

To be approved at next BoA meeting

BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING
Held on March 30, 2024

The Board of Abatement meeting was called to order in person by Board Chair Tabitha Tant at 10:02 AM in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, Barre, VT. In attendance in person were: Peter Anthony, Karen Lauzon, Thom Lauzon, Tom Kelly, Amanda Gustin, Ivana Argenti, Michael Deering, Emel Cambel, Samn Stockwell, Patti Bisson, Assessor Larry Martin, and City Clerk/Treasurer Carol Dawes.

Members absent: Rosemary Averill, Tim Boltin, Michael Boutin, Jake Hemmerick, Lisa Liotta, Brian Parker, Haley Pero, Tess Taylor, William Toborg, and Teddy Waszazak.

The Board approved the minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting on motion of Board Member Stockwell, seconded by Board Member Anthony. **Motion carried.**

Chair Tant opened the abatement hearings, and administered the oath to all requesters present.

- **BOA #2024-42: 44 Granite Street LLC, 44 Granite St. Parcel #0685-0044.0000.**
Lucky Boardman was present to represent the property. Mr. Boardman said the property was heavily damaged during the flooding, and the 11 units remain unoccupied. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-43: 66 Maple Ave LLC, 66 Maple Ave. Parcel #0995-0066.0000.**
Mr. Boardman represented the property, and said the tenants in the 3 units were displaced for a number of weeks, and they waived rents for two months. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-44: The Boardmans Holdings LLC, 4 Blackwell St. Parcel #0190-0004.0000.**
Mr. Boardman represented the property, and said the downstairs tenant was displaced for a number of weeks, and they waived the rent for two months. The upstairs office space was unusable for a week while repairs were made. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-51: Samantha Hiscock, 9 Harrington Ave. Parcel #0750-0009.0000.**
Samantha Hiscock said the two upstairs units were displaced for a week while utilities were being replaced. Ms. Hiscock said the two downstairs units were displaced until late January and early February, respectively, while repairs were made. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member Gustin, seconded by Board Member T. Lauzon. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-52: Samantha Davis-Hiscock & Benjamin Hiscock, 12 Harrington Ave. Parcel #0750-0012.0000.**
Ms. Hiscock said one unit was vacant for 1 ½ weeks. The other unit wasn't impacted. There was no loss of utilities. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member Anthony, seconded by Board Member T. Lauzon. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-53: Richard Sawyer, 8 Scampini Sq. Parcel #1280-0008.0000.**
Richard Sawyer said the single family home lost the paved driveway, furnace, electrical, and hot water. The property is a rental, and no rent was collected for July. Mechanical systems were repaired in approximately 2 weeks. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**

The Board went into deliberative session at 10:21 AM on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Anthony. **Motion carried.**

The Board came out of deliberative session at 10:50 AM on motion of Board Member Bisson, seconded by Board Member Stockwell. **Motion carried.**

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The following decisions were made in deliberative session, and written decisions will be sent to the requesters within 15 days, as required by statute:

- **BOA #2024-42: 44 Granite Street LLC, 44 Granite St. Parcel #0685-0044.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of taxes based on 100% of the building's assessed value from the date of the flood through March 31, 2024, representing the period of time to date that the tenants have been unable to live in the apartments. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-43: 66 Maple Ave LLC, 66 Maple Ave. Parcel #0995-0066.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of taxes based on 100% of the building's assessed value from the date of the flood for a period of two months, representing the period of time rents were waived while repairs were being made. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-44: The Boardmans Holdings LLC, 4 Blackwell St. Parcel #0190-0004.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of taxes based on 50% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood for a period of two months, representing the period of time rent was waived for the tenant while repairs were being made. There is an additional abatement of the assessed value of the office portion of the building for a period of two weeks while the space was unusable while being repaired. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-51: Samantha Hiscock, 9 Harrington Ave. Parcel #0750-0009.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 50% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood through January 31, 2024, representing the period of time the two downstairs units were unable to be occupied while repairs were made. There is an additional abatement of 50% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood for a period of two weeks, representing the period of time the two upstairs units were unable to be occupied while repairs were made. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-52: Samantha Davis-Hiscock & Benjamin Hiscock, 12 Harrington Ave. Parcel #0750-0012.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 50% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood for a period of two weeks, representing the period of time one unit was unable to be occupied. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-53: Richard Sawyer, 8 Scampini Sq. Parcel #1280-0008.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 100% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood for a period of one month, representing the period of time rent was waived while repairs were being made. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.

Board Chair Tant reopened the abatement hearings, and administered the oath to those requesters in attendance.

- **BOA #2024-55: Builder Specialties Inc., 553 N. Main St. Parcel #1095-0553.0000.**
Matt Grundy represented the property. Mr. Grundy said there are 4 rental spaces on the main floor, and three apartments on the upper floor. He noted there was no displacement of tenants in 2 of the apartments, and the other apartment was vacant at the time of the flood. There was no damage to the apartments. The front portion of the main floor was heavily damaged and remains unusable. It represents approximately 1/2 of the first floor of the building. Other first floor spaces are being used for storage. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-63: Lauren Jo Chase, 24 East St. Parcel #0500-0024.0000.**
Lauren Jo Chase said she was flooded by the culvert next door to her property. The building was unusable while the water heaters were rewired, which took approximately 2-3 weeks. The tenants returned to the three unit building by September 1, 2024. There was some damage along the culvert, but no loss of land. There is some cracking and damage to the foundation. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Anthony. **Motion carried.**

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- **BOA #2024-58: Jo-Ann Alonzo, 417 Washington St. Parcel #1515-0417.0000.**
Harry Davis represented the property. Mr. Davis said FEMA sent a letter saying the property was unsafe to live in for 60 days following the flooding. They did not vacate the property. The culvert on Washington Street failed, and filled the basement and yard with mud and debris. They didn't lose utilities or use of the home. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Bisson. **Motion carried.**
- **BOA #2024-62: Jacqueline McCarty, 10 First St. Parcel #0585-0010.0000.**
Jacqueline McCarty took the oath. She said she lost electricity for three weeks, and heating and ductwork needed to be replaced. The basement was flooded, and there was damage to the kitchen and downstairs bathroom floors. There was approximately a month where they were unable to use the garage because the doors were damaged, and the foundation of the garage is cracked. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Deering. **Motion carried.**

There was a brief discussion on state issuance of certificate of occupancies for commercial properties, and the City issuance of COOs for single family homes, and how this creates unequal situations and inequity between commercial and residential properties.

The Board went into deliberative session at 11:25 AM on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Anthony. **Motion carried.**

The Board came out of deliberative session at 11:50 AM on motion of Board Member Stockwell, seconded by Board Member Bisson. **Motion carried.**

The following decisions were made in deliberative session, and written decisions will be sent to the requesters within 15 days, as required by statute:

- **BOA #2024-55: Builder Specialties Inc., 553 N. Main St. Parcel #1095-0553.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 100% of the assessed value of the first floor of the building from the date of the flood through March 31, 2024, representing the period of time the first floor space has been unusable to date. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-63: Lauren Jo Chase, 24 East St. Parcel #0500-0024.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 50% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood for one month, representing the time the first floor apartment was uninhabitable while repairs were being made. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-58: Jo-Ann Alonzo, 417 Washington St. Parcel #1515-0417.0000.**
The Board denied the abatement request due to no loss of use of occupancy or mechanical systems. Damage was limited to mud and debris, and not damage to the primary structure.
- **BOA #2024-62: Jacqueline McCarty, 10 First St. Parcel #0585-0010.0000.**
The Board approved 100% abatement of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood through October 31, 2023, representing the period of time the property was without electricity, heating, ductwork, and other utilities and mechanicals. There is not abatement on the assessed value of the land.

Board Chair Tant reopened the hearings at 12:00 PM and administered the oath to those in attendance.

- **BOA #2024-69: Thomas Mowatt Revocable Trust, 545 N. Main St. Parcel #1095-0545.0000.**
Jay White and Thomas Mowatt, trustees, represented the property. It was noted the property in question is the former Salvation Army thrift store. There is a lease agreement with the SA that's still in place, and the future of the building and use are still up in the air. The building took on nearly 6 feet of water, and needs gutting and all systems replaced. No rent has been collected since the flood, and power and water services

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have been removed. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Bisson. **Motion carried.**

- **BOA #2024-64: Michael Deering, 31 East Street. Parcel #0500-0031.0000.**
Property owner Michael Deering said the building is a duplex, and he is requesting abatement under the inability to pay criteria. Mr. Deering said he has been unable to work for the last four years, and has been unable to cover expenses, including taxes. The upstairs tenant is behind paying their rent by at least 10 months. Mr. Deering said he has made tax payment agreements in the past, but they were broken, and he is unable to enter into anymore agreements. He noted the property is currently up for tax sale. Mr. Deering said the upstairs tenant is a single mother, and he's trying to provide housing for her. He is requesting an abatement of 50% of the balance due, and he said he can pay the balance off in 2 months. He has not tried to access assistance from funding agencies such as Capstone Community Action or the VT State Housing Authority. There was some minor flood damage with the washing away of the propane tanks, but he is not seeking abatement under those terms. The hearing closed on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Gustin. **Motion carried.**

There were no representatives present for the following scheduled hearings. The Board closed these hearings on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Bisson. **Motion carried.**

- **BOA #2024-37: Bonnie Pepin, 68 Brook Street. Parcel #0240-0068.0000**
- **BOA #2024-48: Reg Dailey, 25 Park Street. Parcel #1145-0025.0000**
- **BOA #2024-57: David White, 14 Third Street. Parcel #1420-0014.0000**
- **BOA #2024-59: 561-567 North Main Street LLC, 561 N. Main Street. Parcel #1095-0561.0000**
- **BOA #2024-60: 19 West Second St. LLC, 19 W. Second Street. Parcel #1560-0019.0000**
- **BOA #2024-61: Stonewall Properties LLC, 15 Scampini Square. Parcel #1280-0015.0000**
- **BOA #2024-65: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 4 Shurtleff Place. Water/sewer account #00503**
- **BOA #2024-66: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 16 West Street. Water/sewer account #00794**
- **BOA #2024-67: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 1 Bugbee Avenue. Water/sewer account #00825**
- **BOA #2024-67: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 78 Elm Street. Water/sewer account #01230**

Board Member Deering noted he is conflicted out of deliberations on the abatement request for 31 East Street. Board Members T. Lauzon and K. Lauzon noted they are conflicted out of deliberations on the abatement request for 19 W. Second Street.

The Board went into deliberative session at 12:18 PM on motion of Board Member T. Lauzon, seconded by Board Member Bisson. **Motion carried.**

The Board came out of deliberative session at 12:58 PM on motion of Board Member Stockwell, seconded by Board Member T. Lauzon. **Motion carried.**

The following decisions were made in deliberative session, and written decisions will be sent to the requesters within 15 days, as required by statute:

- **BOA #2024-69: Thomas Mowatt Revocable Trust, 545 N. Main St. Parcel #1095-0545.0000.**
The Board approved abatement of 100% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood through March 31, 2024, representing the period of time the building has been unusable to date. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-64: Michael Deering, 31 East Street. Parcel #0500-0031.0000.**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of proof of financial hardship, and noted Mr. Deering could present documentation of financial hardship under a new abatement request.
- **BOA #2024-37: Bonnie Pepin, 68 Brook Street. Parcel #0240-0068.0000**
The Board approved abatement of 70% of the assessed value of the building from August 26, 2023 through November 1, 2023, based on the written testimony submitted by Ms. Pepin. There is no abatement on the assessed value of the land.

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- **BOA #2024-48: Reg Dailey, 25 Park Street. Parcel #1145-0025.0000**
The Board denied the abatement request to do no evidence of inability to use the building caused by flood damage.
- **BOA #2024-57: David White, 14 Third Street. Parcel #1420-0014.0000**
The Board approved abatement for the assessed value of the portion of the building occupied by his unit through March 31, 2024 based on the written testimony submitted by Mr. White. There is no abatement of the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-59: 561-567 North Main Street LLC, 561 N. Main Street. Parcel #1095-0561.0000**
The Board approved abatement of 100% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood through June 30, 2024, representing the unlivable and unrepairable condition of the building. There is no abatement of the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-60: 19 West Second St. LLC, 19 W. Second Street. Parcel #1560-0019.0000**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of information about the damage or uninhabitability of the property.
- **BOA #2024-61: Stonewall Properties LLC, 15 Scampini Square. Parcel #1280-0015.0000**
The Board approved abatement of 100% of the assessed value of the building from the date of the flood through March 31, 2024, based on the unlivable condition of the building. There is no abatement of the assessed value of the land.
- **BOA #2024-65: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 4 Shurtleff Place. Water/sewer account #00503**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of evidence to support one of the statutory criteria for abatement.
- **BOA #2024-66: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 16 West Street. Water/sewer account #00794**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of evidence to support one of the statutory criteria for abatement.
- **BOA #2024-67: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 1 Bugbee Avenue. Water/sewer account #00825**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of evidence to support one of the statutory criteria for abatement.
- **BOA #2024-67: TJM Green Mountain Inc., 78 Elm Street. Water/sewer account #01230**
The Board denied the abatement request due to lack of evidence to support one of the statutory criteria for abatement.

Clerk Dawes thanked the Board of participating in today's long session of hearings. The Clerk said there is a small list of remaining requests, and she hopes to schedule them for before next week's Council meeting. The state's education tax refund program for flood-related abatements will only consider those abatement hearings concluded by April 15, 2024, and the Clerk's intention is to have as many as possible done by that date.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM on motion of Board Member Stockwell, seconded by Board Member T. Lauzon.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn S. Dawes, Clerk/Treasurer