

TOWN OF HIGHGATE

Board of Abatement

Thursday, February 13, 2020 @ 5:00pm

NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.

A. Call to Order & Roll Call

John Ferland called the Board of Abatement hearings to order at 5pm.

Present were: Wendi Dusablon (Town Clerk); John Ferland (JP); Dennis Nolan (JP); Clarence Miller (JP); Peter St. Germain (Lister); Connie Janes Beyor (JP); Claude Chevalier (JP); Shelley Laroche (Town Treasurer); Aimee Reynolds (Lister); Patty Rainville (JP)

John asked if any member of the Board of Abatement had a conflict of interest with regard to these hearings. There were none.

B. Abatement Hearings

Gagne, Gerald & Bonnie
4757 US Route 7
Parcel # 0002700341

Mr. & Mrs. Gagne submitted a letter to the town on 1/3/20 requesting an abatement hearing. The Gagne's were noticed via certified mail but were not present for this hearing. Gerald and Bonnie Gagne had a fire at their property on October 9, 2019 that destroyed their automotive business. Aimee Reynolds, lister, noted that the property lost was assessed by the town at \$32,500.00. Aimee presented a figure of \$440.88 for a refund based on the assessment and the date of the loss (264 days) and another figure of \$608.11 based on the entire fiscal year. It was clarified for the board members that the property taxes were paid in full, so this would be a refund. Motion by Claude Chevalier to abate the taxes for the structure lost in a fire (assessed value \$32,500.00, per the listers office) resulting in a refund of \$440.88 which covers 264 days in the tax cycle from the date of the loss (Oct. 9, 2019). This falls under the abatement criteria #5 listed in the "About Abatement" publication through the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. The motion was seconded by Clarence Miller – **APPROVED**.

Hemingway, Nicole
2802 Carter Hill Road
Parcel # 0016001244

Shelley provided the background information on this property. The taxes have been delinquent since 2012 and the previous DTC, Tom Racine, had a hard time collecting. Shelley started here in 2015 and the property was on the tax sale list that first year. Ms. Hemingway owned this mobile home that is located on her parent's property (Douglas and Sharon Mosher). The town attorneys tracked Ms. Hemingway down to serve her paperwork about the tax sale and she was in North Dakota. It was also noted that Ms. Hemingway is no longer allowed on the property. It has been advised to Shelley by the auditors and the attorneys to get this off the books, as it is uncollectable. Aimee and Pete (listers) have visited the property and the mobile home has been completely shelled. Ms. Hemingway's parents, the Mosher's, have taken over the tax bill from 2017 forward and have made those payments but the NEMRC software auto applies to the most delinquent bill. The Mosher's were noticed via certified mail about this hearing but were not present. On paper it looks like 2017 and 2018 are delinquent but payments have been made. The former mobile home, now just a shell, has been put in the Mosher's name as an outbuilding structure. The total taxes on the books are \$7,386.39 Of that amount \$4,516.49 is principal, \$2,323.58 is interest, \$361.32 is penalty, and \$185.00 is tax sale fees. This probably should have gone to the Board of Abatement sooner, but Shelley was hopeful it would be dealt with, but it has not. The attorneys and auditors would like to see it cleared. The property is essentially now a shelled mobile home on unowned land. John asked if the parents can be held liable. No, they cannot, because everything was in Nicole's name and she has since been forbidden from the property which is how it got moved into her parent's name. This property is located at 2802 Carter Hill Road in Highgate Springs. Nicole was last known to be in ND back in 2015 and you can't get blood from a stone. Clarence had questions about the possibility of tracking her down in the future. If the amount of

\$7,386.39 is abated that will clear the delinquent amounts under Nicole. Her parents are responsible now and they do still owe their 2019-20 bill, but Shelley expects that to be taken care of. Claude questioned how the bill got so high. Shelley referred to the breakdown, noting that the actual delinquent taxes are \$4,516.49 – the rest is penalty, interest and tax sale fees. Dennis asked about the transfer of the property and why the taxes weren't settled then. Motion by Connie Janes Beyor to abate the amount of \$7,386.39 and have it removed from the tax rolls. This falls under the abatement criteria #2 & #3 listed in the "About Abatement" publication through the Vermont Secretary of State's Office. The motion was seconded by Patty Rainville – **APPROVED.**

C. **Adjournment**

Motion by Claude Chevalier to adjourn the Abatement Hearings @ 5:14pm. The motion was seconded by Clarence Miller – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by,



Wendi Dusablon
Town Clerk
02/14/2020