

**HARTFORD BOARD OF ABATEMENT**  
**Thursday, September 21, 2023**  
**Hartford Town Hall, Room 2**  
**171 Bridge Street, White River Jct., VT 05001**

**MINUTES (draft)**

**Members present:** Melinda Brooks; Lynn Bohj; Kevin Christie; Pat Cook; Scott Farnsworth; Nancy Howe, Chair; Brett Mayfield; Mike Morris; Lisa O’Neil, Clerk; Gayle Ottmann; Rocket; Nancy Russell, Vice-Chair; Rick Vincent, Assessor.

**5:18pm:** Nancy Howe opened the meeting of the Board of Abatement (BoA). She reviewed the Abatement process with the members.

**Hearing #1:     **Apartment Living, LLC****  
**Property Location #1: 20-30 A Street**  
**Parcel ID #24-25/SPAN #285-090-10429**  
**Property Location #2: 305-307 Gifford Road**  
**Parcel ID 24-115/SPAN #285-090-10430**

The Chair opened the hearing. Kevin Purcell appeared for Apartment Living, LLC. Mr. Purcell explained the company experienced staffing shortages last year and temporary staff were utilized to assist. The tax bill due dates were incorrectly entered into their system thus they missed the payment deadline. He requested the BoA abate the total penalties and interest charged for each of the properties. The Chair closed the hearing.

**Hearing #2:     **Charles Jameson****  
**Property Location: 1856 Quechee Main St., #7C**  
**Parcel ID#12-60-RBC-7C/SPAN #285-090-12658**

The Chair opened the hearing. The applicant was not present. The applicant’s request, including photo documentation, indicated the unit had been destroyed by the July flooding. The members asked about the current status of occupancy of the unit and how the building is structured. Rick Vincent explained the building houses commercial office condominiums. There was a discussion about flood plain, FEMA involvement and insurance; one member indicated insurance does not pay toward taxes. The Chair closed the hearing.

**Hearing #3:     **Jedediah Rose****  
**Property Location: 134 Hanover Street**  
**Parcel ID #43-34/SPAN #285-090-13835**

The chair opened the hearing. The applicant was not present. The applicant’s request form indicated there had been an undetected leak causing a higher than usual sewer bill. The application did not elaborate on the cause of the leak but indicated it had been repaired. The applicant provided a billing history. The applicant requested an abatement of the “the additional amount accrued from the leak”. The chair closed the hearing.

**Hearing #4: Stephen & Rosalie Nelson**

**Property Location: 78 Oak Street; Parcel ID# 44-12/SPAN#285-090-13835**

The Chair opened the hearing. The Assessor explained he had visited the property and would be providing testimony during the hearing. Mr. Nelson appeared before the BoA. He explained the house was built in the early 1970's; he has owned the property for over 40 years, and this is the first time he has had water in the basement. He explained about a year ago, he had a sewer back up in the basement. He had it evaluated and a contractor. The contractor noted there was a perimeter drain emptying into the town sewer system which is no longer allowed (according to the information Mr. Nelson was provided, the prohibition for this practice was established in the 1990's); the contractor capped the perimeter. The property has a sump pump, but it could not keep up with the volume of water from the storm. FEMA assisted with the mildew; an insurance claim was applied to loss of the carpet only. Mr. Nelson has contacted the Director of Public Works to request reconnecting the perimeter drain to the sewer, but he has not had a response; he stated it should be grandfathered and there is an exception to the ordinance (he is willing to pay for reconnection). He stated the cause of the issue is the perimeter drain being capped. The water destroyed the carpet; finished walls had to be removed and cracks in the floor/foundation were discovered when the materials were removed. He has a contractor scheduled to epoxy the floor, but he fears if water seeps under from the ground, it will destroy the flooring again. He said he has damage he cannot fix; the property is not saleable with this unresolved condition. He said the problem will persist because the ponding in the land will continue without the perimeter drain connection.

Mr. Vincent, Assessor, explained he visited the property on July 31, 2023. He observed damage to the carpet, sheetrock/wall and saw the cracked floor. He noted his finding was the finished basement had lost value. He will be making an assessment adjustment as a result of the loss. The Chair closed the hearing.

**Hearing #5: Ludmilla & Sergei Golovetchii**

**Property location: 94 Oak Street; Parcel ID 344-13/SPAN #285-090-15854**

The chair opened the hearing. The Assessor indicated he had inspected the property and would be providing testimony during the hearing. Ms. Golovetchii appeared before the BoA. She explained they have lived at the property for five years. The basement area was finished with carpet, knotty pine walls, bathroom, and appliances. The July 10<sup>th</sup> storm caused the basement to flood. When they noticed the basement had water, they used a wet vac to remove water every twenty minutes; they took out the carpet, used a dehumidifier and purchased a commercial dehumidifier and fan to try to dry things out before they could remove the carpet. Ultimately, they had to remove the wood walls and discovered mold and the insulation behind the wall covering was destroyed. They are concerned for their health. They contacted a contractor to evaluate the issue. They were told the issue is being caused from outside and they will need to dig around and to the base of the foundation to seal it and then epoxy inside rather than replacing carpet. They also have a sump pump, but the water did not come in near the sump pump.

Mr. Vincent, Assessor, visited the property on July 21, 2023. He indicated it was still wet, the carpet was still in place, so he did not see the extent of the damage. He reduced the valuation from the assessment for the loss of the finished basement. The chair closed the hearing.

**7:30pm:** Mike Morris made a motion to enter into deliberative session. Brett Mayfield seconded the motion. The Assessor, Rick Vincent, did not participate in the deliberations for or vote on Hearing #4 and Hearing #5. **8:13pm:** Came out of deliberative session.

**Hearing # 1:** Apartment Living, LLC

Brett Mayfield made a motion to abate \$271.06 for charges applied to 20-30 A Street, Parcel ID #24-25/SPAN #285-090-10429. Kevin Christie seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 10-3.

Mike Morris moved to deny the abatement request for 305-307 Gifford Road, Parcel ID 24-115/SPAN #285-090-10430; Rick Vincent seconded the motion. The motion to deny failed on a vote of 5-8.

Brett Mayfield moved to abate \$132.09 for charges applied to 305-307 Gifford Road, Parcel ID 24-115/SPAN #285-090-10430. Gayle Ottmann seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote 8-5.

**Hearing #2:** Charles Jameson

Mike Morris made a motion to abate six months of taxes in the amount of \$481.83 for 1856 Quechee Main St., #7C Parcel ID#12-60-RBC-7C/SPAN #285-090-12658. Lynn Bohi seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Hearing #3:** Jedediah Rose

Brett Mayfield made a motion to abate \$73.34 of the sewer portion of the bill, which represents the difference between the highest previous sewer bill and the bill the applicant has requested be abated, for 134 Hanover Street, Parcel ID #43-34/SPAN #285-090-13835. Kevin Christie seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Hearing #4:** Stephen & Rosalie Nelson

Mike Morris moved to abate \$651.79 for 78 Oak Street, Parcel ID# 44-12/SPAN#285-090-13835. Nancy Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Hearing #5:** Ludmilla & Serghei Golovetchii

Brett Mayfield made a motion to abate \$1,030.53 for 94 Oak Street; Parcel ID 344-13/SPAN #285-090-15854. Mike Morris seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

**Other Business:** Nancy Howe explained Board of Civil Authority member Gabrielle Lucke recently resigned from the BCA because she has moved out of Hartford. She stated the general process when a vacancy occurs is for nominations to be made to the Governor by the political party of the resigning member. Lisa O'Neil reminded the BCA there are training opportunities for the Accessible Voting Machines/Systems and the Voting Tabulator this fall.

**8:22pm:** The meeting was adjourned.

