

## I have recently gotten married and would like to add my significant other and/or change my name on the tax bill. How do I do that?

All ownership records are recorded with Milwaukee County Register of Deeds. In order to make that change, a new deed of the home indicating the change will need to be recorded. Once the document is recorded, we are notified of that change and will update our records.

### **The retaining wall between my home and my neighbors is falling, how do we know whose property is on?**

In order to know where your property lines are, you need a property survey. If you would like to know if there is a survey in your property file, please call our office directly. If we do not have one on file, you can check with the building department as well. If neither office has one and you need it for any reason, it would be the home owner's responsibility to have one done by a registered land surveyor.

### **I just bought my home in Wauwatosa and received a notice of changed assessment; why has the property assessment changed?**

When a property sells, our office reviews the property record card of the home to determine whether or not there was a change in the property description. For example, a change in condition of the property, any new exterior structures, or updates we previously did not have on record.

The new value, would be based upon the last reassessment years' model and would be set as if we knew of the updates during that time.

### **I am in the process of remodeling part of my home and have been issued permits, how will this affect my property assessment?**

Each year, our office reviews all residential and commercial building permits that are issued or were not completed from the previous year. We use this information to update our property record card and to reflect the new information based upon the work that has been completed

Any permit item that is not completed by the assessment date of January 1st, would be revisited for the following assessment year.

### **What is the Board of Review?**

The Board of Review is a quasi-judicial body that operates under State of Wisconsin Statutes. If you feel your assessment is not correct, you can appeal your assessment to the Board of Review. While you can appeal your assessment directly to the Board of Review, it is highly recommended that you first contact the Assessor's Office. Minor errors and misunderstandings can often be corrected at an informal meeting with the Assessor's office first.

To appeal your assessment to the Board of Review, you must be able to demonstrate, in a factual and meaningful way, that there is an error in the assessor's valuation. Only actual sales of comparable properties are accepted as evidence.

The Board of Review does not recognize a comparison of the assessed value of your property to those of other properties as a basis to change assessments. Wisconsin Case Law precludes this type of comparison since it is impossible to determine that the assessed values of the comparable properties used are correct. People interested in appealing their assessment to the Board of Review need to contact the City Clerk's Office.

### **How will my taxes change as a result of a new assessment?**

Though the value of your property affects your share of taxes, the actual amount you pay is determined by the budget needs of the schools, city, county, sewer district, and technical college. All of these taxing units decide what services they will provide in the coming year and how much money they will need to provide those services. Once this decision is made, a tax rate is adopted that will generate the needed funds.

### **There are 5 taxing authorities that approve a budget each year that together become the Tax Levy.**

- Common Council
- School Board
- MATC Board
- MMSD Board
- County Board



# Frequently Asked Questions

City of Wauwatosa  
Assessors Office

7725 W North Avenue

(414) 479-8969

[www.wauwatosa.net/assessor](http://www.wauwatosa.net/assessor)





## What do I do if I don't agree with my assessment?

If you disagree with your assessed value, (not your tax bill), please contact the Assessor's office.

Prior to Open Book and Board of Review you can request a review of your property assessment by filing a "request for review" form available on the assessor's page at [www.wauwatosa.net](http://www.wauwatosa.net). This form can only be filed by the property owner or agent if an agent authorization form is also completed.

When filing a request for review, one of our appraisers will review the entirety of your property. You will be notified via a "notice of changed assessment" whether or not there is a change in the assessment prior to the next open book period.

During open book, please contact the assessor's office directly to request an informal review of your assessment. The appraiser assigned to your neighborhood will review your property's description to make sure it is accurate and discuss how the value was determined.

To know when the next open book period is, please contact our office or visit our website.

### What is the Assessor's role?

The Assessor's office is staffed by state certified individuals whose duties are to analyze, discover, list and value all taxable real property in the city, in a uniform manner. The Assessor's office is not involved in the collection of property taxes or the calculation of the mill/tax rate.

### What is the process of setting assessed values?

We, as appraisers set the values. The CAMA system is just a tool that assists us in our work. Internally, every value generated by our system is reviewed for "reasonableness." If a generated value does not appear appropriate, either for its neighborhood or property type, other value indicators are considered.

Externally, our work is reviewed by the Department of Revenue (DOR) as to the degree of "equity" achieved. We receive reports from the DOR that measure our assessment results.

### Do I have to allow the assessor into my home if an inspection is requested?

The State of Wisconsin recognizes a property owner's right to privacy. Therefore, they are within their right to refuse entry into their home by the local assessor's office. However, by denying an interior view, an estimate of the property's description and condition is made, that may not be as accurate if the assessor obtained an actual view of the property.

### How can my assessment change when I haven't done anything to my property?

General economic conditions such as fluctuating interest rates, sales inflation rates, supply and demand and changes in tax laws will influence the value of real estate. As property values change, those changes must be reflected on the assessment roll.

### Will I be notified if there is a change in my assessment?

Yes. Wisconsin law requires notification whenever an assessment is changed.

### Does the assessor have defined goals which they are expected to meet?

The assessor is expected to value all properties fairly and uniformly. To assist in meeting that goal, we are required to value in conformance with Chapter 70, of the Wisconsin State Statutes, and the prescribed Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual. As stated earlier, the Department of Revenue monitors our work on an annual basis.

### What is the difference between Assessed Value and Estimated Fair Market Value?

For most properties, the assessment was established at the last revaluation, unless changes in a property description occurred after the last revaluation that

may result in a different assessed value. The estimated fair market value is calculated by taking the assessment and dividing it by the city wide assessment ratio.

This ratio is determined by the Department of Revenue and the same ratio shows up on all tax bills within Wauwatosa. However, the ratio and its resulting estimated fair market value is not specific to location or type of property as it reflects all sales activity from the previous year.

### I am interested in putting my property on the market, how can I gauge what my property is worth?

The best indication of market value is what a willing buyer will pay for a home in the open market. In order to understand what your home is worth at a given time, you can review sales on the city's website at [www.wauwatosa.net/property](http://www.wauwatosa.net/property) by entering in characteristics of your home and making adjustments for any differences, such as square footage, number of bathrooms, land size, etc.

Keep in mind, comparing your assessment to another is not a good practice as there are multiple influences in setting one value,

### How can I review my property description?

Property descriptions can be reviewed online at [www.wauwatosa.net/property](http://www.wauwatosa.net/property) and/or by contacting our office to speak with a property appraiser. If you would like to see the full property file, please come into the office during normal business hours.

## Important dates and deadlines

- ◇ **January 1st– Statutory assessment date**
- ◇ **March 1st– Deadline for property tax exemption requests**
- ◇ **Spring- Notices of changed assessments are typically mailed, open book and board of review to follow– to see dates please look online at [www.wauwatosa.net/assessor](http://www.wauwatosa.net/assessor)**
- ◇ **Late Spring/Summer– Close current assessment roll and work on next years'**
- ◇ **December- Schedule any submitted "requests for reviews" for upcoming assessment year**