

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF ABATEMENT

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

6:00 pm

Board Members present: Chair, Del Cook, Doug Bailey, Brian Coolidge, Seth Hopkins, Seth Clifford, Sally Cook, Bud Coolidge, Wendy Feldman, Marge Munger, Timothy Guiles, and Clerk Sue Gage. Laura Peterson and John Peterson arrived after the meeting started.

Guests present: Jeff Wallin

I) Abatement Hearings

Chair Del Cook opened the hearing at 6:00 pm.

- Jennifer Keeler; Parcel 0008-0140; 140 Middle Rd; Per 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5) - Taxes upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year.

Clerk, Sue Gage passed around the request for abatement, photographs and copies of the property tax bill for last year, 2018/2019. The taxpayer, Jennifer Keeler is requesting an abatement of tax from the time the home was destroyed by a falling tree on 5/7/2019 through the end of last tax year, 6/30/2019. The taxes were paid in full on 4/12/2019. Ms. Gage stated that we would need to tax the land valuation and any improvements. Ms. Gage did not include the lister card which would detail this. Seth Hopkins requested that we make sure the lister card is included in future abatement hearings.

- Brandi Whitney Backus and Michael Backus; Parcel 0010-0038; 38 Newton Rd; Per 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5) - Taxes upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year.

Seth Hopkins recused himself from this hearing. Ms. Gage passed out the request for abatement of taxes from Brandi Whitney Backus and Michael Backus for the home they lost in a fire on July 2, 2019. She also passed out the current year tax bill and a recalculated tax bill based on just the land and improvements, as well as a quit claim deed of property transfer on May 21st of this year. They are requesting abatement of current year taxes 2019/2020.

- Town of Brandon; Parcels 0010-0419 and 0010-0449; 419 Newton Rd and 449 Newton Rd; Parcels owned by Tax Exempt town.

Ms. Gage explained that the next request for abatement was for properties acquired by the town with FEMA funds to reclaim the flood zones on Newton Road. Two properties so far have been purchased and there are more to come. The properties will be torn down and the area will

become part of the fluvial floodplain. The purchases occurred after April 1st, so the old owners' names are on the tax bills, and they must be abated, as the Town is tax exempt. Tim Guiles asked if abating the taxes meant the fire district tax and school taxes would still be paid as the property is on the grand list. Ms. Gage confirmed that and stated that the taxes for the school and fire district would essentially be paid by the remaining taxpayers in town. Mr. Guiles asked what would happen if abatement was not granted. Ms. Gage explained that the town would have to pay itself the tax. Doug Bailey explained that there would be additional properties forfeited in this manner, and the town will tear down the structures leaving only land. We are looking to abate the current year taxes only, as the property will be listed as Town of Brandon property next year.

Marge Munger moved that we allow the Town Clerk/Treasurer to abate further properties under this arrangement for FEMA properties that will be purchased along Newton Road instead of bringing them before the board each time the transaction is completed. The motion was seconded by Seth Clifford and passed. Clerk, Sue Gage abstained. Future purchases for Newton Road properties under FEMA will be abated and board members will be notified by email that the abatement was completed.

II) Other Business

Ms. Gage mentioned that Jeff Wallin was here to request that the board of abatement meet prior to their scheduled November meeting in order to hear an abatement request from the Neshobe Golf Course. The board agreed, although a number of board members will need to recuse themselves from this meeting. Ms. Gage will ensure that we are able to have a quorum. Meeting was set for Thursday, September 19th at 6:00 pm.

Ms. Gage mentioned that she needs a group of BCA members to meet to go through the voter list. Marge Munger, Bud Coolidge, Wendy Feldman, and Del Cook will meet on Wednesday, September 11, at 10 am.

The board entered deliberative session.

III) Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Susan Gage, Clerk

Del Cook, Chair