

ASSESSORS NEWS

Projected FY20 Tax Rates and Average Single-Family Tax Bill

Projected tax rates and the resulting average single-family tax bill—should all articles pass at the **FY20** Annual Town Meeting—are provided below. Prior years’ figures are provided for comparison. These projections are based on the current (FY19) total town property valuation of \$513,673,154.

	<u>FY17</u>	<u>FY18</u>	<u>FY19</u>	<u>FY20</u> (est.)
Tax Reate - Residential	\$ 6.19	\$ 6.86	\$ 5.01	\$ 5.41
Tax Rate - Com/Ind/PP	\$ 13.67	\$ 14.73	\$ 8.02	\$ 8.65
Avg Single-Family Tax Bill	\$ 1,298	\$ 1,454	\$ 1,062	\$ 1,147

*Note: To calculate your estimated **FY20** tax bill, divide your parcel’s total property valuation by 1000, then multiply by **\$5.41** (projected FY20 residential tax rate). Valuations can be found on FY19 tax bills.*

Comparison to Neighbor Towns

To help keep things in perspective, the following table provides a comparison of last year’s (**FY19**) residential tax rates, average single-family home values, and average single-family tax bills for some of our neighboring towns. [data from MA DOR Municipal Databank]

<u>Town</u>	<u>Residential Tax Rate</u>	<u>Average Single Family Home Value</u>	<u>Average Single Family Tax Bill</u>
Rowe	\$ 5.01	\$ 211,989	\$ 1,062 (2nd lowest)
Monroe	\$ 13.43	\$ 95,709	\$ 1,285 (3 rd lowest)
Erving	\$ 7.35	\$ 189,853	\$ 1,395 (4 th lowest)
Florida	\$ 9.72	\$ 160,941	\$ 1,564 (5 th lowest)
Hawley	\$ 16.48	\$ 219,237	\$ 3,613
Colrain	\$ 20.57	\$ 177,476	\$ 3,651
Heath	\$ 21.60	\$ 177,969	\$ 3,844
Shelburne	\$ 14.39	\$ 275,549	\$ 3,965
Buckland	\$ 18.63	\$ 214,530	\$ 3,997
Charlemont	\$ 19.73	\$ 204,100	\$ 4,027
Greenfield	\$ 22.36	\$ 186,591	\$ 4,172
Ashfield	\$ 17.16	\$ 253,593	\$ 4,352
Hancock	\$ 3.33	\$ 249,332	\$ 830 (lowest in MA)
Weston	\$ 12.59	\$ 1,589,799	\$ 20,016 (highest in MA)

ASSESSORS NEWS

Assessors Pursuing Two New Initiatives Regarding Utility Valuations

As part of the *Mass Modernization Law* changes enacted in Nov 2016, the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) changed from a triennial (every three years) revaluation cycle to a quintennial (every five years) cycle. The Assessors of Rowe, Monroe and Florida—who jointly contract for the valuations of our hydro facilities—felt that five years was too long to go between formal appraisals due to the volatile nature of the electricity market. In consultation with the DOR, all three towns' Boards of Assessors are requesting funds for annual valuations of these facilities. In FY19, the three towns jointly signed a 5-year contract with GE Sansoucy PE for interim year updates based on electricity market changes—and any facility changes—for the first four years (FY19-FY22), followed by a formal revaluation in the fifth year (FY23). Formal one-time “separation” studies will also be performed under this contract to definitively ascertain the portions of each hydro facility in each town. Rowe's annual cost for this valuation work is \$17,600 (to be appropriated annually at town meeting).

Another initiative underway in Western MA involves the appraisal of electric utility transmission and distribution assets using a methodology similar to that used by the MA DOR for valuing telephone and telegraph assets. These electric assets have heretofore not been valued. Although MA DOR is not formally involved in this initiative, they have been supportive of the process. Numerous towns in Berkshire, Hampden and Hampshire counties are discussing implementation of these appraisals in their towns. The Rowe Assessors, eager to pursue this right away, signed a contract for FY19 with GE Sansoucy PE for the sum of \$7,000. This year the Rowe Assessors have signed a 4-year contract with GE Sansoucy PE for interim year updates for the next three years (FY20-FY22), followed by a formal revaluation in the fifth year (FY23). Rowe's annual cost for this valuation work is \$5,000 (to be appropriated annually at town meeting).

For FY19 these appraisals identified significant valuation increases for the various power companies resulting in total town valuation increase from \$283,608,234 to \$513,673,154. The Town's Levy Limit was increased by almost \$585,000 due to New Growth identified by these appraisals. The overall impact of these changes for FY19 reduced the tax rates from \$6.86/\$14.73 to \$5.01/\$8.02. However, it should be pointed out that the affected power companies have all contested their new values and submitted abatement applications which are currently under review.

Please contact the Assessors' Office at 339-5520 ext.19 or assessor@rowe-ma.gov if you have any questions or for further information.