

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ABATEMENT

Tuesday, September 22 at 6:00 PM
REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM

Board Members Present: Tim Guiles, Doug Bailey, Laura Peterson, John Peterson, Kathy Clark, Seth Clifford, Marge Munger, Bill Moore, Wendy Rowe-Feldman and Clerk, Sue Gage. Note a quorum was present.

Guests: Melanie Laraway, Ralph Ethier, and Darcy Stone

Clerk Sue Gage opened the meeting at 6pm, and asked the members to vote on a chair pro tem, as Del Cook was not at the meeting. Tim Guiles offered to chair, and the group voted affirmatively.

I. 6:00 pm Hearing – Melanie Williams Laraway; 1784 Forest Dale Rd, Brandon, VT 05733; Requesting abatement under 24 VSA § 1535(a)(3) Taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest and collection fees.

Chair pro tem Tim Guiles opened the hearing at 6:05 pm. Mr. Guiles administered the oath to Melanie Williams Laraway, and asked if there were any exparte communications or conflicts of interest on the board. There were none. Mr. Guiles asked Ms. Laraway to explain her request. Ms. Laraway stated that she was trying to sell her house in the middle of a divorce and that in order to pay off all the debts, she was hoping we could abate some of the outstanding amounts due for her sewer bill. Mr. Guiles asked whether her ex-husband is liable for any of the debt. Ms. Laraway responded that he should be but they are still married at this time. Doug Bailey asked whether the house was under a contract at this point. Ms. Laraway stated that it is not under contract right now. Marge Munger asked Ms. Laraway why there had been no attempt to pay the bill since 2016, when the last payment was recorded on the account. Ms. Laraway explained that she had not been working, and that her husband controlled the finances at that time. Wendy Rowe Feldman asked Ms. Laraway to clarify whether she was married and whether she was in the process of a divorce. Ms. Laraway confirmed that she is still married, and they are in the process of divorcing.

The public hearing was closed at 6:12 pm.

II. 6:10 pm Hearing – Ralph Ethier, Champlain Street, Brandon, VT 05733; Requesting abatement under 24 VSA § 1535(a)(3) Taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest and collection fees. Requesting abatement of interest and penalties for tax years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

Chair pro tem Tim Guiles opened the hearing at 6:13 pm. Mr. Guiles administered the oath to Ralph Ethier, and asked if there were any exparte communications or conflicts of interest on the board. There were none. Mr. Guiles asked Mr. Ethier to explain his request for abatement. Mr. Ethier explained that he was looking for abatement of the interest and penalties. Clerk, Sue Gage explained that Mr. Ethier had purchased the property in tax sale, but then had to wait for a year until the property was deeded to him. In that year and the year of the tax sale, the taxes became delinquent for an additional two years. Ms. Gage stated that Mr. Ethier came in and paid the outstanding taxes on the property. Mr. Ethier asserted that he wasn't aware that he would be charged interest and penalties on this.

The public hearing was closed at 6:18 pm.

III. 6:20 pm Hearing – Darcy Stone Hubbard, 52 Carver Street, Brandon, VT 05733; Taxes upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year. 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5).

Chair pro tem Tim Guiles opened the hearing at 6:18 pm. Mr. Guiles administered the oath to Darcy Stone Hubbard, and asked if there were any ex parte communications or conflicts of interest on the board. There were none. Mr. Guiles asked Ms. Hubbard to explain her request for abatement. Ms. Hubbard stated that her barn was lost in a fire on April 15th due to an arsonist. She would like her taxes abated for the period that the barn was no longer standing. The amount of abatement would be \$53.41 for the period of April 15th through June 30th.

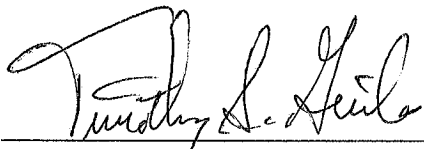
The public hearing was closed at 6:22 pm.

IV. 6:30 pm Hearing – Town of Brandon, 44 Prospect Street, Brandon, VT 05733;

Chair pro tem Tim Guiles opened the hearing at 6:22 pm. No one was present representing the town. Mr. Guiles asked whether the new buyers should be responsible for the outstanding taxes. Ms. Gage explained that the town acquired the property and the liabilities this winter through probate court. The town typically runs town owned or acquired property through the board of abatement to clear up outstanding property taxes and sewer. The town will owe the water department any outstanding amounts.

The public hearing was closed at 6:29 pm.

V. Deliberative Session – Note that deliberative session continues until a decision is written and signed.



Tim Guiles, Chair Pro Tem



Susan Gage, Clerk