

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is the 2014 tax rate?** \$30.33 per thousand

**What is the 2014 assessment ratio?** 95.4%

**What is the deadline for filing a tax abatement for 2014?** March 1, 2015

**When does the tax year start?** The tax year runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>

**What if I think my tax assessment is higher than the fair market value?** Taxpayers who believe their property is over assessed may apply for a property tax abatement. The time period to file for a tax abatement is AFTER the issuance of the final tax bill (generally sent out in November) and ON OR BEFORE the following March 1<sup>st</sup>. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to provide documentation in support of an abatement request. Forms are available at the assessing department or may be obtained on line at <http://www.nh.gov/btla/forms/index.htm>.

### **When is the appropriate time to request an abatement from the Town or Board of Tax and Land Appeals/Superior Court?**

Step one: The taxpayer must file the abatement application with the municipality by March 1, following final tax liability (December bill).

Step two: The municipality has until July 1 following the notice of final tax liability to deny or grant the abatement application.

Step Three: The taxpayer must file an appeal with the Board of Tax and Land Appeals or Superior Court after receiving the municipality's decision, but no later than September 1 following the notice of final tax.

### **Why perform a revaluation?**

State law requires a full value reassessment at least every five years. This is so that assessments reflect current market value, Statewide. As the real estate market changes (up or down), if assessments stay the same, this puts our assessments out of sync with the current market.

**When market value changes, naturally so does assessed value.** For instance, if you were to add a garage to your home, the assessed value would increase. However, if your property is in poor repair, the assessed value would decrease. The assessor has not created the value. People make value by their transactions in the marketplace. The assessor simply has the legal responsibility to study those transactions and appraise your property accordingly.

**How can I review my assessment?** The Assessing Department can assist you with any questions you may have and you can also look at your Property Assessment Record on line at [www.gorhamnh.org](http://www.gorhamnh.org).

**When is the tax rate set?** The New Hampshire Department of Revenue typically sets the tax rate in the fall.

**Why are types of properties valued differently?** All properties are valued at their full market value. Analysis of market sales will help in determining to what extent any differences in properties affect their value. Styles, size, condition and location may affect property values differently. Similarly, property type, rents, expenses and investment risk may affect commercial properties.

**I am thinking of adding an addition, a garage, a porch, a deck or other to my property, can you tell me what the change in property assessment might be?** Although, we try to accommodate all inquiries to this office, it is nearly impossible to forecast, with any degree of accuracy, these types of what-if scenarios. As such, we do not calculate hypothetical assessments.

**I just purchased my home and find the assessed value far exceeds what I paid, what can I do?** One way to determine if you are properly assessed is to take the purchase price of your home and multiply it by the assessment ratio for that year. (For 2014 this would be as follows: \$100,000 purchase price x 95.4 ratio = \$95,400 equalized assessment). If you find a significant difference (10% either side) between the purchase price and the equalized assessment, you may want to stop in the assessing office to review your property record card. It is also recommended that you review the abatement application process on the website.

**Will the Town receive additional taxes from conducting or not conducting property revaluations/property value updates?** No. The Town, School or County will not receive any additional tax revenue from any revaluations/property updates. By bringing property assessments to market value, a revaluation results in an equitable redistribution of each property owner's portion of the tax.

**How does a revaluation/property value update coincide with the budget process?** A revaluation of all properties is not affected by the budget process. Once the dollars for the municipality, schools, and county budgets have been approved by their respective governing bodies, the tax rate is determined by dividing the final budget dollars, to be raised from the property tax, by the community's total assessed valuation. Property taxes are, in effect, voter-approved spending.

**What types of exemptions or credits are available to taxpayers?** Elderly Exemption, Veterans Credit, Blind Exemption, Disabled Exemption & Improvements to Assist Persons With Disabilities are all available to taxpayers. Contact the Assessing Department for details and to apply.

**When is the deadline for applying for exemptions and tax credits?** All exemptions and tax Credit applications must be filed by April 15th preceding the setting of the tax rate. No applications will be considered after the tax rate is set for the year.

**When should I expect to receive my tax bill?** Tax bills are issued twice a year, usually in June and November. The June bill is typically ½ of the previous year total unless you have made physical changes to your property. The November bill reflects your "final value" for the year, the value determined after the sales analysis is completed.