

**Minutes of the Board of Abatement**  
**Monday December 15, 2025**  
**28 North Main Street**

**Attendance:** Alec Tuscany, Karen Petrovic, Kane Sweeney, Bob Butler, Liz Schlegel, Katrina VanTyne, Mary Miller, Roger Clapp, Amanda McKay, Mike Bard

Second Hearing only: Steve Karcher

**Public Attendance:** Terry & Peggy Gates, Alyssa Johnson (did not participate)

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

**Approve Agenda: Bob Butler moved to approve the agenda. Kane Sweeney seconded the motion. A vote was held and passed unanimously.**

**Public comment: none**

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

Continuation from the November hearing

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 request 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.

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 the bank is not releasing the remaining loan balance because they claim Dunham-Friel has not substantially completed building. J. Dunham-Friel stated his construction company is not residential building but rather retaining walls. Acres are the same as when

property was purchased just that acres was removed from land use for the purpose of this home construction. L. Schlegel confirmed this is a temporary inability to pay the taxes due to construction and Dunham-Friel stated they would be able to pay their taxes going forward. A. McKay asked if the \$31,000 of unreleased funds to pay back these taxes – applicant seems unsure about that. No applicant did not contact the Town regarding a payment plan. A. McKay asked if there is a loan payment due at this time. Yes, applicant is responsible for a loan payment at this time which is \$5,300 and not included on the financials that were supplied to the board.

L. Schlegel closed the hearing.

**Terry & Peggy Gates – 38 Union Street:** L. Schlegel opened the hearing by stating the applicant's names, Terry & Peggy Gates, the property address of 38 Union Street with a parcel ID of 958-0038.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?" Terry and Peggy Gates 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 request board members to disclose any ex parte communication that has taken place. There being none the hearing proceeded.

Peggy Gates confirmed the two statutory reasons he is requesting abatement. 1. Taxes or charges of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, charges, interest, and/or collection fees. 2. Taxes or charges upon real or personal property lost or destroyed during the tax year.

Applicant is asking for consideration of 2023, 2024 & 2025 property taxes. Purchased their home as a forever home and endured all three recent floods. They did have flood insurance which helped cover many of the expenses. July 2023, they lost most of the first floor of the house and tools and personal items in the garage. They could not live in the home for three months. Even after three months they did not have heat or hot water. December and July they did not lose the first floor but they did lose everything in the basement and garage. The furnace was just installed in December when that flood occurred. They no longer use the basement or garage spaces because of fear of further floods. They are awaiting word of a FEMA buyout; there has been no updates. They have now purchased a home in South Barre but have been subject to higher interest rates and selling prices because it is a sellers' market. They are now subsidizing two houses out of necessity. Closed on new home on October 22, 2025, it is a fixer upper, they are currently making repairs. They just learned the furnace there needs to be

replaced. They currently live in the Waterbury home; they will relocate as soon as the Barre home is ready. They expect that to be about one month from now. The flood insurance has been elevated to high risk and the insurance premiums will make it extremely expensive for a new buyer. The Waterbury home currently has heat and running water and has been habitable from early 2025. The Barre home is not in the flood plain and has a \$2,800/month mortgage. The Waterbury home had a \$750/month mortgage. Their Annual Gross Income is \$102-105,000 per year.

Clarity on the request is any level of abatement for the three events.

**Deliberative Session:**

Disappointment applicant did not peruse a payment plan. **K. Sweeney made a motion to deny the request for abatement. M. Bard seconded the motion. Applicant did not satisfy need of financial hardship. A vote was held and passed unanimously.**

R. Clapp suggested we at least abate the three months of taxes they were not living in the home. **K. Sweeney moved to abate 90 days of 2023 taxes. A. McKay seconded the motion. R. Clapp made a friendly amendment to add 60 days of 2024 to acknowledge the loss of heat. M. Bard seconded the motion. A vote was held on the amendment and passed unanimously. A vote was held on the amended motion and passed unanimously.**

**There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm**