Real Estate Taxes – Frequently Asked Questions~

I just purchased property this year. Why is the name of the prior owner still on the tax bill?

Property tax assessments are billed on a fiscal year basis, from July 1 to June 30, with an effective date of the previous January 1. This means that the owner as of January 1 should legally appear on the tax bill. Example: For Fiscal Year 2020, the effective date is January 1, 2019. The Registry of Deeds has gone on-line and the Assessor's office keeps track of transfers of property on a monthly basis. The office staff strives to insure that the new homeowner receives a copy of the bill, but we ask that new homeowners who do not receive a property tax bill to please contact us or the Tax Collectors office.

I sold my property so why did I receive a tax bill.

Same as above, but if the property in Millis was sold and a tax bill was generated, please either contact us or return the tax bill letting us know that the property has been sold. The office makes every effort to insure that the new homeowner receives the bill. If a previous owner receives the bill, in error please contact our office or the Tax Collector's office to let us know so that we may research the error and make any necessary changes.

Who should I contact regarding payment of my taxes?

Please call the Millis Treasurer's/Tax Collector's office at 508.376.7091.

Why did my assessment increase when I have done nothing to my property?

Assessments must be at market value. To arrive at "full and fair cash value" for a property, the Assessor must know what "willing sellers" and "willing buyers" are doing in the marketplace. The Assessor also must collect, record and analyze information about property and market characteristics in order to estimate the fair market value, including keeping current on cost of construction in the area and any changes in zoning, financing and economic conditions which may affect property values. The Assessor uses the three nationally recognized appraisal approaches to value: cost, income and market. This data is then correlated into a final value.

The object of the valuation program is to estimate "full and fair cash value" as of January 1 (known as the "assessment date") prior to the fiscal year to be billed. For example, the assessment date for Fiscal Year 2020 is January 1, 2019.

Why did I receive a notice that the Assessor wanted to inspect my house and why should I let them in?

Interior inspections are an important part of the Town's assessment process. Just as a potential buyer of real estate inspects the interior of a home before making an offer, the Town can make a better determination of value based upon accurate data by the use of an interior inspection. The result of the inspection can sometimes be beneficial to the taxpayer primarily due to the correction of data that the Assessor's office has currently existing on the property. Sometimes potential new buyers check the Assessor's office property record cards prior to purchase. Examples of data reviewed are type and size of additions to the main house, the condition overall of the main house and additions, type and size of detached buildings (garages, sheds, etc.). There are currently three types of inspections that the Town of Millis Assessor's office attempts to process:

1. Cyclical Inspections: The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) states that assessors must conduct a periodical, cyclical inspection in order to verify and update existing data. The

DOR certification guidelines require that all properties be inspected at least once every ten years.

2. Building Permit Inspections: The Assessor also reviews building permit applications and thereby attempts to inspect new buildings, properties that have been altered and properties that have been demolished. Most of the town's new growth comes from these types of construction activity.
3. Sales Inspections: The Assessor's office researches sales within the town by attempting to inspect the properties that have sold. The properties involved in the sales inspection program are for the properties that sold in the previous calendar year, in other words, the properties sold in calendar year 2018 were researched for FY 2020. The information gathered by doing this research is vital to correctly assess all the properties in town, as is the goal of all three inspection programs.

For any other questions regarding your assessment, abatement or exemptions, please contact our office at 508.376.7049.