

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
July 8, 2014

Present:	Bob Bancroft Carol Howrigan Chris O'Donnell	Alex Weinhagen Allison Weinhagen Nanette Rogers
Guests:	Caroline Brown Trish Indoe	Corey Mathieu Sarah Jean

The Board of Civil Authority met on Tuesday, July 8, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office.

Allison Weinhagen nominated Bob Bancroft as Chair, seconded by Chris O'Donnell. Motion passed: 6:0.

OATH OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Board members present subscribed to their oath.

COREY MATHIEU – GRIEVANCE APPEAL

The oath was given to Corey Mathieu, Caroline Brown and Trish Indoe.

Listers Caroline Brown and Trish Indoe provided a handout (exhibit 1). Caroline advised the lot is 10.01 acres and fronts Route 128 however it is accessed from a private road (Richard's Way) from the Westford Milton Road. The dwelling was built in 2013 and has a view of Mount Mansfield and the valley. The dwelling is a 2,028 square foot, 2 story building with a built in garage and two decks. The assessment of the dwelling is \$210,800. Water and sewer is assessed at \$15,000, which is standard for all properties in Westford. The land is assessed at \$138,800. There is a 9,600 square foot equipment/barn/shed building assessed at \$122,200. The total assessment is \$486,800.

Caroline advised that Corey Mathieu provided three excellent sales comparables. The dwellings were good comps but the land varied. The Vanderbilt sale was a short sale therefore is not considered a good comparable. Caroline noted that Corey's bank appraisal was completed before construction and did not include the barn.

Alex noticed that the acreage for one of the comps, the Breen property, is assessed lower than Corey's. Caroline and Trish advised it's because the Breen property does not have the view Corey's does and is on a gravel road, not a paved road.

The information Corey submitted with his appeal letter was labeled as exhibit 2.

Corey stated that his concern is about fair market value. The Listers have a responsibility to determine the fair market value for properties in Westford. He feels the current value is over assessed. The professional appraisal done on the house values the property at \$329,000. The appraiser included sales comps, which take into account similar homes that have sold. He feels the barn may be beneficial to him however it may not be to a potential buyer. Corey thinks his assessment should be closer to the professional appraisal amount of \$329,000.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting
July 8, 2014

In their exhibit, the Listers submitted a copy of their assessment card with areas highlighted. Bob Bancroft asked Corey if he has concerns with any of the areas highlighted. Corey advised that these numbers are fairly accurate adding that he is not sure what the fair market value is in the real estate market. His issue is the \$329,000 versus the \$486,000

Bob advised that town appraisals are based on a 3 year average. The current Common Level of Appraisal is 103%, which means the town's assessments are on the high side. Corey referred to page 2 of the Listers' Handbook, which is part of exhibit 2. It states that the Listers need to make corrections, additions and adjustments to maintain equity among properties in between reappraisals. Caroline advised that this applies to group changes, such as lakefront properties. Westford does not have any properties that fit this criteria. She advised that the cost tables used in the 2009 reappraisal are the same ones used for new construction.

Alex asked when the house was built and when Corey moved in. Corey stated 2013. Alex asked about the year built for the comps provided. Caroline advised that the home on Old Stage Road (Breen) is at least 20 years old.

Alex pointed out that the professional appraisal states that the barn doesn't detract or add value to the property. Corey feels that the value should be based on what a realistic number to sell the property is.

Caroline advised that the Listers measured the building and chose the best Marshall & Swift category to describe the building. Alex asked if there are other properties in town with similar buildings to compare to. Les Moore and the Doty's place came to mind.

Bob asked about the percent good value assigned to the barn. Caroline advised that the program chooses that number.

Allison pointed out that the Listers are responsible for treating every property the same. Bank appraisals versus town assessments have always been a point discussed at meetings and never match. The question is are we treating Corey Mathieu the same way as everyone else? Bob Bancroft agreed.

Alex is interested in seeing comps and/or category choices for the barn. The Listers were asked to bring information to the next meeting.

The site visit was scheduled for Tuesday, July 15 at 5:30. Chris O'Donnell, Allison Weinhagen and Carol Howrigan volunteered to serve on the inspection committee.

A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, July 22 at 7:00 to hear the inspection committee's report, additional testimony and review all information submitted.

MINUTES

Chris O'Donnell made a motion to approve the June 25, 2014 minutes as written, seconded by Alex Weinhagen. Motion passed: 6-0.

SELECTION FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Board members present nominated Allison Weinhagen and Chet Balon as members for the Nominating Committee to search and make recommendations to the Selectboard for a Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector. If Chet is unable/unwilling to participate, Carol Howrigan agreed to replace him.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting
July 8, 2014

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert L. Bancroft, Chair
Board of Civil Authority

Nanette Rogers
Town Clerk