



TOWN OF CALAIS

3120 Pekin Brook Road
East Calais, Vermont 05650
802-456-8720
calaisvermont.gov

Calais Board of Abatement Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2024, 5:00 pm, Calais Town Hall

Present: Steve Sweeney, John McCullough, Wilson Hughes, Anne Winchester, Scott Bassage, Michal Loignon, Kristina Bielenberg, Jordan Keyes, Dillon Burns, Barbara Butler, Jamie Moorby, Teegan Dykeman-Brown, Charlotte Hanna, Donny Mucherino, Anne Toolan, Janet Ancel, Kari Bradley, Craig Line

Present on Zoom: Sandra Ferver, Rebecca Downer

1. **Call to order:** Teegan Dykeman-Brown called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2. **Election of Officers:** Barbara Butler made a **motion** to elect Janet Ancel as Chair. Dillon Burns seconded. Motion passed. Janet offered that she would recuse herself from the Craig Line hearing due to a conflict of interest. She then requested that election of a Vice Chair take place.
Kristina Bielenberg made a **motion** to elect Michael Loignon as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Barbara Butler. The motion passed.
3. **Oaths of Office:** All members signed the Board of Abatement oath.
4. **Approve Minutes:** Barbara Butler made a **motion** to approve the Minutes of the Board of Abatement meeting on September 14, 2022. Kristina seconded the motion with a correction – she should be added to the list of the attendees, seeing as she is noted as making motions within the minutes.
5. **Rebecca Downer**
Parcel # 145047, 5047 Vermont Rte 14
Request: \$4,198.68
Status criteria: 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(1) Taxes of persons who have died insolvent

Rebecca Downer was sworn in. Rebecca's husband passed away last year after a prolonged illness. They were both on disability, and they exhausted their savings with his medical care. Rebecca is seeking a full abatement of taxes, interest, and fees as she works to secure employment. Her only asset is her home.

Barbara Butler asked if Rebecca has sought assistance from other agencies. Rebecca responded that she turned to Capstone, who directed her to the abatement process.

Kristina made a **motion** to go into Deliberative Session. Jordan seconded. There was further discussion about the Board of Abatement process for members who are new. The Board decided to wait to go into Deliberative Session at the end of the meeting. Anne Winchester asked how the Board decides if someone is unable to pay. Charlotte Hanna responded that in her time on the Board, she had never had reason to doubt that applicants were asking without it being a last resort.

Kristina asked Rebecca about the criteria under which she was applying. She had indicated “Taxes of persons who had died insolvent,” but the Board thought that perhaps a more appropriate choice would be “24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(3) Taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees.” Rebecca agreed that was fine.

The Board told Rebecca that they would finish discussing her application at the end of the meeting and call her back.

6. Craig Line

Parcel #450287, 287 Old West Church Rd

Request: \$4,024.58

Status criteria: 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(3) Taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees

Chair Janet Ancel recused herself due to the possibility of a perceived conflict of interest. Mike Loignon swore Craig Line in. Craig has had a series of cascading health issues that has eaten away his savings, made it difficult to do his sugaring work, and made keeping up with forms, taxes, applications, and other paperwork overwhelming. For the last few months, he has been on the mend, and thus he was able to pay his first 2023 tax payment. He is requesting an abatement of the second payment and all interest and fees associated with it.

Barbara Butler asked if he thought to seek help in the form of free tax services from the State of Vermont or Twin Valley Senior Center. He did note recently that AARP has a tax helpline and planned to pursue that.

His land was in Current Use, but he missed the filing deadline last fall. He sent in the application late with a note of explanation but has not heard back. Michael Loignon recommended that he contact Marc Mihaly or another legislator who can help with that kind of thing.

7. **Small Delinquent Tax Amounts:** request from the Delinquent Tax Collector to abate delinquent tax amounts of under five dollars per parcel.

Parcel	Amount
NP0526	.06
480711	.08
092726	1.62
130174	.08
281219	.09
CP010	.54
332180	.61
A19879	.09
421559	2.54
210477	.08
510447	3.18
NP0010	.23
CP0294	.06
281209	.01
021861	.21
B10417	.01

CP0186	.39
110083	<u>.03</u>
Total	9.91

Charlotte made a **motion** to abate the small amounts of taxes. Jordan seconded. Motion passed.

Anne Winchester made a **motion** that the Board of Abatement continue this meeting next month to allow both applicants time to explore additional funding options. Scott seconded. Michael made a friendly amendment to suspend interest accrual until that time. Jordan asked if anyone would offer to liaise with applicants until that time. Teegan offered to be the point of contact. Dillon suggested the Board go into deliberative session to get very specific about what would be asked of the applicants. It was decided that Janet would write up a set of expectations for Rebecca and Michael would write one for Craig. Kristina made a **motion** that we close the current meeting and continue it on March 25. Motion was seconded and passed at 6:01 pm.