

Minutes of the Board of Abatement  
Monday, January 8, 2024  
Steele Community Room, 28 North Main Street and via zoom

**Attendance:** Alyssa Johnson, Bob Butler, Bruce King, Liz Schlegel, Amanda McKay, Linda Gravell, Mike Bard, Kane Sweeney, Mike Bard, Karen Petrovic, Alec Tuscany, Mary Woodruff, Katrina VanTyne, Roger Clapp, Tom Leitz

**Public Attendance:** Timothy Webber, Spencer Peterson

**ZOOM:** Jim Adams, ORCA Media

L. Schlegel called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

**Approve Agenda: K. VanTyne moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by L. Gravell. B.** King asked to add a discussion of Rules & Procedures following deliberative session. **R. Clapp seconded the request to amend the agenda. A vote was held and passed unanimously on the amended agenda.**

**Public:** none present

**Hearing to consider abatement of 131 South Main Street:** L. Schlegel administered oath to T. Webber. L. Schlegel asked if any board members feel there is a conflict of interest, there were none heard. T. Webber confirmed he received abatement information in advance of the meeting. T. Webber confirmed his request for abatement based on his inability to pay his taxes. Purchased his property in May of 2023. Stated the flood impacted him by losing two vehicles in the flood having to replace engines in each vehicle which resulted in fees totaling \$8,000. T. Webber gave background information on his first-time purchase of a home and provided the board detailed information of his financial status both when he purchased the home and when the July flood impacted him. Having lost his vehicles in the July flood he lost his job because he did not have transportation.

- A. A. McKay asked for details regarding the previous owner, Riverbend Holdings. T. Webber stated the property was taxed as a non-residential property in 2023. Rent is \$900/month for the unit that is currently being rented.
- B. L. Gravell asked why T. Webber has two vehicles. T. Webber stated he had the vehicles repaired however he did not repair them at the same time. L. Gravell restated her question to clarify if one vehicle is for work and the second for personal reason. T. Webber confirmed he repaired the Honda first for work transportation and then repaired the Fiat.

Clarification for the board: there are 4 condo units in the building with T. Webber owning two units and Dennis Griffin owning 2 units.

When the property became available for sale T. Webber was able to rent a unit and sign a lease to own to purchase the home. T. Webber is not required to have escrow because he is using private financing options available to him.

- C. L. Gravell asked why one of the cars was not sold to settle the debt. T. Webber stated the cars are important to him and gave other examples of ways he could get cash such as retirement accounts but he does not wish to do that.
- D. L. Schlegel asked about FEMA. T. Webber stated he did submit his losses to FEMA and is still waiting for any information from FEMA regarding his losses.

- E. B. King clarified on costs to repair the Fiat. T. Webber provided clarification. Follow up question regarding his relationship to Riverbend Holdings, there was no personal relationship between the two parties. T. Webber did speak to his financial advisor who advised against using those funds to settle debt.
- F. T. Webber confirmed there was no property damage caused by the flood but he lost the engines to his cars, L. Schlegel stated his request is related to his inability to pay not loss of property.
- G. A. McKay brought attention to the Good Neighbor Fund having paid the second half, T. Webber is asking for relief on the \$1,800 he paid to put that towards his debt. A. McKay asked about T. Webber's employment status now – he is working again now at Key Bank.

**Hearing to consider abatement of 1878 US Route 2:** L. Schlegel administered oath to S. Peterson. L. Schlegel asked if any board members feel there is a conflict of interest, there were none heard. S. Peterson confirmed he received abatement information in advance of the meeting. S. Peterson is requesting an abatement based on losses he sustained due to flooding in July and December. S. Peterson provided background information regarding the purchase of the home in April of 2022 and the damages they sustained in the July 2023 flood. They lost all their personal possessions and home in the July flood. Fortunately, they have had housing at a S. Burlington hotel until recently when they secured an apartment here in Waterbury. Recently they have sold the mobile home leaving a garage which is being utilized as storage space for the couple. They do plan to rebuild on the property with flood mitigation standards in place. Plans to rebuild a home with garage below.

- A. B. King asked about the state of the garage. The garage is unheated, very simple structure that S. Peterson stated he was able to repair and use as a storage space.
- B. L. Gravell asked why the couple bought a house in the flood zone? T. Peterson said the property was in their price range when they made the purchase. The home is in the 100-year flood zone so did not believe they would be faced with this so soon. The new home will be a brand-new build 2-car garage with living space above. Couple is reluctant to move because they cannot find alternative locations in their price range.
- C. K. Sweeney confirmed there is no living space on the property right now
- D. M. Bard confirmed the couple did have flood insurance; S. Peterson is still negotiating with the insurance company.
- E. A. McKay confirmed the property taxes are in escrow. S. Peterson is still responsible for his mortgage payment even though the mobile home has been sold because he owns the land. His mortgage company is not offering deferment on the payments.
- F. B. King asked about the sale of the mobile home which S. Peterson said he was able to sell for \$6,000
- G. M. Bard asked if the mortgage company asked for the \$6,000 to be placed on the principle of the mortgage and they did not.
- H. L. Gravell asked for clarification about him paying rent, paying a mortgage and now the cost of rebuilding. S. Peterson confirmed that is true, he has been meeting with contractors and negotiating with insurance now to work through the finances of this situation.
- I. S. Peterson confirmed he is registered with FEMA however FEMA is asking for insurance information and he is still working through that process.

- J. S. Peterson has considered a FEMA buyout however he feels it can take too long and he can not wait years for that possibility. It is unsustainable to wait for that buyout and they cannot find an alternative home to buy.
- K. S. Peterson stated they did not make the repairs after the July flood because he did not realize the process and lost a month of time waiting for the insurance company to give him direction. S. Peterson stated some of the decision was inexperience however he feels at this time it was the best decision because of the December flood.

**Deliberative Session: B. King moved to enter deliberative session with T. Leitz as a guest. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Consent to begin deliberations with the second applicant. B. King summarized his understanding of the application. B. King proposed a prorated amount based on losses and grand list values. B. Butler agreed. K. Sweeney stated he did not feel the \$6,000 was a profit because he lost his house and it would have cost him that or more to demolish the house.

Prorate the taxes back to July when the house was lost in the flood. Being consistent with how flooded properties were abated back when Irene occurred would be to calculate an abatement amount based on the number of days the property was not

**B. King moved to refund the taxes prorated based on July flood date to the end of the year. K. Sweeney seconded the motion. A vote Unanimous**

B. Butler made a motion to direct the treasure to issue the refund to the land owner. Sweeney seconded, unanimous.

T. Webber is asking for abatement based on his inability to pay. Facts restated he has two cars, he has a tenant, he has a job again and he has assets. B. King moved the board does not abate his taxes. L. Gravel seconded, a vote was held and passed unanimously

**B. King moved to end deliberative session. B. Butler seconded the motion, a vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**R. Clapp made a motion to have B. King draft new BOA rules. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.**

**R. Clapp made a motion to adjourn, the motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.**