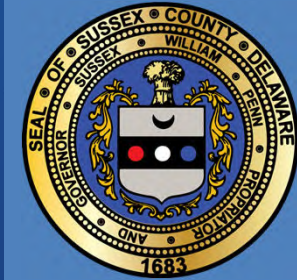


# Sussex County Reassessment Project Update



# Agenda



- Tyler Technologies Informal Hearing Results
- Assessment Rolls
- County Rate
- Appeals Process
- Tax Programs - Introduction of Ordinances
- Questions
- Public Hearing (Board of Assessment Review)

# Tyler Technologies Informal Hearings



- Tentative Values were mailed in November
- Tyler Technologies held informal hearings from November to January.
  - 11,647 hearings were scheduled (out of 200,836 parcels - 6%)
    - 731 were a no show - 6%
    - 293 canceled - 3%
    - 4,541 no value change - 39%
    - 6,082 value change - 52%
- On February 18<sup>th</sup>, Tyler sent 17,824 re-notices due to the informal appeal review process and additional improvements



# Assessment Rolls



- Assessment rolls were given to the Board of Assessment Review on February 14<sup>th</sup>.
- All property data is available on our website as of February 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Required advertisements were placed in the paper announcing the rolls are available and how a person can appeal.

# Assessment Rolls – Summary Data



| School District | 1974 Taxable Assessed Value* | 2023 Taxable Assessed Value** | Percent Increase |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Indian River    | \$2,010,414,350              | \$40,273,446,200              | 1903%            |
| Laurel          | \$138,377,780                | \$2,156,790,900               | 1459%            |
| Seaford         | \$231,519,750                | \$3,422,132,600               | 1378%            |
| Milford         | \$198,573,698                | \$3,580,151,700               | 1703%            |
| Woodbridge      | \$154,091,641                | \$2,314,170,400               | 1402%            |
| Cape Henlopen   | \$1,618,210,244              | \$38,783,833,000              | 2297%            |
| Delmar          | \$66,332,899                 | \$1,044,366,800               | 1474%            |
| Countywide      | \$4,417,520,362              | \$91,574,891,600              | 1973%            |

\* Includes improvements through February 15<sup>th</sup> - will continue to add improvements through June 30<sup>th</sup>

\*\* Values will change due to improvements and appeals

# County Rate



Per State Code, the County shall not collect more than 15% (after new improvements) in a year of reassessment

|            | 1974 Taxable Assessed Value* | 2023 Taxable Assessed Value** | Percent Increase |
|------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Countywide | \$4,417,520,362              | \$91,574,891,600              | 1973%            |

Current County Rate: 44.5 cents per \$100

$$\$4,417,520,362 / 100 * 44.5 \text{ cents} = \$19,657,967$$

County's estimated rate assuming revenue neutral (and ASSUMING ASSESSED VALUES DON'T CHANGE): ~2.15 cents per \$100

$$\$91,574,891,600 / 100 * \sim 2.15 \text{ cents} = \$19,688,602$$

Example: **\$28,000** (1974 taxable value) = \$124.60 versus **\$579,535** (2023 taxable value) = \$124.60

\* Includes improvements through February 15<sup>th</sup> - will continue to add improvements through June 30<sup>th</sup>

\*\* Values will change due to improvements and appeals

# Available Information



- One page for reassessment: past presentations, access to Board information, appeal applications, videos - <https://sussexcountye.gov/reassessment>
- Assessments of each property - <https://property.sussexcountye.gov/>
- Estimated Tax Calculator - <https://sussexcountye.gov/property-tax-calculator>



# Appeals Process



Informal Review



Finalize Assessment Rolls



Formal Appeals



Superior Court



# Formal Appeals



- Property Owners must file an appeal by March 31, 2025 to enter the Formal Appeals Process. <https://sussexcountyde.gov/board-assessment-review>
- Once the application is filled out and submitted to the Assessment Office, the applicant should schedule an appointment to go over their application with a referee.
- The appeals process has two steps.
  - Step 1
    - Referees will meet one-on-one with property owner
  - Step 2
    - Public Hearing with the Board of Assessment review

# Referee Meetings



- Referee Meetings are the first step in the Appeals process.
  - Referee meetings are held at the Administrative building during normal business hours.
  - Property Owners can schedule online or over the phone after they submit the application
- Referees will:
  - Meet one-on-one with the appellant
  - Review supporting evidence provided by appellant
  - Make recommendations to the Board of Assessment Review
- Note: No decision will be made at the referee meeting.

# Board of Assessment Review



- If an agreement is reached after the referee meeting, a stipulation form is completed and forwarded to the Board for review and official decision.
- If an agreement cannot be reached at the referee level, property owners will have the opportunity to participate in a public hearing with the Board regarding the assessed value of their property.
- It is the Board of Assessment Review that presides over the formal appeal hearings.
  - The hearings will include a County attorney, County staff, and board members.
  - The hearings will be held in Council Chambers and open to the public.
  - The Board will review recommendations from the Referee Meetings as well as hear Formal Appeals from property owners.



# Superior Court Appeal



Per State Code Title 9 § 8312(c), if an agreement cannot be reached property owners can appeal the Board of Assessment Review decision to Superior Court.





# Tax Programs



The County has two tax programs that are calculated on taxable assessed value and are established in County Code.

1. Low-income Over 65
2. Disability

Currently, if a taxpayer qualifies, they will get \$12,500 off their taxable assessment. There are 818 property owners that qualify. These property owners pay \$10,569 in county taxes.

With the new assessed values, I recommend the \$12,500 be increased to \$229,000. These 818 property owners would pay \$10,539 in county taxes.

# Tax Programs



Recommended Code changes for County Low-Income 65 Program:

- (1) Change exemption from \$12,500 to \$229,000
- (2) Change residency requirement from 3 years to 5 years

Recommended Code changes for (non-veteran) County Disability Program:

- (1) Change exemption from \$12,500 to \$229,000
- (2) Change residency requirement from 3 years to 5 years
- (3) Change income limits to match low-income 65 Program \$4,500 to \$6,000 for single and \$6,500 to \$7,500 for married (income does not include social security benefits, railroad retirement benefits, and pension income from the applicant's disability)

# Tax Programs



These changes do not impact:

- (1) The State 65 Program where residents who lived in the State for 10 consecutive years get half of their school taxes discounted up to \$500 (25,478 properties enrolled)
- (2) The Disability Veterans Tax Credit where residents who lived in the State for 3 preceding years and are totally disabled get a full credit towards their property taxes excluding Sussex Tech and non-value based fees and services (350 properties enrolled)

Deadlines for these programs are April 30 of each year. More information can be found here:  
<https://sussexcountyde.gov/tax-assistance-programs>



# Short Title of Ordinances



AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 103 (“TAXATION”), ARTICLE II (“REAL PROPERTY EXEMPTION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS”) OF THE CODE OF SUSSEX COUNTY TO UPDATE THE ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE THRESHOLD AND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 103 (“TAXATION”), ARTICLE I (“REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR DISABLED PERSONS”) OF THE CODE OF SUSSEX COUNTY TO UPDATE THE ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUE, RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT AND INCOME THRESHOLDS, THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND TO EXCLUDE PENSION INCOME DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE APPLICANT’S DISABILITY WHEN CALCULATING APPLICANT’S INCOME.



The background of the slide features a dark, textured surface with embossed Hebrew text. Two bright orange arrows are visible, pointing towards the right. The text is arranged in vertical columns, and the overall aesthetic is modern and academic.

Questions?

# Public Hearing



# Public Hearing



The Board of Assessment Review is given authority under State Code 9 Del. C §7004 to hear appeals of property assessments.

The ordinance today allows them to set their own rules on how to meet the requirements of the State Code.

Having the Board set their own rules to carry out its function is also done in the other two counties. New Castle County allows the Board to set its own rules per Title 9 of State Code and Kent County allows their Board to set its own rules per Chapter 9 in Kent County Code. Although the Board has always existed and met, the Code does not say the Board can set their own rules in either State or County Code for Sussex County. Therefore, to be consistent with the other boards, we are asking you to adopt this ordinance that gives them the ability to set their own rules to operate.

# Short Title of Ordinance



AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 103 (“TAXATION”) OF THE CODE OF SUSSEX COUNTY TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE VIII, ENTITLED “BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW” TO GRANT THE BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW AUTHORITY TO ADOPT RULES AND PROCEDURES TO CARRY OUT ITS DUTIES AS OUTLINED IN 9 DEL. C. §7004