

**TOWN OF ESSEX
BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
MEETING AS THE BOARD OF ABATEMENT
DRAFT MINUTES OF MEETING
JUNE 24, 2025**

Members Present In-Person: Dawn Hill-Fleury, Chair; Betsy Dunn, Vice-Chair; Alyssa Black; Leonora Dodge; Rey Garofano; Georgia Lavigne; Karen Lemnah, Assessor; Ken Signorello; Nanette Rogers, Town Clerk; Erik Post; Andy Watts; Irene Wrenner

Members Present Virtually: Kendall Chamberlin

Others Present: Jennifer Booker, Deputy Town Clerk; Caitlyn Bain; Zachary Moyse

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by Dawn Hill-Fleury, Chair.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS/CHANGES

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

BETSY DUNN made a motion, seconded by ERIK POST, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion passed 13-0.

4. PUBLIC TO BE HEARD

None.

5. CONSENT ITEMS

a. Approve Minutes: October 18, 2024

BETSY DUNN made a motion, seconded by GEORGIA LAVIGNE to accept the meeting minutes, with additions. Motion passed 10-0-3, with IRENE WRENNER, KEN SIGNORELLO and KAREN LEMNAH abstaining.

Additions:

- Erik Post made the motion to approve the Consent Items and Betsy Dunn seconded the motion.
- Georgia Lavigne made the motion to approve the Agenda.

6. REQUESTS FOR ABATEMENT

a. Steve & Allyson West - Request to abate taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees. 24 V.S.A. §1535(a)(3).

The applicant was not present. The applicant claims that their taxes were postmarked by the due date, however no proof of such is provided. There is no information on the bill about postmarks being accepted, however it is the Town's unwritten policy to accept such. Envelopes are saved if there is a discrepancy. A late notice was sent to the property owner. Payment was received on April 1st. Alyssa Black said that it should be the responsibility of the Town to save envelopes to prove that payment was late. Essex has been experiencing mail delays in recent years. Irene Wrenner said that the Town policy used to be that the check must be in hand by the due date. She suggested that this policy be put in writing.

D. Hill-Fleury requested to change the agenda order because Caitlyn Bain and Zachary Moyse are present. All agreed.

d. Caitlyn Bain & Zachary Moyse - Request to abate taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees. 24 V.S.A. §1535(a)(3).

Caitlyn Bain and Zachary Moyse are requesting abatement of the return processing fee and interest accrued on their taxes. Their payment was made online and later returned by the third-party payment vendor for insufficient funds. C. Bain provided proof of sufficient funds available in their account at the time that payment was made. The payment was not rejected by Town staff and the applicants contacted the Town who confirmed that their payment had been made. She believes that an error was made due to incorrect owner information. Nanette Rogers said that the attorneys generally provide the applicant with the tax information at closing. The payment was not rejected by Town staff; however, the bank cannot definitively say who was responsible for rejecting the payment.

b. Dynamic Ideas LLC - Request to abate taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees. 24 V.S.A. §1535(a)(3).

Nanette Rogers said that the following two applications are affiliated. The applicant said that unexpected repairs on the property made it difficult to pay their taxes. The applicants did not pay their September or March installments on time but are making payments. Payments began in June. There are no prior year delinquencies.

c. Afia Ahmed & Ajit Kumar - Request to abate taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees. 24 V.S.A. §1535(A)(3).

The applicant owns both units A & B at this property, however they are only requesting abatement for one of the units. D. Hill-Fleury said that the property is new and questioned the urgency of the repairs that were mentioned in the application.

7. DELIBERATION

ERIK POST made a motion, seconded by BETSY DUNN, to close the abatement hearing and enter into deliberations. Motion passed 13-0.

ERIK POST made a motion, seconded by BETSY DUNN, to exit deliberations. Motion passed 13-0.

ALYSSA BLACK made a motion, seconded by BETSY DUNN, to deny Steve & Allyson West's request for abatement of \$573.53, due to failure to provide proof of postmark. Motion passed 12-1, with LEONORA DODGE opposing.

GEORGIA LAVIGNE made a motion, seconded by ERIK POST to approve Caitlyn Bain & Zachary Moyse's request for abatement of \$300.83.

AMMENDMENT made by KEN SIGNORELLO, seconded by IRENE WRENNER, to amend the motion to not include the \$25 returned processing fee, bringing the total to \$275.83. This abatement is due to a manifest error of unknown origin. Motion passed 13-0.

ALYSSA BLACK made a motion, seconded by KEN SIGNORELLO to deny Dynamic Idea's request for abatement for all penalties and interest of \$938.08 based on lack of valid reason. The Board of Abatement recommends that the applicant continues with their payment plan. Motion passed 13-0.

REY GAROFANO made a motion, seconded by BETSY DUNN, to deny the motion for abatement based on the calculated request amount due to no valid reason. The Board of Abatement recommends that the applicants continue with their payment plan. Motion passed 13-0.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by KEN SIGNORELLO, seconded by IRENE WRENNER, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 13-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Darby Mayville, Recording Secretary