

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION
GOVERNMENT CENTER MEETING ROOM B
JUNE 13th, 2022, 6:00 P.M.

The Pennington County Board of Appeal and Equalization met in Meeting Room B of the Pennington County Government Center in Thief River Falls, MN, on Monday, June 13th, 2022 at 6:00 P.M.

Members present: Commissioner Seth Nelson, Commissioner Bruce Lawrence, Commissioner Neil Peterson, Commissioner Darryl Tveitbakk, and County Auditor-Treasurer Jennifer Herzberg. Members present via Zoom: None. Members absent: Commissioner David Sorenson.

Also present: County Assessor Carl Bruzek, County Coordinator Kevin Erickson, property owners Gabriel Swann, Gordon and Mary Myklebust.

The members of the Board of Appeal and Equalization were sworn in by County Attorney Seamus Duffy and signed the Official Oath of Office, which is on file in the County Auditor-Treasurer's Office.

Commissioner Bruce Lawrence was appointed Chairman of the meeting and called the meeting to order.

Gabriel and Kristin Swann were not present for their 6:00 p.m. appointment time. They were contacted via phone and it was agreed they could present after the second appointment.

Gordon and Mary Jo Myklebust, owners of parcels R25.10002520 and R25.10002420, stated that it has been 7 years and their property taxes continue to go 'through the roof'. They have been working with the city, mayor, equalization and planning committee regarding their taxes and complaints. They stated that the hotel (bordering their property) had deadlines to meet regarding mitigation of issues such as smoking areas, pollution, etc. and those deadlines aren't being met. They feel an adjustment to their taxes is justified due to these issues. She said the County Assessor was to reduce their valuation by 5% for these issues but they don't see it reflected on their statements. Mr. Bruzek stated the 5% reduction is reflected as depreciation, which doesn't show on the tax statements. He also said the reduction only applies to the parcel with their house, not the vacant lot. Discussion was then held on water drainage for the properties, with Mary stating that water is supposed to drain north towards Greenwood St. She said the ditch isn't taken care of and doesn't drain as it should, so the water is held back and pools up. They have contacted the City of TRF regarding the issue and are awaiting a response. The Board recommended they speak to Travis Giffen at the City of TRF about the ditch and drainage problems. Commissioner Lawrence stated that most of the issues they have discussed today are not the county's responsibility and suggested they continue to work with the City of Thief River Falls to find resolutions. Hearing no further discussion, the County Board took the request under advisement.

Gabriel Swann was later present at this meeting. He is the spouse of Kristen (Burkel) Swann, who owns parcel R25.00635900. He stated the home was purchased in 2017 for \$110,000 and now it's valued at \$148,400. He said there is no way it is worth that amount due to a bad roof, foundation caving in, etc. The Board noted that in order to be re-appraised the Assessor's Office would have to come out and see it, and Mr. Swann has refused for the Assessor's to view the inside of the house. Mr. Swann said that the house was resingled in 2017 but the wood underneath is bad, so the roof leaks with every rainfall. He asked how the County Assessor can fairly value his property if they haven't come out to see it, to which the Board replied that he is refusing for them to view the inside of the home. Mr. Bruzek stated that on August 10, 2021, one of the Assessor's Office staff was at the property and spoke to Mrs. Swann. She viewed the exterior of the house, but not the interior. Mr. Swann said he could take pictures of the house or video a walk-through of the house and provide it to the Assessor's Office. Mr. Swann asked what his

options are should the Board not take any action on his value. The Board stated that tax court is an option for him. Mr. Swann stated that if his value go up, the taxes will go up, and once that happens they will never go down. The Auditor-Treasurer explained the factors for tax calculation, noting that property value is a factor but taxes are also dependent on budgets, tax capacity for the county, etc. Hearing no further discussion, the County Board took the request under advisement.

County Assessor Carl Bruzek informed the Board that the Minnesota Department of Revenue is increasing the commercial values in Thief River Falls by 10% over and above what his office has already assessed. The Department of Revenue was also proposing to increase agricultural values over and above the increases his office has already assessed. Following his discussions with the Minnesota Department of Revenue, they decided to wait with additional value increases on agricultural values and will continue to watch our sales and sales ratios.

Mr. Bruzek noted that commercial property is selling at very high value in comparison to estimated market value, so he predicts that estimated market values for commercial property will have to be increased for the 2023 assessment – tax payable 2024.

After discussion, the following actions were taken:

Gabriel and Kristen Swann property (R25.00635900): After discussion, no action was taken on the value of the property.

Gordon and Mary Myklebust properties (#R25.10002520, R25.100002420): After discussion, no action was taken on the value of the properties.

The County Board of Appeal and Equalization then reviewed the actions taken by the Township and City Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings, the tillable section averages, and the township average values presented by the County Assessor.

Motioned by Commissioner Peterson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, that the real and personal property values as returned by the Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings and submitted by the County Assessor be accepted and approved. Motion unanimously carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk , seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the County Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting at 7:10 p.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jennifer Herzberg, Auditor-Treasurer
Pennington County

Bruce Lawrence, Chairman
Board of Commissioners