



**Municipal  
Assessment  
Agency Inc.**

# ASSESSMENT NEWS

**Volume 11**

**February 2002**

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

## BOARD ELECTS CHAIRPERSON

The Agency's Board of Directors at the February 8, 2002 meeting in Mount Pearl elected Mayor Walwin Blackmore of Grand Falls-Windsor chairperson. The vacancy was created by the election of former Chairperson Randy Simms as President of the Federation. "I look forward to working with municipalities to ensure the continued strength of the property tax system," said Mayor Blackmore.



**Walwin Blackmore**

Mayor Blackmore is the NLFM representative on the Agency's Board. He has served on the Agency's Board of Directors since 1998 and most recently served as Vice-Chairperson of the Board and Chairperson of the Public Relations & Policy Committee.

Mayor Fred Best of Clarenville was selected as Vice-chairperson to replace Mayor Blackmore. Mayor Best is the Eastern municipalities director on the Agency's Board and has served on the Agency's Board since 1998. Mayor Best serves on the Agency Finance & Audit Committee and is a member of the NLFM Board of Directors.

## WELCOME YORK HARBOUR

York Harbour in the Bay of Islands has partnered with the Municipal Assessment Agency to implement a property tax system. The Agency's Western Regional Office will assess the community in the coming months with the first assessment roll to be delivered in September 2002. Council plans to impose a real property tax for the 2003 taxation year. Welcome York Harbour!

## FEE STRUCTURE REVIEW

The Finance & Audit Committee has received the draft report on the Agency's fee structure from staff. As announced during the Agency's Annual General Meeting in November, the Board directed staff to compile a detailed report on the Agency's fee structure. The Finance & Audit Committee is reviewing the draft report and will be seeking input from stakeholders prior to finalizing the report. "We believe it is important for the Agency to maintain equity and transparency in its fee structure," said Committee Chairperson Dennis Kelly. "The report will assist the Committee in discussing possible improvements with municipalities." A summary of the draft report is available for viewing on the Agency's website at [www.maa.nf.ca/whatsnew.asp](http://www.maa.nf.ca/whatsnew.asp)

The Committee will be consulting with municipalities on the impact of the proposed changes. An individualized summary will be forwarded to each municipality for their review and response.

## NEW URBAN DIRECTOR ELECTED

Councillor Lucy Stoyles of Mount Pearl has been elected the Urban representative on the Agency's Board of Directors. Councillor Stoyles was the successful candidate in a mail-in ballot to fill the position recently vacated by the new NLFM President Randy Simms.



**Lucy Stoyles**

Board Chairman Walwin Blackmore welcomed Councillor Stoyles to the Board "I appreciate the participation of all the candidates in the recent mail-in ballot and congratulate Councillor Stoyles on her election". The Board is representative of the Agency's stakeholders with six municipal representatives, two taxpayer representatives, two provincial government representatives and a representative from each of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Municipal Administrators.

Councillor Stoyles looks forward to representing the urban municipalities on the Agency's Board. She can be contacted by calling (709) 364-1916 or by email at [LStoyles@MTPEARL.nf.ca](mailto:LStoyles@MTPEARL.nf.ca)

## ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDED

In December, the legislature passed an amendment to the *Assessment Act*. Bill 24, An Act to Amend the Assessment Act added the following to Section 26:

**(6) Notwithstanding subsection (2), a council may, in its discretion, waive the payment of a fee required by the director under that subsection.**

The amendment enables council to waive payment of a fee in connection with an appeal to the Assessment Review Commission. This is consistent with the authority of the council, in its discretion, to grant relief to a ratepayer.

## ASSESSMENT CYCLE & BUSINESS OCCUPANCY TO BE REVIEWED

In response to concerns expressed by some municipalities, the Public Relations & Policy Committee will prepare a discussion paper on possible changes to the property tax system in the province. In particular, the paper will focus on the revaluation cycle and business realty assessments.

At present a new valuation is completed every three years. Should this cycle be reduced? What are the implications for the ratepayers and municipalities? Some people believe the business occupancy tax is cumbersome to administer and leads to lost revenue; do most municipalities feel this way? Should this form of taxation continue or would municipalities be better served by a business realty tax?

The Committee will seek advice from the NLFM and NLAMA during the development of the paper. A copy of the completed paper will be the basis of discussions with municipalities.

## TRAINING PROGRAM

Municipalities are reminded that the Agency has a three-hour training program for elected officials. The program is delivered locally on request. Any municipality or joint council interested in hosting a session can contact the Agency's regional manager by calling toll-free 1-877-777-2807.

## MEET THE BOARD

Mayor Aneitha Sheaves of Channel-Port aux Basques is the Western Regional Director on the Agency's Board of Directors. Born and raised in Port aux Basques, Aneitha received her education in the school system in Port aux Basques.



Together with her late husband Clifford they raised seven children. In 1971 they began a family business that is still operating today.

In 1989, Aneitha was elected to Town Council for the first time and became Deputy Mayor by polling the most votes. In 1993 she was elected Mayor and won re-election in 1997 and 2001.

In addition to her duties as Mayor, Aneitha has served on the Gateway Status of Women Council from 1987 to 1993 and was President of the Council from 1989 to 1992. She has also served on the Dr. Charles L. Legrow Health Centre Board, the Dr. Charles L. Legrow Health Center Foundation, the Community Development Corporation and is an active member of the Southwest Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation. In 1998 the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization for Women Entrepreneurs recognized her outstanding contribution to women's advancement in business and community economic development. In 1999 she was a regional finalist in the Canadian Women Entrepreneur of the Year Awards. In November of 1998 Aneitha was appointed by the Province to serve on the Board of the Municipal Assessment Agency and was recently re-elected to the position of Western Director by her colleagues in the Western region. On February 6, 2002, she was appointed to serve a two-year term on the Board of

the Western Health Care Corporation

Municipal leaders and officials can contact Mayor Sheaves by calling (709) 695-3989 (W) or (709) 695-7389 (H). Her fax number is (709) 695-2760.

## AGENCY TO MAIL NOTICES?

### PILOT PROJECT UPDATE

The Agency, in cooperation with the Town of Clarenville, conducted a pilot project where the Agency mailed the assessment notices for the 2002 annual assessment roll for the Town. As a result of this pilot, the Assessment Services Advisory Committee have recommended the Agency expand the pilot project. The Board has accepted the recommendation and have directed staff to develop an implementation plan for an expanded pilot project. According to Sean Martin, Executive Director and CEO of the Agency, "The expanded pilot will assist the Agency in providing a cost-benefit analysis for this service and improving the efficiency of the assessment service to the ratepayer".

Municipalities will be consulted to determine their views on changing the existing process. The Board will continue to inform municipalities of the results of this consultation.

## NLAMA CONVENTION

The Municipal Assessment Agency will participate in the upcoming Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Municipal Administrators Annual Conference, to be held in Gander. The Agency will be represented at the trade show as well as at the convention. The Agency's Board of Directors will meet in Gander on April 18<sup>th</sup> and look forward to discussing possible improvements to the property tax system in Newfoundland and Labrador with conference attendees.

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## APPEAL RESULTS RELEASED

Correspondence has been forwarded to all municipalities highlighting the results of the 2001 Assessment Review Commission. This report will be enhanced in future years to highlight the results of the appeals. This is another step in improving the transparency and accountability of the assessment service to Agency clients.

## ORIENTATION VIDEO AVAILABLE

Municipalities are reminded that copies of “**Property Assessment: A Co-operative Approach**” an award-nominated video are available at the Agency’s offices. The video, produced by Hindsight Productions, is designed as an introduction to property assessment in Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly for elected officials and municipal administrators. To obtain a copy, please contact our Business Manager, Clar Simmons at (709) 724-1532 or toll-free 1-877-777-2807 or one of our regional managers.

## MARKETING PLAN UNDERWAY

With the hiring of a cooperative student from Memorial’s School of Business Administration, the Agency has started the development of a strategic marketing plan. Alaina Kent, of Wabush, has been hired to assist with the completion of the marketing plan. “This plan should speed the development of new and improved services and improve our success rate,” said Sean Martin, Executive Director. “It is important the Agency maximize its opportunities to ensure clients receive a quality service at the least possible cost”.

## THE NAME GAME

The Trade Name and Legal Entity Name of a business can be two totally different names. The proper use of these names is very important when a property is being taxed. If for example a business goes bankrupt and there are outstanding taxes owing, the municipality must ensure the bill has been issued to the legal entity, not the trade name. There have been cases where due to the property being billed in the trade name and not the legal entity name it led to a taxation liability issue. You can avoid this problem by requiring both trade name and legal entity name for any new business in your municipality. For any additional information please contact the Agency’s regional manager for your region by calling, toll-free, **1-877-777-2807**.

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**ASSESSMENT NEWS** is a publication for the clients of the Municipal Assessment Agency. Please forward any comments or suggestions to:

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