



Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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**Board of Abatement Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 22, 2023**

In attendance: BOA Chair Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Justice of the Peace (JP) Paula Moore, JP Eileen Brennan, JP Jamie Dayton, JP Gretchen Bailey, Town Clerk Maggie McCormick, Miles Sherts

Via Zoom: JP Diana Raphael

- 1) Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.
- 2) Additions/deletions to agenda: None.
- 3) Approval of the minutes of the December 19, 2022 meeting
 - a) Paula moved to accept the minutes as written. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
- 4) Public comment
 - a) Howard thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.
- 5) Tax Abatement Request Hearing
 - a) Teresa established that the abatement request was for 1490 Arnold Bay Road, parcel number 050300000.
 - b) Teresa had all present swear to tell the truth.
 - c) Maggie stated that she had conversations about the abatement request to set up the hearing.

- d) Teresa confirmed that Mr. Sherts had received a copy of the rules of procedure and asked if he had questions about them.
 - i) Mr. Sherts answered he had received the rules and had no question.
- e) Teresa asked Mr. Sherts under which statutory category he was requesting abatement.
 - i) Mr. Sherts answered category 6, 32VSA
 - ii) Maggie stated that 32VSA refers to the veteran's exemption.
 - iii) Paula clarified exemptions are also under 24VSA includes "other good cause."
 - (1) Mr. Sherts replied that was his intent.
- f) Teresa asked Mr. Sherts if he wanted to state his case.
 - i) He responded that:
 - (1) Lived in Stannard VT for 32 years
 - (2) Was shocked when he got a penalty
 - (3) Had no idea there were two payments
 - (4) If the Board wants to do it, he wouldn't go away upset.
 - (5) It's a rude way [for the Town] to start the relationship.
 - ii) Maggie stated 16 property transfers took place in Panton between April 2, 2021 and April 1, 2023 and 14 new owners paid their property taxes in full and on time.
 - iii) Maggie stated that Mr. Sherts had requested and received a copy of his property tax bill on March 28, 2023 via email by Suzanne Snyder and asked if he didn't see the two payments at the bottom.
 - iv) Paula stated that "friendly neighbor" cuts both ways and that the Town depends on new residents to look at documents sent to them and respond accordingly.
 - (1) Mr. Sherts replied that he had just never heard of getting one bill with two payments. Stated that he's happy to pay but it's alienating.
 - v) Teresa stated the Board would have a conversation about this.
 - vi) Howard brought up that it would be hard to use "Miles will be mad at us" as a justification for granting an abatement.
 - (1) Maggie said she didn't feel ability to pay is relevant here, and stated that another property on Lake St had new owners who missed the second payment but had paid the penalty. She also stated that a couple of hours had been invested in arranging the hearing, and gathering and transmitting information.
 - (2) Mr. Sherts stated he had no idea it would be such a big deal.
 - vii) Diana noted that it has been tricky for new property owners to get the information because it gets missed at closing.
 - viii) Howard stated that the Town tries to send a welcome letter to new property owners providing the information.
 - (1) Maggie stated she couldn't affirm that a letter had been sent to Mr. Sherts.

- (2) Mr. Sherts suggested a post on Front Porch Forum and was informed that a post was made on April 21, 2023.
- g) Teresa asked if anyone had anything further. No one did.
 - h) The Board and Mr. Sherts agreed that he would receive the written decision by email and by US Mail.
- 6) Paula moved that the Board enter deliberative session. Jamie seconded. All in favor; the Board went into deliberative session at 5:20 p.m.
- 7) Howard moved to return to open session. Zach seconded. All in favor; the Board returned to open session at 5:30 pm.
- 8) Teresa called a vote from those in favor of upholding the late payment penalty. There were eight (8) aye and one (1) nay. The penalty due was upheld.
- 9) Howard moved to adjourn. Maggie seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 5:31p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie McCormick
Clerk-Treasurer