



**BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING MINUTES
OF JANUARY 22, 2026**

Members: Charlie Burnham, Donnie Blake, Don McDowell, Ed Wilson, Judy Bickford, Julia Compagna, Leah Hollenberger, Monte Mason, Richard Craig, Roland Billings, Shap Smith, Shelley Nolan, Siri Rooney*, Urban Martin, and Sara Haskins (Clerk).

Listers: Grant Wieler* and Kevin Petrochko

Absent: Darcie Abbene, George Cormier, Laura Streets, Yvette Mason and Brian Yeaton.

Applicants:

**participating via Zoom*

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Donnie Blake called the Board of Abatement meeting to order at 6:00 PM at the Morrystown Municipal Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

None

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of September 8, 2025

Motion made by Shap Smith to approve the minutes of September 8, 2025. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (15/0)

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

1. Wells, Newton- 224 Ryder Brook Rd (16057.01)

Chair Donnie Blake called the Board of Abatement hearing to order at 6:02 PM, announcing the name of the Applicant, the property location at 199 Ryder Brook Road, and the parcel ID number. The Chair administered the oath to the Applicant, Newton Wells, and asked Board members to disclose any conflicts of interest or ex parte communications; none were reported. Chair Blake confirmed that the Applicant had received a copy of the rules of procedure and had no questions regarding the conduct of the hearing.

Mr. Wells presented a written abatement request and accompanying narrative seeking abatement of \$1,005.91 in principal for the 2024–2025 tax year, pursuant to Title 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5), for property lost or destroyed during the tax year. He testified that the manufactured home on the property was destroyed by fire on February 1, 2025, and requested abatement for the period from February 1 through June 30, 2025.

Kevin Petrochko, testifying on behalf of the Listers, stated that the value of the destroyed structure

was \$119,900 and confirmed the calculation of the requested abatement for the 150-day period. Chair Blake invited questions from the Board; none were raised.

The Chair explained that the Board would enter deliberative session and issue a written decision within 30 days. The hearing was adjourned at 6:05 PM. Don McDowell arrived following the adjournment.

2. Menville PAB Properties LLC- Elmore Rd Radio Tower (13068.90)

Chair Donnie Blake called the Board of Abatement hearing to order at 6:06 PM, announcing the name of the Applicant, the property location of a radio tower on Elmore Road, and the parcel ID number. The Chair administered the oath to the Applicant, Peter Bourne on behalf of Menville PAB Properties LLC, and asked Board members to disclose any conflicts of interest or ex parte communications. Chair Blake noted that he had previously done work for the Applicant but believed he could remain impartial; several other Board members acknowledged that they knew the Applicant. Chair Blake confirmed that the Applicant had received a copy of the rules of procedure and had no questions regarding the conduct of the hearing.

Mr. Bourne presented a written abatement request and accompanying narrative seeking abatement of \$101.46 in principal and interest for the 2025–2026 tax year, pursuant to Title 24 V.S.A. § 1535(a)(5), for property lost or destroyed during the tax year. He testified that when he purchased the property at 72 Lower Main Street, it included a radio tower on Elmore Road. Mr. Bourne has never visited the radio tower, which he stated was removed or destroyed years ago. Because the radio tower was not present on April 1, 2025, he requested abatement of the principal amount plus interest accrued for the full 2025–2026 property tax year.

Kevin Petrochko, testifying on behalf of the Listers, stated that he contacted Louis Ferris, who confirmed that the radio tower had been used as scrap metal years ago. Mr. Petrochko further investigated the property and verified that the tower is no longer present. He estimated the value of the destroyed structure at \$5,000. A Board member asked whether the property had been inspected at the time of the reappraisal; Mr. Petrochko indicated that he was not employed by the town at that time but did not believe it had been inspected.

Chair Blake explained that the Board would enter deliberative session and issue a written decision within 30 days. The hearing was adjourned at 6:09 PM. Ed Wilson arrived following adjournment.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

DELIBERATIVE SESSION

Motion made by Shap Smith to go into deliberative session at 6:09 PM. Motion seconded by Shelley Nolan. Motion carried (17/0).

Motion made by Shap Smith to exit the deliberative session at 6:14 PM. Motion seconded by Shelley Nolan. Motion carried (17/0).

ADJOURN

Motion made by Judy Bickford to adjourn. Motion seconded by Urban Martin. Motion carried. (17/0)

Meeting adjourned at 6:14 PM.
Submitted and filed this January 26, 2026.
Sara Haskins, Clerk

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