

BOARD OF ABATEMENT HEARING  
OCT. 28, 2015

Upon due notice to each member of the Board of Abatement and those persons requesting an abatement, the Board met at the Bethel Town Office on Oct. 28, 2015 at 6:30 pm. Members present were: Jean Burnham, Clerk; Bill Hall, Carl Russell & Lisa Hill, Selectboard; James Gray & Debra Leahy, Listers; Ola O'Dell, Scott Putney & Eric Benson, Justices.

RANDY & DEBORAH OAKES

Both Randy and Deborah were present and given the necessary oath. Their property is located at 324 South Main St. and their reason for requesting an abatement was the inability to pay.

Randy said they are both disabled. He is receiving disability payments, but Deborah is not. They are still fighting for hers. He said their monthly income is \$836.

Said they have always burned wood in the pass, but to a herniated disc and other injuries, he has not been able to handle the wood. Said they are getting some help from Community Action for a new heating system and fuel assistance.

They said they had made an agreement with Keith to pay \$200 a month, but had fallen behind due to the expense of the many doctor's appointments he has had. He said just when they think they are getting caught up, something else happens.

Said they had tried to file their Homestead Declaration on line, but it was not received by the state and it is now too late to file.

It was suggested by Debra Leahy that they could do a paper copy next year and that the forms are available at the Town office.

There being no further questions, the Oakes were excused and the Board went into deliberative session.

A motion was made by Lisa Hill and seconded by Scott Putney that we abate the interest and penalties for the 2014 & 2015 FY in the amount of – Interest - \$302.59 & Penalties - \$172.58, therefor allowing their monthly payment of \$200 going directly toward back taxes. This passed by a voice vote.

THE BRENNIFERS

Brendon Butler and Jennifer Emens were present and given the necessary oath.

Brendon said they had purchased the property at 268 River St. at a foreclosure auction for \$55,000 and the town has it listed for \$287,400. Felt the listers were in error in their value as the house was in very bad shape when they purchased it in Aug. He said the original owner had walked away from it and nothing had been done to it since the flood in 2011. He said they are having to replace the heating system, the electrical and a lot of the plumbing as the copper pipes had been cut out and stolen from the basement. Jennifer said every time you turn on the water you wonder what ceiling or wall it will be running down from broken pipes.

They said that it was not in livable condition when they bought it. Said they hoped to have at least one unit ready by December.

Listers Debra Leahy and James Gray questioned their request for an abatement due to an error by the listers. Said they had attempted to get into the property after the flood and did lower the value some from what they could see from the outside. Bill explained that there is really no blame, just a lack of knowledge about the condition of the property.

Carl asked them what they were looking for as their taxes are current through the Aug. payment. Brendon said they would like to see an abatement for the taxes over the \$55,000 purchase price.

There being no further questions Brendon and Jennifer were excused and the board went into deliberative session.

On a motion by James Gray and seconded by Carl Russell it was voted to abate the November payment of \$1,582.71 as Brendon felt they would have an apartment ready to rent by December. This passed by a voice vote.

#### ELIZABETH GARDNER

Elizabeth was present and given the necessary oath. She stated her property is located at 643 Old Vt 12 and that she had recently become unemployed. Because she has some health issues that need to be attended to, she has not wanted to go back into the work force until these health issues are in order. She so far has been keeping up with her tax payments and has no delinquency, but she said she has let other things go to do this.

When asked what her income is, she said right now all she is receiving is \$43 a session in a research study. When asked about unemployment benefits, she said she had left her job voluntarily so she did not apply for benefits.

There being no further questions, Elizabeth was excused and the Board went into deliberative session.

On a motion by Scott Putney and seconded by James Gray her request for an abatement was denied, because she was not delinquent and she had left her job voluntarily. This passed by a voice vote.

#### BENHAM ROGERS

On the recommendation of the delinquent tax collector, Keith Arlund, the Board abated the taxes, interest and penalties due on an unlanded mobile home owned by Benham Rogers that was located on Graham St. The mobile home is no longer there and no longer being assessed. The total amount abated was \$1622.14. A motion was made by Lisa Hill and seconded by Ola O'Dell and passed by a voice vote.

#### TELEPHONE OPERATING CO OF VT

At Keith Arlund's request the Board abated the interest and penalties on the back taxes due by the Telephone Operating Co. of Vt. They went through bankruptcy and the bankruptcy court paid the principal but will not cover the interest and penalty.

A motion was made by Scott Putney and seconded by Debra Leahy and passed by a voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Town Clerk