

**TOWN OF SHARON
NOTICE OF
BOARD OF ABATEMENT
Sharon Town Offices
15 School St, Sharon, Vermont
6:30PM, January 24, 2023**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were from the Selectboard Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin (Zoom), and Sara Pfeiffer (Zoom); Listers Galen Mudgett, Helen Barrett (Zoom), Collector of Delinquent Taxes Ken Wright (Zoom); Treasurer Deb Jones; Justices of the Peace Mary Ayer, Joe Willis, and John Lanza (Zoom); Assistant Town Clerk Carol Flint; and Appellant Jon Honkala.

2. Elect a Chair

Joe Willis nominated Kevin Gish as Chair of the meeting; Mary Ayer seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

3. Oaths of Office

Kevin reminded all in attendance their work here was done under oath they have already taken, and he swore in Jon Honkala who signed a Board of Abatement Oath form.

4. Presentation of application by Jon Honkala

Kevin summarized Jon Honkala's application where he requested the board to abate \$3,000 of his property taxes at 3620 Vermont Route 14. Kevin introduced Jon who reiterated his request, noting that \$3,000 would allow him to be eligible to receive a \$30,000 grant (from the Vermont Housing Authority) to help pay off unpaid taxes. Jon noted that on his application he checked that he was unable to pay because he has no income.

Kevin asked the board if there were any conflicts of interest. There were none. The hearing continued.

Jon answered questions from the board. Ken Wright said he was aware of the Vermont Housing Authority grant, and Jon is not the only one who qualified for it nor was he the only one on the delinquent tax list. Ken said he introduced the grant to the Selectboard at a meeting last fall. If Jon were to obtain the grant, he would still be responsible for approximately \$12,000 of back taxes. The board suggested that he review commercial versus residential tax bracket types and consider if his could be changed to residential. Jon said he, his fiancé, and two children (ages 1 and 4) live in an apartment in the same building as the garage. Jon has not been able to work. He also noted he has never filed for homestead declaration, understood filing for income sensitivity, or changing his property type to include residential (all discussed in this hearing that might lower his future taxes).

Jon told the board that he is filing for disability soon; has already been turned down from social security; and has no income nor a mortgage. Galen mentioned that Jon faced the Board of Abatement in 2017 and made no attempt to pay taxes after that hearing.

Jon announced that he needed an answer before February 4 - the Vermont Housing Authority deadline. He continued to answer questions from the board before it went into deliberations.

5. Close/enter deliberative session

Kevin announced it was time to move into deliberations. After Jon and Ken left the meeting, the board went into session at 7:06 to deliberate.

6. Open/adjourn

After closing the deliberation session at 7:34 p.m., Kevin asked for a motion. Joe Willis made a motion for the Board to abate \$3,000 to assist Jon Honkala's eligibility for the Vermont Housing Authority \$30,000 grant to pay off back taxes. John Lanza seconded the motion. Galen Mudgett requested a roll call vote. The motion passed.

Helen Barrett moved to adjourn the meeting; Mary Gavin seconded. The hearing adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol K. Flint
Assistant Town Clerk