

Town to update property values this spring

This spring, the Assessing Department is conducting a town-wide revaluation to ensure greater assessment equity for all of its taxpayers.

A revaluation is the process of updating real property values to reflect their current market value (i.e., to maintain reasonable estimates of what each property could sell for on the open market).

This is the first revaluation in five years. Unlike the 2019 revaluation, in which the Town used a contracted company, work will be performed in-house by Town Assessing staff. There will also be no in-home inspections, unless specifically requested, as staff will instead use existing data to revalue all town properties. There is also a concerted effort by the Town to do more public outreach and expand community engagement.



The most common question we've heard from residents is, ***Why is the Town performing a revaluation again, and why now specifically?***

There are two important factors behind the decision to perform more regular revaluations and why it is necessary to do so this year in particular: Fairness and Compliance with State Law.

Fairness: Property owners should pay no more or no less than their fair share of the property tax burden. Currently, some taxpayers may be paying more than their fair share of taxes, while others may be paying less. A revaluation redistributes the existing tax base so all property owners pay their share based on the market values of their property. A revaluation is revenue-neutral. By itself, a revaluation does not increase or decrease total tax revenue collected by the Town. The amount of taxes raised only changes if the Town, School, and County budgets change. Your assessed value may go up, but the tax rate will go down.

Compliance: Scarborough is currently out of compliance with assessment requirements. When this happens, the State reduces many reimbursements and exemptions, which in turn affects taxpayers. Maine State Law requires that assessments be maintained between 70-110% of market value. Scarborough's are currently below 70%. A revaluation will bring assessed values back in alignment with market value, keeping us in compliance and eligible for higher reimbursements and exemptions.

During a revaluation, it is the Assessing Department's job to research and discover values through the thorough analysis of all available information, especially current sales data. The goal is to appraise thousands of properties, all at one time, in a way that is equitable for all property owners. We strive to follow the established industry standards for mass appraisals; however, we recognize that there will be situations where the mass appraisal approach may produce an estimate of value that seems somewhat high or low for an individual property. We are committed to working with all property owners to ensure that every property is assessed at a reasonable estimate of its market value as of April 1.

Assessing Department

There are often issues other than tax value that concern property owners, such as the amount of change from the last revaluation and affordability of the expected taxes. While these are understandable concerns, the responsibility of the Assessor's Office is to address the assessed value. The key question is, ***"What was the market value of your property on April 1st, 2024?"***