

Supervisors pick Grota as town's new assessor

Written by MARK JAEGER
Wednesday, 25 July 2012 16:18

Officials hope update of market value will void push for reappraisal

The Saukville Town Board approved a three-year contract last week with Grota Appraisals in a move officials hope will help prevent a costly state-mandated reassessment.

The hiring was done in reaction to the abrupt retirement of the town's former assessor, Don Peters. His departure came amid warnings from the state that the town's valuation had fallen below acceptable limits.

Last year, the state Department of Revenue notified town officials that commercial property values were no longer within 90% of full market value.

Failing to meet that threshold could force a full reassessment of all town properties, an expensive process for which the town has not budgeted.

Town Chairman Barb Jobs said a full reassessment could cost as much as \$100,000 to document the value of the community's 744 improved parcels.

Mike Grota told town officials he would prepare a full market update of properties in the town, which should be sufficient to counter a state reassessment mandate.

Grota said the update would include detailed records of all recent property sales in the township, as well as gathering data on the sale of comparable properties in surrounding communities because there are so few transactions in the town.

His contract calls for a quick assembly of the market update to be completed so that open-book sessions with the public before the Board of Review can be held this fall.

Field inspections will be made of all recently sold properties, providing data which will be used in setting values for all properties in the town. Notices will be sent for all new assessments along with an explanation of the open book process.

Grota said the market update would be a "stop-gap measure so you are in compliance with the state requirement and dodge a bullet."

"All we are after is compliance with the state requirement. This is not going to be a full on-site valuation," Jobs said.

"I've talked with people in other towns, and they all seem very satisfied with the work Grota does."

Grota Appraisals, which is based in Menomonee Falls, handles assessment duties for the towns of Belgium, Cedarburg, Fredonia and Grafton, the villages of Fredonia, Newburg and Thiensville and the City of Mequon.

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It also works with 13 municipalities in Washington County.

The Town Board unanimously approved the contract with Grota, at a cost of \$34,500. Payments can be spread over three years.

The assessor duties will run through 2015, and includes the remainder of 2012.