

**Meeting Minutes: Royalton Board of Abatement  
January 11, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting: Zoom Conference  
2460 Vermont Route 14, South Royalton, Vermont 05068**

**Requests received:**

Flora Quillia: PID A—130, VT Rt 110 Mobile Home. Request received October 30, 2020(original request), November 2 & December 7, 2020(additional information)

Andrew Alinovich & Elizabeth Willhite: PID U—350, 878 VT RT 14, 3.5 AC & Dwelling & Retail Barn. Request(re-consideration) received December 4, 2020.

Donna Britch: Parcel ID Q—440, 9 Riverbend Park, Mobile Home Lot #2. Request received December 23, 2020(original request) and January 11, 2021(additional information)

January 6, 2021: notice and agenda of abatement hearing mailed to Board of Abatement members and all appellants. Notices posted same day to Town of Royalton website, town office, post office, Chelsea Street and Royalton Academy.

**January 11, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. Board of Abatement met via Zoom conference.**

Members Present: Justices of the Peace: Chair “Bushrod” Powers, Bill Ballou, Allison Fulcher, Bruce Post, Hoyt Bingham, John Dumville, Peg Ainsworth, Charlie Bascom and Matt Angell. Selectboard: Tim Murphy, John Dumville and David Barker. Listers: Walter Hastings, Jeff Barcelow and Samantha Bruce. Treasurer: Rita Hull. Clerk: Karmen Bascom.

Members Absent: Justices of the Peace: Rebecca Foulk. Selectboard: Chris Noble and Jerry Barcelow.

Appellants: Donna Britch. Public: Donalyn Churchill.

The meeting was called to order at request of Ms. Fulcher. Ms. Fulcher asked Chair Powers to modify agenda and move Ms. Britch to first hearing as she was the only appellant there. Chair Powers swore in Ms. Britch at 6:40 p.m.

Ms. Britch stated she was abating under 24 VSA §1535, inability to pay her taxes. She had to leave her full-time job at Timken due to upper-respiratory issues complicated by low air-quality. She has since been working with a doctor and has found part-time employment since her short-term disability ran out on October 9, 2020. Bingham and Barker asked if Britch had filed for mortgage and tax relief as well as homestead exemptions. Britch produced documents confirming such and summarized living expenses at request of Barcelow and Fulcher. Ms. Britch noted she had applied for an abatement request at the suggestion of Theresa Harrington, Collector of Delinquent Taxes. Britch was thanked and exited meeting.

Clerk Bascom introduced public guest: Donalyn Churchill. Ms. Churchill asked for an abatement. She was thanked and will be added to the next hearing. Fulcher suggested deliberative session to discuss remaining material submitted for Ms. Quillia and Ms. Willhite. Chair Powers entered session.

Regarding the Quillia application and based upon evidence received at the January 11, 2021 hearing, the Board of Abatement made the following findings of fact: Mrs. Quillia was not present. Jeff Barcelow was asked to present Ms. Quillia’s documents and his understanding of the situation. Documents noted state financial hardship, clerk gave false information and “conveniently” lost her paperwork.

1. Ms. Quillia’s abatement request and letter stated she was forced to move her home to Stockbridge by May 1, 2020. But, due to Covid-related reasons sold her home, at a loss of only \$4,750 to Mr. Colson, Vt Rt 110, Royalton.

2. Clerk gave false information and lost her paperwork. First follow up letter received 11/2/2020 Mr. Quillia states the clerk gave them false information—that Mrs. Quillia would not be taxed if the home was moved by 6/30/2020 and that clerk “conveniently” lost her paperwork. The second follow up letter, addressed to the listers, dated 12/3/2020, received 12/7/2020 reiterates her concerns.

Barcelow noted that Bascom did tell him that one of the letters had been misfiled and he opined that breakdown in communications may have occurred.

In response to the reasons Mrs. Quillia was requesting abatement, Karmen Bascom offered her evidence.

1. Assorted email correspondence to and from Collector of Delinquent Taxes, State of Vermont (PVR), Listers, Treasurer and Russell Finkle, Mrs. Quillia’s son. These noted Bascom’s focus: clearing delinquency concerns to assure legal transport of Ms. Quillia’s home out of town. No mention was made releasing her from future taxes on her property.
2. When Lister Barcelow mentioned Ms. Quillia’s concerns, Clerk Bascom searched for letter and promptly offered it to listers. All letters were presented to board for abatement review.

The Board concluded that no manifest error was committed on part of clerk. The tax bill in the name of Flora Quillia whose mobile home is now parked on Colson property at VT Rt 110 is the responsibility of Mrs. Quillia and Mr. Colson to work out, perhaps in conjunction with a real estate attorney, but not as an abatement issue. And, while taxes may be somewhat confusing, it is reasonable to assume that property owners would recognize property taxes must be paid each year. Abatement denied based on a unanimous voice vote with Jeff Barcelow and Karmen Bascom abstaining.

Regarding the Elizabeth Willhite and Andrew Alinovich application and based upon evidence received at the January 11, 2021 hearing, the Board of Abatement makes the following findings of fact:

1. They are asking for a reconsideration to a prior meeting where they had been asked to supply additional information.
2. They are not present, nor has any additional information on their situation or payment plan been received.

The board concludes that with no appellants and no new information they cannot abate. Motion to abate unanimously denied.

Regarding the Donna Britch abatement application, testimony and evidence received the board makes the following findings of fact:

1. Upper respiratory issues placed her in a position where she had to leave her full-time job at Timken and seek medical care.
2. She went on short term disability through 10/2020, returned to more suitable part-time work and has received her Covid relief funds, homestead exemption and mortgage assistance.
3. Applied for an abatement at the request of the Collector of Delinquent Taxes.

The Board concluded that Ms. Britch:

1. Has offered documents noting progress paying relevant bills and budgeted expenses.
2. Has been able to re-enter the workforce in a healthier work environment.
3. Sought out in good faith, an appropriate abatement suggested by the Collector of Delinquent Taxes, though only two months overdue to the town.

Based on these findings the Board of Abatement requests Ms. Britch set up a payment plan with Theresa Harrington, Collector of Delinquent Taxes. With one in favor and others opposed abatement was denied.

Meeting adjourned 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karmen M. Bascom, Town Clerk