

Morgan County Commission
Board of Equalization
Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2009

Members Present: Thomas R. Swaim, Brenda J. Hutchinson, and Stacy A. Dugan

The meeting was opened by Debra Kesecker, County Clerk, at 9:32 a.m.

Richard Fox

Mr. Fox approached the Board of Equalization regarding his 2.53 acre parcel in Sleepy Creek District in the Pleasant View Estates Subdivision, Section II. The Commission reviewed and agreed that the land value appraisal was high. The Commission discussed the land appraisal with the Assessor and his staff. After a review, the Assessor's staff changed the grade for the land to a D grade, which lowered the appraised value from \$184,000.00 to \$148,600.00. Commission Staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. Fox stating the new appraised value.

Terry Edminsten

Mr. and Mrs. Edminsten approached the Board of Equalization regarding their 46.98 acre parcel in Allen District. Mr. and Mrs. Edminsten expressed their concern for the rising assessed values. Mr. and Mrs. Edminsten's current appraised value is \$36,580.00 for their land. Commissioner Hutchinson reviewed the assessment and informed the Edminstens that the total equals to be \$778.00 an acre. Mrs. Edminsten insisted she is upset that the appraised value continues to rise on the property. The Assessor's staff placed a telephone call to Mr. Leroy Bohrer, the chief appraiser for the State of West Virginia, and Commissioner Hutchinson explained to Mr. and Mrs. Edminsten that there is nothing the Commission can do to lower the assessment. If they are still dissatisfied, they can contact the circuit court with the issue. Mrs. Edminsten expressed her concern for the increase and may pursue her options to sue.

William Makinson

West Virginia Silver Haired Legislature representative William Makinson approached the Board of Equalization and requested the Commission support the efforts to raise the homestead exemption from \$20,000.00 to 30,000.00. Mr. Makinson said the homestead exemption helps the senior citizens but it is only worth half of the amount. Mr. Makinson presented a 2003 West Virginia Silver Haired Legislature Draft Resolution for the Commission to review. Assessor Ronald McIntire said he was in favor of the increase. The Commission agreed they were also in favor of an increase, and Commissioner Hutchinson agreed to explore the idea regionally.

Brooke Parker

Ms. Parker appeared in front of the Board of Equalization to discuss two properties in Timber Ridge District. One property, Lot 6, is 4.29 acres and the other property, Lot 4, is 3.52. Ms. Parker explained the houses on the properties are unfinished and in poor condition. Ms. Parker presented photos of the houses and also provided homeowners insurance policies for the homes. The Commission discussed the assessments with the Assessor and agreed that the assessments seem too high for the properties. The Assessor's staff made some changes to the assessments and

changed the appraised value on Lot 4 to \$81,000.00 and the appraised value on Lot 6 to \$84,100.00. Ms. Parker will receive a follow up letter stating the new appraised values.

Kerry Comerfield

Ms. Brooke Parker representing Kerry Comerfield approached the Board of Equalization to discuss his 5.03 acre parcel in Timber Ridge. Ms Comerfield presented a homeowners insurance policy and also photos showing the condition of the house. After reviewing the information with the Assessor and his staff, the Commission agreed to lower the appraised value. The Assessor's staff lowered the appraised value to \$188,600.00. Mr. Comerfield will receive a follow up letter stating the new appraised value.

Richard Beddow

Mr. Beddow approached the Board of Equalization regarding 4 properties he owns in Bath District. Mr. Beddow expressed his concern for rising taxes considering the economic situation. Mr. Beddow also described the properties and explained that there is a 100 foot power line running on the properties. The Assessor and his staff reviewed the assessments and suggested Mr. Beddow merge the properties together for tax purposes. The Assessors staff also applied an influence factor to the assessments which lowered them. See below:

Lot 2D- lowered from \$79,100.00 to \$39,600.00

Lot 1C- lowered from \$99,200.00 to \$49,600.00

Lot 1B- lowered from \$124,400.00 to \$62,200.00

Lot 1A- lowered from \$79,100.00 to \$39,600.00

Commission Staff will follow up with a letter stating the new assessment totals to Mr. Beddow.

Tricia Strader

Ms. Strader approached the Board of Equalization regarding her property in Town of Bath District. Ms. Strader presented a list of home sales and a list of personal concerns for the Commission to review. Ms. Strader explained to the Commission her

concern for the rising taxes and stressed she felt her assessment was too high. The Commission and Assessor reviewed the assessment and agreed to lower the assessment to \$104,000.00. Commission staff will follow up with a letter stating the new assessment.

Franklin Strader

Mr. Strader approached the Board of Equalization regarding his 5.65 acre parcel in Bath District. Mr. Strader expressed to the Commission he feels the assessment is too high regarding his property. The Commission and Assessor and his staff reviewed the assessment and agreed to lower Mr. Strader's assessment to \$226,300.00. Commission staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. Strader stating the new assessment.

The Board of Equalization adjourned for lunch at 12:35 pm and reconvened at 1:30 pm

Ted Xendis

Mr. Xendis approached the Board of Equalization regarding his 8.22 acre parcel in Cacapon District. Mr. Xendis presented a land appraisal report for the property.

After reviewing the appraisal, Commissioner Hutchinson agreed to lower the appraised value to honor the appraisal report. The appraised value was lowered to \$58,000.00. Commission staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. Xendis stating the new appraised value.

Terry Bienstock

Mr. Bienstock appeared in front of the Board of Equalization to discuss his 36.28 acre parcel in Cacapon District. Mr. Bienstock has a water front home along the Cacapon River. Mr. Bienstock expressed his concern for the rising appraised values stated on his assessment. Mr. Bienstock insisted the assessment is too high and requested it be lowered to last year's value. The Commission and Assessor's staff discussed and agreed that it is not fair to the county residents to lower Mr. Bienstock's assessment to last year's value. The Assessor suggested that Mr. Bienstock put his property in the managed timber program. The Commission and Assessor compared Mr. Bienstock's property to a neighboring property and decided that the assessment was fair valued. Mr. Bienstock requested again to have the assessment reduced to last year's value. The Commission agreed to reduce the appraised value to \$475,000.00. Mr. Bienstock insisted the amount is still high and he may pursue Circuit Court regarding the assessment.

Mark Pratt

Mr. Pratt approached the Board of Equalization regarding his 5.00 acre parcel in Cacapon district. Mr. Pratt explained to the Commission that the conditions on the dirt road leading to his property are in very bad condition. Mr. Pratt showed the Commission pictures of the road on his cell phone. The Commission discussed the road conditions with the Assessor's office and agreed to change the classification of the road, and lowered the appraised value to \$23,800.00. Commission Staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. Pratt stating the new assessment.

Carlson Heldman

Mr. Heldman approached the Board of Equalization regarding his 5.6 acre parcel in Cacapon district. Mr. Heldman expressed how upset and unhappy he was with the increase in taxes. The Commission explained to Mr. Heldman that the land tables have risen and that is causing the land assessments to increase. Mr. Heldman expressed his anger for the increasing taxes. The Commission and Assessor discussed the assessment and the property and agreed to lower the assessment to \$50,500.00. Mr. Heldman was still dissatisfied with the new assessment and planned to contact Circuit Court.

Charles Douglas

Mr. Douglas approached the Board of Equalization concerning his 99.4 acre parcel in Timber Ridge district. After reviewing the assessment, the Commission and Assessor suggested Mr. Douglas place his property in the managed timber program. The Commission agreed not to lower the assessment.

Gladen O'Neil

Mr. O'Neil spoke to the Board of Equalization concerning his 1.5 acre parcel in Rock Gap District with a cabin. Mr. O'Neil spoke to the Commission and expressed his concern about the assessment. The Commission and Assessor discussed the assessment with Mr. O'Neil, and the Assessor suggested merging the lots together. The Assessor's staff changed the grade factor on the house and land, which lowered

the assessment to \$79,700.00. Commission Staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. O'Neil regarding the new assessment.

Ellen Barnes

Ms. Barnes approached the Board of Equalization to discuss her 2.53 acre property in Timber Ridge district. Ms. Barnes submitted an appraisal for the Commission to review. The Commission agreed to honor the appraisal and lowered the assessment to \$16,200.00. Commission staff will follow up with a letter to Ms. Barnes stating the new assessment.

Sam Swaim

Mr. Swaim approached the Board of Equalization regarding his property in Rock Gap district. To avoid any favoritism, Commissioner Swaim excused himself and abstained from the discussion. Sam Swaim presented a topographic map showing the Commission the layout of his property. Sam Swaim questioned whether the Assessor's staff had physically driven to his property. The Assessor informed Mr. Swaim that the Assessor's staff had been to his property, and it was documented. After discussing the property with the Assessor, the Commission agreed not to lower the assessment.

Gil LaVean

Mr. LaVean approached the Board of Equalization regarding his property in Rock Gap district. The Assessor suggested that Mr. LaVean merge his two properties together and explained that it would help lower the assessment for next year. The Assessor's staff had already spoken to and lowered Mr. LaVean's assessment to \$49,000.00. Commission Staff will follow up with a letter to Mr. LaVean stating the new assessment.

Mary Woodworth

Ms. Woodworth appeared in front of the Board of Equalization to discuss her property in Rock Gap district. Ms. Woodworth presented an appraisal for the property. After discussing the property with the Assessor's staff, the staff changed the grade to a D+ on the assessment and lowered the amount to \$138,000.00. Commission staff will follow up with a letter to Ms. Woodworth stating the new assessment.

Bill Bishop

Mr. Bishop went before the Board of Equalization to discuss his property in Bath district. After discussing the property, the Commission and Assessor agreed to lower the assessment to \$49,200.00. The Assessor suggested Mr. Bishop place his property in the managed timber program. The Assessor presented an application for Mr. Bishop to list his property in the Managed Timber program.

Upcoming Meeting

February 28, 2009 @ 9:00 a.m.

Board of Equalization Meeting

Morgan County Meeting Room