

**Hartford Board of Civil Authority
Property Tax Appeal Hearings
August 14, 2025**

MINUTES (Draft)

Present: Sara Blood, Vice Chair; Pat Cook; Scott Farnsworth; Don Foster; Jen Horn; Nancy Howe, Chair; Erik Krauss; Mark McNamee; Linda Simon Miller; Lisa O'Neil, Clerk; Rick Vincent, Assessor; and Ryan Walther.

8:35am: Nancy Howe called the meeting to order. The Clerk made the BCA aware of recent legislation requiring Towns with multiple voting districts to perform an audit of voters and streets to ensure voters are in the correct voting district. The Audit review by the BCA is due by September 15th.

Erik Krauss made a motion to have the Town Clerk act as Chair in the event both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent during any Tax Appeal hearing dates. Jen Horn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair reviewed the purpose of the Property Tax Appeal process and went over the procedures that the BCA would be following as outlined in the Rules of Procedure adopted by the BCA. The Board of Civil Authority members received and signed Oaths. Rick Vincent, Assessor signed an Oath.

The Chair noted statute outlines the timeline for appellants to submit a request for a Tax Appeal Hearing to the BCA. The timeline was specified in the Assessor Grievance Decision Letters and the Clerk received opinions from two attorneys at the Vermont League of Cities and Town cautioning extending the deadline set forth in statute. Appellants who submitted inquiries or requests after the July 11, 2025, deadline were referred to the Assessor's Office who advised the property owner they could grieve the property assessment next year through the process within the statutory guidelines.

The Chair opened the Tax Appeal Hearings to be held on August 15; August 26; August 28; September 9 and September 11, 2025. The Clerk read the appellant names and addresses for each hearing and recessing each to the respective date of the hearing as follows:

Barbara Davis & Wayne Mills-Recessed to August 15, 2025
485 Alden Partridge Rd., 5D

Andrew & Joy Cohn-Recessed to August 15, 2025
50 Fletcher Lane

Vernon and Mary Suzanne Crowther-Recessed to August 15, 2025
1221 Baker Turn, 1C

William & Sarah Dwyer-Recessed to August 15, 2025
165 Royall Tyler Road

William Mann; John & Bethalyn Mann-Recessed to September 11, 2025
0 Royall Tyler Road

David & Cheryl Hawthorne--Recessed to August 15, 2025
127 Golfview Lane

Leonard Morse & Gwen Tuson-Recessed to August 26, 2025
2499, 2521, & 2546 Christian St.

Matthew & Susan Foster- Recessed to August 26, 2025
1427 Jericho St.

Jennifer Lamoureux-Recessed to August 26, 2025
207 Latham Works Lane

Nancy Griswold, James Griswold & Wendy Louis-Recessed to August 26, 2025
168-180 Hickory Ridge

Kyle Moses & Crystal Pearson-Moses-Recessed to August 26, 2025
186 Hillcrest Terrace

Donald & Beth Main (Appellants have withdrawn their tax appeal request)
1301 Hillside Road

Katelyn & Brent Eastman- Recessed to August 28, 2025
2161 Hillside Road & 385 Quechee Main St, units 2A, 2B & 2C

Daniel Solomita- Recessed to August 28, 2025
316 Brookmeade Circle

Melanie Williams & Robert Merrill- Recessed to August 28, 2025
46 Pullman Lane

Steven & Joanne Collins- Recessed to August 28, 2025
711 Colonial Drive

Betty Colt-Recessed to August 28, 2025
745 Chandler Road

Alan & Heidi Haehnel-Recessed to September 9, 2025
38 Hillridge Road

Charlotte Lyman--Recessed to September 9, 2025
3446 Jericho Street

James Peters--Recessed to September 9, 2025
753 Podunk Road

Daniel Vota & Deborah Liddy-Recessed to September 9, 2025
160 Bennington Lane

David Grossman--Recessed to September 9, 2025
186 Sugarhill Lane, 3A

Kelvin & Kristen Smith--Recessed to September 9, 2025
984 Vallery View Road

Stewart & Lisa Smith-Recessed to September 11, 2025; rescheduled from August 14
580 Murphys Road, 9B

William Mann; John & Bethalyn Mann-Recessed to September 11, 2025; rescheduled from
August 15
0 Royall Tyler Road

Charles & Maureen Bacon- Recessed to September 11, 2025; rescheduled from August 14
0 Woodstock Road

Mark McNamee stated for the August 14th hearings he knows one of the appellants but does not consider it a conflict. However, he also noted he is a co-owner of a condo at Lakeland Village and will recuse himself from the hearing for property at 111 Lakeland Drive, 5D.

HEARING 1:

Nancy Howe opened the hearing for:

John T. Dickinson
0 Galaxy Hill Lane
Parcel ID #4-47-3-H1
SPAN #285-090-16992

Snow Village Properties, LLC c/o Pamela Dickinson
0 Mercy Strong Lane
Parcel ID #7-2157
SPAN #285-090-14502

John Dickinson was present. He acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor, Rick Vincent, introduced the Dickinson property at 0 Galaxy Hill Lane. He explained this property is part of the Red Barn Rd. Planned Unit Development (PUD) but not part of Quechee Lakes.

Mr. Dickinson explained they paid \$315,000 for the lot due to competition from other potential buyers.

The property was then reassessed by the Town Assessor three years ago for \$288,500. He said the assessment increase is 85% to \$533,700. He stated their lot is the smallest lot in the development, the lot is unimproved (there is not a well or septic) and there is a large three-story home overlooking the lot. Mr. Dickinson shared some properties he considers comparable to include:

0 Galaxy Hill (7-47-3-H6): he described it as a better lot and unimproved; it sold in 2024 for \$390,000.

42 Fairbanks Turn (11-1073-a): he described it as a lot with beautiful views; it sold in 2022 for \$390,000 and has water & septic. It is reassessed for \$148,200.

0 Galaxy Hill (7-47-3-HB): he described it unimproved but it as having pastoral views. It sold in 2022 for \$350,000.

Mr. Dickinson provided a written document containing the above information plus Galaxy Hill historical sales information and appraised values of abutting land to support his position their lot on Galaxy Hill should be assessed closer to the purchase price from 2021.

The Assessor, Rick Vincent, shared the aggregate appreciation from 2021 to 2025 is 53%. In the Memo provided he stated "land values typically represent 30-40% of an improved property's total value. Mr. Vincent provided the property card for 166 Galaxy Hill Lane explaining the assessed value is \$2,105,700 with a recently built home; the vacant lot had been purchased in 2021 for \$397,000. The land portion of the property is assessed for \$648,000. He said the assessed land values for the other lots on Galaxy Hill Lane are similarly assessed and the Dickinson lot is proportional to other lots in the subject development.

The Chair opened the hearing for 0 Mercy Strong Lane. Mr. Dickinson was present. Rick Vincent, the Assessor, introduced the property. Mr. Dickinson explained they purchased the Mercy Strong lot to access the Quechee Lakes amenities when his daughter attended Dartmouth Medical School. He also said although it is considered a buildable lot, the site will make the cost to build substantial. They purchased the lot in 2023 for \$67,000. Mr. Dickinson contends the assessed value should be closer to the purchase price rather than the new assessment of \$82,000. Mr. Dickinson shared recent Sales Comps in writing to include:

0 Baker Turn (6-2076)-sold in March 2025 for \$45,000 and now assessed at \$47,600 (.96 acres).

0 Hendee Way (7-5679)-sold in February 2025 for \$129,000 and now assessed at \$48,200 (1 acre lot on a cul de sac, sewer & water).

0 Noyes Lane (7-2170)-sold in January 2025 for \$25,855 and now assessed at \$95,800 (abuts trail system & is 8.03 acre lot).

Rick Vincent, Assessor, explained the QLLA membership lots are extremely varied impacting valuations. He said he visited the property and described it as very steep. He recommended an assessment reduction to \$74,000. Mr. Dickinson said he could live with \$74,000 but he thinks it should be closer to \$68,000. The Chair recessed the hearings until the afternoon when the site inspections are completed.

HEARING 2:

Nancy Howe opened the hearing for:

Jon & Lynda Christensen
2243 Quechee Main Street
Parcel ID #12-1309
SPAN #285-090-10894

Lynda Christensen was present. She acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath. Rick Vincent introduced the property stating it is a 1999 ranch-style home on 2.46 acres. He visited the property on August 12th. He noted the driveway is somewhat hidden and steep.

Mrs. Christensen stated the house had been built for them in 1999. She said, save one bathroom, most of the finishes are original to the home. They planted many trees to prevent erosion; the trees block the view. She added the traffic noise from Quechee Main Street is significant and the traffic speeds by making it challenging to safely exit the driveway. She said rains cause driveway damage and they have had to have it re-graded multiple times. She feels the influx of new residents during COVID impacted values disproportionately. She noted Quechee Main Street is not part of the Quechee Lakes.

Rick Vincent, Assessor, commented the lot and driveway are steep and the location is not the most desirable. He noted he made an adjustment for land topography and steep access. He is recommending a reduction to \$694,200 from the assessed value of \$765,300. He added the property card does not list it as a view lot; the traffic noise is already reflected in the assessment; The condition rating is average; and although the house has original features from the built date, it is well-maintained. The Chair recessed the hearing until the afternoon when site inspections are completed.

HEARING 3:

Nancy Howe opened the hearing for:

Stephanie Gile
93 Dawn Drive
Parcel ID #12-100-SSC-10
SPAN #285-090-10796

Stephanie Gile was present. She acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath. Rick Vincent introduced the property stating the property is a 1170 square foot single-family home built in 1995 part of a condominium association; the land is considered common area and not owned by the homeowners. There are some single-family homes and some duplexes. The property is assessed for \$312,700.

Ms. Gile talked about the character of the neighborhood noting it also consists of a lot of rentals, and the owner of the rental units does not maintain the properties well nor do those properties contribute to shared maintenance in the community. She said her home has deferred maintenance that would make it less desirable than the house next to hers which recently sold for \$345,000; she stated she had been in the home; the previous owners did not have children and "it is pristine and meticulously maintained".

Rick Vincent stated he drove through the neighborhood recently and there is some work needed in the neighborhood. He stated the sales reflect that. He outlined three Dawn Drive properties built in 1995-1996 that he considers comparable:

121 Dawn Drive: Sold in December 2024 for \$318,000, same style & square footage with a smaller deck.

103 Dawn Drive: Sold for \$345,000 in January 2025. It is similar but a bit larger.

36 Dawn Drive: Sold in June 2023 for \$399,000. It is a large Colonial-style home with 1560 square feet, a two-car garage, small deck and full basement.

The Assessor also noted there is a duplex unit with 1120 square feet in the community currently on the market for \$299,000; he indicated duplexes traditionally sell for less. He stated based on the comparable sales and the duplex on the market the assessment of \$312,700 is correct.

Ms. Gile said from the exterior view of the property she understands how that assessment was established, however she said the condition of their property differs due to the deferred maintenance and impacts the value. She said the assessment should be closer to \$278,000. The Chair closed the hearing until the afternoon when site inspections are completed.

HEARING 4 & HEARING 5:

Nancy Howe opened the hearing for the following TWO hearings and recessed them until September 11, 2025 to accommodate the appellants' schedules:

Charles and Maureen Bacon
0 Woodstock Road
Parcel ID #12-32
SPAN #285-090-12569

Stewart & Lisa Smith
580 Murphys Road, 9B
Parcel ID #12-1824-FHC-9B
SPAN #285-090-14784

HEARING 6:

Nancy Howe opened the hearing for:

Frederick Thompson and Monique Grondin
111 Lakeland Drive, 5D
Parcel ID #12-8126-LLC-5D
SPAN #285-090-16303

Mark McNamee recused himself from this hearing. He did not participate in any aspect of the Tax Appeal process for 111 Lakeland Drive, 5D.

Monique Grondin was present. She acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath. Rick Vincent introduced the property stating there is 1436 square feet of living area and is assessed for \$415,800 after a reduction applied during the grievance process.

Ms. Grondin stated the complex was built on a stump dump causing sinking and structural issues. She said at one point they had a contractor perform work done to try to resolve the issues, but it did not work. She provided an excerpt from the copy of a 2019 engineering report. She indicated units A & D have been impacted the most. She said unit A is a larger unit and has been impacted by the structural issues yet is assessed for less. She said she does not know if they could even sell their unit in its current condition, and they do not know what it would cost to fix the units and their issues.

The Assessor said absent the cost estimates to address the structural issues it is hard to make assessment adjustments. Mr. Vincent examined the exterior of the complex. Based on the structural issues, he said he applied the same adjustments from unit A to unit D and is recommending a reduction to \$287,900. He changed the depreciation code to "fair condition" and applied 20% for physical depreciation. Ms. Grondin indicated she is satisfied with the Assessor's recommended reduction to \$287,900. The Chair recessed the hearing until the afternoon when site inspections are completed.

The Chair reviewed the Site Inspection process with the Board of Civil Authority (BCA) members. Erik Krauss made a motion to recess the meeting to mid-afternoon today for the purpose of conducting the site inspections. Jen Horn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Don Foster made a motion to reconvene the BCA Tax Appeal meeting for the purpose of hearing the Site Inspection Reports. Ryan Walter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Dickinson
0 Galaxy Hill Lane

Sara Blood presented the report for Inspection Team 1 stating the land is moderately sloped, undeveloped and sits below several large homes. The lot is .23 acres but has a limited buildable location specified (80 x 100) due to ACT 250 and QLLA restrictions. The inspection committee recommended a reduction closer to \$335,000.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Dickinson
0 Mercy Strong Lane

Sara Blood presented the report for Inspection Team 1 stating the lot is steeply sloped and may be more costly to build. The inspection committee supported the Assessor's recommendation to reduce the assessment to \$74,000.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Christensen
2243 Quechee Main Street

Pat Cook presented the report for Inspection Team 2 stating it is a ranch-style home with a finished walk-out basement in average condition. The driveway is steep & winding off busy Quechee Main Street. The property has mostly original finishes and some exterior deferred maintenance. The inspection committee supports the Assessor recommendation to reduce the assessment to \$694,200.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Gile
93 Dawn Drive

Pat Cook presented the report for Inspection Team 2 describing the property as a three-bedroom, cape-style home with one car garage. The property is part of a condominium complex, and the land is common area rather than owned. The overall home condition is fair rather than average condition. The inspection committee recommends a reduction due to the condition.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Thompson & Grondin
111 Lakeland Dr, 5D

Ryan Walther presented the report for Inspection Team 3 stating the concrete foundation has significant cracking; the interior has uneven & sloping floors; numerous cracks in the walls & ceiling; gaps in the baseboard & windows; the stairs tilt and one sliding door is non-functional. The inspection committee recommends a reduction.

The Chair closed the hearings for August 14, 2025. The BCA went into deliberative session.

DECISIONS:

Dickinson

0 Galaxy Hill Lane

Mark McNamee made a motion to reduce the assessed value from \$533,700 to \$335,000. Scott Farnsworth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dickinson

0 Mercy Strong Lane

Sara Blood made a motion to accept the Assessor recommendation to reduce the assessment from \$82,000 to \$74,000. Mark McNamee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Christensen

2243 Quechee Main Street

Pat Cook made a motion to accept the Assessor recommendation to reduce the assessment from \$765,300 to \$694,200. Sara Blood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Gile

93 Dawn Drive

Pat Cook made a motion to accept the Assessor's recalculated recommendation to reduce the assessment to from \$312,700 to \$289,800. Linda Simon Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Thompson & Grondin

111 Lakeland Drive, 5D

Ryan Walther made a motion to reduce the assessment from \$415,800 to \$173, 700. Erik Krauss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2:45pm: The Board of Civil Authority recessed until August 15, 2025 at 9:00am.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa O'Neil, Town Clerk.

