

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

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 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

BPAAR Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024

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 a Quorum was present.

Approval of the Minutes of the Prior Regular Meeting of January 18, 2024

Mr. Suley makes a motion to approve meeting minutes. Ms. Montgomery seconds. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Public Comment Period

Mr. John Silvestri, Esq., represents property owner at 5150 Penn Avenue, a City of Pittsburgh property, parcel ID# 50-R-311. Mr. Silvestri speaks to the Board regarding discussions that were brought before the Board on December 7, 2023, and January 18, 2024, Board meetings. Mr. Silvestri stated that the City of Pittsburgh tax appeals that had already been heard were going to be given priority because the City of Pittsburgh tax bills are sent out in February 2024. Mr. Silvestri also notes the appeals process through a Right-to-Know law requests that he placed last year. Mr. Silvestri states that the County Administration, and not the Board, operates and manage the systems used to process tax assessment appeals. Mr. Silvestri asks the Board to take a close look at the transparency and straight forwardness of how the County processes appeals.

Solicitor's Report (Ms. Schrempf)

No solicitor's report. Ms. Schrempf provides an update to the Board on streamlining processes within BPAAR. Updates include revised Tip Sheet and the link to Board meetings are accessible via the BPAAR webpage. Ms. Schrempf and Mr. Fargotstein met with members of OPA to streamline processes for 2024 Appeals.

Appeals Department Report (Ms. Brown)

Ms. Brown provided the Appeals department status report as submitted. Ms. Brown added that 332 appeals applications have been received to date.

Mr. Suley asked Ms. Brown for clarification of the number of outstanding appeals to date. Mr. Suley used tax year 2023 as an example. An in-depth conversation took place among Ms. Brown, Board members, and the Board's Solicitor, Amy Schrempf to review and understand the Appeals status report. Mr. Suley stated that there will be 4600 plus appeal files remaining to be processed after today.

Mr. Suley stated that there is confusion regarding the remaining 2023 appeals. OPA staff and the Board members did not provide a final number. Ms. Montgomery and Ms. Schrempf further analyzed the report to determine that there were 4,893 files that have been heard but have not been processed to send a disposition letter. Mr. Suley and Ms. Schrempf agreed that there were thousands of appeals to be processed for 2023 and the 4,893 number appears to be in the area of files that are remaining.

Items from OPA Department (Ms. Brooks)

None proffered.

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Items from the Board Administrator (Ms. Baldwin)

Request to reissue dispositions with Current date | Tax Years 2022 and 2023 for Parcel ID# 771-J-44 and 420-P-172

Attorney DJ Nichols contacted Amy stating that he nor his clients received the notice of disposition and is requesting new notice with current date.

Mr. Suley makes a motion to approve. Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Administrative rescinds, rescind and reissue and rescind and rehear (attached to Board Administrator report)

Multiple rescind requests from Liz McGraw, Case file reviewer.

Request to rescind parcels ID# 22-G-55, 1824-S-42-T2, and 820-R-54. The disposition notices for all parcels went out for 2022-A. However, 2022-A appeals are superseded by the 2022-Y record.

Ms. Payanzo makes a motion to approve. Mr. Suley seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Request to rescind and reissue parcels 67-S-83 tax year 2022, 1823-K-45 tax year 2022. Disposition notices were mailed with incorrect data. Requesting for disposition notices to be rescinded and reissued with correct data.

Mr. Payanzo makes a motion to approve. Mr. Suley seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Rescind and rehear request for parcel ID# 925-F-213 tax years 2022 and 2023, parcel ID 165-R-105.

925-F-213 – 2023 was a special appeal with a permit for swimming pool. The hearing took place on February 27, 2023 prior to tax year 2022 which has not been dispositioned at this time.

Mr. Payanzo makes a motion to approve. Mr. Suley seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

165-R-105 – Board approved to rehear at its August 3, 2023 Board meeting. The file was never pulled and went to “04A” the approval process.

Mr. Payanzo makes a motion to approve. Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

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Rescind and Withdraw | Parcel ID# 188-E-52

Timely filed School District Appeal for tax year 2022. The hearing went all the way through the appeals process with a disposition notice mailed on September 28, 2023. The School District withdrew the appeal in November of 2022.

Request the Board to rescind and withdraw the appeal due to administrative breakdown.

Ms. Montgomery makes a motion to approve. Mr. Suley seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Rescind and Rehear | Parcel ID# 471-B-232

Timely filed 2022(Y) and 2023 School District appeals. On May 25, 2023, the Board approved to rehear the hearings due to an administrative breakdown. The hearings went all the way through the appeals process with disposition notices mailed December 7, 2023.

Request the Board to rescind and rehear due to an administrative breakdown.

Mr. Snipe makes a motion to approve. Ms. Payanzo seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Commercial Hearing Officer Contract Renewal | Mike McAndrews

Mike McAndrews, previous Commercial Hearing Officer, contracted in spring of 2021. Looking to return as Commercial hearing officer.

Mr. McAndrews was not a strong Commercial hearing officer. Given a second chance approval by the Board, he may the potential to improve.

Property owner's concern of pending assessment appeal hearing and scheduling of 2022(Y) | Parcel ID# 1347-C-3

Ms. Alysa Farabaugh purchased her home in 2020. School District appealed her property in 2021. The hearing was scheduled and heard June 8, 2021. Disposition notice was mailed in August 2021. Ms. Farabaugh appealed to the BOV and it closed in September 2022.

Ms. Farabaugh filed a timely 2022(Y) appeal. It was originally rejected due to previous appeal to the BOV. Ms. Farabaugh learned that County Council ordered appeals applications to be accepted and heard although appealed to the BOV.

Ms. Farabaugh says that she received a letter six months ago and she still has not heard anything regarding the scheduling of her appeal.

Amendment to Hearing Officer Renewal List from December 7th Board meeting

The following Hearing Officers were not included on the December 7, 2023 hearing officer renewal list.

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Requesting Board approval

1. David Dean
2. Lisa Fabry
3. ~~Robert Gelman~~
4. Jayme Holloway
5. Cynthia Klein
6. Jean Wallace-French

Mr. Suley makes a motion to approve all except for Robert Gelman. Mr. Snipe seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Board Approval List

Tax Year 2022, First Parcel ID# 547-L-64
Tax Year 2022 (Y), Frist Parcel ID# 1-H-30
Tax Year 2023, First Parcel ID# 938-G-60

No pulls or recusals

Mr. Payanzo makes a motion to approve. Ms. Montgomery seconded the motion. All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

Old Business.

Tyler Technologies – CLR application in IASWorld – Mr. Suley following up with a discussion he had with Ms. Brooks of OPA in October 2023. Ms. Brooks was not present. Mr. Suley asked Mr. Fabian if he knew anything about the ability to apply the common level ration in IAS. Mr. Fabian’s response was no. Mr. Suley adds that the current process for applying the CLR is manual and would like to see the process added to IASWorld.

Board members hearing appeals – Mr. Suley and Ms. Schrempf discuss the Board’s rules as it pertains to Board members and the Board Solicitor being permitted to conduct hearings. Ms. Schrempf advises Mr. Suley of the Board’s process to making a rule change. Mr. Suley stated that he would like to move that Board members moving forward may hear appeals in the same manner as Hearing Officers.

Mr. Fargotstein moved to table the discussion of Board members being permitted to conduct hearings to an executive session following the Board’s meeting.

Mr. Fargotstein makes a motion to table Board members conducting hearings to further discuss with Board members. Vote called for individually. . All in favor. MOTION CARRIED.

- Mr. Snipe – voted yes to table
- Mr. Fargotstein – voted yes to table
- Ms. Payanzo – voted yes to table
- Ms. Thornton-Lara – voted yes to table
- Mr. Suley – voted no to table
- Ms. Montgomery - voted yes to table

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New Business.

BPAAR Website – Mr. Suley – moved to pull this item from the Agenda based on Ms. Schrempf's updates regarding the BPAAR website.

Appeal Workflow – Mr. Suley communicated to Board members on the Appeals workflow chart that hangs in the BPAAR's office. Mr. Suley was part of the team that depict the steps and flow of the data. Mr. Suley would like to work with the Board and other members of the OPA staff to review the flow chart and make changes or updates.

Ex Parte Communication with County Assessors – Mr. Suley wants to make sure that ex parte communications are not occurring between Hearing officers and Assessors after a hearing has been closed. Mr. Suley would like to a memo sent to all Hearing Officers conducting hearings and a memo sent from Ms. Brooks or Mr. Fabian regarding the same to assessor's.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.



Michelle Payanzo, Board Secretary