

MIDDLESEX NORTH REGISTRY OF DEEDS

RICHARD P HOWE JR, REGISTER OF DEEDS

BILLERICA – CARLISLE – CHELMSFORD – DRACUT – DUNSTABLE – LOWELL – TEWKSBURY
TYNGSBOROUGH – WESTFORD – WILMINGTON

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023

Middlesex North by the Numbers

Docs Recorded 1991 to 2023		% change Prior year	Deeds	Mortgages	Foreclosure Deeds	E-Filed Docs	E-File %	Revenue (millions)
1991	52019	0%	5868	8823	466			
1992	76282	+47%	7321	14487	762			
1993	83337	+9%	7463	17097	701			
1994	71427	-14%	5721	10936	624			
1995	60681	-15%	7223	10137	401			
1996	67286	+11%	8057	12017	399			
1997	70128	+4%	7984	13664	322			
1998	93633	+34%	8771	21823	185			
1999	89506	-4%	8557	17816	101			
2000	71558	-20%	8254	14456	74			
2001	97180	+36%	8355	24969	44			
2002	115890	+19%	8756	31221	45			
2003	146956	+27%	8977	41800	42			\$26.1
2004	96204	-35%	9165	28079	69			\$21.7
2005	87866	-9%	8930	25402	47	1057	1%	\$22.0
2006	72830	-17%	7236	20503	166	1871	3%	\$17.5
2007	66192	-9%	6767	15999	271	3491	5%	\$16.3
2008	56011	-15%	5568	11451	602	3956	7%	\$12.2
2009	65838	+18%	5557	14743	400	8168	12%	\$12.1
2010	63247	-4%	5535	13837	584	9013	14%	\$11.8
2011	59173	-6%	5332	12007	429	14736	30%	\$11.0
2012	70558	+19%	9158	16002	342	24210	34%	\$13.5
2013	67001	-5%	6718	13272	150	25251	38%	\$14.4
2014	53584	-20%	6561	9190	155	20306	38%	\$13.7
2015	60516	+13%	6913	11148	209	26955	45%	\$15.1
2016	65521	+8%	7776	12639	270	33620	52%	\$16.5
2017	59064	-10%	7268	10647	194	32463	55%	\$16.3
2018	57380	-3%	7319	9745	213	31173	54%	\$17.3
2019	60104	+5%	7459	11631	91	35700	59%	\$18.6
2020	69468	+16%	7250	17347	49	57863	89%	\$22.8
2021	75922	+9%	8451	18035	21	65914	87%	\$28.2
2022	52819	-30%	7138	9319	25	45180	86%	\$21.6
2023	39115	-30%	5847	5895	40	32947	85%	\$15.7

MEDIAN DEED PRICES BY COMMUNITY: 2005 TO 2023

<i>Showing year-to-year percentage change (for prices greater than \$60,000)</i>										
<i>Year</i>	<i>Billerica</i>		<i>Carlisle</i>		<i>Chelmsford</i>		<i>Dracut</i>		<i>Dunstable</i>	
2005	\$359,900	5%	\$540,000	-6%	\$325,000	3%	\$269,900	10%	\$460,000	21%
2006	\$324,000	-10%	\$560,000	4%	\$317,500	-2%	\$260,000	-4%	\$395,500	-14%
2007	\$329,000	2%	\$597,500	7%	\$304,000	-4%	\$241,000	-7%	\$399,900	1%
2008	\$299,950	-9%	\$570,000	-5%	\$280,000	-8%	\$275,450	14%	\$426,500	7%
2009	\$291,700	-3%	\$525,000	-8%	\$289,000	3%	\$230,000	-17%	\$330,000	-23%
2010	\$300,000	3%	\$555,000	6%	\$290,000	0%	\$237,000	3%	\$338,000	2%
2011	\$285,500	-5%	\$545,000	-2%	\$275,250	-5%	\$214,800	-9%	\$362,500	7%
2012	\$295,500	4%	\$450,000	-17%	\$278,950	1%	\$226,032	5%	\$422,969	17%
2013	\$312,000	6%	\$458,000	2%	\$290,000	4%	\$239,950	6%	\$370,000	-13%
2014	\$332,500	7%	\$533,750	17%	\$310,000	7%	\$245,000	2%	\$405,000	9%
2015	\$350,000	5%	\$560,000	5%	\$323,000	4%	\$259,900	6%	\$430,400	6%
2016	\$370,000	6%	\$569,900	2%	\$330,000	2%	\$270,500	4%	\$430,000	0%
2017	\$400,000	8%	\$730,000	8%	\$361,500	10%	\$290,000	7%	\$489,000	14%
2018	\$405,000	1%	\$769,500	5%	\$370,000	2%	\$319,000	10%	\$620,000	27%
2019	\$438,950	8%	\$800,000	4%	\$394,425	7%	\$329,000	3%	\$520,000	-16%
2020	\$480,000	9%	\$825,000	3%	\$440,000	12%	\$370,000	12%	\$502,500	-3%
2021	\$537,000	12%	\$875,000	6%	\$480,000	9%	\$420,000	14%	\$630,000	25%
2022	\$591,750	10%	\$1,329,000	52%	\$529,950	10%	\$431,000	3%	\$700,000	11%
2023	\$615,000	4%	\$1,182,500	-11%	\$550,000	4%	\$450,000	4%	\$800,000	14%
	<i>Lowell</i>		<i>Tewksbury</i>		<i>Tyngsboro</i>		<i>Westford</i>		<i>Wilmington</i>	
2005	\$254,900	7%	\$345,000	5%	\$293,000	-7%	\$420,000	1%	\$383,598	7%
2006	\$247,000	-3%	\$325,350	-6%	\$350,000	19%	\$397,000	-5%	\$384,450	0%
2007	\$225,000	-9%	\$305,000	-6%	\$295,000	-16%	\$369,900	-7%	\$360,000	-6%
2008	\$184,900	-18%	\$310,000	2%	\$261,500	-11%	\$329,900	-11%	\$335,000	-7%
2009	\$178,500	-3%	\$290,000	-6%	\$249,450	-5%	\$349,900	6%	\$334,575	0%
2010	\$180,000	1%	\$289,000	0%	\$271,000	9%	\$338,250	-3%	\$346,500	4%
2011	\$170,000	-6%	\$280,000	-3%	\$262,000	-3%	\$360,000	6%	\$317,000	-9%
2012	\$175,000	3%	\$275,000	-2%	\$237,500	-9%	\$369,900	3%	\$354,250	12%
2013	\$195,000	11%	\$283,850	3%	\$299,000	26%	\$385,250	4%	\$360,000	2%
2014	\$208,167	7%	\$320,000	13%	\$326,000	9%	\$366,500	-5%	\$373,950	4%
2015	\$221,000	6%	\$329,450	3%	\$288,500	-12%	\$380,000	4%	\$400,000	7%
2016	\$229,700	4%	\$354,950	8%	\$315,000	9%	\$403,000	6%	\$403,500	1%
2017	\$250,000	9%	\$369,950	4%	\$339,900	8%	\$460,000	14%	\$460,000	14%
2018	\$255,000	2%	\$385,500	4%	\$327,000	-4%	\$519,000	13%	\$484,000	5%
2019	\$287,500	13%	\$400,000	4%	\$313,650	-4%	\$496,000	-4%	\$537,650	11%
2020	\$329,875	15%	\$452,446	13%	\$355,000	13%	\$549,900	11%	\$565,000	5%
2021	\$380,000	15%	\$520,000	15%	\$444,500	25%	\$630,000	15%	\$595,000	5%
2022	\$425,050	12%	\$573,500	10%	\$525,000	18%	\$667,500	6%	\$675,000	13%
2023	\$440,000	4%	\$565,000	-2%	\$511,750	-3%	\$700,000	5%	\$664,000	-2%

MIDDLESEX NORTH REVENUE BREAKDOWN: 2001-2023

<i>Year</i>	<i>Rec Fees</i>	<i>Excise Tax</i>	<i>CPA</i>	<i>RoD Tech</i>	<i>Copies</i>	<i>Total Rev</i>	<i>Inc Prior Yr</i>
2001	1,683,968	6,824,138	1,845,554	0	171,156	10,638,504	
2002	2,053,313	7,448,014	2,220,120	0	218,016	12,025,947	+13%
2003	9,939,032	10,711,657	2,838,190	525,110	340,542	25,769,725	+114%
2004	8,683,821	10,340,685	1,895,030	519,715	272,028	21,711,280	-16%
2005	7,845,005	11,807,727	1,703,090	470,540	179,386	22,004,809	+1%
2006	7,795,665	11,700,791	1,696,230	471,520	175,633	21,836,700	-1%
2007	5,544,661	9,099,832	1,276,270	352,410	59,984	16,333,427	-25%
2008	4,480,655	6,310,086	1,068,900	296,955	35,288	12,191,884	-25%
2009	5,322,095	5,139,387	1,251,800	347,565	25,679	12,086,526	-1%
2010	5,085,580	5,109,201	1,203,360	332,160	22,086	11,752,387	-3%
2011	4,622,670	4,631,891	1,106,980	310,785	18,898	10,691,224	-9%
2012	5,765,332	5,689,329	1,345,800	378,435	18,274	13,197,170	+23%
2013	5,513,380	7,232,687	1,255,050	352,600	14,593	14,368,310	+9%
2014	4,094,340	8,274,438	982,810	280,860	14,032	13,646,480	-5%
2015	4,691,101	9,419,659	1,114,200	317,115	15,686	15,557,761	+14%
2016	5,131,600	9,779,672	1,212,470	346,300	15,785	16,485,827	+6%
2017	4,583,300	10,239,988	1,096,820	313,681	15,229	16,249,066	-1%
2018	4,397,757	11,485,820	1,054,110	303,905	14,898	17,256,580	+6%
2019	4,728,270	12,411,925	1,113,445	318,685	9,594	18,576,921	+8%
2020	5,830,241	13,361,932	3,279,980	369,530	5,087	22,847,775	+23%
2021	6,343,940	16,853,295	3,614,570	406,165	5,343	28,221,913	+24%
2022	4,102,750	14,751,725	2,454,525	282,580	3,444	21,595,206	-24%
2023	2,821,435	10,749,229	1,797,575	208,335	2,003	15,735,231	-27%

The registry of deeds collects revenue from five different sources:

- Recording Fees – standard fee set by legislature to record a document
- Excise Tax – tax on the sale of real estate based on sales price. Rate is \$2.28 per \$500
- CPA – surcharge on documents recorded to fund Community Preservation Act
- RoD Tech – surcharge of \$5 per document to fund technology for registries of deeds
- Copies - \$1 per page for document copies printed by registry. Fee set by legislature

RECORD BOOK PRODUCTION: 1855 - 2023

Start Year	End Year	Years	Start Book	End Book	# of Books	# of Pages
1855	1924	69	1	702	702	421,000
1924	1949	25	703	1127	425	255,000
1949	1995	46	1128	7510	6,383	2,790,500
1995	2001	6	7511	12442	4,932	1,479,600
2001	2023	22	12443	38262	25819	7,745,700
Totals		168			38262	12,692,000

Middlesex North: Top Stories of 2023

- **Recording volume decline** – The 39,115 documents recorded in 2023 was the lowest annual amount for Middlesex North since 1983. The year-to-year decline was 30 percent from 2022 (52,819) which was 30 percent less than the prior year (75,922 in 2021). The primary cause of this decline was higher interest rates which have caused the number of mortgages being recorded to drop even more. They declined 37 percent from 2022.
- **Decline in revenue** – Fewer documents being recorded means less revenue collected with the \$15.7 million collected in 2023 a 27 percent drop from the \$21.6 million collected in 2022.
- **Prices hold steady** – Despite the decline in recordings and revenue, the median price of deeds recorded remained stable and may have increased slightly. The Middlesex North communities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Lowell, and Westford saw median deed prices increase by about 4 percent; while Carlisle, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough and Wilmington saw declines averaging 2 percent.
- **New Remote Video Notary Law** – Passed as part of the state’s supplementary budget in the spring, this new law will allow documents to be notarized online and completely digitally. Besides containing protections against fraud, the new law specifically mandates that a Massachusetts lawyer participate in certain transactions. The law was to take effect on January 1, 2024, however, some administrative requirements are causing a delay in implementation.
- **Validity of tax takings in doubt** – In the case of *Tyler v. Hennepin County*, the United States Supreme Court held that a Minnesota law that allowed the outright sale of real estate seized for unpaid property taxes violated the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Because the Massachusetts law works similarly, it is now also thought to be unconstitutional. The Massachusetts legislature is working on revisions to the law.
- **Cornelius Kiernan Justice Center** – In September, the 3-year-old Lowell Justice Center was renamed the Judge Cornelius F. Kiernan Justice Center. Born in Lowell in 1917, Kiernan served as a state representative from 1949 until his appointment to the District Court bench in 1974. Kiernan retired in 1983 at age 65 and passed away in 1996.
- **Supreme Judicial Court sits in Lowell** – On November 3, 2023, the justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court heard oral arguments in three cases at the Kiernan Justice Center. The Justices also attended a reception for the local legal community and met with high school students who attended the oral arguments.
- **Register of Deeds Richard Howe to retire** – In October, Register of Deeds Richard P. Howe Jr. announced he will not seek reelection in 2024 but will retire when his term ends on January 1, 2025. How has served as Register of Deeds since 1995.