

Dated: May 11, 2011

Although I now have a copy of the FOILed 2011 Tentative assessment database which should have been provided to me as it has always been for the past 8 years, without all the nonsense that consumed the better part of a couple of days last week, I asked to address the town board tonight to read a prepared statement regarding my FOIL and subsequent appeal.

The fact that the town attorney interfered with a very routine FOIL request by using his position to intimidate others in an effort to try to prevent me from getting the assessment database is reprehensible. I view these recent events as a deliberate attempt to prevent me from making the database available online in an Excel spreadsheet so that residents could, if they so choose, use that information to file a grievance

The Freedom of Information Law is clearly on my side in this instance; the FOILed assessment data disk should have never been denied, particularly after Robert Freeman was consulted by the town attorney. Make no mistake...this was not a misunderstanding. Robert Freeman is a very clear speaking advocate of the rights afforded under the Freedom of Information Law. This town board had no problem giving me the assessment database last year; so why did the town attorney try to block my FOIL request this year?

Perhaps it can best be explained by saying that this town board, like the previous town board, is now well aware, that the assessment database contains much more than what is made available to the general public on the town or the county websites. It contains information that allows a person experienced in database maintenance to analyze and easily spot errors within the files.

Perhaps, the town attorney's misstep has finally publicly acknowledged that there are problems with the information in the assessment database; problems that some of them may want to sweep under the carpet. The actions of the town attorney in this matter should be a wake-up call to all town residents to review their assessment and consider filing a grievance on or before May 24<sup>th</sup> if they feel their property is unfairly assessed.

Herb, as an attorney, you are supposed to advise the town board of the law and guide them in the right direction; not put up roadblocks to keep information from the public. There have been other instances where it could be argued as to whether or not your interpretation of the FOIL was an attempt to cover for the supervisor. However, with this stunt that was so blatant, you have now made it crystal clear that you are not above giving out misinformation if it suits your purpose...even if it is contrary to law.

Further, I want to make it perfectly clear, [cathy@snsdollars.com](mailto:cathy@snsdollars.com) is my own personal and business email account and I see no reason why Mr. Wiatr should have been called by the town attorney to discuss my FOIL request,

which I submitted with my own signature using this email account. I hope in the future you will respect me by contacting me directly regarding matters that I personally bring before the town board.

As an aside, Pat, just to set the record straight...I do have considerable accounting and technological experience...there is no need for you to ever feel you have to babysit me...I believe you know exactly what I am referring to with that statement!

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine R. Lawrence



**Concerned Citizens for Honest & Open Government**

<http://www.newhartfordnyonline.blogspot.com>

<http://www.nhconcernedcitizens.com>

<http://www.townofnewhartford.com>

Email: [concerned@nhconcernedcitizens.com](mailto:concerned@nhconcernedcitizens.com)