

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
PENNINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF APPEAL AND EQUALIZATION
GOVERNMENT CENTER MEETING ROOM B
JUNE 14th, 2021, 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 14th, 2021 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: Commissioner David Sorenson. Members absent: None.

Also present: County Assessor Carl Bruzek, County Coordinator Kevin Erickson, property owners Gordon and Mary Myklebust, Mike Lorenson, Brian Green, Lee LaRock, Cynthia Kilen, Rex and Dian Crapeau, and Travis Nelson.

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 Neil Peterson was appointed Chairman of the meeting and called the meeting to order.

Donald and Elaine Laursen, owner of parcel #R25.04100310, was not present for the meeting.

Mary and Gordon Myklebust, owner of parcels #R25.10002520 and R25.10002420, stated they continue to deal with issues with their properties on Hanson Drive, including the presence of garbage on their property from the nearby hotel and truckstop, people have defecated on their property, there has been no enforcement on jake brakes from trucks coming into town and no signs have been put up stating as such. They were told a fence was to be put up on the property line to separate them from the truckstop and hotel and that hasn't been done. The estimated market value on their empty lot have gone up from \$6,000 to \$24,000+ in 10 years and all they have done is remove some trees from the lot. They built a home on the other lot and taxes continue to rise and they stated there seems to be no end to the increases, at some point it needs to stop. Commissioner Lawrence explained how his property in Rocksbury, which is near to them, has experienced the same increases and how that is driven by high sales and high demand for homes. The Myklebusts have received little to no response from the city in regards to their noise, garbage, etc. and they will contact a Senator next if nothing is done. Ms. Myklebust expressed her concern over the empty lot and how the value has quadrupled in value with no improvements. The County Assessor stated the size of the empty lot and discussion was held on values and sales of open lots in the City of TRF. After discussion the County Board took the request and their concerns under advisement.

Mike Lorenson, owner of parcel #R25.11002850, stated he lives at 1900 Pennington Ave. He is frustrated that the county has made a large change in his area (roundabout) and it in turn increased his value by \$20,000+. He feels the roundabout makes his property less appealing and thus less valuable. He also feels the electrical boxes present are beyond the easement and if so they should be moved as he's paying taxes on property he can't use. He provided before and after pictures of the area and questioned the bike trail and its placement. While he and his family enjoy the trail, it does cause liability and pose a risk for his family and others. During construction in the area he noted and provided pictures of ruts in the soil and garbage left in the area, and his garden area was destroyed as well. He said he has lived in a construction area for two years in a row and the area is still not finished. He questioned who will get that area (soil/grass) back to its state prior to construction. He noted that traffic has increased from an estimated 800 vehicles per day to 3,600 cars per day after the roundabout and bridge construction, and many semi trailers use that roundabout daily, resulting in more noise pollution. He stated he would not

have built in this spot had he known what was to become of the area, he would have chose to build on Eastwood Drive instead. After discussion the County Board took his concerns and request under advisement.

Brian Green, owner of parcel #R25.01109200, stated he purchased this property in April 2021 for \$160,000 and he believes the tax value is out of line in comparison to the property appraisal that was done for his purchase. He noted that the house was appraised as a 3 bedroom but it is legally a 2 bedroom, it is not updated, the garage is nice but is not finished. He said his taxes and value are higher than neighbors but he believes those properties and homes are much nicer and more valuable; if his were updated then he would be more understanding. The County Assessor stated that the comparable properties used by the private appraiser included a two story home, and that there were better comparables available as of the date of the appraisal. He also stated that the values of the comparables were averaged instead of being weighted like in most cases. After discussion the County Board took the request under advisement.

Lee LaRock, owner of parcel #R10.03621404, stated his estimated market value in Norden Township are proposed to go up 23% or approximately \$44,000. His home isn't finished and he hasn't done anything to it since purchasing it, so the large increase in value at one time just doesn't make sense to him. The County Assessor said he has never been in the home and stated that pictures of the interior would help with the value estimation. Commissioner Peterson questioned the 2020 value and it was noted that the pole shed was built in 2002 and the property is nearly 30 acres. Mr. Bruzek noted that he has the property designated as 10 acres tillable, 4 acres of woods, and the remainder acreage is the building site. The County Board took the request under advisement and asked that Mr. LaRock provide interior pics of the home to Mr. Bruzek to aid in the value estimation.

Cynthia Kilen, owner of parcel #R10.02110400, stated that she has spoken to Mr. Bruzek a few times prior to tonight's meeting regarding her value. She noted that tax market value on her property in Norden Township is jumping over 20.5% in one year (\$54,000+) and there seems to be no consistency in the valuation changes in her area, some are 0%, others are 9%, etc. She stated that eight acres of her woods has been revalued dramatically from the prior year, resulting in a \$20,000 change alone. She understands that market demand is high right now but doesn't understand the change in the eight acre valuation. It was noted that four acres of woods remains at \$900 per acre, but eight acres of woods increased to \$3,000 per acre. Discussion was held on some comparables and other woods being valued as high. The County Assessor said the land took a 37% increase and he values woods based on the building site and how woods around a home is in demand and brings a higher value. He also stated the 2015 and 2016 taxable market value on the property was \$264,600. The County Board took the concerns and request under advisement.

Rex and Dian Crapeau, owners of parcels #R10.01302600 and #R10.02102710, questioned why their property value has increased approximately 55% in one year, especially on the vacant lot. The vacant lot is 12 acres and was valued at \$11,300 in 2020 and increased to \$17,600 in 2021. The vacant lot is mainly flat with brush and a little area cleaned up near the road. Discussion was held about the property, nearby sales, etc. It was stated that some nearby properties have sold high recently and those sales drive values up. The County Assessor said that the land values took the increase and the building values stayed the same. The County Board took the request under advisement.

Travis Nelson - Smiley Township, Section 8, property address 14374 190th Ave NE, Thief River Falls. Mr. Nelson was not on the agenda and stated he attended the Smiley Township Board of Appeal meeting but was unable to reach his contact in the Assessor's office as unbeknownst to him that person is no longer employed for the county. Mr. Nelson stated he bought two lots adjacent to his home in 2017 and 2020, each being approximately 5 acres and each at a cost of \$17,500 each. The EMV on the lots have increased from about \$10,000 when purchased to \$15,000 and \$15,200. Mr. Nelson noted that the Smiley

board did not make any changes to his value. The County Assessor stated that these lots are buildable and are valued at \$3,000/acre.

After discussion, the following actions were taken:

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

Mike Lorenson property (#R25.11002850): After discussion no action was taken on the value of the property.

Brian Green property (#R25.01109200): It was noted that the property appraised at \$173,000 and was purchased by Mr. Green for \$160,000. After discussion Mr. Bruzek recommended a value of \$175,700. Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to set the value of the Brian Green property (#R25.01109200) at \$175,000. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to set the value on the Lee LaRock property (#R25.03621404) at \$240,000. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded by Commissioner Sorenson, to set the value on the Cynthia Kilen property (#R10.021110400) at \$310,300. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.

Motioned by Commissioner Nelson, seconded by Commissioner Tveitbakk, to set the value of the Rex and Dian Crapeau property (#R10.01302710 - vacant lot) at \$14,000. Upon roll call vote: Nelson – Aye, Lawrence – Aye, Peterson – Aye, Sorenson – Aye, Tveitbakk – Aye. Motion carried.
No action was taken on the value of the other parcel.

The County Assessor 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.

Moved by Commissioner Tveitbakk, seconded, by Commissioner Sorenson, 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 Lawrence, seconded by Commissioner Nelson, to adjourn the County Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting at 8:41 p.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Jennifer Herzberg, Auditor-Treasurer
Pennington County

Neil Peterson, Chairman
Board of Commissioners