



Town of Barre VERMONT

BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING

August 10, 2023

AGENDA

1. Call to order.....6:00 p.m.
2. Roll call.
3. Approve the agenda.
4. Public Comment
5. Approve the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes.
6. Consider approving amendments of the Board of Abatement Hearing and Code of Conduct Policy
7. Hear requests for abatement.
8. Adjourn

BOARD OF ABATEMENT MINUTES

The duly warned Board of Abatement meeting was held at the Municipal Building, Selectboard meeting room, in Lower Websterville on Thursday, August 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Board of Abatement Member Present: JP Isabelle, Donna Kely, Rob LaClair, Tina Lunt, Norma Malone, Paul Malone, Mike Gilbar, Edward Paquin, Virginia Poplawski, Dean Preston, Lee Walther, Sheila Walther, Paul White, Russ Beaudoin, Tom Koch (arrived at 6:10 p.m.). Those present virtually: Guy Isabelle.

Board of Abatement Members Absent: Jeff Blow, Justin Bolduc, Lori Cohen, Jeanne Daniele, Jennifer Allard, Bob Nelson, and Frederick Thumm.

Others Present: None.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Malone called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and proceeded with roll call.

APPROVE THE AGENDA:

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by JP Isabelle, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda as follows:

Mrs. Walther requested to add item #7a. to the agenda. This request pertains to asking anyone to disclose any conflicts or interest and/or ex parte communications prior to hearing the abatement requests.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

APPROVE THE MINUTES:

On a motion by Ed Paquin, seconded by JP Isabelle, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to approve the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes with amendments as provided to the Clerk.

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY MEETING OF August 10, 2023 continued:

Mrs. Walther requested additional amendments be made to the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes. Chair Malone questioned if additions other than corrections can be made to meeting minutes. Board members discussed if it was appropriate for Mrs. Walther's request to be added as an amendment. Comments were made that the minutes should be a record of what was actually discussed at the meeting. Mr. Paquin suggested if the amendment is information for the purpose of clarification, it should be included in this current set of meeting minutes as a record for clarification. Mrs. Walther stated that she will make a motion to add the content of the amendment under item #7.

BOARD ABATEMENT HEARING AND CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY:

Clerk Lunt shared that edits were made to #5 of the document. A copy was shared with all Board members. Mrs. Walther requested to add an amendment to item #5. Mrs. Walther asked to add the last sentence of the previous version #5 to the current version #5 to wit, a taxpayer who believes any BOA member should be excluded from participating in a hearing based on these criteria must raise the concern to the BOA chair prior to the presentation of evidence.

On a motion by JP Isabelle, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to amend the Board of Abatement Hearing and Code of Conduct Policy.

ABATEMENT REQUESTS:

1. Thomas & Lynn Crawford
Abatement request for: Property Taxes
Amount: Property Tax: \$3,263.86

On April 17, 2023 Mr. & Mrs. Crawford lost their home located at 729 East Barre Road due to a fire. During the June 21, 2023 Board of Abatement meeting Mr. & Mrs. Crawford came to the Board to request an abatement of their 2022 fourth quarterly tax installment and second semi-annual sewer usage fees. The Board voted to approve the abatement request for their fourth quarterly tax installment.

The Crawford's have submitted a second abatement request for their 2023 property taxes in the amount of \$3,263.86. This amount is for the value of the home, excluding the land.

On a motion by Sheila Walter, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to go into deliberative session after hearing both requests.

2. Jessica Loranger
Abatement request for: Property taxes
Amount: \$2,541.00

Mrs. Loranger was not present. A request for abatement of property taxes in the amount of \$2,541 is being requested citing that the persons liable for the tax are financially unable to pay.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to move into deliberative session at 6:22 p.m.

On a motion by Tom Koch, seconded by Paul White, the Board of Abatement voted to come out of deliberative session at 6:43 p.m. Motion passed 13-3

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY MEETING OF August 10, 2023 continued:

On a motion by Sheila Walther, seconded by Lee Walther, the Board of Abatement voted that based on the opinion expressed by Town Attorney Mike Monte's in a letter dated November 10, 2021 (pertaining to taxes upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year) to deny the Crawford's request for abatement. Motion failed 2-14.

Mr. Walther voiced to Assessor Beaudoin that this should have gone through the change of appraisal process and not through as an abatement request. Mr. Walther further stated the Board of Abatement has zero authority to adjust valuations. He stated the Board is being asked to abate a future tax when this should have been handled through the grievance process. Additionally, Mrs. Walther questioned the Clerk on why the Crawford's were not notified about the grievance process when they requested the abatement application.

On a motion by Tom Koch, seconded by Paul White, the Board of Abatement voted to abate \$3,263.86 of the 2023 property taxes for Thomas & Lynn Crawford located at 729 East Barre Road, Tax Map 006/072.00. The motion passed 14-2.

On a motion by Norma Malone, seconded by Donna Kelty, The Board of Abatement voted unanimously to go into deliberative session at 6:56 p.m.

On a motion by Sheila Walther, seconded by JP Isabelle, The Board of Abatement voted unanimously to come out of deliberative session at 7:07 p.m.

On a motion by JP Isabelle seconded by Sheila Walther, The Board of Abatement voted unanimously to deny Jessica Loranger's request for abatement due to lack of evidence.

Chair Malone read a letter of resignation submitted by Mr. Rob LaClair. Mr. LaClair will be resigning from the Board of Civil Authority effective August 11, 2023. Chair Malone thanked Mr. LaClair and expressed his appreciation for all he has done for the Town.

ADJOURN:

On a motion by Sheila Walther, seconded by Mike Gilbar, the Board of Abatement voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:10p.m.

These are the minutes as taken by the Clerk of the Board.

Filed in the Barre Town Clerk's Office on this _____ day of _____, 2024.

_____, Barre Town Clerk. *Tina Lunt, Town Clerk*