

Skowhegan Board of Assessors  
Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
January 16, 2020

Present: John F. Grohs, Chairman  
Bonnie A. Baker, Vice Chairman  
Harvey Austin, Jr.

Assessor's Agent: William "Bill" Van Tuinen  
Asst. Assessor: Leisa D. Emery-Burns

**I. Call to order:**

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 PM by Chairman John Grohs.

**II. Minutes to be approved and signed:**

1. November 8, 2019, Regular Meeting:

Bonnie Baker made a motion to approve and sign the minutes, seconded by Harvey Austin. – Vote 3 yes – 0 no

**III. Items by the Public: None**

**IV. Unfinished Business:**

1. Johnny Gray, Map 3, Lot 14, abatement request \$15,000: (Tabled from the November 8, 2019 meeting)

Bill Van Tuinen explained this is a parcel of land and camp on the Steam Mill Road. It is a very isolated road that you need a four wheel drive to access this property. Harvey Austin took Bill with his vehicle to go inspect this property. You have to go through Canaan and or Cornville to get there. It isn't a town owned road, it is more like an old logging road. Bill said he did look for sales in Skowhegan and surrounding towns, but found nothing with a location this isolated.

Bill recommends the Board grant the abatement in the amount of \$7,000 valuation, which is \$120.68 in taxes.

Harvey Austin asked what it would be assessed for after the recommended abatement.

Bill said it was assessed at \$25,200 minus the \$7,000 abatement would leave a value on it of \$18,200.

Harvey Austin made a motion to grant the abatement as recommended, seconded by Bonnie Baker. – Vote 3 yes – 0 no

**V. New Business:**

1. Charlene A Lamphere, Map 33, Lot 12, abatement request \$44,200: Bill Van Tuinen said this is a brick building that was used as a bed and breakfast and is located at 165 Madison Avenue. It was listed on the market for a long time as a commercial property but it wasn't being used as a bed and breakfast any more. The property has recently sold for \$142,000.

Bill Van Tuinen recommends the abatement in the amount of \$33,800. Bill said the reason for his recommendation is that you could say it did sell for the \$142,000 but that is one standard that Assessors have to consider. The other is we need to treat like properties alike. In estimating the value, Bill compared this property with the house next door, which is also a brick house with a long back yard. Bill valued the two houses the same. Bill used the same grade and depreciation on both properties.

Harvey Austin asked if we valued properties at 100%.

Bill Van Tuinen stated that we certainly do.

Harvey Austin stated this property has been on the market for three or four years. All the offers have been lower and this is the only offer that she could live with. If all she can sell it for is \$142,000 that is what we should be assessing it at. Harvey said the property had been shown several times by the real estate broker. Harvey stated the sold value when something has been on the market a reasonable length of time is what it should be taxed on.

Bill Van Tuinen said that is true to a point but as Assessors we have two standards we need to follow, one is market the other is treating like properties alike.

John Grohs asked if this was assessed as a commercial property.

Bill stated that with his recommended abatement it is not taxed as commercial, current use is something we take into consideration when valuing a property. It was assessed at \$186,200, with Bill's recommendation it would be valued at \$152,400. The law recognizes that we can assess a property and be within 10%.

Harvey said the true value in his opinion is the sold value of \$142,000. Harvey made a motion to grant the full requested abatement in the amount of \$44,200.

John Grohs said he can see both sides and he would like to meet in the middle if possible.

Harvey Austin stated he would withdraw his original motion and go along with that.

John Grohs said he would go along with the abatement in the amount of \$38,800.

Harvey Austin made a motion to grant the abatement in the amount of \$38,800 value, which is \$668.91 in taxes, seconded by John Grohs. Vote 2 yes – 1 abstained (Bonnie Baker)

Harvey Austin asked Bonnie why she abstained.

Bonnie Baker said she didn't entirely agree with it, but didn't necessarily disagree either.

2. Verne & Irene Daigle, Map 23, Lot 88, abatement request unspecified: Bill Van Tuinen explained this property is located at 9 Free Street and they did not specify an amount for the abatement. The basis for the request is because of the big change of a lot directly across the street from them. It is now a portable toilet storage area by Central Maine Septic. Bill feels that it does change the value in a somewhat negative way. It is similar to a couple of abatements that were made over the past year or so on properties next to a car wash. In treating properties the same, Bill recommends the abatement in the amount of \$10,300 which is giving the property 10% economic obsolescence.

Harvey Austin made a motion to grant the abatement as recommended, seconded by Bonnie Baker.

Harvey stated that he understands how they feel. There aren't many areas for commercial properties to expand. The flip side of the coin will be that right now it may take away from the value, but if they decide to sell down the road they could possibly get a commercial price for the property. You just never know. Harvey said he does agree with the abatement. It is just a sad thing, when a couple has lived there for years and then this happens.

- Voted 3 yes to abate as recommended – 0 no

**VI. Chairman's Items:** None

**VII. Member's Items:** None

**VIII. Assessor's Agents Items:**

Exempt properties were briefly discussed. Some exempt properties may be reviewed at a meeting in the near future.

**IX. Asst. Assessor's Items:** None

**X. Adjournment:**

John Grohs made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bonnie Baker. – Vote 3 yes – 0 no

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM

The Skowhegan Board of Assessors

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John F. Grohs, Chairman

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Bonnie A. Baker, Vice Chairman

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Harvey Austin, Jr.

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