

INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR NOTICE

Due to State Tax Commission policy, it is expected that local units of government will annually inspect a minimum of 20% of the parcels in each property class each year. The goal is that all parcels will be examined at least once over a five year period. For 2018 our focus will be in Section 35 (Village) and Section 34 (Township). Any time our staff is doing an inspection outside the office, they will be wearing proper identification. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our office at 586-752-4585 ext. 200.

The Board of Review is comprised of residents from the community that have knowledge of property values. They are not employees of the Township, they are residents that have expressed an interest in serving and have been appointed by the Bruce Township Board. **The Board of Review is available by appointment ONLY.** Appointments are ten minutes long and provide you the opportunity to present evidence to support your requested value. Residents may protest in person or send someone to protest on their behalf. If someone appears on behalf of a property owner, they must have a letter of authorization from the property owner. Non-residents or residents not able to attend in person may appeal by letter which **must be received by Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 12:00 p.m.** The Board of Review will not make decisions at that meeting. A decision will be mailed to you no later than the first Monday in June. Remember, you may further appeal your assessment to the Michigan Tax Tribunal, but only if you first appeal at the local Board of Review for residential and agricultural properties only. **Commercial and industrial** are not required to appear before the Board of Review in order to file an appeal to the Tribunal. **Disabled Veterans Exemption** and **Poverty Exemptions** are submitted to the Board of Review at either the March, July or December meetings. Both exemptions are for one year only. Guidelines and applications are available at www.brucetwp.org.

The constitutional amendment known as Proposal "A" was approved by the voters in 1994. This proposal was designed to limit the growth in property taxes to the rate of inflation until the property transferred. Regardless of the increases in your property value, your taxes could only go up the rate of inflation (unless you made changes to the property) thereby allowing homeowners to continue to afford the home they lived in. This proposal requires the Assessing Office to calculate three values for each property in the Township.

Assessed Value/State Equalized Value (SEV): This value is calculated for each parcel in the Township each year. The value is set at 50% of True Cash Value for your property as determined by studies of the market (sales) that occur during a time frame outlined by the State Tax Commission.

Capped Value: This value is calculated by a defined formula. The formula starts with last year's Taxable Value, considers physical changes to the property and uses the "rate of inflation" or 5% (whichever is less). The "rate of inflation" percentage is provided by the State Tax Commission and developed from the US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index. Assessors cannot develop or use another inflation rate multiplier.

Taxable Value: This is the value which your property taxes are based on. This value is the lower of your State Equalized Value or your Capped Value. For most property owners, this value only increases/decreases by the rate of inflation, or Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year. For 2018 the CPI is 1.021%.

WHAT SALES ARE USED TO DETERMINE THE ASSESSMENT?

Our community used the two year study for 2018 Assessments. Sales occurring between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2017 (period defined by the State Tax Commission for 24 month studies) were used to determine 50% of True Cash Value.

Actual Sale Price is not True Cash Value: The law defines True Cash Value as the *usual* selling price of a property. An Assessor must assess the property using the same valuation method used to value all other property of that same classification in the Township. Your sale price alone does not determine the True Cash Value. All sales of similar type properties are studied. Some sales are excluded in accordance with established guidelines set by the State Tax Commission. The remaining sales are used to determine the levels of assessment from similar type property in the Township.

Foreclosure Sales: Sales from financial institutions, after a foreclosure, are not included in the sales study until the Assessing Office verifies the terms of the sale and the condition of the property. Guidelines were provided to Assessors this year by the State Tax Commission to make this determination.

HOW SHOULD I PRESENT MY PROTEST?

The Board of Review functions in many ways like a court, although the procedures are much more informal. You must be prepared to justify and bring evidence that your appeal is valid. You have the burden of proof. The comparable you use should be between 4-1-2015 and 3-31-2017 or more recent. Forced or stressed sales, unless verified, are not valid. You must provide at least one copy of all documents or pictures for the Board of Review. Three (3) copies are preferred; **one copy must be retained in the Board of Review file.**

WHAT DO I BRING? WHAT DO I SAY?

Suggested items to bring to your appointment might include appropriate comparable sales data, photo's, estimates to fix home damages, or other supporting evidence to prove your proposed value. Statements such as "My taxes are too high", "My property isn't worth what the Township has it valued", or "My taxes are more than my neighbors" do not prove your case. Remember, **one copy of any information you expect the board to consider for your appeal will be retained in the Board of Review file.**

WHAT THE MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW CAN AND CANNOT DO:

The Board **cannot:** Change the calculation (formula) for the Capped Value which generally becomes your Taxable Value
Discuss or change values from prior years.
Hear appeals of Principal Residence Exemptions.
Change the millage rates.
Change any Tribunal decisions.
Change the zoning of your property.

The Board **can:** Hear appeals on the classification of the property.
Hear appeals and make changes to assessed value.
Grant a Poverty Exemption and Disabled Veteran Exemption for current year only.
Change the Taxable Value, only if there is a loss to the property or the Assessed Value becomes lower than the previous year's taxable value multiplied by the current year's CPI.