

Minutes of the Board of Abatement
Monday November 17, 2025
28 North Main Street

Attendance: Alec Tuscany, Karen Petrovic, Kane Sweeney, Bob Butler, Liz Schlegel, Katrina VanTyne, Mary Miller, Mary Woodruff, Linda Gravell, Mike Bard, Roger Clapp, Steve Karcher, Amanda McKay

Public Attendance: Clark Ferris

Zoom Attendance: Tori Taravella, Bob Stanton, Eli Fortney, Jesse Dunham-Friel

Approve Agenda: K. Sweeney moved to approve the agenda. M. Miller seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed unanimously.

Public comment: none

Eli Fortney – 995 Loomis Hill Road: L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the name of the applicant, Eli Fortney, the property location of 995 Loomis Hill Road and the parcel ID of 650-0995

L. Schlegel administered the oath: “Under the pains and penalties of perjury, do you solemnly swear that the evidence you give in the cause under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?” E. Fortney answered in the affirmative.

L. Schlegel asked all board members to disclose any conflicts of interest that exist. There being none the hearing proceeded.

L. Schlegel requested board members to disclose any ex parte communication that has taken place. There being none the hearing proceeded.

L. Schlegel confirmed the applicant received a copy of the Board’s rules of procedure and asked whether the applicant had any questions about how the hearing will proceed.

L. Schlegel asked the applicant to identify the statutory abatement category which E. Fortney confirmed he is applying under clear and obvious error. He is asking for a refund of the \$138.12 late filing fee for the homestead declaration. E. Fortney stated he thinks it’s an unfair practice to penalize tax payers when there is no communication regarding the change in tax filing laws. M. Bard stated he is also using TurboTax and his filing went through without issue. L. Gravell asked if there was a review of the tax filing once it was completed. E. Fortney stated he does receive a confirmation but admits he likely did not spend the time to review the entire document in detail.

L. Schlegel closed the hearing at 5:10pm and stated E. Fortney would receive a decision from K. Petrovic.

Jesse Dunham - Friel 779 Blackberry Lane: L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the applicant's name, Jesse Dunham-Friel, the property address of 779 Blackberry Lane with a parcel ID of 210-0500

L. Schlegel administered the following oath to the applicant: "Under the pains and penalties of perjury, do you solemnly swear that the evidence you give in the cause under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" J. Dunham-Friel answered in the affirmative

L. Schlegel asked all board members to disclose any conflicts of interest that exist. There being none the hearing proceeded.

L. Schlegel requested board members to disclose any ex parte communication that had taken place. There being none the hearing proceeded.

L. Schlegel confirmed the applicant received a copy of the Board's rules of procedure and asked whether the applicant had any questions about how the hearing will proceed.

J. Dunham Friel identified the statutory abatement category as "taxes or charges of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, charges, interest and / or collection fees".

J. Dunham Friel stated they recently build a house in Waterbury and moved in the summer of 2024. At that time the taxes were about \$5,500 for the year. Now upon reassessment, the tax bill is \$18,000, an increase of 320%. This is a one-bedroom house, the remaining two bedrooms are still not completed. Receiving this massive increase in the end of July of 2025 was completely unexpected for them and they were financially unprepared.

L. Schlegel informed the applicant when someone applies for the inability to pay, we ask them for documents relating to that request. In previous hearings, applicants have brought information to support such a claim.

J. Dunham-Friel stated the taxes are something they can manage to pay in the future however they are not prepared to pay at this time. He was not aware to supply income information for an abatement request.

L. Schlegel invited questions from the Board. R. Clapp asked if the applicant plans to appeal the assessment of the property. J. Dunham-Friel stated he had discussions with D. Sweet and didn't know what the taxes would be in order to know he needed to appeal. L. Gravell asked how much time the applicant would need to pay the current bill; applicant stated he would need to consider stopping the construction in order to pay the taxes. L. Gravell suggested this timeline

might be included in his paperwork for a future hearing. K Sweeney asked if the house was incomplete at the time of the assessment; the home is still not completed at time. M. Bard asked for clarification on the current use of the property which lists 98 acres are still in current use.

L. Schlegel tabled the hearing giving J. Dunham-Friel an opportunity to submit documentation to support why the property tax amount is a hardship to him. Once received, we will schedule a hearing to consider his request.

Clark Ferris – 33 North Main Street: L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the applicant's name, Clark Ferris, the property address of 33 North Main Street with a parcel ID of 900-0033.V

L. Schlegel administered the following oath to the applicant: "Under the pains and penalties of perjury, do you solemnly swear that the evidence you give in the cause under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" C. Ferris answered in the affirmative

L. Schlegel asked all board members to disclose any conflicts of interest that exist. There being none the hearing proceeded.

L. Schlegel had ex parte communication because she took a call from C. Ferris asking if his FEMA buyout was moving along and asked if his taxes were paid. L. Schlegel communicated with K. Petrovic and confirmed the taxes were paid by the bank. L. Schlegel then reported back to C. Ferris with updates.

L. Schlegel confirmed the applicant received a copy of the Board's rules of procedure and asked whether the applicant had any questions about how the hearing will proceed.

C. Ferris confirmed the three statutory reasons he is requesting abatement. 1. Taxes in which there is a manifest error. 2. Taxes in which there is a mistake of the listers. 3. Taxes or charges upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year.

C. Ferris confirmed the number of floods the property has suffered and how overwhelmed he felt after repairing the property so many times. He is working with Mr. Hayes, his attorney, to keep moving the FEMA buyout along. Since the house is uninhabitable, he can not do anything with it until it's turned over to the Town of Waterbury.

R. Clapp asked if C. Ferris was granted an abatement last year, C. Ferris believes he received ½ year of abatement from a previous year. C. Ferris confirmed the bank is paying the taxes on the property. K. Sweeney asked if the property had been destroyed in this past year. C. Ferris stated that in July & December 2023, it was flooded, then in July 2024 it flooded again; also the tenant had left garbage which was soaking wet. The house is now locked up with wet garbage and any other possessions which have not been removed from the home.

L. Gravell asked if there are tenants, no there are not. L. Schlegel confirmed there is a FEMA appraisal that C. Ferris has accepted but there is no closing date for a sale at this time. Property contamination is stalling the closing, C. Ferris stated he is not aware of any contamination.

L. Schlegel closed the hearing stated C. Ferris would receive a decision from K. Petrovic.

Stanley DeGray – 198 East Wind Drive: L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the applicant's name, Stanley DeGray (deceased)/Trek Communities, the property address of 198 East Wind Drive with a parcel ID of 120-0198

L. Schlegel asked all board members to disclose any conflicts of interest that exist. Steve Karcher feels he has a conflict of interest and recused himself from this hearing.

L. Schlegel requested board members to disclose any ex parte communication that had taken place. There being none the hearing proceeded.

K. Petrovic explained the situation to the board. The timeline of the court order – tax bills mailed – interest and penalty applied and finally a property title search. Mr. DeGray died in December 2024 and the courts ruled the home uninhabitable in May 2025

L. Gravell stated the attorney fees could exceed the 2025 property taxes.

B. Butler made a motion to abate the \$270.86 plus interest and penalty. The motion was seconded by A. McKay. A vote was held and passed unanimously.

Rachel Campbell – 118 South Main Street: L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the applicant's name, Rachel Campbell, 118 South Main Street with a parcel ID 916-0018.V

K. Petrovic explained the timeline of events and how a clerical error led to interest and penalty being applied as well as the second installment of property taxes not being paid.

R. Clapp made a motion to abate the penalty and interest charges in the amount of \$363.46. K Sweeney seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed unanimously.

Deliberative Session:

Per statute, K. Petrovic, Treasurer stated she would not support this abatement because the Town is not responsible for communication regarding personal income tax filling. **R. Clapp made a motion to deny the request for abatement for Eli Fortney. L. Gravell seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed unanimously.**

L. Schlegel stated she will get back in touch with J. Dunham-Friel and list all the documents recommended to make his claim the taxes are a hardship to his family.

R. Clapp made a motion to abate the 2025 taxes for C. Ferris with the refund being sent to the mortgage company. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm