

Minutes of East Lyme Board of Assessment Appeals - 09/16/23

Date and time: 09/16/23 9:00 AM to: 09/16/23 12:49 PM
Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Patrick Hughes, Chair, Mike Bekech, Suzanne Szupiany, Gary Cicchiello, Kim Kalajainen
CC: Diane Vitagliano, Assessor
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Town Lawn if weather permits, otherwise (Conf. #1)
108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT, 06357
Link: <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/403269>

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note: Mr. Hughes called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Note: The meeting began outside and continued inside after the first 6 appeals were heard.


2. Additions to the Agenda

Note: There were none.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

3-1. March 13th, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Note: see attached minutes.

 [BAA-March-13-2023-Minutes.pdf](#)

Decision: MOTION (1)

Ms. Szupiany moved to approve the March 13th, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted.

Mr. Bekech seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

4. Motor Vehicle Appeals (2022 Grand List)

4-1. David Higgins- 39 West End Ave- List #506893

Note: Mr. Hughes swore in Mr. Higgins.

Note: Mr. Higgins provided copies of his last two tax bills and noted some of the following:

He estimates the worth to be \$62,800.

He bought the 2013 Hegan Mercedes Winnebago damaged.

The damages totaled \$34,000 and he's been slowly fixing the items over time.

His current assessment is based on the vehicle being worth \$77,000 but his isn't in perfect working order.

It doesn't meet average retail and has 84,000 in mileage.

Note: The Board viewed the vehicle and Mr. Higgins explained that neither the fridge nor generator work, and it costs \$4,000 a piece to replace them.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2023 SEP 27 A 8:05
Cassidy M. Higgins
TOWN CLERK

Note Mr. Higgins added that there must be strong lobbying in CT, because it seems like it's discriminatory for recreational vehicles.

4-2. Lynn & Owen Charles- 310R Flanders Road- List #502804

Note Mr. Hughes swore in Owen and Lynn Charles.

Note Mr. and Mrs. Charles have a 2013 Mercedes cargo van that is valued at \$72,000, which they bought for \$30,000 two years ago. The couple explained that there's no air conditioning, no generator, it has a diesel engine, and the back of the van has been retrofitted with a homemade bed and kitchen cabinets.

Note Mr. Hughes noted the value of RV vehicles went through the roof last year and increased 30 to 40%.

Note Mrs. Charles said for them the value is almost double what they paid for it and the condition doesn't match the retail value. Mr. Charles added that it has a lack of frills, is a cargo van, and has 308,000 miles on it.

Note The Board viewed the cargo van.

4-3. John Spiliotis- 24 Egret Road

Note Mr. Hughes swore in Mr. Spiliotis.

Note Mr. Spiliotis said that his 2019 Jeep Cherokee Latitude is a 4-cylinder AWD vehicle with very high mileage, 232,000.

He said the tax bill should be 45% lower based on its condition and mileage. He added that it has a new engine since there was a recall on the original one.

Note Mr. Spiliotis estimates the value to be \$9,525 and would like a \$235.09 credit. He said the Town assessed it at \$17,000 and they can take 52 miles off to reflect the time of assessment.

4-4. Joe Johnson- 8 Cavasin Drive- List #507935

Note Mr. Hughes swore Mr. Johnson in.

Note Mr. Johnson shared the following:

He has a 2015 Subaru Legacy that is beat up and over 9 years old.

It has 150,000 in mileage and interior damage.

The entertainment system no longer works properly.

He wouldn't buy another since he does a lot of tri state travel, and it's not good in terms of wear & tear.

As of last year, it had 145,000 in miles and his wife has used it for the last to travel back and forth from L&M Hospital.

Note Mr. Johnson provided photos of some comparable vehicles and noted one is selling for \$5,000, when his is valued at \$10,000.

4-5. Harold A. Peatfield- 20 Terrace Ave- List #512510

Note Mr. Hughes swore Mr. Peatfield in.

Note Mr. Peatfield detailed how he has a 1966 Austin Healey and put antique plates on the vehicle on October 16th, 2022, so he missed the deadline, but will fortunately not have this issue going forward. He added that the vehicle has 35,000 in mileage, and that it's assessed at \$60,760, while he thinks \$29,200 is a more appropriate number.

Note The Board viewed the vehicle.

4-6. Heidi Decosta- 54 Hillcrest- List #22M503846

Note Mr. Hughes swore Ms. Decosta in.

Note Ms. Decosta shared the following:
She has a 2017 Subaru Impreza.
It has 88,400 miles on it and was an accident a year ago.
The damage amounts to around \$5,000.
She puts around 16,000 miles a year on the vehicle.
She estimates the worth to be \$10,058.

4-7. Stephanie Hermann- 6 North Main Street - List #22M507079; #22M507075; #22M507074; 22M507077

Note Mr. Hughes swore Ms. Hermann here.

Note Ms. Hermann noted her husband was here last year about these same four salvage vehicles.

Note She estimates that the 2017 Toyota Prius is worth \$11,797, that the 2015 Dodge Ram is worth \$12,637, that the 2015 Camaro is worth \$17,887, and that the 2013 Ford Mustang is worth \$8,647.

Note Ms. Kalajainen said they should check with the Assessor about carrying over the salvage title from year to year, so that the person doesn't have to come back every year.

4-8. Erica Correia- 15 Hathaway Road

Note Mr. Hughes swore in Ms. Correia.

Note Ms. Correia shared the following:
Her 2015 Volvo 560 has 191,000 miles on it.
It burns oil, overheats, and needs a completely new engine.
They'll keep driving it until it catches on fire.
It's currently used only for her son to drive himself to and from school.
The town says the vehicle is worth \$11,500 and she thinks \$3,000 is a more appropriate number.

Note The Board viewed the vehicle.

5. Decisions/Deliberations

5-1. David Higgins- 39 West End Ave- List #506893

Note Mr. Hughes noted the camper was valued high but is a nice vehicle.

Note Mr. Bekech said Mr. Higgins was right on target in regard to \$4,000 to replace the fridge and \$4,000 to replace the generator.

Note The Board discussed how the average retail price is \$68,000.

Note Mr. Bekech proposed a reduction of \$8,000 to reflect the faulty equipment and Mr. Hughes commented that he thinks that is reasonable.

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Bekech moved to reduce the 2013 Heging Mercedes Winnebago from a \$54,000 assessed value, to \$48,400 based on the repairs necessary.

Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

6. Appeals Continued

6-1. Kyle Vining- 10 Esther Pond Ln

Note Mr. Vining shared the following:

He has a 2016 Subaru Forester XT.

His appeal is based on the high mileage of the vehicle, which is 144,000.

He said he's probably put 120,000 miles on it since last year, and he thinks it's worth \$8,000.

Note The Board viewed the vehicle.

7. Decisions/Deliberations Continued

7-1. Lynn & Owen Charles- 310R Flanders Road- List #502804

Note Ms. Kalajainen noted they essentially retrofitted a commercial vehicle and Mr. Hughes observed that there was a big difference between the Mercedes camper and the Mercedes cargo van.

Note Ms. Szupiany said it's still a commercial vehicle despite the modifications made.

Note Ms. Kalajainen said \$72,300 seems high, and noted it appraised higher than the first vehicle they saw, the Mercedes camper, which was in much better condition. Mr. Hughes agreed that the second vehicle didn't have the amenities that the first vehicle had.

Note Mr. Hughes said the assessment should be \$14,000 and Ms. Szupainy suggested they just consider it as empty cargo vehicle.

Note The Board further discussed the appeal.

Note The Board decided to have the Assessor look up the value for an empty cargo vehicle and to return to this appeal later.

8. Appeals Continued

8-1. Qimin Liu- 22 King James

Note Mr. Hughes swore Mr. Liu in.

Note Mr. Liu shared the following:

He has a 2009 Toyota Tacoma and thinks it's worth \$1500 at the most.

Note He noted the car is inoperable and needs a new transmission.

Note Mr. Liu provided the Board with photos of his vehicle.

Note Mr. Liu also detailed how he has a second salvage vehicle that he obtained in April. Mr. Bekech explained he would need to come back next year for that vehicle.

8-2. David Godbout- 15 Cardinal Road- List #506032; #506033; #506030

Note Mr. Hughes swore in Mr. Godbout.

Mr. Godbout said that he wanted to call the Assessor as a witness.

Mr. Hughes said that is not this type of hearing and asked him what brings him here today.

Mr. Godbout said that he wants Mr. Hughes to recuse himself as he does not feel he will have a fair hearing.

Mr. Hughes stated on the record that he can adjudicate this without prejudice.

Mr. Godbout said it's not his decision to make, he thinks it's for the Board to decide.

Mr. Hughes said he's not going to recuse himself and Mr. Godbout replied that the Board has to rule on his motion.

Mr. Hughes said there is no motion, the Board doesn't take motions from appellants, and asked him to proceed with appeal.

Note Mr. Godbout said some of the following:

He estimates the value of the 2012 Insight to be \$4,510.

He based his request on faulty assessments because it should be based on the market instead.

The vehicle is also not in clean condition.

His 2014 Volt was side swapped.

The Board has looked at this vehicle before.

He estimates it to be worth \$8,995.

Note The same things apply to his 2015 Volt that have in the past, the radiator still leaks.

He estimates it to be worth \$9,031.

He can only drive it for short trips.

He got some quotes to fix it last year but didn't get it done due to lack of parts, and because doing so would cause his taxes to be raised.

Note A dealer would not be able to sell his vehicle as is.

It would cost \$1,763 for the radiator and bodywork necessary.

The vehicle has 50,000 miles on it.

Note The Board viewed the 2015 Volt.

9. Decisions/Deliberations Continued

9-1. Lynn & Owen Charles- 310R Flanders Road- List #502804

Note The Board reviewed the value results the Assessor found online.

Decision MOTION (3)

Mr. Hughes moved to reduce the value to \$22,750 appraised and \$15,925 assessed.

Ms. Kalajainen seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-2. John Spiliotis- 24 Egret Road

Note Mr. Cicchiello noted that the appellant used trade in values in his request.

Note Mr. Bekech discussed reducing the value to \$8,950.

Decision MOTION (4)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to reduce the vehicle \$6,300, to an assessed value of \$10,880.

Mr. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-3. Joe Johnson- 8 Cavasin Drive- List #507935

Note Mr. Bekech said the current assessment is \$14,500, which he'd be inclined to reduce by \$3,375 because of mileage, and take \$2,000 for repairs.

Decision MOTION (5)

Mr. Bekech moved to reduce the vehicle value to \$9,125, which will result in an assessment of \$6,390, based on high mileage and overall condition.

Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-4. Harold A. Peatfield- 20 Terrace Ave- List #512510

Note Ms. Kalajainen noted the vehicle is in very good condition given the age.

Note The Board discussed how the FMV is \$86,800 and the appellant believes it's worth \$28,200.

Decision MOTION (6)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to accept the appellant's requested value of \$29,200.

Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-5. Heidi Decosta- 54 Hillcrest- List #22M503846

Note Ms. Kalajainen noted the vehicle is appraised at \$14,610 and was fully restored after the accident. Mr. Cicchiello noted she only provided trade-in values.

Decision MOTION (7)

Mr. Hughes moved to take no action.

Ms. Kalajainen seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-6. Stephanie Hermann- 6 North Main Street - List #22M507079; #22M507075; #22M507074; 22M507077

Decision MOTION (8)

Mr. Hughes moved they maintain last year's salvage discount percent reduction for the 2015 Camaro.

Mr. Bekech seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Decision MOTION (9)

Ms. Kalajainen moved that they ask that the value for salvage vehicles carry over from year to year.
Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Decision MOTION (10)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to maintain the value for the salvaged Dodge Ram determined last year.
Mr. Bekech seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Decision MOTION (11)

Ms. Szupiany moved to maintain the value for the salvaged Toyota Prius determined last year.
Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Decision MOTION (12)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to maintain the value for the salvaged 2013 Ford Mustang determined last year.
Ms. Szupiany seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-7. Erica Correia- 15 Hathaway Road

Decision MOTION (13)

Mr. Cicchiello moved to reduce the value of the Volvo 560 to a FMV of \$5,700, and an assessed value of \$3,990.
Mr. Hughes seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-8. Kyle Vining- 10 Esther Pond Ln

Note Ms. Kalajainen noted his Subaru Forester is in good condition and she's comfortable taking no action.

Note The Board discussed how the vehicle has 144,000 miles on it.

Decision MOTION (14)

Mr. Cicchiello moved to reduce the FMV to \$19,271, which results in an assessment of \$13,490, based on the excess mileage on the vehicle.
Ms. Kalajainen seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-9. Qimin Liu- 22 King James

Note The Board discussed how the Toyota Tacoma is inoperable.

Decision MOTION (15)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to accept the applicant's appeal of \$1,500.
Ms. Szupiany seconded the motion.
Motion carried, 5-0-0.

9-10. David Godbout- 15 Cardinal Road- List #506032; #506033; #506030

Note The Board discussed the condition of the 2012 Honda Insight.

Note Mr. Hughes said he's inclined to agree with Mr. Godbout's request.

Decision MOTION (16)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to accept the appellant's appeal that the value be reduced to \$4,510.

Ms. Szupiany seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note Mr. Bekech noted for the record that in the past Mr. Godbout has requested they use the book value less the cost to make it clean, and that is exactly what they've done.

Note The Board discussed how the 2014 Volt has been viewed in the past, how it was side swiped, and its condition has not been improved through repair.

Decision MOTION (17)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to accept the FMV of \$9,520 as submitted.

Ms. Szupiany seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note Mr. Bekech again noted for the record that in the past Mr. Godbout has requested they use the book value less the cost to make it clean, and that is exactly what they've done.

Note The Board discussed the 2015 Volt and the radiator repair needed. Mr. Hughes noted this is the vehicle they viewed.

Decision MOTION (18)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to accept the applicant's value of \$9,031 as submitted.

Ms. Szupiany seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note Mr. Bekech once again noted for the record that in the past Mr. Godbout has requested, they use the book value less the cost to make it clean, and that is exactly what they've done.

Decision MOTION (19)

Ms. Kalajainen moved to adjourn the September 16th, 2023, BAA Hearing at 12:49 p.m.

Mr. Cicchiello seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 5-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary