

# Property Tax Calculation

The following has been reviewed for accuracy and permission granted to publish by our Town of Warren property assessor Kevin Irwin and applies only to the Town of Warren. Other towns may differ.

No one likes the amount they are charged for property tax. In an effort to lower your property tax you appear at the 'Board of Review', but, what basis do you have to question the 'Net Property Tax' on your 'Real Estate Property Tax Bill'? Most feel comparing your home to another home that is similar to yours with a lower tax is a valid comparison and should result in lowering your tax. In my investigation this isn't so. Each home is unique in its inside and outside features.

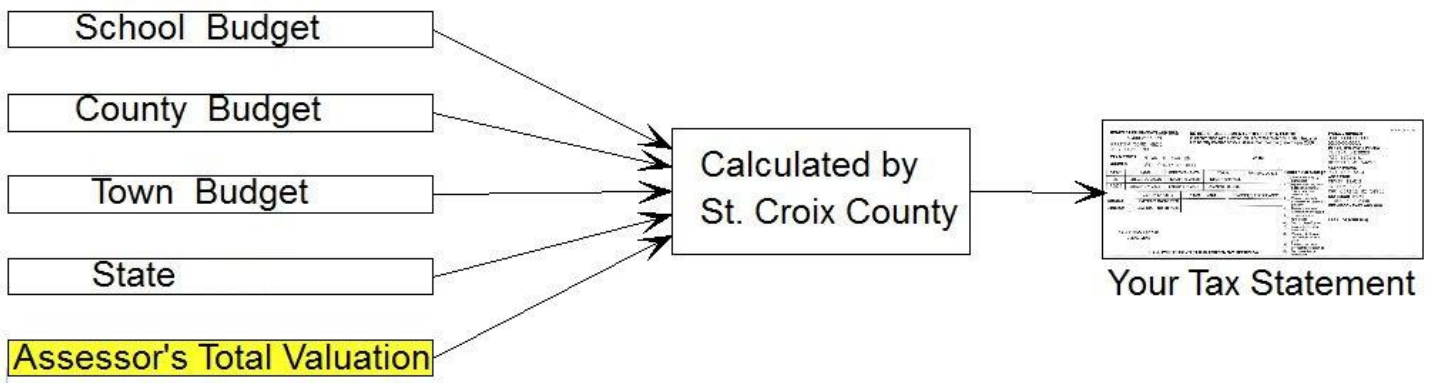
The first step in determining your property tax happens when the tax assessor walks through your home and observes the home's features among which are, type of construction, floor areas, number of bathrooms, fireplaces, decks, garage, age of home, etc. These numbers are entered on a 'Summary Report' sheet that is filled out during his visit. These are raw numbers, no costs associated

A document titled "Dwelling Pricing Schedule" is available that gives the costs for floor area, porches, carports, decks, patios, etc. I used the costs from this document to calculate my home and compared the results to the assessor's 'Summary Report' and found it to be right on.

The assessor enters the numbers from the "Summary Report" and the land value derived from evaluating past sales and property transfers into MCost, the computer program used by the State of Wisconsin. MCost already contains the costs from the "Dwelling Pricing Schedule". When run MCost calculates the "Total Assessed Value" that appears on your 'Real Estate Property Tax Bill'. ***This is all the assessor is responsible for. All other dollar costs come from other entities.***

The other factors that result in your "Net Property Tax" are the school budget (local schools and tech schools), county budget, town budget, and the state. The county then feeds all of this into their calculation and the result is your "Net Property Tax".

If you are interested in what the state has to do with your property tax go to:  
<http://www.dor.state.wi.us/equ/strat.html>



So where does this leave you in contesting your property tax? Insist on accompanying the assessor as he walks through your home filling out the 'Summary Report' and ask him to explain the reasoning for each number being entered. Ask for a copy of the 'Summary Report' for your records. If the 'Summary Report' correctly reflects your home, your property tax is correct.

Once you are in agreement with the assessors "Total Assessed Value" on your property tax statement; to lower your property tax you will need to take an active role in monitoring the costs for the schools, town and/or county boards from which the dollar amounts originate. Schools being the largest tax followed by the county.

Call your tax assessor if you wish to have your home re-evaluated.  
Kevin Erwin can be reached at 800-688-2390

Written by Town Resident Bob Albright