



**BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING MINUTES  
OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2025**

Members: Charlie Burnham, Darcie Abbene, Donnie Blake, Ed Wilson, Judy Bickford, Julia Compagna, Leah Hollenberger, Monte Mason, Richard Craig, Shelley Nolan, Siri Rooney, Urban Martin, Yvette Mason\*, and Sara Haskins (Clerk).

Listers: Kevin Petrochko

Absent: Don McDowell, George Cormier, Laura Streets, Roland Billings, Shap Smith, Brian Yeaton, Grant Wieler

Applicants: Marci Young\*

*\*participating via Zoom*

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**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Donnie Blake called the Board of Abatement meeting to order at 6:01 PM at the Morrystown Municipal Building.

**AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS**

None

**APPROVE MINUTES**

**1. Approve minutes of June 23, 2025**

*Motion made by Charles Burnham to approve the minutes of June 23, 2025 . Motion seconded by Darcie Abbene. Motion carried. (14/0/1) Judy Bickford abstained.*

**HEARINGS PURSUANT TO TITLE 24 V.S.A § 1535 TO CONSIDER ABATEMENT OF PROPERTY TAXES**

**1. Peters, Nickolas William- 287 Valley View Ln (12069)**

Chair Donnie Blake opened the hearing at 6:04 PM by stating the name of the Applicant, the property location, and the parcel ID number.

Neither the Applicant nor a representative was present. As a result, Chair Blake could not administer the oath or confirm that the Applicant had received a copy of the rules of procedure or had any questions regarding the process.

Chair Blake asked Board members to disclose any conflicts of interest and/or ex parte communication. None were reported.

Since the Applicant was not present, Chair Blake read the abatement request form and written narrative into the record. The Applicant requested an abatement of **\$3,824 in principal taxes for the 2024–2025 tax year** under **24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(4)** (taxes or charges in which there is a manifest error or mistake of the listers). The written testimony stated that the property had been over-assessed, as

no interior work had been completed.

### **Testimony of the Listers**

Kevin Petrochko provided testimony on behalf of the Listers. He explained that the Applicant had informed the Listers in spring 2025 that the construction was only 50% complete, rather than the 59% for which he was billed. The Listers corrected this on the FY25–26 grand list and also slightly adjusted the quality rating of the home. This resulted in a reduction of **\$65,800 in assessed value**. Based on these corrections, Kevin presented an abatement figure of: **\$1,353.44 in principal, \$108.28 in penalty and \$13.53 in interest**.

Kevin further shared that the Applicant believed he would be receiving a revised bill for the May 2025 installment and had been waiting to pay once that bill arrived.

### **Board Discussion**

Chair Blake invited questions from the Board. There were none.

Chair Blake stated that the Board would enter deliberative session and issue a written decision within 30 days.

The hearing was closed at **6:11 PM**.

## **2. Young, Marci- 52 Fairwood Heights (24079)**

Chair Donnie Blake opened the hearing at 6:12 PM by stating the name of the Applicant, the property location, and the parcel ID number.

Chair Blake administered the oath to the Applicant, **Marci Young**, who appeared via Zoom.

Chair Blake asked Board members to disclose any conflicts of interest and/or ex parte communication. None were reported.

Chair Blake confirmed with the Applicant that she had received a copy of the rules of procedure and asked if she had any questions about the hearing process. The Applicant stated she had received the rules and had no questions.

### **Applicant Testimony**

Chair Blake asked the Applicant to identify the statutory category of the abatement request and present supporting evidence. A written abatement request form and narrative were submitted, requesting abatement of **\$55.45 in interest and penalty** for the **2024–2025 tax year** under **24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(4)** (manifest error or mistake of the listers).

Ms. Young testified that she paid her property taxes in full on **May 14, 2025** using the Town's online property tax payment portal, paying an additional **\$1.50 service fee**. On the same day, she received three confirmations—a portal reply, a text message, and an email—indicating that her payment had been processed.

On **May 19, 2025**, five days later, she was notified by the online processor that her payment had been returned due to an **account error** (not insufficient funds). That same day, she also received an email from the Morristown Town Clerk's Office stating that penalty and interest had been added to her account. She resubmitted her payment on May 19, again receiving three confirmations from the

processing company.

Ms. Young testified that if she had been notified of the error on May 14 or 15, she would have immediately resubmitted the payment and avoided penalty and interest. She stated that her second payment attempt was also returned for the same error, but her third attempt was accepted. She submitted two of the three confirmations received on May 14 as evidence.

Ms. Young additionally requested that the payment processing system be improved to provide faster notification of errors so taxpayers are not unfairly charged interest and penalties.

### **Other Testimony**

Kevin Petrochko stated that the Listers had no testimony to provide on this request.

At the Board's request, **Town Treasurer Sara Haskins** provided testimony on behalf of the Treasurer's Office. Ms. Haskins confirmed the sequence of events described by Ms. Young. She explained that the Treasurer's Office processes all tax payments in the same manner, regardless of method, and issues confirmation receipts on the date payments are received. If a payment is later returned by the bank for insufficient funds or other errors, the confirmation is voided, and if the due date has passed, interest and penalties are assessed.

Ms. Haskins noted that the Treasurer's Office does not control the time it takes banks to process payments or to notify the Town of returns, whether by check or electronically. The Treasurer's Office was notified at the same time as the Applicant of the canceled payment.

### **Board Discussion**

Chair Blake invited questions from the Board. Board members asked clarifying questions of the Applicant and the Treasurer, which they answered.

Chair Blake stated that the Board would enter deliberative session and issue a written decision within 30 days.

The hearing was closed at **6:36 PM**.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Sara Haskins shared that the state statute has changed and now abatement of small balances due will be done at the Selectboard level.

### **DELIBERATIVE SESSION**

***Motion made by Leah Hollenberger to go into deliberative session at 6:36 PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (14/0).***

The Board closed the hearings and entered deliberative session at 6:36 PM.

***Motion made by Urban Martin to exit the deliberative session at 7:12 PM. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (14/0).***

### **ADJOURN**

***Motion made by Judy Bickford to adjourn. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (14/0)***

Meeting adjourned at 7:12 PM.

Submitted and filed this September 10, 2025.

Sara Haskins, Clerk

*Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Board of Abatement meeting.*