

BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2014
RANDOLPH TOWN HALL
CONFERENCE ROOM B
6:30 P.M.

Present: Justices of the Peace: Martha Lawrence, Richard Burstein, Jessamyn West, Barbara Angell, and Sheila Jacobs
Selectboard: Dennis Brown, Tom Schersten and Larry Richburg
Board of Listers: Donald Sweetser and Mimi Burstein
Town Clerk & Treasurer: Joyce Mazzucco
Others: Patrick French, Town Assessor

The Board of Abatement meeting was called to order at 6:55 p.m. by Board Chair Richard Burstein when there was a quorum of board members present. The first order of business was to consider the tax abatement request of David Howe, Parcel #117049-000, property located at 1764 East Bethel Road. Mr. Howe was not able to attend the meeting but sent a letter outlining his circumstances and the reason for the abatement request. Town Clerk Joyce Mazzucco distributed copies of the letter to the Board. Mr. Burstein entered the original abatement request letter into evidence and this was labeled as "Exhibit 1". The information letter from Mr. Howe was entered into evidence as "Exhibit 2". It appears the abatement request is being made due to financial hardship under 24 V.S.A. § 1535(3) "...taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest and collection fees..." Mr. Howe is seeking an abatement of the interest and penalty charges on the FY 2013 property taxes which total \$757.48.

A discussion followed on the information provided in Mr. Howe's letter. Mr. Howe described his circumstances and the issues that have affected his financial status, which include filing a lawsuit against his business partner and his separation from his wife and pending divorce. He also described issues with communication regarding the property taxes. The following individuals participated in the discussion: Richard Burstein, Barbara Angell, Joyce Mazzucco, Jessamyn West, Don Sweetser, and Tom Schersten. Tax bills are usually sent to the address on file for the property and it is the responsibility of the person receiving the bill to share the tax information with any other owners of record of the property. The attorney's fees are fees accrued for legal work performed during the tax sale process and is due to the attorney whether the tax sale proceeds or is halted. Dennis Brown made a motion to deny the abatement request. Sheila Jacobs seconded the motion. Discussion continued, with the following individuals participating: Richard Burstein, Dennis Brown, Joyce Mazzucco, Jessamyn West and Mimi Burstein. Mr. Howe stated in his letter that he and his wife are aware that they are responsible for paying the taxes, but hoped that as town officials the board would pursue a positive approach to help with the situation. There was no further discussion. Mr. Burstein called the question and a voice vote was taken and the motion carried by majority vote, with one abstention (Richard Burstein). A written decision will be sent to Mr. Howe.

There was no further business to consider. Dennis Brown made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Sheila Jacobs. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried by majority vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Attest: _____
Joyce L. Mazzucco, Town Clerk