

MUNICIPAL OFFICES



MINUTES
Board of Tax Abatement
October 1, 2024
6:00pm

Members Present: Justices; Lea Hatch, Merry Kay Shernock, Anne Donahue, Richard Wobby, Denise MacMartin, Larry Garland, Scott Blanchard

Selectman: Dave Maxwell, Lydia Petty, John Stevens & Town Clerk/Treasurer Kim Pedley.

Northfield Utilities Department- Doug Reed

Presenter for Abatement- Marc Boullion

Lea Hatch started the meeting with explaining that we were here to hear the utility abatement for Deanna Bullion at 91 Prospect St. Deanna is requesting an abatement on her electric bill in the amount of \$2767.49. Deanna is not here her husband Marc is representing.

Marc was asked to present his case:

Marc stated that they moved here in the summer of 2021. We moved here because my wife's mother and grandfather were killed in a car accident on I89 and we moved up as Deanna's younger sisters and siblings are here and so we moved up here. We bought a house on 91 Prospect St and the house is costing a little bit more to heat then we expected in the wintertime because it's only heated by oil. So, it's expensive to keep going and then after about a year of being here, Deanna took a pay cut and then after taking a pay cut, she was fired from her job without any kind of reason. So that caught us unexpectedly off guard then we just ended up getting behind on bills. We moved up here from Texas originally, so things cost more here than in Texas for sure and we're still just trying to get caught back up. Marc stated that his wife has recently found another job and that she's been there for a couple of weeks. Marc explained that they are working on getting caught back up on bills, but they were still behind on quite a bit. Marc stated that had to let a couple of credit cards go because they couldn't afford to pay them. Mr. Wobby asked how old the bill was, Marc stated about one year. Doug Reed from the utilities department was present. Mr. Reed stated the outstanding bill goes back to about May of 2023.

Richard Wobby also stated he was curious; why we don't have a shut procedures for being 90 days behind?

Mr. Reed stated we do. The State of Vermont was offering programs for people that are having trouble paying bills, and if they get on to that program then we can't do anything. The Boullion's were on this program. Mr. Reed also stated we do work with the customers, and we do agreements

with people. Mr. Reed stated on June 25, 2024, an agreement was made with the Boullion's and so far, they have pretty much kept up with the agreement. Mr. Reed also stated that the State of Vermont programs have all ended.

Marc stated they will be getting back on track with his wife back working, he also stated Community Action came in and weatherized the home and he is putting in a pellet stove.

Merry Kay thought if they are on a payment plan and it's working why not just continue this track. There was much conversation about how to possibly help them in this situation. Some of the Board members were concerned about others struggling and does this open a door. How would we handle and influx of requests while other Board members wanted to try to get a reasonable solution for the Boullion's.

Dave Maxwell suggested they reach out to CERV for some help Marc stated they have called on them and other resources.

At this time Marc Boullion left and deliberation session started.

Motion was made by Richard Wobby; Seconded by Scott Blanchard to abate fifty percent of the bill (\$1200.00) with the understanding they pay the remaining \$1200.00 within in 12-months and if they falter the full amount of the bill would re-applied on to their account.

Question was called and failed 4-6-1

Motion was made by Richard Wobby; Seconded by Lydia Petty to abate \$600.00 and to pay off the current balance within 18-months.

Question called and failed 5-5-1

Motion was made by Denise MacMartin; Seconded by Anne Donahue to amend the motion above to abate \$300.00 of the current agreement.

Question was called and amendment failed 5-5-1

Motion was made by Richard Wobby; Seconded by Scott Blanchard to abate \$500.00 and 18-months to pay off outstanding bill.

Question was call and failed 5-5-1

Motion was made by Anne Donahue; Seconded by Dave Maxwell to abate \$300.00

Question called and passed 9-1-0

Second Item on the warning:

These are mobile homes that have moved out of town without filing the proper paperwork with the town letting the Town know they are being moved or destroyed. Therefore, the Listers didn't know they moved or had been destroyed, so they continued to stay on the tax rolls. They have been on the books for years and there is no chance of collecting these delinquent taxes. The Accounting Department along with the Auditors would like these abated so we can legally remove off the delinquent tax list and clean the books up.

The total amount to abate is \$17, 178.12 breakdown as follows:

\$8899.41 Principal

\$6676.92 Interest

\$712.06 Penalty

\$889.73 Other/Legal fees

Total \$17,178.12

Motion was made by Scott Blanchard to abate uncollectible delinquent taxes in the amount of \$17,178.12; Seconded by Richard Wobby
Question called and passed 11-0-0

Motion to adjourn made by Lea Hatch; Seconded by Anne Donahue meeting adjourned 7:02pm

Respectfully submitted

Kim Pedley- Town Clerk/Treasurer



Lea Hatch- BCA Chair

