

*Town of Springfield - Board of Abatement*

*Selectmen's Hall - 96 Main Street - Third Floor*

*Thursday, February 2, 2023 at 6:10 pm Minutes*

Board of Civil Authority Members Present:

Ernest Lamphere  
Warren Cross  
Char Osterlund  
Beth Gray  
Randy Gray  
John Middleton  
Lori Claffee  
Lisa Young  
Stephen Matush  
Jim Fog  
Kathy Scott Weaver  
Josephine Hingston  
Judy Stern  
Walter Martone  
Barbara Courchesne, Town Clerk

Others:

Maxine Aldrich, Assistant Town Clerk  
Nichole Knight, Assessor

**1. Call to Order by Chair**

Having a quorum and the Appellant being present, the meeting of the Board of Abatement was called to order at 6:01 pm by Chairperson Ernest Lamphere.

**2. Swearing in of Board**

The Board was sworn in by Barbara Courchesne, Clerk.

**3. Requests for Tax Abatement**

**4. Swearing in of Appellant and Lister as Witnesses**

**Hilarie Tolstoi – 25 Union St – Parcel 026/3/53**

Appellant, Hilarie Tolstoi, and Assessor, Nichole Knight, were sworn in. Copies of Appellant's abatement request under "Reason No. 5" (24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5)), letter, assessor's determination of value, CAMA card, tax bill and calculation of abatement were distributed to all parties. Barbara Courchesne read aloud Appellant's request.

Nichole Knight confirmed there was a fire on July 11, 2022. Nichole Knight heard from Appellant, confirmed with Fire Department and went and took some pictures. The total

building value was removed. Previous to the fire, the value was \$71,500, and after removing the building value, it becomes \$21,300 for the land value. Appellant had nothing further to add. Lori Claffee asked if the building is being torn down. Appellant stated she did not know, the cost of building is astronomical and the contractors are booked for years. Appellant considered donating to the town. Appellant had heard from an adjacent owner about buying the property and tearing it down, but didn't hear from him again.

Barbara Courchesne explained reasons for consideration referring to the statute under item 5. Stephen Matush asked if paid on tax bill. Barbara Courchesne stated first two quarters of 2022-2023 have been paid. Barbara Courchesne reviewed the calculations presented. Warren Cross asked if Appellant had the building for the first two tax quarters. Barbara Courchesne explained tax year runs from July 1 to June 30 so Appellant owned the building for 10 days of the tax year.

Walter Martone asked if the structure was insured. Appellant stated yes but not enough. Walter Martone remarked on \$300,000 damage on a building worth \$70,000. Walter Martone stated the town does have ordinances that do not allow vacant buildings or damaged buildings like that to continue, it's been six months. Walter Martone stated there could be ordinance enforcement which would be penalties or condemnation of it. Appellant stated she does not want it to be like that. Walter Martone stated it's a blight on the town, and it's been six months.

**MOTION:** Lisa Young moved to approve the abatement as requested and have the town send the Appellant a check in the amount of \$1,576.20 in accordance with Reason 5; seconded by Beth Gray. Lori Claffee asked who declares a building to be a total loss. Barbara Courchesne stated the assessor gave testimony. Nichole Knight confirmed if the property is valued at \$71,500 and it has over \$300,000 worth of damage, that is a total loss. Barbara Courchesne confirmed the assessor is the trained professional in that instance. Walter Martone abstained. Motion passed.

**5. Deliberation**

None.

**6. Public Comment**

None.

**7. Adjournment**

Stephen Matush moved to adjourn; seconded by Jim Fog. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Maxine M. Aldrich  
Assistant Town Clerk