

From: Grantham News & Events <granthamnews@granthamnh.net>
To: news@granthamnh.net
Subject: New Assessor's in town!
Date: Wed, Feb 17, 2010 9:30 am

News Release

The Town of Grantham has recently hired a new firm to perform assessing services for the municipality. The firm of Cross Country Appraisal Group, LLC (CCAG) was chosen from four firms that replied to the Town's Request for Proposals to perform the annual assessing work and to update values as of April 1, 2010. CCAG's headquarters are in Concord, New Hampshire.

The Grantham Selectmen chose the firm they felt had the best qualifications and who could perform the work in a thorough and timely manner.

The President of Cross Country Appraisal Group is Jeffrey M. Earls. Mr. Earls formerly worked for the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration as the Chief Utility Appraiser from 1985-1996 and as the Assistant Director of the Property Appraisal Division until 1998. Mr. Earls was a Managing Partner in the firm Earls, Nieder and Perkins before forming his own company in 2005. Mr. Earls will actively participate, along with his staff, in the Grantham Statistical Update.

In Mid- February CCAG will begin visiting properties with open building permits and properties that have ongoing construction to determine what should be added to the tax rolls for the current year. This process should be completed in a week or two.

Shortly after Town Meeting, CCAG will begin the process of updating values for 2010. The appraisers will adhere to the following guidelines during the update process:

If a sale property owner is home, the appraiser will ask the homeowner to allow them to perform an interior inspection of the buildings. All appraisers will be wearing identification badges and their cars will have signs with the company logo. There will also be a list of persons working in Town with their picture, make and model of their vehicle and their license number available at the Town Hall and Police Station.

The appraisers will be looking for the following information for each building: year built, functional utility, condition, number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, type of floors, type of interior walls, and type of heat. Additional questions include asking if the property was purchased through a realtor and asking the sale price.

Homeowner's input is welcome. If the homeowner has information about the property that may not be apparent to the appraiser, such as seasonally wet basements, cracks in foundations, easements and leaking roofs, they are encouraged to bring that type of information to the appraiser's attention. After the interior inspection is complete, the appraiser will measure all buildings on the property.

In most cases, the total time for the interior inspection should not exceed 10 minutes. No property will be entered unless there is someone at least 18 years of age at home at the time of the visit. It is very important that the appraisers be allowed inside to help ensure an accurate assessment.

If the homeowner is not home, the appraiser will leave a notice stating that they visited the property and measured the buildings, and also indicate that the homeowner will receive a letter which will inform them of the dates and times in which homeowners can make appointments for an interior inspection.

Completing the Process:

When all inspections are complete, the appraisers will set preliminary values based on recent sales of properties

in town. Taxpayers will be notified by letter of their new value(s), and lists of all values will be posted. After values have been set taxpayers are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the appraisers to discuss their values. The dates, times and places of these appointments will be included in the notification letter.

When the informal review process is complete, values will be finalized and given to the town. Subsequent tax bills will be based on these new values and a new tax rate. When a taxpayer receives the final tax bill, and the taxpayer disagrees with their new value, they may appeal, in the form of an abatement request, to the selectmen, on or before March 1st 2011. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact the municipal liaison, Becky Newton, Town Administrator.