

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ABATEMENT

Tuesday, February 27, 2018 6 pm

TOWN HALL BASEMENT Meeting Room
1 Conant Square, Brandon, VT 05733

Present: Seth Hopkins-Vice Chair, Doug Bailey, Devon Fuller, Bill Moore, Lisa-Marie Rovi, Marge Munger, Seth Clifford, Brian Coolidge, Bud Coolidge, Joan Thomas, Laura Peterson, Dick White and Clerk, Sue Gage (a quorum of members)

Others present: **Jonathan Blake and David Atherton**

Vice-Chair, Seth Hopkins opened the meeting at 6:03 pm and acknowledged that a quorum was present. Mr. Hopkins asked if there were any ex-parte communications regarding any of the requests for abatement on the agenda. Board members did not indicate any ex-parte communications. Mr. Hopkins opened the first hearing.

I) 6:03 PM, Richard W Morris; Account 0419; 6 Grove Street; Parcel 0079-0006; SPAN 078-024-11248; Tax Map 20-50-54; Per Town of Brandon Policy on Sewer Bill Abatements

Vice-chair Seth Hopkins asked if there were any conflicts of interest. There were no conflicts of interest. Clerk, Susan Gage furnished copies of the letter and sewer usage summary submitted by Mr. Morris. Ms. Gage summarized the request from Mr. Morris who alleges that an outside faucet was faulty and leaking water. He requested that the Board abate all usage in excess of his calculated average of 43,000 gallons. Mr. Morris was not present to speak to his request. The Board entered deliberative session at 6:05 to discuss the request.

Dick White moved that the Board abate 15,000 gallons of usage, seconded by Seth Clifford. The motion was approved.

Clerk Susan Gage noted that the Board continues in deliberative session until a decision is written and signed.

Written decision abates \$195.00 which is 15,000 gallons. The abatement will result in a credit to be applied to a later billing.

II) 6:20 PM, Jonathan Blake; 28 High Street; Parcel 0029-0028; SPAN 078-024-11615; Tax Map 23-51-67; 24 VSA § 1535 (a)(4) taxes in which there is manifest error or a mistake of the listers

Vice-chair Seth Hopkins asked if there were any conflicts of interest. There were no conflicts of interest. Clerk, Susan Gage furnished copies of the letter from Jonathan Blake requesting abatement of taxes on 28 High Street, a property he purchased from foreclosure in October. Mr. Blake was present to speak to his request for abatement. Mr. Blake contends that the property is nearly worthless due to broken pipes damaging the interior of the property. He also states that there is an unknown source of water running through the basement constantly. Mr. Blake feels the property is overvalued and has requested that property taxes be abated in the amount of \$2,403.50 which equates to the house portion of the bill. The meeting concluded at 6:33 pm.

Doug Bailey moved to deny the request, seconded by Seth Clifford. The motion was approved.

Written decision denies the request for abatement.

III) 6:35 PM, Town of Brandon; 27 Walnut Street; Parcel 0052-0027; SPAN 078-024-11306; Tax Map 21-50-11; Sewer Acct 0614; 24 VSA § 1535 (a)(4) taxes in which there is manifest error or a mistake of the listers;

Vice-chair Seth Hopkins asked if there were any conflicts of interest. Board Member Bill Moore stated that he was an employee of the town. The Board had no objection to Mr. Moore hearing this request. Clerk, Susan Gage furnished copies of the letter from Town Manager requesting abatement of property taxes and sewer taxes on property acquired at 27 Walnut Street. Mr. Atherton stated that the property owners were in bankruptcy for a number of years which precluded the town from collection efforts. Shortly after the owners emerged from bankruptcy the house caught fire. The house was never fully removed after the fire and it is both an eyesore and a danger. Mr. Atherton felt that a quitclaim would be more productive and less costly than a tax sale in which the property would have to sit for another year during the redemption period. There have been some neighbors

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interested in purchasing the property from the town and it will be sold with a stipulation to clean up the site within a timeframe.

Marge Munger made a motion to abate all taxes and sewer on the property, seconded by Dick White. The motion was approved.

Written decision abates \$33,700.21 in unpaid taxes and \$6,329.25 in unpaid sewer fees.

IV) Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Seth Hopkins, Vice-Chair

Susan Gage, Clerk