

**TOWN OF BARRE - TAX GRIEVANCE HEARING**  
**July 23, 2014**

**AGENDA**

(This meeting is being audio taped.)

1. Call to order 6:30 p.m.
2. Amend the Agenda
3. Administer Oath to Board Members:  
I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will well and truly hear and determine all matters at issue between taxpayers and Assessor submitted for my decision. So help me God (or under the pains and penalties of perjury).
4. This hearing is being audio taped. Be advised the tape recorder can pick up background conversations. Speak clearly and identify yourself.
5. In accordance with Vermont Statutes, Chapter 32, Section 4404 (b), the first Tax Grievance hearing must begin no later than 14 days after the last date allowed for the notice of appeal, at some place within the Town. The deadline to submit appeals to this Board was Wednesday, July 16, 2014.
6. Discuss the Inspection Committee Report - what should and should not be included.
7. Other Business:
  - A) Next Tax Grievance hearing will be Wednesday, September 17, 2014 to take evidence from the Assessor and appellant (Stephen & Lisa Brassard).
  - B) To discuss any other Board of Civil business as needed.
8. A motion to adjourn the meeting to Wednesday, September 17, 2014.

**TAX GRIEVANCE HEARING MINUTES**  
**July 23, 2014**

**CALL TO ORDER** - Chair Virginia Poplawski called the Tax Grievance Hearing meeting to order on this 23<sup>RD</sup> day of July 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

**ROLE CALL** - The following members were present: Chair Virginia Poplawski, Jeff Blow, Gordon Booth, Pearl Bugbee, William Bugbee, Tracy Delude, Irene Haskell, Town Clerk-Treasurer Donna J. Kelty, Robert LaClair, Paul Malone, Caroline Pellon, Roland Tessier, Christopher Violette, R. Lee Walther, Sheila Walther, and Tom White.

**AMEND THE AGENDA**

*On a motion by Irene Haskell, seconded by Pearl Bugbee, the Tax Grievance Board voted unanimously to amend the agenda as follows:*

1. *Agenda item 3, delete the words "were not" and insert "are" as well as deleting "at the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting;"*
2. *Agenda item 7, add item C) "Request for election tabulator training;"*
3. *Agenda item 7, add item D) Discuss draft of the "Abatement Hearing Request" application.*

*Marion Fish, Guy Isabelle, JP Isabelle, Louise Coates and Jack Mitchell were not present for the vote.*

**BCA OATH**

The BCA members present were administered their oath. The Chair reminded the Board members and those present the tax grievance hearings are being audio taped. Please speak clearly and identify yourself prior to speaking.

### **POSTING CERTIFICATION**

The following notice was published (in the Times Argus Newspaper) and posted (Barre Town Municipal Building, website, Hannaford's Market, Trow Hill Grocery, and Lawson's Store): "Barre Town Residents - Pursuant to the provision of 32 V.S.A., section 4404 (b) notice was duly given that the Board of Civil Authority (B.C.A.) within and for the Town of Barre, Vermont is meeting this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July 2014 at 6:30 p.m. at the Municipal Building, Selectboard Meeting room, in Lower Websterville to hear grievances of persons, or other parties who are aggrieved by the action of the Assessor's Grievance process and have timely filed their written grievances with the Town Clerk. Hearings will continue as scheduled by the BCA, with appellants until all aggrieved parties are heard."

### **DISCUSS INSPECTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Several members of the Board attended Tax Grievance Hearing training last year. One of the items noted was that our inspection committee reports were not what they should be. A copy of the sample report was distributed to members for review.

The Board agreed a format would be preferable to ensure consistency. Reports items discussed included inspecting all buildings/land for an appeal versus just the portion under consideration; the Grievance Handbook advice that all property (buildings and land) be inspected; use of photographs/videography; what information is consideration essential versus the fact that we are not "Assessors/ REALTORS®;" and understanding the Handbook sample report is just that, a sample.

The consensus of the Board is to have an Inspection Committee Report template created. Sheila Walther (who is a REALTOR®) and Donna Kelty will work on the project. It will include at minimum: The inspection committee members, date of inspection, who was present, property location, summary description of what was seen during the inspection, and may include informational comments on comparables. Ms. Kelty will check with VLCT and the Secretary of State's Office regarding the inspection committee use of photos and/or videos. There is concern this type of media may be considered "new evidence" and if allowable may need some type of written authorization from the homeowner/agent.

The consensus of the Board would also be to have some type of checklist or fill-in-the blank document to assist them when visiting the property which would be used to help write their report.

The documents will be ready for the September 17, 2014 meeting.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Town Clerk-Treasurer noted the next tax grievance hearing will be on September 17, 2014 to take evidence from the one appeal. Formal notice will be forthcoming to the Board, Assessor and Appellant.

The BCA will meet on Wednesday, August 20, 2014 for the purpose of updating the checklist to be used at the Primary Elections on Tuesday, August 26, 2014.

### **TABULATOR TRAINING**

The Secretary of State's office is providing tabulator training to BCA. This training is available in Rutland and Montpelier on 2 different days, each having 2 session times throughout the day. Several members signed up to attend the training.

**REVIEW OF BOARD OF ABATEMENT APPLICATION**

Sheila Walther prepared a draft abatement application to ensure conformity with Vermont Statutes and Town Charter, combining our existing application with items endorsed by the VLCT, the Secretary of State's 2014 "About Abatement" Guide and Barre Town's Attorney Guidelines. One revision is to ensure the applicant acknowledges the information being provided to the Board is true.

Members thanked Ms. Walther for drafting this document. Minor changes were noted to include:

1. Adding the "Agent" name to the heading on the 1<sup>st</sup> page (general information);
2. Under Criteria #3 add "/Assessor" after the word lister;
3. Split Criteria #4 - This should be two reasons ("died insolvent" and "have removed from the state");
4. Insert "Briefly describe the reason for abatement request..." after the criteria list;
5. Correct the spelling of "solemnly" in the oath section (letter 'n' missing);
6. Add a dollar sign (\$) before the word "amount" on the second page.

*On a motion by Pearl Bugbee, seconded by Tracey Delude, the Tax Grievance Board voted unanimously to adopt the Abatement Hearing Request Form, as amended. Marion Fish, Guy Isabelle, JP Isabelle, Louise Coates and Jack Mitchell were not present for the vote.*

**ADJOURN UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2014**

*On a motion by Pearl Bugbee, seconded by Irene Haskell, the Tax Grievance Hearing was adjourned at 7:37 p.m. to reconvene on Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.*

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*Donna J. Kelty, Town Clerk-Treasurer*

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*B.C.A. Chair*

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**BARRE TOWN BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES**

(To view the Board Member oaths see next page.)

TOWN OF BARRE - TAX GRIEVANCE HEARING  
OATH OF BOARD MEMBERS

Commencing July 23, 2014

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will well and truly hear and determine all matters at issue between taxpayers and Assessor submitted for my decision. So help me God (or under the pains and penalties of Perjury).

Name	Signature
Jeff Blow	x <i>Jeff Blow</i>
Gordon Booth	x <i>Gordon Booth</i>
Pearl Bugbee	x <i>Pearl Bugbee</i>
William Bugbee	x <i>William Bugbee</i>
Louise Coates	x
Tracy Delude	x <i>Tracy Delude</i>
Marion Fish	x
Irene Haskell	x <i>Irene M. Haskell</i>
J. Guy Isabelle	x
JP Isabelle	x
Kelty, Donna J.	x <i>Donna J. Kelty</i>
Robert LaClair	x <i>Robert LaClair</i>
Paul Malone	x <i>Paul Malone</i>
W. John "Jack" Mitchell	x <i>W. John Mitchell</i>
Caroline Pellon	x <i>Caroline Pellon</i>
Virginia Poplawski	x <i>Virginia Poplawski</i>
Roland Tessier	x <i>Roland Tessier</i>
Christopher Violette	x <i>Chris Violette</i>
R. Lee Walther	x <i>R. Lee Walther</i>
Sheila Walther	x <i>Sheila K. Walther</i>
Tom White	x <i>Tom White</i>