



MAINE REVENUE SERVICES PROPERTY TAX DIVISION PROPERTY TAX BULLETIN NO. 15

THE VALUATION BOOK

REFERENCE: 36 M.R.S. §§ 205, 708-709-A, 711-714
September 5, 2019; replaces June 3, 2016 revision

1. General

The valuation book, also known as the commitment book, is a document containing the value, tax due, and official documents related to the property in a municipality. The municipal assessor is responsible for creating the valuation book every year. For purposes of this bulletin, the term “municipal assessor” includes an individual assessor, a board of assessors, and the chief assessor of a primary assessing area. Property in the valuation book must be valued as of April 1. Once complete, the valuation book must be signed by the municipal assessor, or a majority of the board of assessors, permanently bound, and signed over (committed) to the municipal tax collector. The date that the valuation book is committed to the municipal tax collector is called the commitment date. A copy of the valuation book must be kept by the municipal assessor and made available to the public. This bulletin describes what should be contained in the valuation book.

2. Contents

The valuation book prepared by the municipal assessor should contain all of the documents listed below. Copies of these documents must be included in the copy of the valuation book available to the public. The original documents must be given to the municipal tax collector together with the original valuation book.

- A. Municipal Valuation Return. The municipal assessor’s copy of the Municipal Valuation Return, as filed with Maine Revenue Services (“MRS”), should be included in the valuation book.
- B. Valuation list. The valuation book should include a listing, called the valuation list, of the taxable and exempt property in the municipality. The taxable and exempt property may be listed together or separately, but both types of property should be included in the valuation book.
 - (1) List of taxable property. The list of taxable property should include the name of each taxpayer, a description of each parcel of taxable real estate, the value of the land, buildings, and personal property, and the amount of the tax assessed to each taxpayer. Taxpayers should be entered in the list of taxable property in alphabetical order.

Real estate descriptions must be sufficient to identify the property assessed with reasonable certainty. Reference to parcels should generally be made with the book and page numbers of the registry record where the deed describing the property can be found. If the property is not identified by a book and page numbers, an alternate description may be made. If tax maps are available, reference to parcels should be made to the map and lot numbers as shown on the tax map. Property must be sufficiently described in the valuation list. An inadequate or incorrect property description cannot be corrected by means of supplemental assessment, and collection of the tax on that property cannot be enforced by a tax lien mortgage.

Land classified under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law, the Tree Growth Tax Law, and the Working Waterfront Land program should be identified on the list of taxable property. Identification of land enrolled in one of these current use programs can be achieved by using a consistent naming convention that clearly identifies the land as subject to current use valuation and the current use program applicable to that land.

Taxable property subject to partial exemption, such as the veteran exemption, the homestead exemption, the blind person exemption, and the Business Equipment Tax Equipment (or BETE) exemption, should be included in the list of taxable property, and the property description should include the type and amount of any applied exemption.

- (2) List of fully exempt property. Property subject to full exemption, such as benevolent and charitable organizations, should also be included in the valuation book. Similar to taxable property, fully exempt property should be listed alphabetically by taxpayer name, and should include a description of each parcel of exempt real estate, and the value of the exempt land, buildings, and personal property. This list of exempt property enables the municipal assessor to complete the Municipal Valuation Return properly and enables field representatives of MRS to verify applications and review proof of claim forms for those municipalities that may be entitled to reimbursement from the State.

- C. Assessors' Certification of Assessment. When the valuation book is completed, and before taxes are committed to the municipal tax collector, the municipal assessor must certify the list of taxable property. This Certification of Assessment must be included in the valuation book and should identify the beginning and ending pages of the list of taxable property. The pages identified on the Certification of Assessment should not include any pages that are blank, that contain supplemental assessments, or, if the taxable and exempt property are listed separately, that list only fully exempt property.

The valuation book may consist of more than one volume. In these cases, each volume, the page numbers involved, and any title of each volume must be identified and included in the Certification of Assessment. A copy of the Certification of Assessment should be included in each volume. For example, if the valuation book requires two volumes to list real estate and a

third volume for personal property, the Certification of Assessment in each volume may refer to all three volumes as follows:

We hereby certify that page numbers from 1 through 499, in Volume 1, Real Property Valuation List; from 500 through 946 in Volume 2, Real Property Valuation List; and from 1 through 356 in Volume 3, Personal Valuation List, in this book contain a description, the value, and the tax assessed . . .

The Assessors' Certification of Assessment must be signed by the municipal assessor.

- D. Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant. The Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant is a notification from the municipal assessor to the municipal tax collector. It includes a summary of the assessments and deductions that make up the total tax committed, directs that the money collected by the municipal tax collector be paid to the municipal treasurer, and assigns a date when interest starts accruing on unpaid tax. The Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant should also include a statement of municipal appropriations on which the property tax assessment is based and an estimate of receipts from state-municipal revenue sharing aid, which the municipal officers are required to make. The Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant must be signed by the municipal assessor.
- E. Certificate of Commitment. The Certificate of Commitment is a notification from the municipal assessor to the municipal tax collector, stating that the commitment of the valuation book from the municipal assessor to the municipal tax collector authorizes the municipal tax collector to collect the total amount of taxes for the year. Both documents must be signed by the municipal assessor or a majority of the board of assessors. The Certificate of Commitment must be signed by the municipal assessor.
- F. Certificate of Assessment to be Returned to Municipal Treasurer. The Certificate of Assessment to be Returned to Municipal Treasurer is a statement from the municipal assessor to the municipal treasurer that includes the information contained in the Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant and an attestation that the valuation book has been committed to the municipal tax collector for collection of taxes. The Certificate of Assessment to be Returned to Municipal Treasurer must be signed by the municipal assessor.

3. Supplemental Assessments

Supplemental assessments may be made at any time within three years from the original assessment date. The municipal assessor should leave enough blank pages in the valuation book to allow space for supplemental assessments.

Supplemental assessments must be covered by special warrants and certificates. When supplemental assessments cover different years, a separate page should be used for each year involved. Each supplemental assessment (or list of supplemental assessments) for a specified year should be included

in the valuation book and should include the same documents listed above (Certification of Assessment, Municipal Tax Assessment Warrant, Certificate of Commitment, and Certificate of Assessment to be Returned to Municipal Treasurer).

NOTE: This bulletin is intended solely as advice to assist persons in determining, exercising or complying with their legal rights, duties or privileges. If further information is needed, contact the Property Tax Division of Maine Revenue Services.

MAINE REVENUE SERVICES
PROPERTY TAX DIVISION
P.O. BOX 9106
AUGUSTA, ME 04332-9106
TEL: (207) 624-5600
EMAIL: PROP.TAX@MAINE.GOV
WWW.MAINE.GOV/REVENUE/PROPERTYTAX

The Department of Administrative and Financial Services does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities. This material can be made available in alternate formats by contacting the Department's ADA Coordinator at (207) 624-8288(voice) or V/TTY: 7-1-1.

(Published under Appropriation No. 1037.1)