



**TOWN OF WINCHESTER**  
**Board of Assessment Appeals**  
**Held Remotely (Via Zoom)**  
**and was streamed live on YouTube:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT1ffiBjMTBQM5OEXSgKlqg/videos>

**March 25, 2021 – 5:00PM**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman John Herman called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Roll call was completed by John Herman. Present at the meeting in addition to him were Jackie Mulvey, Joel Stewart, and Alternates Glenn Albanesius and Melissa Reagan. Additionally, Selectman Todd Arcelaschi, liaison to the Board of Assessment Appeals, was present for the meeting.

Also present were Assessors Cory Iacino and Jill Healey.

**3. AGENDA REVIEW:**

No modifications were made to the agenda.

**4. APPEAL HEARINGS:**

**A. (Real Estate) Jenney, Curtis and Neil and Darr, Hollis 113 Blue Street, Map 035, Block 157, Lot 042-14.**

**B. (Real Estate) Plethora Properties, LLC 25 High Street, Map 110, Block 051, Lot 002.**

Appraiser Bob Warner appeared before the Board regarding this appeal. He reported his clients had received a letter from the Town communicating a change in assessment value from \$86,660 to \$105,770. While not being a year of revaluation, Mr. Warner acknowledged his client had undertaken renovations to the house. An increase was understood but the amount of the increase was in question, according to Mr. Warner. He questioned whether the values were based on 2017. Mr. Herman confirmed. Mr. Warner reported the purchase as having been completed in 2017 with a purchase price of \$37,500. He explained the dwelling as having been converted from a multi-family to a single-family residence after his client's purchase. Those associated renovations have been ongoing from 2017 to the present time, according to Mr. Warner. He opined the 2017 assessed value of \$86,660 as being inflated for that time. Mr. Warner submitted an appraisal as of October 1, 2017, taking into consideration the current improvements. Mr. Herman questioned the sum of the investments for the renovations. Mr. Warner recalled it being \$60K.

Mr. Herman shared his observations of the house being for sale for some time. Mr. Warner explained that the lot is on High Street, just as the road bends up to Highview Avenue. He noted that the parcel has only one parking space with the rest of the lot being ledge. Mr. Warner reported the house having no yard and indicated that but for the porch and patio, there is no other recreational value part of the parcel.

Mr. Herman noted that the property the owner has \$100K into it. Mr. Warner communicated that as an appraiser, he could have beat up this property for the many function obsolesces due to an antiquated layout, due to the lack of parking, lack of recreational use, and due to the flow and layout. He did not because he instead found the house to be an oddity.

Ms. Mulvey noted the applicant as having valued the home at \$90K. Mr. Warner indicated that the value he puts on the property is higher than that, at \$97K. He noted that this assigned value by him is for 2017.

Mr. Stewart discussed assigning different values to the condition factors used in determining the assessment value for this piece. Mr. Herman suggested adjusting the full value of \$105K.

**C. (Personal Property) Rhoades, Charles 29 Unregistered Trailers.**

Charles Rhoades appeared before the Board regarding this application. Mr. Rhoades explained that his trailers were never taxed before. He noted that many were merely given to him and he explained that he hadn't paid for them. Mr. Herman questioned what they were used for. Mr. Rhoades indicated that they were used for storage. Mr. Herman questioned what the contents were. Mr. Rhoades explained that there wasn't much inside of them currently but that he used to store things in them. Mr. Herman questioned whether there used to be business or if the appellant just had a lot of stuff. Mr. Rhoades noted that he just had a lot of stuff.

Mr. Herman observed that the value assigned for each trailer was \$200 and questioned whether that was what Mr. Rhoades thought they were worth. He responded that trailers can still be picked up for free and had questioned what the scrap yard would give him for each and was told that he would receive \$100 each but would need to deliver them.

Mr. Herman questioned the use of 189 Rowley Street. Mr. Rhoades indicated that it was an industrial property. Mr. Herman questioned whether Mr. Rhoades was intending to rid the property of the trailers. Mr. Rhoades indicated that he intended to keep six trailers. Mr. Herman questioned whether they had any value. Mr. Rhoades indicated that they did not.

Mr. Rhoades questioned whether there was a fine that was going to continue to be levied. Ms. Iacino explained that there was a 25% fine for having not filed the Personal Property Declaration. Mr. Rhoades noted that he had been told by scrap yards that the trailers are worthless because of the wooden floors and tires.

Mr. Stewart suggested that the Board take a drive there to review it, wondering if the trailers are actually worthless and how they could be taxed. He wondered how they could be valued at what was reflected. Mr. Stewart was interested in reviewing the email from the scrap yard company. An unsigned letter dated February 10, 2021 with the letterhead of Continental Metal Scrap, LLC of 1275 Wolcott Road, Wolcott, was emailed to Mr. Herman in real time that indicated their offer of \$100 for trailers delivered to their yard.

Mr. Stewart suggested zeroing out all but six of the trailers and assigning a value to them. Ms. Iacino explained that the trailers were being taxed in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-71 for unregistered motor vehicles. Mr. Stewart questioned whether these trailers were registered. Ms. Iacino explained that unregistered motor vehicles are taxed at the same rate as registered motor vehicles. Mr. Stewart questioned how the values are assigned. Ms. Iacino described the processes employed by Assessors, including accessing how scrap yards value them. She explained that they are being utilized like sheds and to remove the value of the trailers would be the equivalent of removing all of the assessments for people's sheds across town. Mr. Stewart sympathized with the cost associated with removing these trailers. Mr. Herman suggested that the value be adjusted to \$100 on twenty of them and be adjusted to \$400 on the remaining nine. He noted he was inclined to agree to that as the appellant had agreed to get rid of the majority of the trailers.

It was agreed that the trailers would be assessed with a value of \$200 each.

**D. (Real Estate) Roller, John 164 Torrington Road, Map 038, Block 158, Lot 019-1.**

John Roller appeared before the board regarding this application. Mr. Roller reported that he had owned the property for twenty years and that when he first began his taxes were \$11K. He explained the fluctuations with the taxes over the years with his having to explain the ledge conditions every couple years. Mr. Roller noted that his taxes for his Crystal Peak facility was currently \$17K and explained he is only open on the weekends.

Mr. Roller explained that most of his land is unusable. Mr. Stewart questioned whether there had been any recent building renovations and at Mr. Roller's request, explained that those included investments in updates. Mr. Roller agreed, noting that there was new flooring installed, new windows being installed, and had put a new roof on the building. Mr. Stewart noted that while Mr. Rollers appeal for assessment relief was based on the condition of the land, most of the increase in assessment was tied to the building value.

Mr. Herman questioned what price Mr. Roller thought he could likely sell the property. Explaining that he was not real familiar with valuing property and with not including the business and equipment, Mr. Roller estimated a likely sale price at \$450K. Mr. Stewart relayed the history of reductions that this Board has granted over time, noting that a reduction in land assessment had been granted in 2016 to 2017 from \$31K to \$21K and the building's assessment for that same time was increased. Mr. Stewart suggested that Mr. Roller obtain an appraisal.

The consensus of the Board was to reduce the assessed value of the land.

**E. (Real Estate) Royals, Glenn and Valerie 3 Carey Avenue, Map 114, Block 105E, Lot 196-199 and Map 114, Block 105E, Lot 350-351.**

Glenn Royals appeared before the Board regarding this application. He explained that the dwelling was gutted when he purchased it for \$65K. He noted that it had no plumbing, electric, or sheetrock. Mr. Royals explained that the house had been on the market for a quite some time. He noted that he intended to tear it down and intended to construct something new. Mr. Stewart questioned how long the house was on the market. Mr. Royals recollected it being on the market for five or six years. Checking the MLS, Mr. Herman noted that it did not appear to have been listed with a realtor.

The consensus of the Board was to reduce the assessed value to \$65K.

**F. (Real Estate) Stanziale, Shawn 504 East Wakefield Boulevard, Map 032, Block 105, Lot 105107.**

Shawn Stanziale appeared before the Board regarding this application. Mr. Stanziale indicated that he was unable to learn what the Town recognized as a life value for the house with no heat, no insulation, and with panel boards on walls. Mr. Stanziale noted that his lot is very steep, with a 35' grade change. He noted that he had completed a comparative analysis with other properties in the neighborhood.

Mr. Herman explained that one of the tools in assigning value, such as a direct sales price indication, is probably one of the most valuable. Absent that direct sale, comparative values to other properties is also helpful, according to Mr. Herman. He indicated that the selling price of \$315K in the 2020 market is helpful but the Board would question what it would be in the 2017 market.

Mr. Stewart questioned what percentage of the property was steep. Mr. Stanziale explained the topography goes from a high point of 918' at 100' from the lake to a point of 883', noting that half of the property drops by a third.

Mr. Herman suggested that if the property was worth \$315K during the COVID-19 pandemic, then it may have been worth \$300K in 2017. Mr. Herman noted that he had been in the property and agreed that it was worth likely what was paid for it. Mr. Stewart questioned whether Mr. Stanziale had an appraisal. He indicated that he did not.

Factor values on land was discussed by the Board. The consensus of the Board was that the full value would be reduced to \$310K.

**G. (Real Estate) Stephen, Gary 602 West Wakefield Boulevard, Map 038, Block 114, Lot 0.**

Gary Stephen appeared before the Board regarding this application. Mr. Stephen reported that a kitchen remodel had been completed. He noted that while the increase was modest, he was still surprised at it. Reviewing the associated building permits, Mr. Herman questioned whether \$40K was spent on the kitchen. Mr. Stephen confirmed. Mr. Herman questioned whether it was likely that the value of the property was increased by \$10K or \$15K. Mr. Stephen indicated that he had no plans to sell the property.

Mr. Stewart noted that Mr. Stephen had reported that the kitchen was in rough shape prior to the improvements and questioned whether other parts of the house were in rough condition. Mr. Stewart explained that the Assessor's field card has the condition at 94% which would reflect pristine condition and in trying to provide relief, questioned whether the rest of the house was really in that good condition. Mr. Stephen indicated that the rest of the house was in fine condition.

The consensus of the Board was that there was no relief to the assessment that should be granted.

**H. (Personal Property) Thomas, Laura Heartspace Therapy & Yoga.**

Laura Thomas appeared before the Board regarding this application. She explained that she ran a very small therapy business out of the Whiting Mills building. Ms. Thomas noted that she has not been in her rental property at the Mill for the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has moved her practice to operate from her home. She shared her surprise with a \$2K assessment for personal property. Ms. Thomas explained that she was a family and marriage therapist with a clientele with primarily lower income. Her office furnishings include a 25-year-old couch, a table from IKEA from the 1980's, and some family book cases. Ms. Thomas explained that she has a few recycled rugs and lamps. She noted that she does not have a computer or printer in the office. Ms. Thomas indicated that if she had to put a value on the items it likely would be \$95 for all of it.

The consensus of the Board was to provide relief to the personal property value and reduce it to \$95.

**I. (Personal Property) Tolly, Chris Chris Tolly Construction, LLC.**

Chris Tolly appeared before the Board regarding this application. He acknowledged having a business that he operates from his home despite none of the work he completes as having taken place in his home. He noted that his business was a mobile one, explaining that his tools are kept in his trailer and not in his home. Mr. Herman explained that a declaration form should still be completed. Mr. Tolly reported having lived in his home for nine years and this being the first time learning of this form or process.

Mr. Herman questioned whether there is more scrutiny being given to these home businesses. Ms. Iacino confirmed, explaining that Mr. Tolly has a Home Improvement Contractor license. Mr. Tolly indicated that this was the first time he had ever received this form. Mr. Stewart questioned how the Town can assume that business owners have received the declaration form. Ms. Iacino explained that the forms are mailed to the same address indicated with the Home Improvement Contractor license. She noted that they are sent out as a courtesy, explaining that the Assessors are not statutorily required to send them. They are sent nonetheless as a courtesy, according to Mr. Iacino. Mr. Tolly complained about the mail service, reporting the post office had lost over \$100K in checks addressed to him last year. Ms. Iacino explained that the forms are available on the Town's website, too.

Mr. Herman offered to cut the assessment in half this year and suggested that the appellant be sure to file the form next year. Mr. Stewart shared his preference to zero out the assessment altogether.

The consensus of the Board was to reduce the assessment to \$1K.

**5. DELIBERATIONS/VOTES:**

**A. (Real Estate) Jenney, Curtis and Neil and Darr, Hollis 113 Blue Street, Map 035, Block 157, Lot 042-14.**

The applicant did not attend. There was no adjustment to the assessment.

**B. (Real Estate) Plethora Properties, LLC 25 High Street, Map 110, Block 051, Lot 002.**

The consensus of the board was to adjust the total real estate value of \$105K on the property.

**C. (Personal Property) Rhoades, Charles 29 Unregistered Trailers.**

The consensus of the board was that a total value of \$200 be assigned for each trailer.

**D. (Real Estate) Roller, John 164 Torrington Road, Map 038, Block 158, Lot 019-1.**

The consensus of the board was to adjust the total real estate value of \$650K on the property.

**E. (Real Estate) Royals, Glenn and Valerie 3 Carey Avenue, Map 114, Block 105E, Lot 196-199 and Map 114, Block 105E, Lot 350-351.**

The consensus of the board was to adjust the total real estate value of \$65K on the property.

**F. (Real Estate) Stanziale, Shawn 504 East Wakefield Boulevard, Map 032, Block 105, Lot 105107.**

The consensus of the board was to adjust the total real estate value of \$305K on the property.

**G. (Real Estate) Stephen, Gary 602 West Wakefield Boulevard, Map 038, Block 114, Lot 0.**

The board agreed that there would be no change to the real estate value assessed by the Town.

**H. (Personal Property) Thomas, Laura Heartspace Therapy & Yoga.**

The board agreed that the total value for the personal property of the business would be assigned at \$95.

**I. (Personal Property) Tolly, Chris - Chris Tolly Construction, LLC.**

The board agreed that the total value for the personal property of the business would be assigned at \$1K.

**6. ADJOURN:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pamela A. Colombie  
Recording Clerk