the same data.

So these were kind of the obvious things but I guess one final point is the Administrative Services Director, the Mayor did a certain amount of research but I did some as well. That was really the directorship glue that kept these departments together and GIS used to be and is still fully integrated with Assessing but GIS, Assessing, IT, those folks have to work together under one directorship would make sense. We have actually a pretty extensive and expansive GIS system and we are going to expand that over to the Department of Public Works for their, they will have their own unique fly over that helps them. But we do have gentleman from CDM Smith who is an expert in all of these systems; whether it be GIS, Assessing, AssessPro so we are expecting that report very soon. So it is kind of with that outlook that we are able to take the folks that we have, use these reports, as the Mayor said, potentially subcontract for the horsepower of the assessing community. We are optimistic that over a short period of time we will really amp up, but by 2 or 3 years from now, will a full measure and list, and the changes we can make in the creation of assessments I think will serve us well going forward. It is kind of a re-set that probably took place back in 1992, 2005, etc. So thank you for your time. I don't know if you have anything more on that but we are free for questions at this point.

Ms. Kleiner

So I would only add that I want to go back to something that the Mayor pointed out. Our assessing staff was very polite, very patient during this process. This can be a very difficult process for staff to go through. There were a lot of questions so imagining everything that you do on a daily basis is being questioned and you are being asked why, why you do everything that you are doing. That can be difficult for staff to go through. They were always very professional, always very polite, always very welcoming to us and I think that speaks to their quality. They were very open and have been continued to be both CFO Griffin and I have been down there almost every day since the audit, we are working with them, we are still asking questions and they continue to be very helpful. So I want to make sure that is said for.

President Wilshire

Questions from the Board?

Alderman Dowd

Yes the question I have is administration asking for any actions taken by the Board of Aldermen this evening or in the near future?

Mayor Donchess

Well the two things you will receive, not tonight, the things you will receive Tuesday the 12th, are of course the budget which will include some of these changes. The two principal ones being the creation of a new position and the elimination of another within the budget. Number Two, there will be an Ordinance that will come in which would re-establish the Administrative Services Director Position under basically the same, there are a couple minor little word changes, but it is the same language basically that existed when the Administrative Services Position in the decades that it is existed which was removed when the position was eliminated. So the proposal would be to return that language into the ordinances and restore the position. But to do that, of course, the Board of Aldermen would need to act affirmatively and also would need to act affirmatively on these sections of the budget to implement it from a budgetary standpoint.

Alderman Klee

I have a couple of questions thank you. My first question is going to be about the permits that don't happen within the assessing office they happen in another department where someone pulls a permit and then it is

done. I remember when I spoke to you it was basically I think they told me that it was a click of a button and the information went to you. Would this permit fall into this new admin services or will it stay where it is?

Ms. Kleiner

So permits is in Buildings which is under Community Development. Interestingly enough there is a new software that is being brought into the City for all of our permitting functions that project is under IT. It includes a variety of different departments that are working on that project. Buildings would stay with Community Development although I think there needs to be a lot more discussion between IT, Assessing, Buildings, DPW on this process as we look forward to implementing the new software. So software implementation sometimes can be difficult. And if you don't have the right people at the table discussing it and the right divisions giving input it can go very wrong. It can also go wrong if you don't have proper training after. So if you haven't built enough money into your budget to have the proper training of staff later, then you are going to encounter problems. So one of the recommendations that you'll see if a lot about training in this audit. That is very important, we want to bring Patriot back in. It is hard to say what type of training our assessing staff went through when we implemented Patriot, but we need to start at the very beginning. So I think you will see a lot of training when the new permitting system is brought in and hopefully you will see a lot more integration of ideas and information under the one administrator.

Alderman Klee

And I can understand that, I worked as an IT Specialist so I know that implementing and training and people's anxiety of just having to change the way they are doing a system so I do understand that. I just have two more questions really, and one is about the bringing up a new system. Who will be responsible for the data transfer from one system to another? Will we be bringing in a contractor or will our IT Department do it? I know when you have different systems and are trying merge, you don't always have the same data fields. So we have to marry those and match them up. Will we be doing that internally or will there be an external person coming in to do something like that.

Ms. Kleiner

So I want to be very clear, this is an audit report which gives you a lot of recommendations. This is not an improvement plan and those issues certainly have to be worked out. CFO Griffin and I have already started to do some investigation but you'd want to see an improvement plan that is detailed and brought to you separate from this and I think that is one question that would need to be answered. Who do we rely on for such and how much consulting do we need to bring in, those sort of questions would be answered in the improvement plan.

Alderman Klee

I had only asked because you had talked about going from the Admin System to the MUNIS System so that was the reason why I asked that one. I'll make this my last question and it goes to the full measure and list and maybe you can't answer this, maybe this is more a general question. I know we spoke earlier also about the 30%, if the 70% no you are not coming in. I can tell you, I've gotten calls from constituents who have said no one is coming in my house. What do we do then? How do we do that assessment? Do we know?

Mayor Donchess

Well New Hampshire Law does not give us the authority to insist on going in. Attorney Bolton can express somewhat of a qualification of that, under certain circumstances that he can describe it could happen, but generally speaking when someone says no or you can't them, they are never home, that's the most you can do.

Steven Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Previously about 15 years ago, the law provided that if a tax payer refused entry to his or her property they lost their right to seek an abatement. Legislature, in its infinite wisdom changed that law and now there is no disincentive provided to effectively stonewall the municipality. There is a procedure an instrument that one seeks that is called an Administrative Search Warrant. And like other search warrants, it gets issued by a judge and it has to be based upon reasonable suspicion that municipal, that there is something untoward going on, building without a permit, housing code violations, zoning violation, something like that or that it is part of an extensive program to search out either those sorts of violations or for tax assessment purposes.

I question whether that is entirely consistent with the 4th Amendment but it is not unreasonable to say you want to look at the interior structure of property that you are trying to assess for tax purposes. I have no doubt that if we get reports that seem credible that – Hey I was in my neighbor's house and they've got a finished basement and I don't have a finished basement and yet my house is assess for more than their house. We go over, we look at the house from the outside, we see that they've got curtains hanging in the basement windows which you can detect from the outside, maybe I can go in and get an Administrative Search Warrant to get us in that house to see if they've got a finished basement. Maybe in the course, and it is a big maybe, in the course of a full measure and list, I can get Administrative Search Warrants more extensively than that. And I am willing to try but there is absolutely no guarantee.

Now for those of you in the Legislature, if you want to give us some assistance here, that would be welcome. The old system had a degree of fairness to it, that if you weren't going to cooperate, we weren't going to cooperate with you. So food for thought.

Alderman Klee

This is the year to do it.

President Wilshire

All set Alderman Klee?

Alderman Klee

I am thank you very much.

Alderman O'Brien

Yes thank you. When I glossed over this I saw a lot of problems and my previous life on the fire department after I watched the original Back to the Future, they taught me the Admin System, you know the VACs and everything and I was wondering if we could save some money in selling it to the Smithsonian. We are probably the only City to still use it. But when you have a choke collar on your dog you aren't going to, such restraints from upgrading through the tax base, you get into these fall behind situations and I understand. But you get a program to work with this because I've rolled through the Lawson years when that was brought in and everything and they don't fit tight and this and it's like buying baggy pants sometimes.

But the thing is, with this report, because I know we are going to look at this in the future and I am wondering farther down the line, I see that the Smith Company CDM Smith is going to report back relatively soon, late March into April. Maybe some of their recommendations would be recommendations on programming is that correct? And that is going to be affecting perhaps maybe this year's budget in a way correct?

Ms. Kleiner

So we have asked CDM Smith for lack of a better term to “look under the hood” of all the systems and let us know and yes you are correct Alderman O'Brien. When you have a bunch of canned systems, you buy a lot of canned systems, quite often people don't really assess whether they can speak to each other effectively. That is one of the questions that we have asked them to look at. Can these systems speak to each other, can they speak to each effectively. They have let us know and in the course of this audit, CFO Griffin and I spoke with Patriot, we had some good discussions and there are some communities that deal with Patriot, speaking directly to MUNIS so there is a lot more work to investigate that and how we make that happen. So there are some positive steps that we've found in this process, but I think you are going to see a lot more out of the report from CDM Smith.

Alderman O'Brien

Follow up if I may – because I know a lot of this information has extra purposes too and I know this is not what we are here to discuss tonight. But in looking at this CDM Smith coming in, it goes all the way to Police and Fire Dispatchers as well too on how that comes up in 911 operation when the GIS and everything is working in unison together. So CDM Smith they are going to look at the whole City I kind of hope to try to come up with something that's going to be the best that we can afford? Beautiful.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. My questions are around the full measure and list. I am interested if we could go over what the goals of that would be and what that would actually uncover or speak to in terms of the things we have uncovered and then I have a couple of follow ups.

Mayor Donchess

Well maybe I can give a general answer and then if I'm off in any way I can be corrected. No one has sought to go into all of the properties since 1991. Now certainly assessors have gone into properties when there is a building permit or under other circumstances, but no one has sought to go inside all of the properties since 1992. And what this would do is potentially where assessors gained entrance, give them the opportunity to discover things which were maybe not correctly characterized or captured in the property records. But also would give them the opportunity and if they couldn't get in they'd have to do this from the exterior to characterize the quality of the property, the condition of the property as either good, very good and there's a scale that they use. So it would help with that. I mean one thing that hasn't been mentioned and maybe Ms. Kleiner or Mr. Griffin can get into it in more detail but one problem that has been identified as all of this discussion has gone on, is that the effective year built is a very confusing factor.

When the Assessor before Mr. Duhamel was in office in quite some time, he created as we've been told, a very complicated kind of jerry-rigged I don't mean that too negatively but system that kind of only he understood. Mr. Duhamel then just kind of adopted that and just went forward with it. But the idea would be to reduce, there would still be an effective year built but to reduce its importance and simply rely principally on the condition of the property as characterized by an inspection and rather than have the condition rely on the effective year built, do the reverse and they can explain this in more detail. But what would be accomplished is we, our agents, the assessors, we'd have to hire an outside firm to do this, would be able to view the internals of maybe 30% of the houses.

Alderwoman Kelly

Follow up. The one that you presented over in 1992 was that done externally as well or internally?

Mayor Donchess

Yes, when a full measure and list is done it is not just residential, it is commercial as well. That cost \$1.5 million dollars in 1992, what is that, almost 30 years ago or 28 or 27 years ago or whatever it is. That cost \$1.5 million dollars in 1990 or 1991 dollars. The technology has improved so that the cost is lower, they use like lasers and stuff like this, they can measure from the outside the dimensions of things without actually going in, especially in commercial buildings. So the relative cost is actually a little lower but it is still \$1.3 million, \$1.4 million, \$1.5 million.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. I have several if you don't mind. I looked at the charter and the ordinances and they don't say a whole lot about assessing and the State law doesn't seem to say a whole lot about it either, maybe I'm missing something. The charter just says that the "Mayor with consent of the Aldermen shall appoint 3 assessors and a treasurer and collector of taxes" and it says "each assessor shall prior to his appointment have demonstrated knowledge of property appraisal or assessment and of the laws governing the assessment and collection of property taxes". When I look at your organizational chart, I don't see the Board of Assessors listed at all and I'm wondering what is their function and to the people that we have there, do they meet this qualification? Aren't they supposed to be in charge of this department? Where do they fit into this scheme of assessing and collecting property taxes?

Attorney Bolton

I can help with that. The Board of Assessors has supervisory authority over the Department but it is the Board of Aldermen that can determine what the staff is going to be and that is in the charter, there is a separate section of the charter from the section 42 that you were looking at Attorney Jette which talks more about the Board of Assessors and the assistants that can be hired by the Board of Aldermen to assist them in producing the assessment. There are ordinances that further define that and also define that as we sit here, that assessing is part of the Financial Services Divisions and reports currently to the CFO. Obviously the idea of reinstating the Administrative Services Division if the Board chooses to go that route will change that, but for the day to day administrative functions there is a hierarchy. The ultimate decision on what property values are assessed each year and the decision as to whether to grant or deny applications for abatement is made by the Board of Assessors.

The three current members of the Board of Assessors, the Chairman has about 50 years' experience in the Assessing Field; he was formally the professional assessor in Merrimack; prior to that he worked for a Mass Appraisal Firm, for many years. Another one of the members is a real estate broker and accordingly has knowledge in the real estate field and values of property and the third member has prior experience managing properties, both I believe commercial and residential properties and has experience in the real estate field in that way. So I think they all meet those general qualifications.

Alderman Jette

So may I follow up? It sounds like they probably do but on the organizational chart, why aren't they somewhere, why aren't they at the top?

Attorney Bolton

I didn't do the organizational chart.

Alderman Jette

I know you didn't.

Attorney Bolton

They could have been listed, they don't have the authority to hire and fire for example, but they have the authority to overrule the recommendations of the staff I think they do so advisedly when they do. But they are not merely a rubber stamp either. They work with the professional staff to arrive at proper assessments and proper decisions on abatement requests.

Ms. Kleiner

So I'll answer as to why they weren't in the organizational chart. We did not look, although we looked at information that was being fed from our internal department to the Board of Assessors, when I talked about looking about their Board Packets and the way abatements were written up and presented and that sort of thing. We did not include them in the management audit as we did not interview them. We were looking at our internal staff, our internal department and how it functions. Certainly that could have been looked at but it was not in the scope of our audit to review the Board of Assessors.

Alderman Jette

When we look at hiring an Administrative Services Director and giving that Director the job of overseeing the Assessing Department, I am wondering if we shouldn't take a broader look at where the Board of Assessors fits in here. Shouldn't they be supervising the Department and the Administrative Services Director is the Administrative Services Director going to be able to, you know, is one person with all the other stuff I hear you talking about, the Administrative Services Director being assigned, shouldn't we have a Chief Assessor under the Board of Assessors? I don't know the answer, I'm just raising the questions. And whether or not – and what about the City Treasurer and Tax Collector? Where does he fit into this?

Attorney Bolton

The City Treasurer and Tax Collector receives a warrant every year from the Board of Assessors and that warrant essentially lists all of the properties and sets a value on all of the properties. A form called the MS1 is transmitted to the State Department of Revenue Administration and very simply the State looks at what the City needs, what its budget is, what it is going to have to pay for its share of the County Budget, County Expenses, subtracts revenue from other sources and then says – Ok, we've got to get so much from the property tax, does the division the value of the taxable property divided by into what you need to raise, they transmit back tax rate they have calculated to the Treasurer and Tax Collector. The Tax Collector then sends out the bills, multiplying the assessed value times the property tax rate. As the money comes in the Treasurer has superintendence over that money and invests it wisely we hope and when it is needed to pay bills, it is there.

Alderman Jette

So talking about the full measure and list, personally I think it is very important that everyone in the City feel that they are being treated fairly, that their taxes are fair compared to everybody else, you know, their share is fair. And I think a key element of that is that their property is being appropriately assessed and it is fair compared to everybody else. And I think doing part of that is keeping up with the assessment, you know, doing a full evaluation where you do look at the properties in detail and you are not just doing a statistical analysis like we just did.

So we are going to have to do another revaluation in 5 years; I know other cities do this constantly, they don't, you know if you wait 5 years and then you try to do everything at once, I think it is a much more major project and probably more expensive. If we kept up with it, if we did like you know every year we did a fifth of the City and so that we would be keeping up, you know? I don't know if that could be done internally or not, I don't know what the costs would be compared if we did, if we hired sufficient staff to do this on an on-going basis, whether

that would be cheaper than hiring someone to come in and do it all at once or hiring somebody to do it every year, you know a part of it every year. But that's something I think we ought to look at.

And when you mentioned building permits not being the most reliable information because people lowball what their improvement is, that we don't require verification by the contractor as to what it costs and everything. I'm thinking – Why don't we do that? And if it is because the Ordinances or our Ordinances don't require it, maybe we need to change the, maybe you should suggest legislation to us that we should adopt so that we can verify that information. I just want to avoid the honest guy hiring a contractor and being full up straight with getting the proper building permits, this is exactly what it is going to cost, allowing people to go in and do the inspections. He ends up, his property ends up being valued at its full value. Some other person, his neighbor for example, low balls what the improvements are that he's making, maybe he doesn't even let the inspector come in and look at it and so you end up with false information and that neighbor, his property doesn't get assessed properly, so his neighbor is paying more in taxes than he is and that is unfair. I think we ought to do whatever we can to avoid that situation.

Attorney Bolton

Well we certainly should. And it may be appropriate to get more information at the time someone gets a building permit about what the cost of the construction will be. But the cost of the construction is not in most cases going to be equal to an increased value of the property. Most of the time it will be different. It might cost \$10,000.00 for someone to redo the bathroom in their home. But that may not add \$10,000.00 to the value of the house. The house may or may not increase in value at all. It may increase by only \$5,000.00 rather than \$10,000.00. A more extensive renovation that adds an additional room and a second or third bathroom to the house might cost \$80,000.00 to construct but only add \$30,000.00 to the value.

So between the expertise of the assessor looking at it and charts and tables that could be used as a reference that assessor has got to use judgement in determining what value is added by any construction project. And before I forget because I meant to say this later, when people don't get a building permit, yes it is bad and the assessments may be wrong because someone has got the finished basement that is not getting taxed. Worse than that is it hasn't been inspected by the building department, we've got an electrical inspector, we've got a mechanical inspector that would inspect any extensions of the gas heat. We've got framing and structure inspectors that guarantee that whatever is built is structurally sound and won't fall down, won't fall down and shear off the gas line and the electric wiring and what all was just installed. That is every bit as important perhaps more important than getting the tax assessment right. I mean if we have fires and unsafe structures and so forth, that is truly life endangering and ought to be corrected. So that is an additional benefit that can sometimes be realized by doing the full measure and list and discovering these problems.

Mayor Donchess

I had a few thoughts in response or additional information or whatever. The Board of Assessors of course, they are volunteers, so it's hard to expect them to be in there every day and they have jobs, the Chair is retired but the other ones have jobs. But also they serving in the way that they do, I think they provide an independent oversight in the sense that sure an appraiser goes in and makes an assessment of what a property is worth. Then the homeowner disagrees, and where do you go with that disagreement? Now you could go back to the staff, but the staff has already made a determination and they may think they are right and they don't change it.

What the Board of Assessors is, is they come in from the outside and they listen to the abatements or consider the abatement request and take an independent view. So it gives a local appeal so you don't have to go Superior Court, at least one level of appeal, you don't have to go to Superior Court, to the Board of Land & Tax Appeals, you can just go down there to 208 and at least somebody is going to come in and review the case if you the homeowner think that there is an error. So they do provide that function although they don't oversee the everyday work.

Yes, we might want to do more frequent assessments. If we do this full measure and list over 3 years which is about as quickly as it can get done, that would enable us to undertake a new revaluation in 3 years if we want to. But it does take time to do that inspection because you've got to put a lot of people out in the field. It is an expensive exercise but it does help to achieve equity and certainly a better perception of equity. So I think the idea of possibly doing this more often is something we want to consider even though every time we do it there are unhappy people.

Point three, even though this was a statistical revaluation, it wasn't just working with numbers, they did go out and visually inspect from the outside every property so there at least was that. It wasn't just done in the office, well let's change this number by such and such. They looked at all the properties. Now they didn't go in, they didn't seek to actually go in, but they looked at every property to try to judge its condition, to make sure that its dimensions were properly captured and they saw things like in some cases a house might be dimensionally higher than was reflected in the records. When they found something like that they corrected it or maybe other external features that they were able to observe. So that was the way they went about it; so it wasn't just a numbers approach.

And number three the building permits, at least in my take on the situation, they are a tool but a very inexact one because you only need a building permit if you are going to do certain things; electrical, any change to electrical, any change to plumbing or to a bearing wall, you need a building permit. But you do a building permit on your electrical you may not increase the value at all. You know if you fix the old rod and tube which I've done and you replace it with something more modern in parts of the house, no one pays more because of that.

On the other hand, you can do projects that increase value considerably without a building permit, validly. So let's you say you go into the kitchen and you do not alter electrical or plumbing or any bearing wall, you can change a wall but if you don't have a bearing wall you don't need a building permit. And you put in new cabinets, you put in the best appliances, you put in granite counter tops and all this stuff; that may not require a building permit if you are not making certain electrical and plumbing changes. So the building permit helps it helps to give the assessor notice that there might be changes in value that they should examine and to the extent that hasn't been done in the past that will be done in the future, from here on in. We are not sure we think it usually mostly been done but it will be done from now on. But it is a tool but it doesn't provide all the answers and it doesn't capture all value. Sometimes it can miss substantial increases; but on the other hand, a building permit that requires some considerable expenditure might, on the other hand, not increase value that much. But it does alert them that they should go in and at least look at the situation and see what's there. And if that is inaccurate, one of these other experts can correct me.

Alderman Jette

I just have one last question. Attorney Bolton when you talk about people refusing entry and allow inspection, you talked about perhaps our legislators could amend the State Law to give you more authority to do that. I would suggest that if that is something that you want, I'm sure they are more than willing to help you do that, if you provide them with what you want. But I always thought that the remedy to that is if the assessor was refused entry, he could assume that you've got the Taj Mahal in there, behind those closed doors. And then when you get your assessment and you think you are being overly assessed you could then request an abatement and the burden of proof is on you to show that it was not assessed properly. Doesn't that work anymore?

Attorney Bolton

Well that was a method that used to be used but now people who work as assessors in communities have to be certified by an agency that is part of the Department of Revenue Administration. It is called the Assessing Standards Board. And if they start making things up just because they didn't get in to a property a complaint can be filed against them and they can lose that certification and therefore lose their job. So assuming, without

any proof that there is finished basement or guessing at the number of bathrooms, bedrooms or anything else without reason is not something that professional assessors are well-advised to do.

Alderman Jette

So your answer is you do need legislation to give you more authority.

Attorney Bolton

Well as I say in the past there was a disincentive to the tax payer to refuse entry and that disincentive was removed. Now if any of the legislators from Nashua or elsewhere in the State just want to just give us blanket authority to enter any premises it will make the assessing function easier. I think there will be some opposition to that. Perhaps a compromise could be arrived at.

Alderman O'Brien

I think we'd be happy to except for that little document called the Constitution but we'll have to look at that.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. So I think that the responsibilities of the Chief Assessor are pretty well outlined in the report and my question is around what the new role, the Administrative Service Director will do, and what the differences are, because we don't have a responsibility outline for that yet.

Ms. Kleiner

So one of the reasons that we were looking at the Administrative Services Director is the job description that it had in the past was more extensive than just your Chief Assessor. So it was really responsible in one of the things that we feel from the audit didn't show and that is the communication between the Departments or now they are called Divisions to ensure that the processes that they are putting in and the systems that they are putting in, that there is proper input and communication amongst those. So that is what the Administrative Services Director, when you look back in the history that Mayor Donchess spoke about, you see how there was much more internal communication and buy-in of all the departments into whatever the function was being evaluated or implemented. That would be more of that level. We do know that right now without a Chief Assessor, someone is going to have to get in there and create an improvement plan and a way to move this department forward. It is something that CFO Griffin and I have just started just as Mayor Donchess has asked us to kind of continue with this process. We had our first staff meeting with them and the Mayor attended on Tuesday. There has to be a lot more oversight without the Chief Assessor by the Administrative Services Director certainly to begin with.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you that was informative. My question as a follow-up is when you are looking for this new person, what kind of background are you looking for, are you looking for someone who would be heavily an Assessor or heavily in IT; there are a lot of different departments that we are talking about overseeing. So what does that look like?

Ms. Kleiner

So I think Mayor Donchess spoke to it best, you are not looking for someone that has a lot of specific knowledge about every particular department, you are not going to find that, or if you do, take that person. You are looking for someone who has solid management skills, looking for someone with a business background. I think your past Administrative Services Directors had accounting backgrounds. The assessing, I mean you can attend

training and you can get certain knowledge, you can rely on consultants and professionals with expertise, will that person know where to get that information? That is important. But I doubt very much you are going to find one individual who is an assessor, worked in IT, been a purchaser, dealt with insurance, and been a City Clerk. If you do that is not the strength of the position. The strength of the position is to be able to manage functions efficiently.

Alderman Klee

I am not sure my comments here are questions as much as comments. Going back to the permits, and I know this does not fall under the assessors, but for transition and to help. And I also know that if someone pulls a \$25,000.00 permit it may really only bring up the assessment by \$5,000.00 and I understand that's a situation. But when a permit is pulled and an inspection is done because I did go up there and I talk to them many many months ago about how they do this. They say when a permit is pulled, depending upon the permit, sometimes they have to go in incremental times to make sure certain things are done. And then finally do a final inspection and sign off on that permit and that's when it would get transmitted to the assessors. But when that happens and this may be to you Attorney Bolton but when that is done, would it be legal or appropriate for pictures to be taken for this information to be the visual, kind of the inspection that they do, to be sent on to the Assessor's Office to help them in the assessment? I know that this person is not an assessor so they can't say the value is up by this, but if they could give that information. And that's why I said this more may be a comment and an idea.

And following up on that at the time and again I don't know about the legality of this. At the time of a sale, often times open houses are done. Would we legally be able to go in at that time and do an unofficial assessment of the property.

Attorney Bolton

I know of no prohibition that would, no law that would prohibit any of our building inspectors from taking photographs. Certainly if there is an open house, I guess it means it is an open house so anyone can go as presently constituted our assessors work a Monday through Friday schedule. Most of the open houses take place on weekends, maybe some in the evenings, but obviously they work regular daytime schedules. Now over time other things can happen, schedules can be changed, better way to do things can be worked out. It might not be impossible to have an assessor accompany the Building Inspector for that final inspection and make it more convenient for the homeowner to have to make that arrangement only once rather than twice. So all of those things are certainly possible.

Alderman Klee

I guess my last part of that is, I know when my house was on the market, one of the things that a lot of real estate agents like to do are these videos that literally show, granted they use the wide lens and my oven looked like it would fit a body in it. You know but just to give you an idea as to how many bedrooms, the process, we can use all those tools when we are not allowed into a home is what I am kind of thinking.

Attorney Bolton

If you've got a home that is being marketed for sale or one that has recently sold, much information can be gathered. The Assessing Department subscribes to the multiple listing service so they are able to, when a home has been listed on the service, they are able to access the pictures that have been posted and if there are links to videos or other things on there. Very often there are flowery descriptions that paint the home in the best possible light. They can get information there and by a simple calculation when the Deed comes through you can calculate from the tax stamps what the sale price is. There are other documents that are filed with the DRA that we can get access too to learn the sales price. That can give you an idea as to whether your data is correct or not, you are not supposed to and there are reasons because of the way it affects the calculation of the

equalization ratio, you are not supposed to be blindly just raise the assessment to match the sales price. That is true even if you've been equalizing it. It can be an indication that what you had down in your data as a place with 1 1/2 baths turns out to have 3 baths. What you thought was a 3 bedroom home turns out to be a 4 bedroom home. That sort of correction to the data on a piece of property is definitely possible when a house is listed for sale.

Alderman Klee

The reason I am bringing this up is perhaps that would be a good position to have rather than having an assessor have to do it but having someone that was more or less kind of their full time job. And I don't mean to add cost or that but I think it would be a valuable tool for people to be able to use. And I understand that we can't do, because someone could sell a \$700,000.00 for \$250,000.00 because they are selling it to a family member. So I understand it goes both directions, so we don't follow the price in that respect but I was just thinking more of the descriptive nature of it.

Attorney Bolton

They go through a check on that as well. It is what they call qualifying a sale. One method of valuing property is to compare it to other properties and make adjustments to the properties you are comparing it to, to try and arrive at a value that is based upon what the market is doing. Well if you have suspicions that a sale is not truly based upon the market because it is what they call, not being at arm's length that would mean as you pointed out, someone selling to a relative for a lower price. Or seller financing sometimes increases the price so if there is seller financing involved you would probably disqualify that as being a comparable. So these kind of other things you mention enter into the picture too. So for every property that is sold, an assessment, a judgement is made as to whether it is a bona fide arm's length transaction and therefore a qualified sale.

Alderman Klee

Thank you very much.

Alderman Tencza

Thank you for including the descriptions of the assessing department what each employee does in the assessing department. I was kind of taken back at how much each person is responsible for. Did you make any opinions throughout this audit on whether the assessing department is adequately staffed, especially on the assessing side or even on the administrative side?

Ms. Kleiner

Well we did. So first one of the things that was noted is those job descriptions and we gave you the job descriptions that are currently held by HR for those positions. We did realize that those need to be reviewed and restructured and rewritten to provide more oversight on what the positions are actually doing now. So it lists an appraiser in there, we have assessors. But during the interviews it was the opinion of several staff that we needed what they call full measure and lister which is not an assessor, but that is the person that goes out and reviews and looks around and does measurements on houses. That is something that we've had in the past that we do not have now. I think as we look for an improvement plan, we will certainly have to look at the staffing levels and are they adequate? But more further investigation would be needed on that.

Alderman Tencza

I just would like to make a couple of follow up comments, not really a question but first, just to say we've lost a number of these positions for reasons over the years and even not doing the full measure and list, you know, every time we do a full measure and list we take away positions from other parts of City Government and \$1

million and \$1.5 million dollars could be how many teachers or policemen and fire fighters that we are not funding for that year as well? I mean that is something we all could consider here on the Board as we go forward. And then I know this is probably not going to happen any time soon but I would hope that, and it is probably an executive function of the Mayor's Office, that if it is a policy if at some point the policy of the City is that we are going to go and seek administrative warrants to go into people's houses, I would hope that would be a broader discussion. I for one would be very much against that unless it is a worst case scenario.

Attorney Bolton

So you want me to tell you about the ones I've already done.

Alderman Dowd

Just a realtor, the MLS presumably has good data, because realtors check tax maps and go in to City Hall and Town Halls and check the data so the data is pretty good. I wouldn't go by the write-ups because there are a lot of English majors that are also realtors that are trying to make it sound like Taj Mahal. And the pictures they always take a ton of pictures and use the best ones, but it would give you, the MLS would give you the exact measurements. I mean today realtors use lasers to do measurements to they are pretty accurate, to within less than an inch. So it is a piece of information that if the assessing department wanted to, could at the time of sale, take the MLS sheet, put it in the file. The MLS also lists the former sales prices and year built and all these other pieces of information that would assist an evaluation to some degree. I wouldn't rely 100% on it but it gives you a pretty good start, especially if they are not letting you in the house.

President Wilshire

Anything else before we open up for public comment? Ok I am going to open up for public comment. If you'd like to come to the microphone and state your name and address for the record. The first person signed up is Michael Ortolano.

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Ortolano 41 Berkeley Street. I just wanted to take a few minutes to address the Mayor's opening comments which confused me. The meeting this morning that I sat through in part of the assessing, of the assessor's board, handed out information regarding the number of abatements filed this year. The numbers are significant, there's 376 abatements, not the 200 that were mentioned during your opening comments. That is 44% higher than the last update year in 2013 and it almost 20% higher than previous update in 2009. So I was confused by the statement because it seemed to be positioning the issue as less of a significant issue than I think the numbers would reflect.

A big part of this issue is the integrity of the numbers and the numbers are one as you look deeper at it, you know there seems to be arbitrary methodologies that are used and I think that is pretty much flushed out in the management audit that was done. The procedures and policies aren't really in place to support having a strong level of confidence that the assessments are equitable and the quality of the work product is good. So I just wanted to highlight that.

I wanted to highlight to this organization that a lot of it is about the numbers. I feel like you know there are lots of generalizations that are made with regard to the Assessing Department and I do hope that the next wave of this gets to look more closely at the work product to make sure that gets converging on what should be a methodology that can be transparent, can be displayed to the community. An ideal scenario, a tax payer that has the interest and the time should be able to use the same method that the assessors are using to arrive at the same conclusion. So that's my only comment. Thank you.

Michael O'Connor Yes thank you, Michael O'Connor, I am at 42 Berkeley Street. So this morning I also attended the Board of Assessor's meeting and I had one simple question which led to a follow on but it was basically about the two major findings which are the ineffective management of the assessing department and a lack of internal procedures. I asked a question about who was accountable, I was actually glad to hear the Aldermen bring up, I think it's Section 42 in the Charter, because when I read that and that was one of the reasons for my question. It was hard to understand who was responsible for this. The Board gave a direct answer to the first one, was the Chief Assessor. But then the follow on question I had was – Well then who is accountable for the oversight. And there it got a little more murky and correct me if I'm wrong, the Attorney, the CFO, and Ms. Kleiner were there, but I think they clearly weren't. And so I think that partially answers the question. There didn't seem to be any sense of accountability on their part and they said the CFO would have been the person that they felt was accountable.

And then there was some vague comment that I didn't quite follow about there was some small supervisory responsibility of the State. I think this issue of accountability, I'm not just a crank about it, or I guess I am a little bit of a crank about it. But it is really important. You know without, you know all organizations have some way of dealing with this accountability, whether you are the Fire Department, the Police Department, I mentioned the Navy, we all know when you are held to account for when things go wrong in the night. Here things went wrong I think it is fair to say, even if you are, you know, reading between the lines. There was ineffective management and it persisted for quite a long time. So who was aware of that? And I guess the answer was – Well maybe the CFO but then I really it made, because I was sort of put in my place this morning because when the Attorney was saying – Well these are personnel matters. I'm not trying to get into your personnel matters, I'm trying to really understand your organizational chart and who should feel responsible and accountable for what went wrong.

Because this wasn't one rogue employee over a space of a week and suddenly somebody finally said – Oh hey this has been persistent conduct for a while. And before you know, there needs to be trust as you move forward to make it right now. So what I am hearing is that the CFO and this is not meant to be personal I'm sure he is a fine fellow and he does a great job and I heard all the great work he does in finances. And the answer I heard tonight sort of makes sense, it was the answer that might have been reasonable this morning except I guess I was prying into personnel matters.

But the answer is that the man didn't have enough time to do his job. But here we are, we are moving forward now, ok and we supposed to trust that the people who are going to make this right are the same people who don't have time. The CFO didn't have time to oversee the management issues in the office that he's responsible for, but now he has time to fix it? I don't know, I think it is going to be really hard to gain trust in that position.

The second thing that I wanted to bring up was something that I heard this morning that keeps coming up and it is about the Assessing Department and there seems to be this conflation between the Customer Service part of the Assessing Department and the output of the Assessment Department, which is fair and equitable assessments. You know having had to become more familiar with what goes on in assessing and having gone down there a number of times since last summer when the letters arrived I can tell you anecdotally from my perspective, the customer service people are great. They are wonderful. Today I hear the Chair of the Board of Assessors seems like a nice fellow but he's saying – But aren't the people really nice down there. Aren't we all happy? It's as if you are going to some place to get surgery and the surgeon was incompetent but you had some nice treatment up front and that's all well and good.

I just don't understand this obsession with trying to say – Yeah hey they've got great customer service, they are great people, they are great underpaid public servants. No one is disputing that, what we are disputing is are we arriving at fair and equitable assessments that people have confidence in?

The last thing that I wanted to say well actually two more things, I'm sorry. One is there is, and I hear we have a Realtor here and I know it's very controversial but there are automated evaluation methods that industry is

exploring. It may be a little too cutting edge for this City but you know people are looking at ways that they don't, you are not the only, or our assessors aren't the only people who can't get in houses. But you know other people in industry for property evaluation can't get in there either but they somehow figure out how to make automated methods that are reasonably accurate. And I think if it was any more accurate than what we are seeing today that would be a step forward.

And lastly the last thing and this was brought up by Ms. Kleiner and I think was a very good point was seeing customer input where the customer, you were referring to us, the citizens, right? And what I would just suggest to you in a respectful manner, one thing besides figuring out how to send out surveys to people is maybe to reasonably accept input from concerned citizens. There may only be a few and I think it is very notable we don't have to mention names, of people who have put in a lot of work and a lot of effort and have been really treated, I think, disrespectfully in a lot of respects because they are bringing a message nobody wants to hear.

Yes, everybody is happy with the customer service down there. We are asking about the assessments. Thank you.

Lori Ortolano Lori Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. Before I start, and maybe we can't do this, but there is a lady here and it is her first time at the meeting and she just whispered to me she'd like to talk but she didn't sign up on the sheet. So I don't know if you can accommodate her, but I just wanted to say that before I ended.

I'd like to address the Mayor's comments first. I know you believe very strongly that the KRT numbers and this revaluation that we just did produced equitable assessments. I really am pretty opposite you on this issue. I feel that we have a lot of inequity in the City and that KRT's work fell very short, really because the data that they used was not that good. I can tell you from my perspective living in an old neighborhood, I think the old neighborhoods are particularly bad. And we have a lot of old neighborhoods around Nashua. And I think there is a lot of disparity in equity. I think there are a lot of people living in some of those homes that don't even understand the disparity that is there.

So I don't like the idea of waiting 5 years, I think it is too long. I'm not even certain how well your ratio, your median ratio is going to hold over that time to give you the 5 years to take that time, especially if the real estate market keeps cruising along with some forward motion. So that is one thing.

Secondly, I've been at the last two Board of Assessor's meetings and I have to be honest, they look pretty darn disappointing. It is really tough for me sitting there. The meeting I went to two weeks ago had a little bit of a show going on for me because at that point the number of abatements filed had been just over 100 so the Chair and the Ex-Chief were commenting on how satisfied the public is – we've only got about 100 abatements in and wow, you know, Lori that is a real good indicator that everyone is very happy, everything is good. You know people are not upset at all, what are you talking about? And I wasn't on the agenda so I couldn't speak to that, but I walked out really disappointed. I talked to some industry experts who said to me – that's not an indication of satisfaction at all and should not be used. A low number of abatements can actually mean that you are pretty undervalued in your City which I agreed with that.

But now a week goes by and the abatements jump almost to 400. So this week we go into the Board of Assessors and they are no longer saying – Oh wow we hardly have any abatements everything is fine. But what they are saying – Well let's conduct a poll and the Chair is saying you know what? Kim and John asked about the community and has there been many complaints in their survey and their survey came up and people seem pretty happy overall people seem pretty happy with the office. I agree with that. I've been down there a lot. Your front end interface is outstanding. The three women at the front are outstanding, they do a wonderful job. Every one of them is professional, courteous, makes you feel welcome. But that is not an indication that the assessments are good and what is going on behind the wall. And so for the Chair to sit there today and say – Well you know what, we are not hearing any complaints, everyone is pretty happy, that's a pretty good indication we don't have a problem. You know, I have to sort of endure that for Round Two. And I think we are missing the point.

So I know Mr. Bolton highlighted the experience of our Board of Assessors, I have some serious reservations about what is going on in there. I really do. I am so glad you brought up the Charter, the Board of Assessors does not seem to know where they fit in that Charter. One of their Mission Responsibilities in the web site it to review all policy and make certain all policy is implemented. When I saw them 3 months ago, I came with their Mission Statement and I read to them – your job is to implement policy, review policy, make certain it is happening. And at that point they looked at the Chief and said – Do we have any policies? And he kind of shrugged and went – I don't know we are looking into that. And then we started talking about the need for a policy on how to judge and grade fixtures. That was in November.

I have been very patient, I have sat back very quietly for 4 months and said nothing about this because I have been watching, where is that policy. And that's a pretty simple policy to outline just to establish some standards among all the assessors. So November goes by and here we are March and I know our Chief left, but through this entire timeframe, no policy ever came forward, no first read to the Board of Assessors, no second read to the Board of Assessors, no asking by the Board of Assessors – Hey where is the policy on this? They don't seem to even understand that they need to be calling out for that. So I have some serious reservations and when I go to those meetings I usually come out of it with a pretty good headache. And there is a lot of work to do because I don't think they understand what their role is and the Chair, you know, he's the one who pushed me to the State to the Commissioner Lindsey Stepp.

When I called the Commissioner and got her on the phone, she was like – Well wait a minute, you know, you have a problem with the Chief coming to work, that really doesn't fall on my plate, that's on your plate, you pay the guy. You know there is some stuff you are supposed to be doing. My Board of Assessor is like no, no, no, that is not on us. We are not covering that, go up to the State. So right now even between the State and the Board of Assessors, I am not certain what our role is. But I can tell you that our Board doesn't feel like they are tied to this position at all and I think they are missing something here.

With regard to the position and the elimination of the Chief, I have a major concern. Mayor Donchess you mentioned that we have somebody within now in a supervisory capacity, I was more or less assured by you today Kim that we were not promoting anyone from within, nothing was being established that way. I hope that is true because I have serious reservations given the report about taking staff within and promoting anyone because there is a total lack of training. One of your commercial assessors has only been doing commercial for 2 years; one of your residential has only been doing residential for 2 years. For those people you've had a massive lack of oversight for the 3 ½ years that the Chief has been there, so they are not well-trained in my book at all with oversight and work. And then you've got the whole communication problem internally and then you've got massive standards issues among the assessors that have experience in general.

So I get pretty distraught to think that we have somebody capable within of promoting. I also share the same concerns Mr. O'Connor expressed. You know we haven't had the time, the CFO, even you Kim, have pretty busy jobs, all-encompassing jobs to now be down in that Assessing Office defining the direction and what needs to be done concerns me. I feel we need an Assessing Expert. Not for nothing but they are not assessing experts. And the fact that we are eliminating the Chief, Angelo Marino was a Chief, was a GIS Director and I think at one point a part-time IT guy and he sat in the Assessing Office and he wore all three hats. And when the IT piece kind of disappeared he wore two hats. So I don't know where this person is going to sit but I think and Angelo was here from 1996 until he left in 2016 and then you brought in John so you had the better of 23 years, you've had a Chief. It's a recognized position in the State.

So the concept that Donnalee got rid of the Director position, we still had a Chief, we've had a Chief for a long time. So I really question, and the City has grown and the parcels of land have grown and the number of properties have grown. Can we really run without one, do we really not need one? So I hope you think a little bit about that because that is a reservation I have and I think you need to bring in help now to figure out how you are going to define how that group operates in a true assessing form.

Now I don't think we are talking enough about some of the issues, the software stuff is great, you are nailing that, you are on the right page. I think we can't forget that all of this software stuff has to generate an interface for the public to be able to access what we would like to access. Please don't forget about us, property cards, MLS stuff, sales searches so we can do better abatements. But your assessors, when we talk about permits, you know the bottom line, I think we are missing a good number of permits, we are just missing them, we don't go. Ok? So that's a problem. MLS adjusting, you know, we are missing a bunch of homes on MLS adjusting, I don't care if you put a little 8 in the column the 8 is there and you flip the card over and nothing is written. And it may be that there was nothing to change, but there should be something there. I can tell you when I look at the MLS pictures, I go – Oh we should've changed stuff. It just looks like we threw an 8 in a column and never really looked at the pictures. And how we use those pictures, you know that I have a serious reservation about the sales chasing issue. And I think we have been doing that type of assessing strongly on sold properties that we have quantitative and we have qualitative data we can look at and we are being way too hard on the qualitative data. And we are changing those sold properties more aggressively than we are on permitted work and we are not even doing it to all sold properties, we are doing to select. That's not acceptable to me.

Now right now my observation is they are not MLS correcting houses at all, there is quite a slew of them that have been sold since November that all have needs review in the column and they are not using the pictures they are not doing anything. I don't know if they gun-shy, I don't know if they are holding back but some of them; I'll give you an example are homes that in the past they would correct that, but I think they got to sit there and not correct. They have a home that is totally rebuilt, remodeled, permits pulled, addition put on, gutted, they go in in April and they go in with a clean card and they re-assess the whole property, it's all re-done which is what they had to do, it's like a new build. They reassess it, they do it just fine, they do their work the way they are supposed to, I go down, I can see it, it's perfect, it is stapled. They come up with an assessment for this property, \$470,000.00. Then six weeks later it goes on the market, it has stayed one the market and it sold in December, ok? What does it sell for? \$560. Alright? The assessment and the price are off. Now it has a "needs review" stamp on it. It has a "needs review" for 3 months. In my opinion, you don't touch that. You're done. You looked at the property, you ran your model, your model produced evaluation, that's how your model works. What it tells me is that your model isn't very good because your permit tables haven't been updated, because your square footage build for new construction isn't that good or additions. But that's what your model is.

So if you go to that house now based on the sale price and you say – Oh the year 2000 build I put on that old house, I'm going to make it 2010 now and I'm going to change the 3 bathrooms to excellent from good; and I'm going to change kitchen to excellent. And I can drive up another \$40,000.00 or \$50,000.00 grand out of that. You are only doing that because of the sales price. Stop. To me you did the best you could because that's what your model showed. Because if that house hadn't sold, and that house had somebody living in it and they had walked in and done that card, that would be the assessment, that would really be the assessment for the person living there. So you have to be careful how you use the sales data. And we need a lot of retraining on that. I think that is very, very important.

I know there is more in my head and I am tired and I think you are too so I am going to stop here. I appreciate the work that's been done, I really do. But I don't want to lose sight of some of the important stuff going on there when we are creating valuation. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Thank you. You can speak, name and address for the record please?

Laura Colquhoun My name is Laura Colquhoun, I live at 30 Greenwood Drive in Nashua. I am going to preface it by saying I am not a public speaker. However I do want to say I thank you very much for explaining the permits. I now realize how Nashua failed me. I moved in here and I am doing an abatement but that's beside the point. I had a gas leak for 4 years and called in 3 plumbers they couldn't find it, finally had the utility company come in and they realized it was a cracked pipe underneath the water heater. Not happy about that.

I will say that number one I appreciate the fact that you said that people in the assessing department have been very patient. But I think you people also have to realize that Nashua residents have been very patient. I've only lived here 5 years and have never ever gotten involved in this until I got my last bill. And then I'm looking over things and saying you know I'm coming to a meeting about this audit and I have to tell you, I'm very disappointed because it is not what I thought the audit would be about. Because I think we all knew the Chief Assessor was very rude because I called him once and he told me that if I didn't like the way Nashua did things, I should move. I am now reviewing what is on the web site and I have to be honest, most of it, you go from one portal to another portal, you are missing blocks and everything else, I am finding whole streets that have absolutely no land value. That to me is a problem. And more importantly I'm going over now, I just took my block and my block, just the land ranges from \$5.37 to \$9.37. That's a problem to me. Why am I paying more money than the guy 3 houses down from me for the same piece of land? I assume that this audit was going to look at the problems within the Assessing Department as far as the garbage that they have on the web site. And I am a little upset about it because I even looked around and believe it or not, Sky Meadow is paying .19 cents a square foot and I'm paying \$8.66 and I want to know why? And if you look around there is a street, Bud Way near the airport, no one is paying any land on it.

So you people are letting the residents of Nashua pay for all these other firms to be here and not pay any land? I think that is totally unacceptable. I will be getting letters out tomorrow, I have 5 streets that do not have any land assessment on. The one over on Bud Way, \$5,500,000.00 to buy that piece of land and they are not paying any taxes. What is it? But I expected you people to look more at the garbage that was on the web site and to find out why, on a short block, our property, our square foot is going from \$5.00 to \$9.00. I'm sorry if I sound mad but I'm looking over these numbers and I am a novice at this. I have never been involved in real estate, you know, I got my bills, I paid them. But I'm looking at some of this stuff and I can't believe it. And I am getting into now the depreciation. You know from 2005 to 2018 we should all have the same depreciation, whether it is 10%, 15% or 30%. I've looked at like 6 properties, somebody is 35, somebody is 20, somebody is 6, somebody 4. There is something wrong here. I mean aren't we all supposed to be treated fairly and at the same rates? I'm sorry guys but that's how I feel. I am very upset because I just can't believe – we all knew, I mean you had to be a moron not to know that there was a problem in the Assessing Department, OK?

My listing said complete reno they forgot to say it was complete reno with used equipment but if I had an inspector there maybe I wouldn't have had to block off my basement for 4 years and not go down there because of the gas leak. But Nashua failed me because they got a permit on the house but nobody checked anything and I spent the next 4 years correcting wiring and everything else just to get it up to standard. Sorry.

President Wilshire

Anyone else who is here to speak this evening? Ok seeing no one, do I have motion?

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Attest: Patricia Piecuch, City Clerk

Management Audit Report

for the Assessing Department

City of Nashua

March 1, 2019

Prepared by:

John Griffin, Chief Financial Officer

Kimberly Kleiner, Chief of Staff

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Objectives, Scope, Methodology of the Audit

**Chapter 2: Profiles of the Organization, Analysis of the
Organization Structure and Function**

Chapter 3: Observations and Opinions

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Major Recommendations

Appendix

Executive Summary

This is a final report on a Management Audit of the Assessing Department within the City of Nashua. This study was commissioned by Mayor Jim Donchess and was conducted from November 2018 through February 2019 by Chief Financial Officer John Griffin and Chief of Staff Kim Kleiner.

Specifically, Mayor Donchess directed the:

- Review of written and unwritten policies and procedures which are in effect in the Assessing Department and recommend any new or different policies and/or procedures which should be adopted and/or put into operation.
- Review and evaluation of the policies, practices and procedures related to the management of the Assessing Department and recommend improvements and changes.
- Review of the organizational structure and the staffing of the Assessing Department and make any reorganization or restructuring recommendations which would benefit the operations of the Assessing Department in particular and the City of Nashua as a whole.

Note: This audit was not intended to review the practices or procedures used by KRT Appraisal, an independent contractor, who was responsible for performing the city's most recent Revaluation project. KRT Appraisal followed specific New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration, Municipal and Property Division rules and procedures to conduct the Revaluation. Due to concerns regarding the efficiency and capacity of the internal assessing department in early spring of 2018, the decision was made to recommend the hiring of an experienced appraisal consultant to the Board of Aldermen.

The major findings of the management audit are:

- 1) Ineffective management of the Assessing Department
- 2) Lack of internal policies to guide operations
- 3) Disparate software systems utilized by the department are not optimized
- 4) A full measure and list of all properties within the City has not been conducted since the early 1990s

Objectives, Scope, Methodology of the Audit

The scope of the Management Audit included the review of written and unwritten policies and procedures; review and evaluation of the policies, practices and procedures related to the management of the Assessing Department; and review of the organizational structure and the staffing of the Assessing Department. The Management Audit was not intended to review individual property cards and assessments. The statutory abatement rules and regulations guide that process.

In conducting the audit, one on one meetings were held with all of the members of the Assessing Department staff. The assessing calendar, internal procedures, various reports, and internal and external software applications were also reviewed. The audit did include the observation of updating AssessPRO records, review of various data contained within the system and some practices used by assessing staff.

Meetings and consultations were also held with the principals of KRT Appraisal, Patriot Properties and CDMSmith. KRT Appraisal most recently conducted the Revaluation. Patriot Properties is the company that developed, installed and maintains AssessPRO, the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system that contains all of the property records for the City. CDMSmith has assisted the City of Nashua in the development of its GIS operations for over two decades.

Profiles of the Organization, Analysis of the Organizational Structure and Function

Analysis Approach:

The organizational analysis focuses on the functional effectiveness of the assessing department's office and management structure.

Several documents were reviewed for this analysis, including:

- Department-level organizational chart (Appendix 1)
- Organizational assessments completed by State DRA
- Policies and administrative regulations
- Department operational procedures
- Job descriptions of all positions
- Board of Assessor meeting minutes, agendas, and Board packets
- Budget information
- Interviews with all departmental staff (Appendix 2)
- Consultation with Information Technology Staff
- Consultation with Patriot Systems, KRT Appraisals and CDMSmith

Departmental Functions as defined in city job descriptions:

Chief Assessor

Directs and participates in all activities related to the assessment of all property in the City. The incumbent directs four appraisers and four technical clerical staff to provide assessment/appraisal services, exemption and credit qualification, constituent services and public relations in the highest quality manner for the City. This individual is also responsible for establishing and administering customer-responsive, cost effective and high quality assessment standards and procedures that meet all applicable legal requirements.

- Accomplishes assessing staff results by communicating job expectations; planning, monitoring, and appraising job results; coaching, counseling, and disciplining employees; initiating, coordinating, and enforcing systems, policies, and procedures.

- Maintains staff by recruiting, selecting, orienting, and training employees; maintaining a safe and secure work environment; developing personal growth opportunities.
- Maintains organization's effectiveness and efficiency by defining, delivering, and supporting strategic plans for implementing best practices in assessing.
- Directs staff in the measuring, listing and valuation of property to maintain \$8.5 B assessment roll.
- Promotes transparency in assessment practices and directs outreach and public information program to educate the public and elected officials.
- Educates staff in the procedures and policies necessary to conform with state law as it pertains to the assessment of property and application of exemptions and credits.
- Directs appeals and litigation for the local and state level abatement process.
- Recommends assessing strategies, policies, and procedures by evaluating organization outcomes; identifying problems; evaluating trends; anticipating requirements.
- Accomplishes financial objectives by forecasting requirements; preparing an annual budget; scheduling expenditures; analyzing variances; initiating corrective action.
- Maintains quality service by establishing and enforcing organization standards.
- Maintains professional and technical knowledge by attending educational workshops; reviewing professional publications; establishing personal networks; benchmarking state-of-the-art practices; participating in professional societies.
- Contributes to team effort by accomplishing related results as needed.

Assessor III

- **Field Work:** Organizes information based on building permit activity and assignments from Chief Assessor and Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV. Assists Chief Assessor/GIS Manager and Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV in supervising data verification of all City properties.
- Assists in training of Appraisers and Data Collector.
- Drives to subject sites; draws detailed sketches and calculates square footage of property improvements; performs interior inspections; records list of pertinent structural characteristics; evaluates quality and condition of subject properties; determines models, styles, story heights, records visit history, performs site inspections and evaluation of new lots and subdivisions. Properties inspected include new construction, building permits, and current transfers.
- **Valuation of Real Property:** Calculates property values utilizing appraisal software; analyzes market influence to surrounding neighborhoods of environmentally sensitive or impacted sites. Estimates value utilizing income approach and mass appraisal techniques. Correlates value estimates into logical conclusion and presents in orderly fashion utilizing ADMINS appraisal software and other computer applications.
- Conducts research to include but is not limited to: Registry of Deeds, banks, brokers, buyers, sellers, MLS, appraisers, etc. to establish ownership histories and determine validity of "arm's length" transactions.

- Interviews taxpayers to determine condition of property at time of sale. Analyzes income statements to determine trends in market and validity of reported income. Defines problem areas if inequitable taxation; suggests corrective measures; implements corrective measures.
- Abatements and Appraisals: Processes requests for abatement of taxes; researches and evaluates concerns submitted by taxpayers; makes recommendations to the Chief Assessor Manager and the Board of Assessors whether or not to abate taxes based on complaints of inaccurate measure and/or listing. Reviews comparable sales, equitable valuation of similar properties, appraisals, cost factors, and other pertinent valuation data. Appraises property as necessary for defense of assessment (appraisals require thorough understanding of sales, cost and income approach to value). Prepares and presents cases for Board of Tax and Land Appeals. Interfaces with Chief Assessor/Administrative Specialist III/CSR, Legal/Planning/ Building/IT Division, Taxpayers, Attorneys, Appraisers, Tax Representatives, Public:
- Answers questions; composes written correspondence; provides information regarding real property; interprets property record cards; arranges appointments; collects and organizes submitted data; answers telephone inquiries; reports to and updates Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV on status of all projects.
- Prepares preliminary value estimates for internal planning purposes of the administration.

Appraiser II

- Performs assessment and appraisal of real property in accordance with pertinent legislation, code, and ordinances.
- Field Work: Organizes information based on building permit activity and assignments from Chief Assessor/GIS Manager and the Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV. Assists Chief Assessor/GIS Manager and the Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV in supervising data verification of all City properties.
- Assists in training of Appraiser I and Data Collectors.
- Drives to subject sites; draws detailed sketch and calculates square footage of property improvements; performs interior inspections; records list of pertinent structural characteristics; evaluates quality and condition of subject properties; determines models, styles, story heights, records visit history, performs site inspections and evaluation of new lots and subdivisions. Properties inspected include new construction, building permits, and current transfers.
- Valuation of Property: Calculates property values utilizing computer software. Reviews base rates and other cost factors used to maintain equitable assessments of properties; analyzes market influence to surrounding neighborhoods of environmentally sensitive or impacted sites. Research: Research includes but is not limited to: Registry of Deeds, banks, brokers, buyers, sellers, MLS, appraisers, etc. to establish ownership histories and determine validity of "arm's length" transactions; interviews taxpayers at site to determine condition of property at time of sale; defines problem areas of inequitable taxation; determines/suggests corrective measures; audits equitable assessments through statistical testing and mathematical computations using ADMINS, spreadsheet applications and other calculating devices.
- Abatements and Appraisals: Processes requests for abatement of taxes; research and evaluates concerns submitted by taxpayers; makes recommendations to the Chief Assessor/GIS Manager and the Board of Assessors whether or not to abate taxes based on complaints of inaccurate measure and/or listing. Reviews comparable sales, equitable valuation of similar properties, appraisals, cost factors

and other pertinent valuation data. Appraises property as necessary for defense of assessment (appraisals require thorough understanding of sales, cost and income approach to value). Prepares and present cases for Board of Tax and Land Appeals. Interfaces with Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV and Chief Assessor/GIS Manager, Assessing Administrative Specialist III/CSR, Legal/Planning/ Building/IT Division, Taxpayers, Attorneys, Appraisers, Tax Representatives, Public:

- Answers questions; composes written correspondence; provides information regarding real property; interprets property record cards; arrange appointments; collect and organizes submitted data; answer telephone inquiries; report to and update Chief Assessor/GIS Manager on status of all projects.
- Assists in preparation of proper forms for filing of taxpayer exemptions.
- Assessment Processing: Analyzes subdivisions and combinations for resulting assessment Change, processes religious and charitable exemptions, processes current use applications and change of use penalties.

Appraiser I

- Responsible for assessment and appraisal of real property in accordance with pertinent legislation, codes, and ordinances.
- Field Work - Measure and List : Drives to subject sites; draws detailed sketch and calculates square footage of property improvements; performs interior inspections; records list of pertinent structural characteristics; evaluates quality and condition of subject properties; determines models, styles, story heights, records visit history, performs site inspections and evaluation of new lots and subdivisions. Properties inspected include new construction, building permits, and current transfers.
- Valuation of Real Property: Calculates property values utilizing VMS-ADMINS and City computer software. Performs data entry of property factors. Updates of assessments due to property changes.
- Research and Ratio Studies: Research includes but is not limited to: Registry of Deeds, banks, brokers, buyers, sellers, MLS, appraisers, etc. to establish ownership histories and determine validity of "arm's length" transactions; interviews taxpayers at site to determine condition of property at time of sale; defines problem areas of inequitable taxation.
- Abatements and Appraisals: Processes requests for abatement of taxes; research and evaluates concerns submitted by taxpayers; makes recommendations to the Chief Assessor/GIS Manager and the Board of Assessors whether or not to abate taxes based on complaints of inaccurate measure and/or listing. Reviews comparable sales, equitable valuation of similar properties, appraisals, cost factors and other pertinent valuation data. Appraises property as necessary for defense of assessment (appraisals require thorough understanding of sales, cost and income approach to value).
- Interfaces with Deputy Manager/Appraiser IV and Chief Assessor/GIS Manager, Assessing Administrative Specialist III/CSR, Legal/Planning/ Building/IT Division, Taxpayers, Attorneys, Appraisers, Tax Representatives, and the Public.
- Answers questions; composes written correspondence; provides information regarding real property; interprets property record cards; arranges appointments; collects and organizes submitted data; answers telephone inquiries; reports to and updates Chief Assessor on status of all projects.

- Assists in preparation of proper forms for filing of taxpayer exemptions.

Assessing Admin Specialist III/CSR

- Responsible for providing the leadership, knowledge, supervisory abilities, and skills necessary to oversee the data management and administrative functions of the Assessing Department and to oversee and maintain a highly professional customer support function both over the counter and over the telephone.
- Assessing Department Data Management and Administration:
 - Supervises, prioritizes and delegates assessing administrative workload
 - Acts on and resolves administrative staff concerns/problems
 - Evaluates performance of Data Management/Administrative Team and writes appraisal reviews
 - Administers the requests and production of special reports regarding assessing system data
 - Produces generic City database and sales reports
 - Writes administrative procedures and maintains departmental procedures manual
 - Acts as liaison with IT Division regarding enhancements to the assessing computerized system
 - Supervises continued auditing of the exemption program
 - Supervises the processing and tracking of abatements
 - Supervises the administration of the yearly assessing update program
 - Assists in resolving budget preparation concerns
 - Reviews/approves weekly department payroll
 - Approves requests for purchase and maintenance of equipment
 - Supervises preparation of sales assessment sheets for Department of Revenue Administration
 - Participates in meetings with other departments to resolve inter-department issues
 - Resolves issues regarding the day to day administrative operations of the Assessing Department
 - Coordinates the training and cross-training of the Administrative staff
- Customer Service/Support
 - Maintains a consistently high level of customer support at the service counter and on the telephone through coordination of office coverage.
 - Provides personal and/or telephone assistance to taxpayers in resolving changes and/or concerns associated with the City of Nashua Assessing Department programs
 - Provides information to taxpayers regarding State Statutes

Communicates with outside organizations regarding the City of Nashua's assessing program

Assists taxpayers in initiating applications/changes associated with exemptions/credit programs

Assessing Admin Specialist II/CSR

- Responsible for initiating new account setup, processing account maintenance, processing all plans, quality control of deed transfers, providing information to GIS Technician, processing, maintaining and auditing exemption files, data entry of prescribed information utilized in assessment applications, research of abnormalities found in Assessing Department records, providing assistance to taxpayers in person or on the telephone and providing backup to other Administrative Specialists and Department Coordinator position.

- Assessing Administration:

Processes account maintenance generated by the Appraisers and GIS Technician

Reviews plans for accuracy

Initiates new account setup

Performs quality control on deed transfers and address changes

Expedites routine Department tasks through the knowledge of office information, data processing, storing, retrieving practices and procedures, and the use of standard office equipment and equipment maintenance/troubleshooting

Initiates correspondence to taxpayers regarding new ownership and/or changes in solar and handicapped exemption status

Participates in resolving issues regarding the day-to-day operations of the Assessing Department

Schedules, prioritizes, and manages workload

Maintains files of work done

Maintains document retrieval system

Utilizes Pictometry photos to locate changes to properties for which no building permit has been issued

Performs data entry for Appraisers

Processes audits and maintains tax exemption and credit files

Prints building permits and property cards and organizes files by street/map designation so files are ready to go for inspections by Appraisers for both residential and commercial building permits

Enters Appraisers visit history and corresponding notes

Adds improvements (deck, sheds, additions, etc.) for all updated property from Appraiser's visits

Prints updated property card for file or Appraiser inspection

Draws detailed sketch and calculates square footage of property based on Appraiser's physical inspection of property

Performs in-house inspection and/or examination of existing city record. Verifies data using

Uses pictometry and prints updated property card for file

Tracks and records possible work being done without building permit. Periodically supplies supervisor with updated list to notify Code Enforcement

Reviews paving on parcels in the City and makes adjustments to property record cards

Performs review of land adjustments due to access, location, etc.

Maintains and updates current use files

- Customer Service:

Provides personal and/or telephone assistance to taxpayers in resolving changes and/or concerns associated with the City of Nashua Assessing Program

Provides information to taxpayers regarding NH State Statutes

Assessing Administration Specialist I/CSR

- Responsible for processing all deed transfers, initiating correspondence to taxpayers regarding new ownership and/or changes in status, assisting taxpayers and others with all property inquiries at the counter and on the telephone, and providing backup to other Administrative positions. Also responsible for processing, maintaining, and auditing exemption files, data entry of prescribed information utilized in assessment applications. After processing of initial application and analyzing financial data submitted, responsible for recommendation of approval or denial of Exemption/Credit application and notification by letter to taxpayer

- Assessing Administration:

Prints and processes easements and deeds

Processes P-34

Interprets deed transfers for accuracy and legality

Reviews Appraiser Maps/GIS Maps for accuracy.

Initiates correspondence to taxpayers regarding new ownership and/or changes in status.

Processes "Notice to Towns and Cities" from the NH Superior Court

Corresponds with Taxpayers, Attorneys or Title Companies regarding errors on deeds.

Researches ownership issues with the Registry of Deeds and Superior Court/Probate Department

Assists GIS Technician regarding accuracy of Appraiser Maps

Maintains taxpayer name and address changes in applicable software database, currently AccessPro

Processes new Blind Exemption, Veteran's Credit, Elderly Exemption, and Handicapped Exemption

Application and verify current recipients are qualified for exemption/credits.

Analyzes financial data submitted to determine eligibility of the applicant.

Sends written correspondence to notify taxpayers regarding new approval and denial of exemption or credit.

Sends written correspondence to notify taxpayers of removal of exemption or credit due to new ownership or change in status of the exemption/credit recipient Inputs data from exemption applications into applicable database(s) for exemption to be reflected on property tax bill.

Audits and maintains tax exemption and credit files Maintains MS Excel spreadsheet for exemption/Credit approval, denials, additions, and removals for the tax year.

Provides support to the Appraisers including researching information at the Registry of Deeds, Department of Building Safety, the Planning Department, Legal Department, and by communicating with other cities and towns maintains assessing department files.

- **Customer Service:**

Provides personal and/or telephone assistance to taxpayers in resolving changes and/or concerns associated with the City of Nashua Exemption/Credit Programs

Provides information to taxpayers regarding NH State Statutes

Assists taxpayers in initiating applications/changes associated with exemptions/veterans credit program

Processes requests for copies of assessing documents and maps

Participates in researching and resolving issues regarding the day-to-day operations of the Assessing Department

Department Coordinator/Customer Service Representative (CSR), Assessing

- Position is responsible for the accounting functions of the Assessing Department. Reviews and balances daily value status reports. Administers the Board of Assessors meetings. Records, tracks, and processes requests for abatement. Responsible for processing payroll and personnel changes and purchasing requests. Forecasts, prepares, and administers the budget. Addresses customer inquiries and/or taxpayer concerns Resolves issues regarding the day-to-day operation of the department. Position is also cross trained for processing of deed transfers, initiating correspondence to taxpayers, processing plans, quality control of deed transfers, processing, maintaining and auditing exemption files, data entry of prescribed information utilized in assessment applications, providing assistance to taxpayers in person and via telephone.

- Reviews/balances daily value status reports; requests problem resolution
- Administers the Board of Assessors meetings: prepares agenda, attends meetings, records and publishes minutes of meetings, schedules appointments
- Records and processes municipal and perfected requests for abatement, responds to BTLA and Superior Court inquiries, tracks status, audits and maintains up to date and accurate files of cases
- Analyzes, troubleshoots and recommends improvements to abatement tracking system; confers with IT to implement programming changes
- Updates and maintains Assessing Department web page
- Expedites routine department tasks through the knowledge of office information/data/processing/storing/retrieving practices procedures, use of standard office equipment and equipment maintenance/troubleshooting
- Develops and designs internal forms
- Initiates requests for purchase, maintenance of equipment; verifies funds availability; authorizes payment of invoices, receiving copy of purchase orders, etc.
- Provides backup to other administrative positions
- Participates in resolving issues regarding the day to day operations of the Assessing Department
- Analyses tax exemption and credit applications for qualifications and legitimacy
- Processes requests for information and administers invoice system
- Schedules, prioritizes and manages workload
- Works with minimal supervision and little verification
- Maintains files of work done
- Maintains document retrieval system
- Customer Service

Provides personal and/or telephone assistance to taxpayers in resolving changes and/or concerns associated with the City of Nashua Assessing Program

Provides information to taxpayers regarding NH State Statutes

Assists taxpayers in initiating applications/changes associated with exemption/veterans credit program

Processes requests for copies of assessing documents and maps. Tracks, records, and inputs payroll changes; processes staff personnel time sheets

Writes/updates procedures for position; assists in maintaining dept. procedures manual

Processes Personnel Action Forms

Processes A9-A12 forms

Performs miscellaneous investigative tasks

Assists in planning, forecasting, preparation, and final review of the department budget

Schedules and attends staff meetings. Prepares agenda and meeting minutes

Generates abatement status, financial, overlay and other reports

Attends staff, other meetings

Reconciles/remits treasurer's report, income funds to City Treasurer

Management Information Systems

ADMINS

Enter and process abatements- This would include entering the abatements as they are submitted or after the Board of Assessors approves or denies the abatement. Run exposure reports to recognize what the City's liability if approved. Once processed, the information is transferred to the Tax Collectors Office to process and issue refund checks including calculating interest to taxpayers. Enter and Remove Exemptions and Credits- including the Elderly, Disabled, Improvement to Assist Persons with Disabilities, Solar, Blind, School Dining/ Dormitory/Kitchen, Religious, Educational, Charitable and Veteran's Exemptions, Veteran's, Surviving Spouse and the All Veteran's Tax Credits to the qualified applicants account. This information is pushed through overnight from ADMINS to AssessPro to properly apply and exemptions and/or credits are applied to the applicants' property for tax billing purposes. Reports printed include abatement and their status (by year), Superior Court, BTLA and Board of Assessor Decision Meeting report, Abate and Compare report, TC abate for Tax Collector Office, elderly exemption recipients age report, etc.

ASSESS PRO

Used to maintain property ownership including current and prior owners, legal references for property sales (current and historical), sale price (current and historical), and any other pertinent information linked to the sale. Creating/Closing accounts based on new subdivisions, condo docs, new mobile homes, voluntary mergers, etc. Maintain a narrative description of the property that includes land acreage, number of units, year built, building square footage, number of baths, rooms and bedrooms, sketch of the building, any plan references, etc. Update property detail information including construction detail, interior and exterior information, special features/yard items, activity information, depreciation, sub area details, images (photo of building) and comments pertaining to the account. The information in AssessPro is used to send out Income and Expense forms to commercial properties to obtain income and expense information from commercial property owners. Information in AssessPro is used to send audit letters to exemption/credit recipients. Full property cards are available to the public and an unofficial property card is updated on the nashuanh.gov website. Entering abatements to match information entered into the ADMINS. Multiple reports are run and used to verify data. Those reports include sales, under construction, open building permits, vacant premium, current use, exemption/credits, building permit status, etc.

GIS

To check and verify the legal description in our records. We compare the information in GIS with the recorded plan and legal description to insure the property has the correct the dimensions and is being taxed for the correct land square footage. GIS/Pictometry to verify that what is on our property card is accurate. Outside building description, if any additions or work done without building permits, yard items (sheds, pools, free

standing decks, etc.) or special features (dormers, flue, chimney, etc.). Verify the information reported on the A-9 matches the use reported for the CH, RG and ED exemption.

CITY VIEW

City View is used to print building permits and organize them for assessors to inspect properties and add improvements listed on the permit to the property record card. Reports are run to track any building permits that indicate the permits have been paid but not marked as "Issued", permits with no issued date, voided/expired permits, work being done that doesn't require a building permit, verify if a C/O has been issued on a property, etc. The permit information is also filtered down from City View to AssessPro so the public can have access to limited information regarding building permits pulled on any property in question.

ACCOUNTS DOCUMENTS

In house programmed Visual Basic application. Using Adobe Acrobat and Autobookmark to create individual PDFS and split into appropriate folders.

PICTOMETRY

Used to view properties and check for abnormalities on the exterior information of the property. We compare the Aerial Photos with the information on the property card and if there was any work done without building permits or if the building permit was not issued we would pick up that item adding to the property card (additions, decks, pools, paved areas, lighting, etc.)

LAWSON

Used to enter invoices, payment authorizations, deposits for transactions purchase orders. Printing of reports including budget reports, exposure reports and payroll reports.

WEBPRO

Imports data from AssessPro at given intervals after billing. Make card data available on the web.

MUNIS

Verifies taxes and record date taxes were paid on a property for an abatement refund and calculating interest due.

INFOVIEW

Software used to convert regular AssessPro sketches to jpeg files which are viewable on the web.

Microsoft Office Package

Utilize Word and Excel to Mail Merge information from AssessPro to send audit letters to recipients of the elderly, disabled, veterans, and to assist persons with disabilities, solar and blind exemption/credits. We also use the programs to mail out sales, Trust and surviving spouse letters. Approvals and denial notices are also mailed out to all exemption/credit applicants using MailMerge. Mail Merge is also used to create labels to forward tax bills returned to us by the United States Postal Service.

External Sources:

Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds

Print deed to change ownership on properties that have sold. View recorded plans and legal description to verify parcel acreage and lot dimensions. Print Planning Board approvals recorded for an accessory dwelling units. Print any death certificates recorded or any other documents pertinent to property ownership.

Nashua Telegraph

Information from the Nashua Telegraph death list to confirm the passing of an individual to update our property records and remove any exemptions/credits. Our office contacts the surviving spouse to have them complete any necessary paperwork to retain the veteran's credit.

Edmunds/Kelly Blue Book

To determine the value of vehicles on an Elderly or Disabled Exemption.

9th Circuit Probate Court

We utilize the information on the legal probate notices to update information on a taxpayer that has passed away and lists the fiduciaries on the property record so future tax bills are mailed to the person in charge of the estate.

DRA Web Portal

This program is used in conjunction with the Department of Revenue Administration Staff to verify all sales listed in the Equalization Ratio Study. This information is used to determine what our equalization ratio is for a particular year.

Revised State Statutes/400 Rules

Site is used to research any laws/rules pertaining to assessing, exemptions and taxation.

Department of Revenue Administration

Used to download forms and instructions needed in our department. PA-29, PA-33, PA-30, Current Use and Excavation information, etc.

MLS/Zillow/Redfin/Trulia

Information is used to verify and update information on our property record card. This information is used to compare the current record and update any improves that have been made. We will also remove any items that are no longer physically on the property (shed, pool, deck, etc.) Data is used to verify the sale being qualified or unqualified based on bank owned, short sale, foreclosure, etc. Reviewing the MLS also gives us any rental/leasing information pertinent to commercial/rental properties.

Costar/LoopNet

Information is used to verify and update information on our property record card for commercial properties. This information is used to compare the current record and update any improvements that have been made.

Data is used to verify the sale being qualified or unqualified based on bank owned, portfolio sales, foreclosure, etc.

Radaris/Intelius

When working on the Ratio Study, these programs are used to help determine if Grantor and Grantee are related when reviewing.

Observations – Organizational Structure and MIS

Organizational Structure

The assessing department consists of two major functions which appear to operate separately from each other; the assessors, commercial and residential and the administrative staff.

The Chief Assessor is the manager of the department responsible for all functions and the day to day management of all assessors. The department includes two commercial assessors and two residential assessors. The supervisor of administrative staff manages the activities of all administrative staff including the processing of exemptions, abatements, deed transfers and customer service.

During the review of the organizational structure the following observations were noted:

- 1) Lack of consistent knowledge throughout the staff of the assessing process and functions within the department due to the separation of management between assessors and administrative staff.
- 2) Limited departmental communication. Lack of departmental staff meetings, limited knowledge of departmental goals and objectives and functions often operate independently.
- 3) Limited knowledge on potential improvements to the process or growth of the department. Limited interaction with other city hall departments and divisions.
- 4) Job descriptions are outdated and somewhat inaccurate, indicating lack of review of the internal functions for several years.
- 5) Absence of internal policies, internal training and personal growth opportunities.

Management Information Systems

During the review of the Management Information Systems the following observations were noted:

- 1) Data integrity is at risk due to the use of multiple data systems to support the same transactions.
- 2) Lack of efficiency due to data being entered in multiple systems.
- 3) Underutilization of the AssessPro system for exemptions and abatements; reliance on in-house programmed systems.
- 4) Increased costs in software maintenance due to multiple data systems.

Observations and Opinions

1) Ineffective management of the Assessing Department

- a. Lack of communications skills
- b. No analysis of how the department operates currently
- c. No recommendations to improve efficiency of operations
- d. No review of, or correction to inaccurate job descriptions

2) Lack of internal policies and procedures to guide operations

- a. Little to no internal training for assessors
- b. Too much reliance on national and state training programs/documentation
- c. No documented internal assessor training to minimize the subjective components of developing property assessments
- d. No new hire training process or Board of Assessors orientation/workshops
- e. State required training focuses on changes in rules and laws
- f. Development of policies for the use of sales information, MLS information, Building Permits, Effective Year Built (EYB) metric, property card changes

Note: A policy committee consisting of the HR Director, Chief of Staff, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Counsel has begun reviewing all city policies. Due to findings during the completion of this audit, a policy to effectively document employee daily travel has been written and will be submitted to the mayor for consideration.

3) Disparate software systems utilized by the department are not optimized

- a. Continued reliance on ADMINS software to link systems – need migration path to eliminate the use of ADMINS
- b. Not fully utilizing the modules in the AssessPRO CAMA system such as Exemptions/Credits and Abatements
- c. See the Appendix, Exhibit 3 for a software application diagram of all software systems used by the Assessing Department

Note: Due to findings during the completion of this audit and the need for an accurate assessment of the GIS function, the mayor's office has retained a consultant, CDMSmith, to evaluate applications across several

departments including, but not limited to, Assessing and GIS. A report is expected in late March/early April.

- 4) A full measure and list of all properties within the City has not been conducted since the early 1990's
 - a. A full measure and list is designed to update all property records
 - b. Last full measure and list conducted in 1991
 - c. Results in more reliable and equitable information
 - d. Can be conducted on a multi-year basis before the next Revaluation which is required every five years.

Conclusions and Major Recommendations

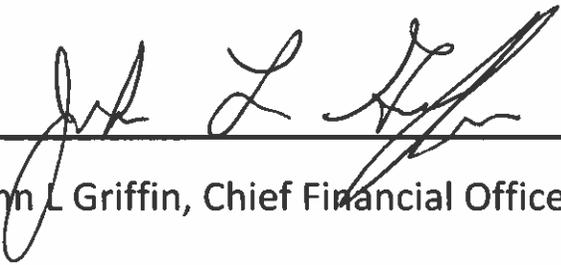
The Assessing Department Management Audit has enabled us to look beyond the operations of the Assessing Department as several other departments are involved.

Major Recommendations:

- 1) Re-establish the Administrative Services Director position reporting to the Mayor which will more effectively align internal serving functions within the city, including but not limited to, Assessing, GIS and Information Technology operations under one directorship.
- 2) Eliminate the Chief Assessor position – the Administrative Services Director will direct the operations of the Assessing Department and working with the Chief Financial Officer will be charged with a) observing the current operating state and b) creating and implementing an efficiency/improvement plan.
- 3) More effectively use the AssessPro software to conduct assessing business to include such items such as exemptions/credits and tax abatement processing. Consultation and technical assistance by Patriot Properties may be needed.
- 4) Create and/or update internal policies and procedures to reflect the current state of operations. Review functions within the department and update job descriptions as appropriate.
- 5) Implement a new mileage reimbursement policy and related procedures for all employees who use their personal vehicle for City business.
- 6) Develop integrated internal training programs for assessing and administrative staff. Conduct orientation and informational workshops with the Board of Assessors.
- 7) Reduce reliance on the City's legacy ADMINS software applications.
- 8) Invest in a full measure & list project over the next few years to update the property record data. This project will be completed in time to perform the next state mandated Revaluation.

- 9) In coordination with the full measure and list, transition from the use of the EYB to a grade/condition based method of assessment. While the EYB is an acceptable method used in assessing, the grade/condition provides for greater transparency and taxpayer comprehension. An outside, experienced consultant is recommended to assist the city with this transition.

Respectfully Submitted,



John L Griffin, Chief Financial Officer

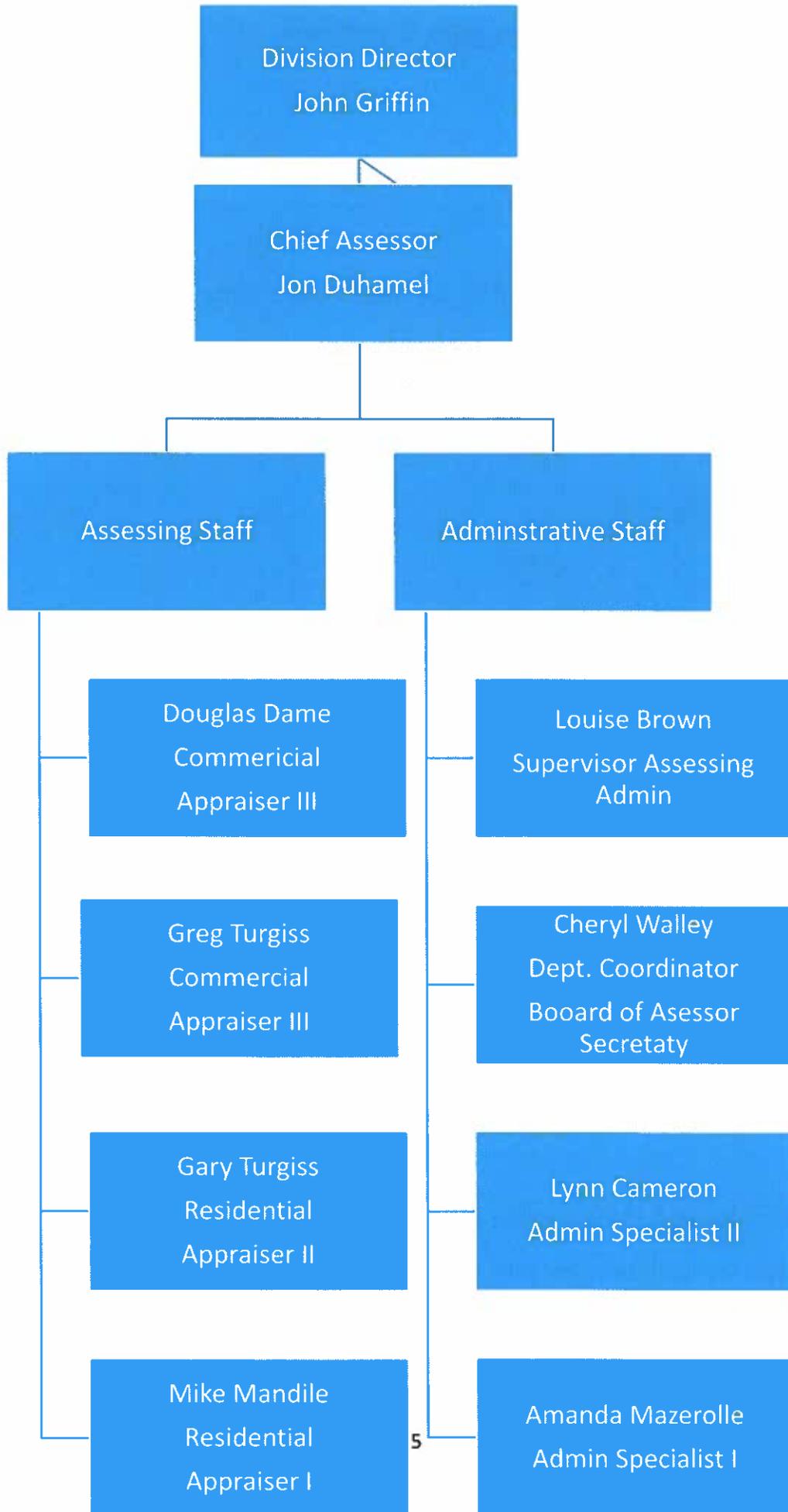


Kimberly Kleiner, Chief of Staff

Appendix

1. Organizational Chart
2. Organizational Interview Questions
3. Software Application Diagram

Department-Level Organizational Chart



Audit Interview Questions

What is your primary function within the department?

What are your primary objectives?

How (and who) are objectives determined? Do they change (time of year)?

How were you trained on objectives?

How is progress against these objectives measured?

What processes and/or tools are in place to help you these achieve objectives?

Is there evidence of progress?

How does data trends get analyzed?

How do employees communicate their improvement ideas?

How do preventive actions/ improvements and changes in policy get recorded?

Are statistical techniques used?

How are customer perceptions captured on a proactive basis?

How are training needs determined?

What kind of orientation training is provided when you were hired?

How were you made aware of the organization's mission, values, and measurable objectives?

How is the effectiveness of training evaluated? Was your training adequate?

What happens when training is determined to have been ineffective?

What's the most important thing about your job?

What's the hardest thing about your job?

What are some things you'd like to change about your job?

What resource would help you be more effective?

What should your manager know that he or she currently doesn't know?

If you were the manager here, what would you do differently?

How are customer complaints handled?

What's the largest complaint category?

What's being done about it?

Has the amount of complaints changed over time?

How are personnel trained in their roles in preventing complaints?

How are customers made aware of actions on their complaints?

Management Information System Data Flow Diagram

