

2017 General Reassessment

Frequently Asked Questions

What is reassessment?

Reassessment is the process of redetermining the value of property or land for tax purposes.

What do I do if I disagree with the assessed value?

A property owner has the right to appeal their property tax assessment. The burden of proof, however, will be on the taxpayer to prove why they should have their assessment changed. Just saying:” My taxes are too high” is not sufficient. You may appeal by either submitting a written appeal or by scheduling a face-to-face hearing.

The following may happen on appeal:

- 1) the assessed value may be raised;
- 2) it may be lowered; or
- 3) it may remain the same

Any appeals that are not resolved by the Reassessment Office may be reviewed by the Board of Equalization.

A new appeal application must be submitted to the Board of Equalization in order for the Board to rule on the appeal.

The final appeal after the Board of Equalization would be to petition the Bath County Circuit Court for judicial review. The Code of Virginia provides all property owners the opportunity to appeal an unfair reassessment through the Circuit Court system.

Why have reassessments?

Reassessments are required by law to insure that each property is valued fairly. The purpose of property tax reassessment is to realign the values of real property that are determined with values of other kinds of property that are assessed annually, such as personal property, utilities and mobile homes.

As required by the Code of Virginia, Bath County conducted a general reassessment that will take effect January 1, 2017.

The Code of Virginia requires that all property is assessed at fair market value. Property taxes are calculated using the assessed value and the tax rate.

What should I expect from reassessment?

A reassessment will result in a new value being established for your property. This new value will replace the value currently on your property and will be the basis used for taxing property. Please remember that an increase or decrease in property value does not automatically mean an increase or decrease in your property taxes.

When was the last reassessment?

Last reassessment took effect January 1, 2011.

What is the reassessment process?

The County is divided into smaller neighborhoods for market comparison. Each property is visited by a field inspector who verifies data and collects additional data. The field review is done with the homeowner if they are at home. Data collection is entered into the mass appraisal system and accuracy validated. Neighborhood sales, land values, yearly appreciation trends and other data are analyzed throughout the process.

Who conducted the reassessment?

Bath County hired Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group to assess values of every residential and commercial property within the County.

How will I know if someone has visited my property?

Field workers had County IDs and cars marked "County Reassessment." When property owners were not home at the time of the visit by the field worker, a notice was left on the door saying the property has been inspected.

What causes property values to change?

The most frequent cause of change in value results from a change in the market. When market value changes, so do the assessed values.

A property's value can also change for other reasons, such as additions, garages, remodeling or damage or destruction.

What is "Fair Market Value?"

Fair market value is defined as the amount a typical, well-informed purchaser would be willing to pay for a property, under the following conditions:

- The seller and buyer must be unrelated.

- The seller must be willing, but not under undue pressure to sell and the buyer must be willing, but not under any obligation to buy.
- The property must be on the market for a reasonable length of time.
- The payment must be in cash or its equivalent, and the financing, if required, must be typical for that type of property.

If all these conditions are present, this is considered a market value, or “arm’s length,” sale.

How will the reassessment affect my taxes?

An increase or decrease in your assessed value does not automatically mean the same increase or decrease in your taxes.

What do my real estate taxes go towards?

Schools, law enforcement, fire and rescue protection, libraries and other services are only a few of the amenities property taxes make possible.

When will the results be available?

The results for the 2017 Reassessment will be mailed to property owners in November, 2016.

How can I tell if my reassessment is fair and accurate?

Compare your property’s value with other comparable properties. You may look at properties of similar age, lot and building size, construction, improvements, location, proximity to shopping, schools, and other amenities.

How do I change my mailing address?

To change your mailing address, please contact the Real Estate Department at the Commissioner of the Revenue’s Office at 540-839-7231.