Hartford Board of Civil Authority
Property Tax Appeal Hearings
August 28, 2025

MINUTES (Draft)

Present: Sara Blood; Pat Cook; Don Foster; Nancy Howe, Chair; Mark McNamee; Linda Simon Miller; Lisa O'Neil, Clerk; Cristina Tardie, Assistant Assessor (was present for Eastman hearings); Rick Vincent, Assessor.

9:25am: Nancy Howe called the meeting to order. Don Foster made a motion to re-convene the BCA Tax Appeal meeting. Mark McNamee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Chair reviewed the procedures the BCA would follow as outlined in the Rules of Procedure adopted by the BCA. The Board of Civil Authority members and the Assessors received and signed Oaths.

HEARING 1:

Donald & Beth Main
1301 Hillside Road

The Chair announced Donald and Beth Main had withdrawn their Tax Appeal request to attend to family.

HEARING 2:

Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
2161 Hillside Road
PARCEL ID #11-31
SPAN #285-090-15636

Katelyn Eastman was present. She acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor, Rick Vincent, introduced the Eastman property at 2161 Hillside Road. He explained there are six separate parcels combined for tax purposes. He said the property card listed 194 acres. The main house has 2500+/- s.f. and was built around 1920; the living space in the barn is 950 s.f. The Assessed value is $1,260,700.

Ms. Eastman explained there were some errors listed on the property card including:

- The acreage is incorrect: the total number of acres is 196.2 however, 11.4 acres are in Hartland; there are 184.8 acres in Hartford.
- All but 5 acres of the farmland is conserved in perpetuity with the Upper Valley Land Trust and cannot be built on. The land value on the property card is $820,000; she said the land assessment should reflect it cannot be built upon.
- The property condition should be downgraded

The Assessor stated he agreed with Ms. Eastman's statements. He has dropped grade for the Barn/Apartment to D- and adjusted the condition to "fair". He adjusted the value for the conserved acreage since it is unbuildable. He left the main house condition at "fair"; a "poor" rating basically means it is uninhabitable and this property is not in that condition. The Assessor recommends a reduction in assessment from $1,260,700 to $835,800. The total land value went from $820,300 to $483,800. He added this value is before Current Use is applied to the tax bill. The appellant indicated she is comfortable with the Assessor's recommendation. The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
385 Quechee Main Street (3 units)
Unit 2A
PARCEL ID #13-1-MBC-2A
SPAN #285-090-15241
Unit 2B
PARCEL ID #13-1-MBC-2B
SPAN #285-090-16177
Unit 2C
PARCEL ID #13-1-MBC-2C
SPAN #285-090-13084

The Assessor introduced the property stating the three units make up the entire condo complex. Units 2A & 2B were built in 1988; they are 1200 s.f. and in average condition. He is not sure the year unit 2C was built; the property card indicates 1988. The appellant stated an old property card indicates it was built in 1920. The Assessor visited the property and stated the foundation construction looks closer to 1988 construction. He said Unit 2A is assessed for $378,700; 2B is assessed for $376,800; and 2C is assessed for $458,000.

Ms. Eastman explained they purchased unit 2C as a foreclosure; it was a distressed property. The previous owner of unit 2C had not been contributing to the condo association fund to help with shared maintenance expenses. Soon after, the other unit owners expressed interest in selling. They purchased unit 2A in 2022 for $185,000; they purchased unit 2B for $140,000. The appellant stated since they own all the units in the complex there is no longer a condo association. She stated the complex is close to busy Quechee Main Street and abuts a ravine. She said after reviewing some comparable sold properties, she thinks the values should be as follows: 2A-$262,800; 2B-247,400; and 2C-$290,500.

The Assessor stated the conflicting information regarding the year built for unit 2C prompted him to look at two different ways he could reflect the age on the property card. One option is to state actual build date is 1920 and bring up the depreciation code/condition rating. Another option is to change the actual year built to date of total renovation with a depreciation code of "average". He chose the second option. He commented some of the appellants comps are located in Wilder, some are older & inferior; one backs up to an industrial complex. The subject units are located in Quechee but are not part of Quechee Lakes Landowners Association (QLLA). He considered five units located in the Dawn Drive neighborhood in Quechee to be more accurate comparable properties. They are 1400-1500 s.f. and are also not part of QLLA. He explained a base rate of $230/s.f. for condominiums is applied across Hartford and then adjustments are made based on factors such as location, desirability of complex, etc. The Assessor recommended reductions to the subject units as follows: 2A to $304,500; 2B to $303,000; and 2C to $368,600. The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 3:
Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

Daniel Solomita
316 Brookmeade Circle
Parcel ID #9-134-4
SPAN #285-090-16884

Daniel and Brittany Solomita were present. They acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor introduced the property stating the property is a ranch-style home built around 2020 by the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center. The property is assessed for $612,600.

Mr. Solomita indicated they agree with the reduction recommendation ($474,900) in the Assessor's memo to the BCA after he visited their property. He said the lot has limitations because there is a culvert in the front, the backyard slopes to a wet area and backs up to the interstate. He added the house was built with contractor grade materials. He said two properties in the neighborhood with useable yards recently sold for $450,000 and $470,000.

The Assessor made some changes to the subject property card including changing the rating from B- to C (he noted the original rating was incorrectly written on his memo to the BCA); two bedrooms are in the basement, so they are valued lower; he changed the number of bedrooms to one on the main level and adjusted the land value. The Assessor recommends reducing the assessment from $612,600 (erroneously stated as $612,900 on the memo to the BCA) to $474,900. The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 3:
Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

Melanie Williams & Robert Merrill
46 Pullman Lane
Parcel ID #22-184-1-B
SPAN #285-090-16989

Melanie Williams and Robert Merrill were present. They acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath. Ms. Merrill said there was no mention in the procedures that the Assessor would be visiting the property before the hearing. The Chair said the procedures are specific to the BCA Tax Appeal process. She added the Assessor tries to view the properties in advance to help him prepare his recommendations to the BCA.

The Assessor added he needs to look at the property in an effort to be fair and determine if an adjustment is needed. The Assessor introduced the property stating it is located at 46 Pullman Lane and is assessed in the amount of $640,300.

Ms. Williams indicated they are satisfied with the recommended adjustment from $640,300 to $549,800 stated in the Assessor's memo to the BCA. She said it seems more in line with the other homes in the development. She said the development is an all solar, high efficiency community with eight units built over a four-year period. She added there are six two-story homes and two single-story homes (theirs being one of the single-story homes). They have not done any upgrades; they added cork flooring and some tile because the original polished concrete floor did not work well. The Town listed the grade as B+, but others in the development were listed as B-. Ms. Williams said they have 1377 s.f, while other homes in the development have 2066 s.f. The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 4:
Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

Steven & Joanne Collins
711 Colonial Drive
Parcel ID #22-227
SPAN #285-090-10994

Joanne Collins was present. She acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor introduced the property as a ranch-style home with an attached two-car garage built in 1973 on .44-acre lot and it is assessed for $347,200.

Ms. Collins indicated the two-car garage is small and more like a 1 1/2 garage. They moved here in 1987. For the Tax Appeal process she tried to look at their house with a buyer's eye. She noted the paved driveway is in bad condition; the garage is not insulated; the baseboard and doors are scratched from previous owner's cats; in the winter a cold draft comes from the bathroom fan which vents into the attic and there is no extra insulation in the attic. She referenced her commentary in her written statement submitted with her Tax Appeal request to the BCA.

The Assessor inspected the property on August 21st. He adjusted the depreciation code from "average" to "fair"; he stated the depreciation is relative to the year built. The property needs repairs. The interior has original kitchen and baths. He noted the size of the garage is already factored into the assessment because it is calculated based on the square footage of the garage.

The appellant stated the Assessor's recommendation to reduce the value is a start, but she would like the BCA to see the property for themselves. The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

The hearings were running ahead of schedule. The Assessor asked to speak about the Assessor visits to properties prior to the hearings and some of the appellant resistance. The Chair commented that

Statutorily, the BCA considers the Assessor's valuation is correct unless the appellant provides compelling evidence otherwise. She noted it is beneficial to have the Assessor view the property to determine if any adjustments are warranted. The Assessor commented he was frustrated because at a previous hearing he felt he was not granted the time to fully explain his position in greater detail and respond to the appellants' assertions. He added as the assessor it is his job to be sure everyone is assessed fairly. The Chair said fairness is the goal of all of us. The Clerk stated having the Assessor present for the hearings allows him to comment on appellant testimony and the answer BCA questions, otherwise the BCA is at a disadvantage.

HEARING 5:
Nancy Howe re-opened the hearing for:

> Betty Colt
> 745 Chandler Road
> Parcel ID #9-85-1
> SPAN #285-090-12673

Brenna Colt, POA for Betty Colt, spoke on behalf of Betty Colt who was also present. They acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor introduced the property as a ranch built in 1997 with attached two-car garage on .65 acres with a detached building housing a workshop; a one-car garage and a canopy storage area. The property is assessed for $544,200. Brenna Colt said they have owned the property since 2016 and have not made any improvements since then. There had been some errors on the property card prior to the Grievance hearing, including listing the home as having central air and a woodstove. The Assessor has corrected those items. She said there was not a mention the Assessor would be visiting the property prior to the hearing in the letter and material received about the Tax Appeal hearing process. During the Grievance hearing they had requested copies of the comps used for their home during the re-appraisal process. They would like to know the metric Tyler Technologies used to come up with the assessment on their home. Brenna Colt said she hired an independent appraiser to appraise their home. The appraisal report was provided to the BCA. Brenna Colt said they received the Assessor's memo recommending a value reduction to $500,400 which matches the private appraisal. She expressed how helpful the Clerks' and Assessors' Office has been throughout this process. She thanked the BCA members for their service.

The Assessor said he changed the heat system from hot water to forced air. The central air and woodstove were removed after the grievance hearing. The Assessor explained, unlike an appraiser report, a mass townwide appraisal does not include 3-4 individual comps for each property rather they look at overall sales and assign a value based on that information. He is still trying to get the final appraisal manual from Tyler Technologies. The Assessor also changed the house quality grade from C+ to C; the garage from "good" to "average" and grade from C to D; he changed the workshop from "excellent" to "average" and grade from C to D; and the canopy from "average" to "fair" and grade from C to D. He recommends the assessment be reduced from $544,200 to $500,400. Brenna Colt stated they are satisfied with the recommendation.

The Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

11:50am: Pat Cook made a motion to recess the BCA Tax Appeal Meeting until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting site inspections. Linda Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3:40pm: Mark McNamee made a motion to reconvene the BCA Tax Appeal Meeting for the purpose of hearing the Site Inspection reports. Dot Foster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
2161 Hillside Road

Sara Blood presented the Committee Inspection Report saying the property consists of the main house with two apartments and a large barn with an apartment. There is a large woodshed/storage and an old structure that may have been a chicken coop at one time. There is a pond; property is on a quiet road with nice field views. The buildings are poorly maintained. The committee agrees with the Assessor recommendation to reduce the value from $1,260,700 to $835,800. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
385 Quechee Main Street, units 2A, 2B & 2C

Sara Blood presented the Report on Unit 2A for the committee. There are four garage bays; the buildings and grounds are poorly maintained. There is a large ravine about 10 feet behind the garage. Unit 2A is a two-story, end unit with two bedrooms & 1.5 baths. The Committee agrees with the Assessor recommendation. Linda Miller presented the Committee Report for unit 2B and stated it is in better condition with hardwood floors on the main level; it is an interior unit. The committee agrees with the Assessor recommendation. Don Foster presented the Report for the committee for unit 2C stating it was the original house and an end unit. It is in the best condition of the three but has poorly maintained building and grounds. The committee agrees with the Assessor recommendation. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Daniel Solomita
316 Brookmeade Circle

Pat Cook presented the Site Inspection Report stating the property is a newer home built in 2020 with contractor grade materials with open floor plan. The Committee supports the Assessor's recommendation to change the assessment to $474,900. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Melanie Williams & Robert Merrill
46 Pullman Lane

Pat Cook presented the Inspection Committee Report stating the home is a solar & high efficiency home with a small footprint within a development governed by a homeowners' association. It is in good condition but does not have high end finishes. The Committee supports the recommendation by the Assessor to reduce the value to $549,800. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Steven & Joanne Collins
711 Colonial Drive

Mark McNamee presented the Inspection Committee Report stating the home is a ranch-style without many improvements since it was built in 1973. There is deferred maintenance. The Committee supports the Assessor's recommendation to reduce the value to $318,400. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Betty Colt
745 Chandler Road

Mark McNamee presented the Inspection Committee Report stating the property is beautifully landscaped and in good overall condition. The out-building is being used for an artist's studio. It is well-maintained and built in 1997. The Committee supports the Assessor's recommendation to reduce the valuation to $500,400. The Chair closed the hearing.

3:40pm: The BCA went into deliberative session.

DECISIONS:

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
2161 Hillside Road
Linda Miller made a motion to reduce the value from $1,260,700 to $835,800. Mark McNamee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Katelyn & Brent Eastman
385 Quechee Main Street, units 2A, 2B & 2C

Unit 2A: Sara Blood made a motion to reduce the value from $387,700 to $304,500. Linda Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
Unit 2B: Linda Miller made a motion to reduce the value from $376,800 to $303,000. Don Foster seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
Unit 2C: Sara Blood made a motion to reduce the value from $458,000 to $368,600. Linda Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

__Daniel Solomita__
316 Brookmeade Circle
Pat Cook made a motion to reduce the value from $612,600 to $474,900. Mark McNamee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

__Melanie Williams & Robert Merrill__
46 Pullman Lane
Pat Cook made a motion to accept the Assessor's recommendation to change the value from $640,300 to $549,800. Mark McNamee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

__Steven & Joanne Collins__
711 Colonial Drive
Mark McNamee made a motion to accept the Assessor's recommendation to change the value from $544,200 to $500,400. Sara Blood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

__Betty Colt__
745 Chandler Road
Mark McNamee made a motion to accept the Assessor's recommendation to change the value from $347,200 to $318,400. Sara Blood seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

__4:50pm:__ Mark McNamee made a motion to recess the BCA Tax Appeal meeting to September 9, 2025, at 9:00am. Linda Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa O'Neil, Town Clerk.