Hartford Board of Civil Authority
Property Tax Appeal Hearings
September 9, 2025

MINUTES (Draft)

Present: Jo Alexander; Sara Blood, Vice-Chair; Pat Cook; Miranda Dupre; Jen Horn; Erik Krauss; Linda Simon Miller; Lisa O'Neil, Clerk; Rick Vincent, Assessor; and Becca White.

9:00am: Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-convened the meeting of the BCA. The Vice-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:

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Alan & Heidi Haehnel
38 Hillridge Road
PARCEL ID #31-52
SPAN #285-090-12138

Alan Haehnel was present. He acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath. Rick Vincent, Assessor, introduced the property located at 38 Hillridge Road as a raised ranch with 1282 s.f. of living area built in 1980 in average condition on .36 acres. The assessed value is $411,000.

Alan Haehnel stated they are not looking for special treatment, but they would like the process to be fair. The property assessment increased by 103% with the townwide reappraisal. He said their neighbors' assessments did not increase at that rate. He feels the assessed value remains too high even after the adjustment made after the grievance process. He indicated the Assessor visited the property recently and has recommended a reduction in assessment to $355,300; Mr. Haehnel supports the recommended value.

The Assessor stated the original condition code was listed as "good", but it was adjusted down to "average" during the grievance process. He visited the property on August 25, 2025. He changed the condition rating to "fair" and made an additional adjustment due to the steep topography. The Assessor recommends a reduction to $355,300. Lynn Bohi asked about the variation in land values using .30 of acre compared to a 1.00-acre parcel. The Assessor explained the law of diminishing returns applies, for example, the value of one third acre is not multiplied by 3 to equal the value of 1.00 acre; there are other value factors for land such as neighborhood; topography, etc.

Mr. Haehnel said in a townwide assessment it is difficult to keep the process fair since the company hired to conduct the reassessment could not possibly go into every property. He cited the home he grew up in the Jericho section of Town is in better condition than his current house in Hartford Village, but it is assessed lower. The Assessor commented he is not familiar with the Jericho property mentioned; it is possible it is under-assessed. There is a limited building permit process in Town; the issuing of a permit notifies the Assessor of renovations, etc. but if a permit is not required, the Assessor would never know renovations occurred. He added a door-to-door townwide reassessment is not feasible for over 6000. He said the company hired and the Assessors combined visited about 1000 properties, did property drive-bys, and used aerial imagery to assist in the process. The Vice-Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 2:

Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Charlotte Lyman
3446 Jericho Street
PARCEL ID #3-57
SPAN #285-090-13319

Charlotte Lyman and her son Russell "Rusty" Lyman were present. They acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor, Rick Vincent, introduced the Lyman property at 3446 Jericho Street. He explained there are two parcels totaling 32.5 acres. The Cape-style house was built in about 1823; it has 2640 s.f. of living area. It is assessed for $570,800.

Mrs. Lyman explained they had owned the property for 50 years; it was her husband's grandfather's property. Her husband passed away two years ago. Their primary concern was being taxed on the three barns that are completely run down and not safe to be in them.

The Assessor explained there are two barns and a shed across the street from the residence. After visiting the property on August 25, 2025, he removed the values assigned to barn & shed structures because there is no utilitarian purpose; The total value reduction for the barns is $37,300. He changed the house condition to "fair"; he said the house is dated but well-maintained. He recommends the assessed value be reduced to $503,100. Miranda asked if the condition of the barns negatively impacts the overall value of the property. Rick said that would not necessarily be the case because in the market it rarely negatively impacts value unless it is the primary residential structure. Linda commented there is a cost to remove the barns due to safety issues, equipment, etc. The Vice-Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 3:

Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

James Peters
753 Podunk Road

The Clerk stated Mr. Peters informed her via e-mail that he wished to withdraw his appeal. The Vice-Chair Closed the hearing.

HEARING 4:
Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Daniel Vota & Deborah Liddy
160 Bennington Lane
Parcel ID#7-5269
SPAN#285-090-11429

The Appellants were not present. The Clerk left them a voicemail at the number provided on their request for Tax Appeal. The Assessor introduced the property as a contemporary/modern style home with 1454 s.f. of living area built in 1975 situated on .98 acres. The assessed value is $623,800. He stated he attempted to contact the owners on August 25, 2025, by both e-mail and voicemail to try to visit the property. He did not get a reply, so he was unable to view the property. He added that the Appellants did not provide any evidence of improper assessment. The Vice-Chair recessed the hearing.

HEARING 5:
Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

David Grossman
186 Sugarhill Lane, 3A
Parcel ID#12-8112-SHC-3A
SPAN#285-090-12072

The Clerk called Mr. Grossman so he could participate by telephone after recent hip surgery left him unable to attend in person. He arranged for a property manager to allow the BCA access to the property for the purpose of conducting the site inspection. The Clerk read the Appellant's Oath to Mr. Grossman; he affirmed the Oath and acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure.

The Assessor introduced the property stating it is a condo unit built in 1981 in "average" condition with 1624 s.f. of living area; there is a finished basement with 600 s.f. It is assessed for $334,300.

Mr. Grossman referenced the written statement he submitted to the BCA dated July 7, 2025. He stated he has been in real estate for 35 years. They have owned the unit for a while and any improvements or work done has been cosmetic. He noted they have painted the kitchen cabinets but not upgraded the kitchen overall. He said his unit is not the same standard as other units based upon photos available on Zillow for units he used as comparable properties unless a buyer was willing to make $20,0000-$30,0000 in improvements. The previous owner installed Pergo flooring; the carpets are original. He said he gathered some estimates online for replacement costs rather than obtaining actual quotes for work he is not ready to schedule. The unit is an end unit, but it is not well insulated and the windows are not great. They installed tile in the bathrooms, so those are in pretty good condition. He said the influx of people during COVID impacted valuations in the area. He said the basement is used for storage.

The Assessor said he left a card at the unit in an effort to view the property. The Property Card states the unit is in "average" condition; it has 3 bedrooms/2.5 baths. The Assessor provided three comparable properties: Unit 5E sold for $490,000 in July 2024; it is assessed for $340,200. It is a 3 bedroom/3.5 bath unit with 1624 s.f. of living area and 600 s.f of finished basement. It is an interior unit. He stated end units typically have a higher value; Unit 6B has 1624s.f. with 3 beds/2 baths. It is assessed for $374,000; and Unit 6C that sold in October 2023 for $450,000; it is assessed for $363,500. It has 760 s.f. of finished basement; 3 beds/3 baths. The subject unit is assessed for $334,300. He stated some of the comparable properties provided by Mr. Grossman (units 1A; 2A; 4A; 5A & 6A) are smaller units; the Assessor said the units he provided are more accurate than those supplied by the Appellant. The Assessor stated there has not been any evidence that values are declining. Mr. Grossman reiterated his unit is not in the same level of condition as other properties and should be valued accordingly. The Vice-Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

HEARING 6:
Sara Blood, Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Kelvin & Kristen Smith
984 Valley View Road
Parcel ID#8-242
SPAN#285-090-15383

Kelvin Smith was present. He acknowledged receipt of the Rules of Procedure and signed the Oath.

The Assessor introduced the property as a 1728 s.f. 2001 Doublewide Mobile Home with 3 bedrooms/2 baths on 12. 5 acres on a privately maintained road. It is assessed for $242,700.

Mr. Smith said he does not think the value matches what he could get for the property if he sold it. He said their home is at the end the long, private driveway. He maintains the road and has invested about $100,000 into the driveway over the years. He said he is not sure a buyer could get financing for the home because it is on blocks rather than a concrete slab; he noted mobile homes depreciate, not appreciate. He also stated the interstate noise is very loud and the Casella facility also has a lot of noise early in the morning. He said he thinks the value should be closer to $200,000.

The Assessor visited the property on September 3, 2025. He said one bedroom has been converted to a mudroom; there are some soft spots in the flooring; the interior needs cosmetic updates; and there are drywall cracks. He made some adjustments including changing the roofing from asphalt to metal roof; he said the fireplace is a prefab fireplace rather than a standard fireplace; and he made an adjustment to the land because of the highway noise. He recommends a price reduction from $242,700 to $216,700. Mr. Smith submitted two property cards for properties he said are comparable (1898 Woodstock Road & 1146 Center of Town Road). The Vice-Chair recessed the hearing until mid-afternoon for the purpose of conducting the Inspection Committee site visits.

At noon, the BCA meeting was recessed for a lunch break and for the site visits.

2:30pm: The Vice-Chair reconvened the BCA meeting for the purpose of hearing the Inspection Committee reports.

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Alan & Heidi Haehnel
38 Hillridge Road

Lynn Bohi presented the Committee Inspection Report saying the property is a split-level home on a very steep and rutted driveway. The house is in fair condition with some areas in lower grade condition. The committee agrees with the Assessor regarding the driveway and overall condition. The committee supports the recommendation to reduce the value from $411,000 to $355,300. The Chair closed the hearing.

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Charlotte Lyman
3446 Jericho Street

Jo Alexander presented the report for the committee. She stated it is a cape-style home with 3 bedrooms & 2 bathrooms. There are dated finishes and many original features. The basement foundation is stone and brick with a portion with concrete floor and a portion with a dirt floor. The three barn structures on the property are dilapidated. The committee agrees with the Assessor recommendation to reduce the valuation from $570,800 to $503,100. The Vice-Chair closed the hearing.

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Daniel Vota & Deborah Liddy
160 Bennington Lane

After attempting to reach the appellants today without a response to arrange a site visit, by statute, the application is considered withdrawn since the BCA did not have access to the property to conduct a site visit. The Vice-Chair closed the hearing.

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

David Grossman
186 Sugarhill Lane, 3A

Miranda Dupre presented the Inspection Committee Report stating it is a three-story condo with 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. It is in average condition with dated features; the baths have been updated. The basement is used for storage, but it is a finished basement. The Committee supports the recommendation by the Assessor to leave the assessed value at $334,300. The Vice-Chair closed the hearing.

The Vice-Chair re-opened the hearing for:

Kelvin & Kristen Smith
984 Valley View Road

Lynn Bohi presented the Inspection Committee Report stating the approach to the property is a long dirt private road. The home is a double-wide mobile home in fair condition with some soft spots on the flooring, and there is a two-bay garage. There is substantial noise from the interstate. The Assessor had prepared a revised MEMO to the BCA while the members were on the site inspections reflecting a "5% Functional Depreciation for the lack of a concrete slab under the mobile home." The Committee supports the Assessor's revised recommendation to reduce the value from the assessed value of $242,700 to $207,000. The Vice-Chair closed the hearing.

2:40pm: Erik Krauss made a motion to enter into deliberative session; Jo Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The BCA went into deliberative session.

3:10pm: The BCA reconvened the meeting to render the decisions.

DECISIONS:

Alan & Heidi Haehnel
38 Hillridge Road

Erik Krauss made a motion to approve the Assessor recommendation to reduce the value from $411,000 to $355,300. Jen Horn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Charlotte Lyman
3446 Jericho Street

Jo Alexander made a motion to accept the Assessor's recommendation to reduce the value from $570,800 to $503,100. Miranda Dupre seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

David Grossman
186 Sugarhill Lane, 3A

Miranda Dupre made a motion to approve the Assessor's recommendation to leave the assessed value at $334,300. Linda Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Kelvin & Kristen Smith
984 Valley View Road

Lynn Bohi made a motion to reduce the value from $242,700 to $207,000 per the Assessor's revised recommendation. Jo Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3:15pm Erik Krauss made a motion to adjourn. Jen Horn seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa O'Neil, Town Clerk.