

## **THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

### **What is the Assessor's role?**

*The Assessor is a State certified individual whose duties are to discover, list, and place a value on all taxable real and personal property in the Village, in a uniform manner. The Assessor is not involved in the billing or collection of property taxes.*

### **How does the Assessor value property?**

*Wisconsin Law requires property assessments to be based on fair market value. Estimating the market value of your property is a matter of determining the price a typical buyer would pay for it in its present condition. Some factors the Assessor considers are: what similar properties are selling for, what it would cost to replace your property, the rent it may earn, and any other factors that affect value. It is important to remember that the Assessor does not create this value, but rather interprets what is happening in the marketplace.*

### **What is market value?**

*Market value is defined as the amount a typical, well-informed purchaser would be willing to pay for a property. The seller and buyer must be unrelated, the seller must be willing, but not under pressure to sell, and the buyer must be willing, but not under any obligation to buy. The property must be on the market for a reasonable length of time, the payment must be in cash or its equivalent, and the financing must be typical for that type of property. If all of these conditions were present, this would be a market value, arm's-length sale.*

### **I've heard you develop values by computer. Is this correct?**

*Just as in many other fields, computers are useful in the assessment process. Assessors are trained to look for relationships between property characteristics and market value. By coding these characteristics and studying sales prices, assessors can estimate value by developing formulas and models. Computers are much faster and are capable of advanced analysis in this area. But despite these capabilities, common sense and assessor judgment are always required to verify assessments.*

### **Can the assessment on my property be changed even if the Assessor has not been inside my property?**

*To make a proper assessment on a building, it is desirable for the Assessor to see the inside and the outside of the property. The law requires that property be valued from actual view or the best information available. The Assessor physically inspects every property once every five years, inspecting approximately 20% of the properties each year. The Assessor keeps records on the physical characteristics of each property in the municipality.*

### **Will I be penalized if I don't let the Assessor in when an inspection is requested?**

*When an interior inspection is not allowed, the Assessor will attempt to update the records by looking at the property from the outside and using any other available information. To ensure an accurate assessment, it is to your advantage to allow the Assessor inside your property when an inspection is requested. By denying an inspection, you may lose the right to appeal your assessment to the Board of Review.*

### **What will happen to my assessment if I improve my property?**

*Generally speaking, improvements that increase the market value of a property will increase the assessed value. The following are typical items that will increase the assessed value of your property:*

- *Added rooms or garages*
- *Substantial modernization of kitchens or baths*
- *Central air conditioning*
- *Fireplaces*
- *Extensive remodeling*

### **Will my assessment go up if I repair my property?**

*Good maintenance will help retain the market value of your property. Generally, your assessment will not be increased for individual minor repairs such as those that follow; however, a combination of several of these items could result in an increased assessment.*

- *Repairing concrete walks and driveways*
- *Repairing original siding*
- *Replacing gutters and downspouts*
- *Replacing a hot water heater or furnace*
- *Weather stripping, screens, storm windows, doors*
- *Repairing porches and steps*
- *Replacing electrical fixtures*
- *Exterior awnings and shutters*
- *Patching, repairing or painting the interior or exterior*
- *Repairing or replacing roof*
- *Exterior landscaping including lawns, shrubbery, trees, flowers*

### **How can my assessment change when I haven't done anything to my property?**

*General economic conditions such as interest rates, inflation rates, supply and demand, and changes in tax laws, will influence the value of real estate. As property values change in the market place, those changes must be reflected on the assessment roll.*

### **Do all assessments change at the same rate?**

*There are differences between individual properties and between neighborhoods. In one area the sales may indicate a substantial increase in value in a given year. In another neighborhood, there may be no change in value, or even a decrease in property values. Different types of properties within the same neighborhood may also show different value changes. For example, one-story houses may be more in demand than two-story houses, or vice-versa. Older homes in the same area may be rising in value more slowly than newer homes. There are numerous factors to be considered in each property, which will cause the values to differ. Some of the factors, which can affect value, are location, condition, size, quality, basement finishing, garages, and many others.*

### **How do I know if my assessment is correct?**

*You should first attempt to decide for yourself what your property is worth. You may feel your property is worth less than the assessed value; but, would you sell it for the lesser amount? This can be done by looking at area sales, contacting appraisers, and comparing assessments of similar homes. Sales and assessment information is available from the Assessor's office and is available for public for review.*

### **THE APPEAL PROCESS**

**What if I don't agree with my assessment?**

*Talk with the Assessor during the Open Book session. During this informal session you can learn how your assessment was made, what factors were considered, and what type of records are kept regarding your property.*

Meetings with assessment staff are on an appointment basis for the following dates and can be scheduled by calling (262) 781-7813 or (262) 781-7889 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Monday, July 6 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, July 8 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, July 10 <sup>th</sup>
Monday, July 13 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, July 15 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, July 17 <sup>th</sup>
Monday, July 20 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, July 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Friday, July 24 <sup>th</sup>
Monday, July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday, July 29 <sup>th</sup>	Friday, July 31 <sup>st</sup>

**Scheduled appointments will be held at the Greendale Safety Center, 5911 W. Grange Avenue.**

The Board of Tax Review for the Village of Greendale will convene August 10, 2009 at 4:00 PM at Village Hall – 6500 Northway, Greendale WI 53129.

**After this review, if I still think the assessment is incorrect, what can I do?**

*The next step is to file an objection with the Clerk-Treasurer’s Office. Your objection must be written and filed prior to Board of Review adjournment with the Clerk-Treasurer. Forms are available in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office or on the Village website [www.greendale.org](http://www.greendale.org). The Clerk-Treasurer’s Office and the website also have copies of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue’s, Property Assessment Appeal Guide for Wisconsin Real Property Owners, which has additional information on how to appeal your property assessment.*

**All assessment appeal hearings will be scheduled by the Clerk-Treasurer. No assessment appeals will be heard unless scheduled by the Clerk-Treasurer. The Clerk-Treasurer will notify each objector of their hearing date and time by U.S. Mail.**

*When you receive your tax bill in December, it is too late to file an objection. Paying your taxes under protest does not constitute an assessment objection unless you have first filed an appeal with the Board of Review.*

**What is the Board of Review?**

*The Board of Review is a 3-member panel, consisting of the Village President, a member of the Village Board, and a citizen. It is the Board's duty to hear evidence by the taxpayer and the Assessor and to decide if the assessment is correct.*

**Does the Board of Review have the final say?**

*Appeals can be withdrawn or settled at any stage in the process. If you do not agree with the Board of Review decision, their decision can be appealed to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue or Circuit Court.*

**How do I appeal my assessment to court?**

*An appeal to the circuit court must be made within 90 days after adjournment of the Board of Review. The court will then make a decision based solely on the testimony that was presented to the Board of Review. When your case goes before the circuit court, the court will review the record that was created at your Board of Review hearing and make its decision.*

## **BOARD OF REVIEW**

*The Board of Review is responsible for correcting any assessment errors. It conducts its hearings in a manner similar to a court.*

*The Board of Review hearing dates are dependent on when the assessment roll is completed and the number of appeals brought to the Board.*

### **What evidence do I need to present to the Board of Review?**

*State law puts the burden of proof on the property owner to show that the assessment is incorrect. Keep in mind that your evidence must be strong enough to prove that the Assessor's value is incorrect. The courts have ruled that, "A difference of opinion amounting to 12 ½% of the value fixed by the assessor does not within the rule of cases cited warrant the court in saying that plaintiff is called upon to pay more than his just share of the tax" Krom v. Antigo, 220 Wis. 542 (1936). The Board will consider only relevant testimony given at the hearing. Stating that property taxes are too high is not relevant testimony. You should establish in your mind what you think your property is worth. The best evidence for this would be recent sales prices for properties similar to yours. The closer in proximity and similarity, the better the evidence. Another type of evidence is oral testimony from a witness who has made a recent appraisal of your property.*

### **You may wish to consider the following as you prepare for your hearing:**

*All evidence must be given as sworn oral testimony. You or your agent must attend the hearing if you wish your evidence to be considered. You should be prepared to explain to the Board what you think your property is worth and why.*

### **You must present evidence to support your estimate of market value. This evidence must be either:**

- *A recent sale of your property, if any. Bring written proof, such as a Closing Statement or Real Estate Transfer Return to substantiate the date and amount of the sale.*
- *Recent sales of similar properties in your neighborhood, if any. Bring written proof substantiating the amount and date of sale.*
- *Be prepared to show how recent sales of similar properties compare to your property if you present them as evidence; for example, style, square footage of house, lot size, number of rooms, condition, exterior wall constructions, etc. Written appraisals by qualified experts should be accompanied by oral testimony from those witnesses.*

*The Assessor's Office will present evidence relating to the market analysis performed on your property. You should contact the Assessor prior to the hearing to exchange information.*

*The Board will determine the market value of your property based on the evidence presented. A written notice of the Board's decision will be mailed to you after the hearing.*