

*Town of Otis*  
**Selectboard/ Board of Health**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
*Conference Room, 1 North Main Rd., Otis, MA*  
**Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 6:30 PM**

This meeting will be held in person at the location provided on this notice. Members of the public are welcome to attend. A remote option is offered via zoom with the link provided below.

Please note that while an option for remote participation is being provided as a courtesy, the meeting will not be suspended or terminated if technological problems interrupt the virtual broadcast, unless otherwise required by law.

Anyone with interest in any specific item should plan in person attendance. This meeting is being recorded.

Topic: Select Board

Time: Nov 25, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88395677432?pwd=aGM9mpChkpR6ySpsqDtpFc5k6Ek42I.1>

Meeting ID: 883 9567 7432

Passcode: 505657

**Attendance:** Terry Gould, Larry Southard, Brandi Page, Stacey Schultze, Denise Hardie, Steve Schultze, Cynthia Fletcher, Larry Gould, Chris Bouchard, Frank Tolopko, B.J. O'Brien, Rich Phair, Brittany Phair, Mike Tame, Sue Brofman, Diane Dyer, Heather Gray, Eric, Sam . Zoom: Gary Thomas, John Fletcher, Peter Stearns, Mary Kay Pinkham, Sue Ebitz and Lisa D'Orazio.

**Call to Order:** 6:30 PM.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from Nov 12<sup>th</sup> were approved as written.

**Revitalization Quarterly Report:** Stacey highlighted the Committee's progress over the last quarter. They have 655 responses from their survey so far. They have decided to leave it open in case it may be beneficial to the Planning Board. Work continues on the narrative files. They were awarded \$25,000 for Real Estate Technical Services through a grant. Stacey is working with Ben Murphy from Mass Development on the scope for the project. This will include a detailed look at up to three underutilized properties in the town center. She reported that the business focus groups went well. Discussion was led by a volunteer and they received good feedback. Staffing is the biggest issue the businesses report facing. Stacey has partnered with UCONN for a report that summarizes the contamination at the Terranova Market site. This report is expected in a couple weeks and she said gives a starting point for rehabilitating the property. Construct was invited to one of their meetings to present and they are hoping to have Habitat for Humanity attend in the future. She talked about the food trucks which ended up going into the fall and on occasion were even two nights a week. She felt they renormalized bringing the community back to the town center and proved the demand for an additional dining option in Town. The food vendors were asked by

the Committee to consider opening a brick-and-mortar business in town but none were interested. The Committee is planning a community day in the spring and possible events around the 250<sup>th</sup> celebrations. They are working on a fact sheet for interested businesses. Terry asked if any controls were built into the survey to prevent people from answering multiple times. Stacey said no the intention was to keep it anonymous. Terry questioned whether this compromises the data. Stacey felt it didn't. Terry brought up concerns about the food trucks. She felt the idea was fine initially for once or twice a month but then having it every week or sometimes twice a week took business away from the restaurants here in town that were trying to be open. She feels it needs to be re-evaluated before next year. Larry Gould asked to speak. He pointed out there are dozens of different trades and small businesses in town. He would like to see the committee promote and support those that are already operating here instead of the focus being to bring in new businesses. Speaking as someone who has been self employed it can be extremely challenging here from season to season. Stacey appreciated the comment and said she has a DBA list from the Town Clerk so she is aware of what businesses exist here. They feel a Chamber of Commerce or Business Association is something the businesses want and would benefit from. Their goal is to learn what Otis can support. They have heard that people want to bring back an additional grocery option. One of the business owners present asked about the survey. Why did it ask for financial information? That seems inappropriate. Stacey countered that it was to determine the size of the business. It was suggested you could have asked how many employees they have instead of asking for financial information. Stacey said it was an optional question and they could move on without answering it. Larry Southard said he had reviewed the charge of the committee that was put in place when they were appointed. He reminded the committee that the goal is to support both town centers. He asked that they be aware of the balance that exists. Encouraging a new business creates vulnerabilities for existing businesses. He feels they have gotten beyond their scope and questioned where it ends. He felt the EMS/ medical services topic was beyond what they are asked to do. Was there a reason a building in East Otis isn't being considered for the study with Mass Development? Stacey stated there are no vacant buildings in East Otis. Larry asked that they consider that balance as they make decisions. Terry asked if Stacey offered criticism of a business as a representative of the Town. Stacey said no she had not. Terry stated she had been told differently. It was clarified that what was communicated was outside opinions of the business and then ways Stacey felt they could help. The business had not asked for the opinions but did acknowledge the offer for help. Chris Bouchard echoed what Larry Gould had said. Let's support the businesses that are here. Has the committee considered the flood plain that impacts the entire Rte. 8 corridor? He agreed the seasons here can be very hard. We have long winters and a mud season that other communities do not. With fluctuations in traffic what is the incentive to set up here? Let's grow what is already here. Stacey clarified that all the businesses in town had been invited to the focus groups. Larry Southard confirmed what was being said. He's been operating for over 22 years as a store, auto shop, deli and gas station. There are years when the winter season is so challenging he has to pull in additional resources to make it into the start of summer. Terry asked why the committee wasn't focused on bringing a bank back. Stacey reported they had talked to two. So far, no interest. Diane Dyer spoke about the mobility challenges seniors here face and the services she'd like to see.

**Liquor License Transfer:** The Board had reviewed the entire packet for the transfer of the license at 1570 North Main Road. The license will transfer from Otis Poultry Farm to Stone Barn LLC. None of the members had any concerns. Terry made a motion to approve the transfer. Larry seconded and the motion passed, vote 3-0.

**Liquor License Renewals:** The Board members didn't have any questions or concerns with regard to the renewals. Terry made a motion to approve the renewals for the following liquor licenses.

L& M Auto, Retail

Otis Poultry Farm, Retail

Knox Trail Bar & Grill Corp., Inn holder

Otis Liquor Inc., Retail

Otis Ridge Ski Area LLC, Common Victualler

Gary seconded and the motion passed, vote 3-0 on all the licenses except L&M Auto which was 2-0. Larry abstained from voting on his own license

**Tax Classification Hearing:** Terry opened the Tax Classification hearing. The packet for the meeting outlined the approved town wide assessments for FY26 and projected the tax rate scenario when calculated from our operating expenses and revenue. Packet attached. B.J. O'Brien was present as Chair of the Board of Assessors. The Board recommends a single tax rate for the Town. He confirmed the rate at which they saw values increase based on real estate sales this past year and the resulting shift downward of the tax rate. The Board members did not have any questions. Terry made a motion to adopt a single tax rate across the property classes in town. Larry seconded and the motion passed, vote 3-0.

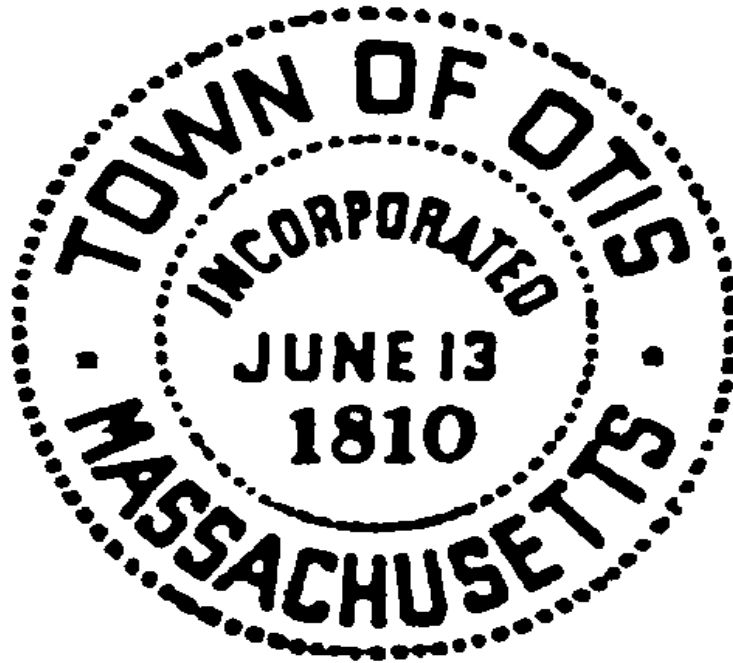
**Retention of Zoom Recordings:** Denise had requested at the previous meeting that the Board add this to their agenda and consider keeping the zoom recording longer than currently in practice. The policy since hybrid meetings were adopted was to retain the zoom recording no less time than it took to draft the minutes of the meeting. After a brief discussion they felt it was appropriate to resume regular audio recording and that those files, which are 1/3 the size of the zoom files, should be kept indefinitely. Those files are easily shared via email when requested. John Fletcher suggested we go back to having people state their name so if listening to a recording later you can determine who is speaking. Stacey approached the table with sheets containing signatures and left them for the Board.

**Recent & Upcoming Events:** The Holiday Tree Lighting is Dec 6th at 4:00pm and Gingerbread House Event Dec 14th at 11:00am.

**Review & Approval of Warrants:** Payroll and vendor warrants are on the table for signature.

**Not Anticipated by the Board:** Chris Bouchard updated the Board on the timing for the rescue services to begin operating under the Town. Jan 01 has been set as the start date. Brittany has been working hard on administrative tasks for the changeover.

**Adjourn:** 7:24 PM.



Fiscal Year 2026

# Tax Classification Hearing

November 25, 2025 at 6:30PM

## Otis Board of Assessors

William O'Brien, Chairperson

Jill Moretz, Member

Heather Gray, Member

Vision Appraisal

Candy Chaffee, Administrative Assessor

## Introduction

Prior to the mailing of 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter tax billings, the Select Board holds a public hearing to determine the percentage of the Town's property tax levy to be borne by each major property class. This responsibility and procedure are described in Chapter 40, Section 56 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

The steps in completing the Classification Hearing are outlined below. Also provided is information about the levy, property assessments, and recommendations made by the Board of Assessors.

## Steps in Setting Tax Rates

### Pre-classification Hearing Steps

- Step 1: Determination of the property tax levy (Budget Process)
- Step 2: Determine assessed valuations (Assessors)
- Step 3: Tabulate assessed valuations by class (Assessors)

### Classification Hearing Steps

- Step 4: Classification hearing presentation (Assessors & Selectboard)
- Step 5: Determine tax shift options (Selectboard)
- Step 6: Voting a tax shift factor (Selectboard)

### Post Classification Hearing Steps

- Step 7: Sign the LA-5 Classification Form (Selectboard)
- Step 8: Send annual recap to DOR for tax rate approval (Assessors)
- Step 9: Obtain DOR approval of tax rates (DOR)

## Terminology

The following are definitions of the terms frequently used in the discussion of tax rates.

Levy: The tax levy (or levy) is the amount of property taxes to be raised. The levy amount is determined by the budget. The total amount of the approved budget less revenues from other sources like motor vehicle excise, municipal fees, and state aid is the amount to be raised from property taxation. The projected tax levy is **\$6,226,436**. Last year's levy was **\$6,089,027**. That is a modest 2% increase.

Levy Ceiling: The levy ceiling is 2.5 percent of the full value of the Town. Based on the Otis aggregate valuation of **\$1,044,022,114** the town cannot levy taxes in excess of **\$26,100,553**.

New Growth Revenue: Property taxes derived from newly taxable properties like new construction, additions, renovations, subdivisions, and personal property. The assessors have tabulated new growth revenues of **\$29,632**.

Levy Limit: Also referred to as the “maximum allowable levy”, is calculated by adding 2.5 percent of the previous year’s levy limit plus new growth revenue for the present fiscal year to last year’s levy limit. Exceeding the levy limit requires an override of Proposition 2½. For Fiscal Year 2026 the levy limit is **\$6,450,240**.

## **The Fiscal Year 2026 Levy Limit and Amount to be Raised**

The following is a calculation of Otis’ levy limit for fiscal year 2026

Fiscal year 2025 levy limit	\$6, 264,008
Levy increase allowed under Prop. 2 ½	\$156,600
New growth revenue	\$29,632
FY2026 Overrides	0
Excluded Debt	-8,200
Fiscal year 2026 maximum allowable levy	\$6,442,040
<b>Levy to be raised</b>	<b>\$6,226,436</b>
Excess levy capacity	\$215,604

## **Valuations by Class before Tax Shift**

<u>Major Property Class</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Res vs CIP%</u>
Residential	\$986,849,636	94.52	94.52%
Commercial	\$19,498,670	1.87	
Industrial	\$4,529,300	0.43	
<u>Personal Property</u>	<u>\$33,144,508</u>	<u>3.18</u>	<u>5.48%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,044,022,114</b>	<b>100.0000</b>	<b>100.0000</b>

## **Shifting the Tax Burden**

Municipalities with a large commercial/industrial tax base often see fit to shift the tax burden to help maintain lower residential taxes. Given Otis’ small commercial and industrial base, it would take an approximate 10 percent increase in the commercial tax rate to yield a 1 percent residential tax rate reduction.

## **Board of Assessors Recommendation**

The Board of Assessors recommends that the Selectboard adopts a single tax rate to be applied to all classes of property in Otis.

# Tax Rates

Based on the above shift factors, the Board of Assessors has calculated the following tax rates needed to raise the tax levy:

<u>Property Class</u>	<u>FY2025</u>	<u>FY2026</u>
Residential	\$6.46	\$5.96
Commercial	\$6.46	\$5.96
Industrial	\$6.46	\$5.96
Personal Property	\$6.46	\$5.96

\*Note that the FY2026 rate is an estimate and may change incrementally upon Department of Revenue review.

# Tax Impacts

Actual property tax impacts will vary from property to property.

The average single-family tax bill will increase by approximately 3%. Individual tax bill increases or decreases will vary depending on a number of property criteria.

Fiscal Year 2025 Average Assessment	\$504,831
Tax Rate / \$1,000 Assessment	6.46
Average Single-Family Tax Bill	\$3,261.21
Fiscal Year 2026 Average Assessment	\$564,608
Tax Rate / \$1,000 Assessment	5.96
Average Single-Family Tax Bill	\$3,365.06

# Voting a Tax Shift Factor (proposed motion)

The Otis Selectboard votes in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2025 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the town’s annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

# Assessor's Classification Report (LA4)

OTIS, MA

## All Neighborhoods

### Real Property

Property Type	Mix Use Chap Count	Parcel Count	Class 1 Residential Assessed Value	Class 2 Open Space Assessed Value	Class 3 Commercial Assessed Value	Class 4 Industrial Assessed Value	Total for Property Type
101	0	1,548	874,012,449	0	0	0	874,012,449
102	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
misc 103, 109, 110	0	62	38,362,634	0	0	0	38,362,634
104	0	9	3,917,168	0	0	0	3,917,168
105	0	1	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
111-125	0	2	1,020,900	0	0	0	1,020,900
130-132,106	0	1,091	61,040,366	0	0	0	61,040,366
200-231	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
300-393	0	36	0	0	11,499,982	0	11,499,982
400-442	0	10	0	0	0	4,529,300	4,529,300
450-452	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ch 61 (600)	7	23	0	0	257,493	0	257,493
ch 61a (700)	1	4	0	0	31,600	0	31,600
ch 61b (800)	2	6	0	0	156,500	0	156,500
012-043	0	25	8,196,119	0	7,553,095	0	15,749,214
900	0	223	0	0	0	0	42,904,791
		<b>3,050</b>	<b>986,849,636</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19,498,670</b>	<b>4,529,300</b>	<b>1,053,782,397</b>

1,010,877,606

### Personal Property

Total Real Property:

Property Type	Parcel Count	Class 5 Personal Prop Assessed Value
501	1,095	6,222,487
502	20	684,218
504	2	18,307,748
505	3	4,366,200
506	1	2,685,300
508	3	878,555
	<b>1,124</b>	<b>33,144,508</b>

Total Personal Property: 33,144,508

Total Real + PP Taxable Property 1,044,022,114

42,904,791

Total Exempt Property:

Total Count Real and PP: 4,174