

Date: June 2014

**CITY OF JOHNSTOWN
Assessment Department
Education Course Outline**

**"UNDERSTANDING THE REASSESSMENT PROCESS
AND
PROJECT ORIENTATION"**

1. Overview: The Assessment Department purpose, goals and objectives and an overview of the current reassessment project.

2. Introduction: The purpose of the course is to take property owners through the various reassessment project phases.

City of Johnstown Assessor: Frank Parker

GAR Associates, Inc. Project Staff:

Project Director: F. Cindy Baire – Vice President
Project Manager: David Barnett

3. History:
 - Last Citywide Reassessment: Early 1990's
 - Current level of Assessment: 70%

4. Department Functions:
 - Maintaining assessment roll, building permits, grievances, sales transactions, inventory data, etc.
 - Processing Exemptions: STAR, Senior, Veterans, Disability, etc.
 - Filing of Assessment Roll
 - Assisting Public with Information
 - Processing a variety of reports for City of Johnstown and Property Owner Use

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5. The Reassessment Project:

- Overview of Project
 - Letter to Property Owners (June 2014)
 - Education- Workshop #1 (June 2014)
 - Data Verification/Collection (June-September 2014)
 - Valuation Process (Fall/Winter 2014/2015)
 - Notification of New Assessments to Property Owners (February 2015)
 - Education-Workshop #2 – Explanation of New Assessments and How to Challenge Your Assessment (February 2015)
 - Informal Reviews (February-March 2015)
 - Notification of Decisions From Informal Review Process (April 2015)
 - Board of Assessment Review Process (May 2015)
 - BAR – Grievance Day 4th Tuesday in May 2015
 - Notification of Decisions from BAR (June 2015)
 - Final Assessment Roll Filed (July 1, 2015)

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6. Property Inventory Collection:
 - Importance of Property Owner Participation
 - Review Commercial Survey
 - How Appraisers will use the information

7. Full Value Assessment:
(Residential)
 - The systematic process of reviewing and analyzing market data within specific neighborhoods to determine trends.
 - Computerized valuation of all properties utilizing current sales data.
 - Professional, experienced appraisers reviewing (from street) each property, taking into consideration condition, location factors, etc.
 - Monitoring of current sales listing and closed activity to track trends
 - Consistency within neighborhoods/streets

8. Valuation of Commercial Property:
 - Cost Approach-Land + Depreciated Replacement Cost
 - Market Approach-Sales
 - Income Approach-Rents/Expenses
 - Utility/Desirability
 - Land-to Building Ratio
 - Units (Apartments, Pumps, Storage units, etc.)

9. Glossary of Terms: Basic definitions of terms commonly used in various forms and throughout the grievance process.

10. Summary: The course reviews the assessment department functions, goals and objectives and provides an overview of the current reassessment project. The course also illustrates the data collection process and the importance of accurate data.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Set forth below are terms with definitions that have been modified for practical application. The reader may find different definitions from other published documents; however, concepts should be the same.

Assessment - This represents a property assessment in dollars, which is placed on the assessment roll according to each SBL. Tax levies are then compared to total assessment in order to create a tax rate.

Assessors Level of Assessment - This is the determined level of assessment in which the local taxing jurisdiction or assessor's office determines their level which converts assessments to a uniform percentage of market value. Level of assessments can be different than equalization rates.

Building Style - For residential properties, this denotes the style of home which is often used as a criteria and yardstick for comparability. The style of homes vary considerably but include Old Style, Cape Cod, Ranch, Colonial, Split Level, etc.

Equalization Rate - The New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services (ORPTS) annually samples all types of properties in given communities. From appraisals and sales, which are compared to assessments, weighted ratios are determined. State equalization rates have many uses, one of which is a yard stick that converts assessments to a market value standard.

Exemptions - Exemptions is a word to describe an assessment reduction where legally warranted. There are many types of exemptions, these including but not limited to veterans exemptions, old age exemptions, industrial development agency exemption and local authorized exemptions under state law.

Final Roll Filing - In the City of Johnstown, July 1st of each year and represents the date on which the roll is final. No changes can be made subsequent to this date, except for those authorized by the courts.

Grievance Day - In the City of Johnstown, it is the 4th Tuesday in May, the time in which property owners can protest their assessment before an independent grievance board.

Market Value - Market value in the real estate world represents the price which real estate will sell for considering willing sellers and buyers, transacting a contract at arm's length. Normal marketing time to create a sale between non-relatives is presumed.

Property Class - All properties in New York receive three digit numbers identifying their use. For example, residential single-family homes are known as 210.

Residential Ratios - This is the rate determined by ORPTS through sample residential sales compared to assessments. A weighted average is computed and published annually.

SBL - Section, Block and Lot, a legal description taken from tax maps that identifies each legal tax entity.

SFLA - The computed square footage of a building or home considering outside dimensions.

Swis Code - This is a six-digit code used throughout New York State to identify incorporated communities.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

(continued)

Tax Levy - This is the total budget or the amount of money that elected officials or board members resolve annually that must be raised to run government and school districts.

Tax Map - An official map showing the metes and boundaries of properties. New York State has a uniform mapping system which was instituted statewide approximately 20 years ago. The maps for area localities are currently maintained by Fulton County. A property is identified on these maps by its SBL number.

Tax Rate - This is a dollar amount expressed per 1,000 and representing the entire levy to be raised in any community divided by the total taxable assessment roll.

Tentative Roll Date - This is the date in which the preliminary assessment roll is filed, by publication in the official newspaper of the community. Assessments can be modified after the tentative roll has been filed. In the City of Johnstown the tentative roll date is May 1st of each year.

Year Built - As opposed to an effective age of real estate, the year built is the date in which the building was constructed.