

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF PROPERTY ASSESSMENT
APPEALS & REVIEW**

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2024**

PRESENT:

WAYDE FARGOTSTEIN, BOARD CHAIR
RICHARD SNIPE, VICE CHAIR
MICHELLE PAYANZO, SECRETARY
LESANS MONTGOMERY, MEMBER
MICHAEL SULEY, MEMBER
SUSAN THORNTON LARA, MEMBER

ALSO PRESENT:

AMY SCHREMPF, BOARD SOLICITOR
BARBARA BALDWIN, BOARD ADMINISTRATOR

Call to Order, Roll Call

Mr. Fargotstein called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Ms. Payanzo called the roll and determined that all were present, and a Quorum was present.

Approval of the Minutes of the Prior Regular Meeting of March 14, 2024

Ms. Montgomery proposed to defer approval of the meeting minutes for March 14, 2024. Mr. Suley seconded. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Comment Period

Mr. John Silvestri, Esq. stated that he had two items to present before the Board however and after hearing the Board's last vote to defer its previous Board meeting minutes, he now has three.

Matthew and Elizabeth Richards, Parcel ID# 214-C-158. Mr. Silvestri recalled that the Board took action to reissue a notice of disposition because the 2022 that was filed after the BOV was decided and a notice was not issued.

Lulu PA LLC, Parcel ID# 457-P-255. A notice of disposition was received for 2023. The subsequent filing and value of tax year dated 2021 would carry over to future years wiping out the 2023 value. Mr. Silvestri stated that he is clear in that action was taken for it to be reissued.

Mr. Silvestri raised concerns with the Board not having a depository or a place on the BPAAR webpage to post Board meeting minutes along with the agenda. Mr. Silvestri feels that this would limit a need to submit Right-to-know requests. Mr. Silvestri is requesting that the Board establish policy that when Board meeting minutes are approved to publish them whereas the public will have access to this information. Mr. Silvestri referenced County Council's webpage as an example.

Ms. Schrempf agreed with Mr. Silvestri that BPAAR's Board meeting minutes should be made available to the public.

Solicitor's Report (Ms. Schrempf)

No Solicitor report.

Appeals Department Report (Ms. Brown)

Ms. Brown provided the Appeals department status report as submitted. Currently 3,729 appeal applications received for 2024. There are about 3500 appeals less than last year. Ms. Brown expressed that this is the last week to submit appeals. We are receiving around 150 to 200 appeals per day. If this pace continues appeals could be under five or six thousand.

Mr. Suley asked what the process would be if someone files online, and they have an authorized representative.

Ms. Schrempf responds that there's a drop-down menu in the online application process where one can add or select an authorized representative.

Mr. Suley projected a couple of reports to discuss the status of appeals and the impact on the City of Pittsburgh.

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Year-to-date 11,983 appeals have been dispositioned. Mr. Suley references the real estate information from the municipality map and states that in the last 10 years he has observed, each year, the County/OPA, this site adds about a billion dollars in an additional assessed value. This comes from new construction and newcomer appeals.

Chief Assessor certified values on January 12th, and that there was a significant decrease around 150 million in taxable value. Mr. Suley makes the point that all three taxing bodies, the school, the city and the county now have to refund taxpayers because appeals were dispositioned after the certification date.

Mr. Suley recommends that OPA and BPAAR worked together to schedule the City appeals early and place emphasis on this year and forward to accommodate the city where disposition of appeals will not come out after January 1st.

Items from OPA Department (Ms. Brooks)

Ms. Brooks provided an update with adding the CLR field in IAS. The County IT department is working with Tyler to how best to accomplish this task. Ms. Brooks will keep everyone updated.

Items from the Board Administrator (Ms. Baldwin)

Rescind and Reissue with Corrected Values | Parcel ID# 298-N-33 (2023) and 249-N-126 (2022 and 2023)

These two requests are for two separate property owners with similar circumstances. The owners reached out to BPAAR with concerns regarding the results of their appeals. Mr. Fargotstein and Ms. Schrempf reviewed the requests along with the hearing officer reports and dispositions and determined that the values should be rescinded and reissued with application of the CLR.

A Motion was Made and Seconded to rescind and reissue dispositions with the application of the CLR for parcel ID# 298-N-33 and 249-N-126. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Rescind and Reissue with Corrected Values or Admin WDN | Parcel ID# 450-N-392

Ms. Michelle Lally of the BOV reached out to Ms. Schrempf and Ms. Carolyn Brooks raising an issue with a court stipulation for parcel ID 450-N-392. The owner filed a timely 2022 annual appeal on February 17, 2022, which was scheduled and heard on June 15, 2022. The file for the 2022 appeal went to 04A on April 27, 2023 (almost a year later). The property owner also filed a timely 2023 appeal February 13, 2023. The timing of the filing for the 2023 annual appeal was before the property owner received the disposition for the 2022 appeal and filed with the BOV. While the 2022 was at the BOV (ABV), there was still a 2023 appeal that was scheduled and heard on October 18, 2023. The Board of Viewers entered a court stipulation for 39,600 for tax years 2022 and 2023. The 2023 appeal went to 04A which ultimately changed/increased the value back to \$63,000.

A Motion was Made to rescind and withdraw the 2023 appeal for parcel ID 450-N-392. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

BPAAR mandatory training. Mr. Suley worked with Ms. Lori Lawyer of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania and Assessors Association of Pennsylvania to obtain training materials via

the Learning Management System. Mr. Suley and I met with DIT and event staff to go over the layout of the training in the Gold Room.

Some of things that we're still working on is scheduling a dry run of actual projection of the training material, audio, and the option of providing lunch.

Board Approval List

- Interim Tax Year 2021, First Parcel 561-E-50
- Interim Tax Year 2022, Parcel ID# 436-B-4
- Tax Year 2022, First Parcel 50-N-26
- Tax Year 2022 (Y). First Parcel 1-C-170
- Tax Year 2023, First Parcel 708-S-25

No pulls or recusals

Ms. Montgomery made a motion to approve the board approval lists as submitted. Mr. Suley second. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Old Business.

Ms. Brooks provided an update on Tyler Technologies – CLR application in IASWorld

New Business.

The Board is complying with the mandatory training which is set for April 12, 2024. Mr. Suley discussed the appeals sign-off process in which he believes to be a two-step process. First step is the Hearing Officer hears the appeal. Second step is either the Board member or the Hearing Officer signs off on the appeal.

Ms. Schrempf states that the two-step process is incorrect. The current process is the Hearing Officer hears the appeal, a Board member signs off on the appeal and a Case File Reviewer enters the Board's decision into IAS system.

Mr. Suley states that Ordinance does not reflect the same and that the third step of the current process is data entry; Ms. Schrempf agreed. Mr. Suley states that overall, the Board spent \$170,000 on data entry since joined the Board. Hopes to get the third step reduced to a minimum of two Case file reviewers.

Ms. Schrempf is working with IT to improve the case file review process to include adding a status to the drop menu. This could also have the potential to eliminate the need for the hearing officer report.

Mr. Suley adds if for any reason a Board member is not able to sign off then possibly one of the appraiser hearing officers can sign-off on an appeal.

Mr. Schrempf disagrees and states that it is the Board members responsibility to review the Hearing Officer's work and sign-off on all appeals. Does not believe that the Board can delegate the actual decision-making process. Ms. Schrempf will investigate it.

Mr. Suley disagrees and implies that Ordinance does not reflect that.

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Ms. Montgomery adds that the ordinance clearly states in the first two sentences that the Board is responsible for making the final decision on appeals.

Mr. Suley disagrees and states that there is nothing in the ordinance that states that the Board must sign off on appeals. What's in the ordinance is if a Hearing Officer hears an appeal, it's a Board member or Hearing Officer to sign off on appeal.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

Executive session held to discuss quasi-judicial on personnel matters.


Michelle Payanzo, Board Secretary