

October 7, 2014

The Pinellas County Value Adjustment Board (VAB) met in the Board Conference Room, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida on this date with the following members present:

Norm Roche, County Commissioner, Chairman
Kenneth T. Welch, County Commissioner
Carol Cook, School Board Member
Robert P. Symanski, Citizen Member (Board of County Commissioners)

Absent: Michael A. J. Bindman, Citizen Member (School Board)

Also Present:

Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
Pam Dubov, Property Appraiser
Stephen G. Watts, Esquire, VAB Counsel
Norm Loy, Manager, Board Records
Erin Moore, Property Appraiser's Office
Other Interested Individuals
Laura M. Todd, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

A G E N D A

1. Meeting Called to Order.
2. Citizens Wishing to Address the VAB.
3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of July 15, 2014.
4. Approval of the First Certification of the 2014 Tax Rolls.
5. Final VAB Meeting to be scheduled following completion of all hearings.
6. Adjournment.

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Roche called the meeting to order at 8:39 A.M. Noting that it has been a privilege to serve on the Board and this would be his final VAB meeting, he thanked the members and staff for their service; whereupon, he requested that later in the meeting Mr. Watts provide a summary of an email received from a citizen.

2. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD – NONE

3. MINUTES OF MEETING OF JULY 15, 2014 – APPROVED

School Board Member Cook moved, seconded by Commissioner Welch and carried, that the minutes of the meeting of July 15, 2014 be approved.

4. FIRST CERTIFICATION OF 2014 TAX ROLLS - APPROVED

Chairman Roche announced that although it is not necessary to take separate votes, the item consists of certification of two tax rolls; whereupon, School Board Member Cook moved, seconded by Mr. Symanski, that the Initial Certification of the 2014 Tax Roll for Tangible Personal Property and the Initial Certification of the 2014 Tax Roll for Real Property be approved.

In response to queries by the members, Ms. Dubov clarified the certification process, noting that today's action will allow her to "extend" the tax rolls by applying the millage rates for each taxing authority and distribute the tax bills in November; that the rolls will be recertified in February and March as a result of the changes from the VAB; and that the Initial Certification numbers are not available yet because one of the millage rates was not received until last Friday night.

Responding to query by Mr. Burke, Mr. Loy indicated that there are fewer petitions this year, currently 1,179, but actual parcels associated with those are approximately the same, nearly 1,700, and discussion ensued.

Mr. Burke noted that many of the issues are resolved by the Property Appraiser's Office prior to the hearing date, and in response to his queries, Mr. Loy related that close to 50 percent of the petitions are typically withdrawn prior to the hearing; that 60 to 70 percent of petitioners attend the hearing; and that the filing fee is \$15, which is non-refundable.

Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous Discussion

In response to earlier queries by Chairman Roche, Attorney Watts discussed an email received from Sheila Anderson, a tax representative, noting that she wants her cases reheard in other counties, but it does not relate to the Pinellas VAB. He stated that there seems to be more confusion over the forms this year; that he has never received more than one phone call a year until this year; and that he is unsure whether the forms can be simplified; whereupon, Mr. Loy indicated that the forms are from the State Department of Revenue, and the Board could only provide input.

Following discussion by the members, Mr. Burke suggested that the Board memorialize the citizens' concerns at the next meeting and approve a letter for Attorney Watts to submit requesting clarification of the process; whereupon, Mr. Loy stated that the information is publicized on the website and is covered quite thoroughly, and Attorney Watts provided input.

Thereupon, Chairman Roche suggested that Mr. Loy distribute electronic copies of the petition forms to the members for review prior to the next meeting.

5. FINAL VAB MEETING

Mr. Loy related that it will probably be late February or early March before the final VAB meeting can be held, as all of the petitions must be heard first.

Commissioner Welch and School Board Member Cook expressed appreciation to Chairman Roche for his leadership on the Board, and Ms. Cook inquired who would be the next Chairman. Mr. Burke indicated that the Chairman must be a County Commissioner, and following brief discussion pertaining to the process, Ms. Cook moved, seconded by Mr. Symanski and carried, that Commissioner Welch be elected Vice-Chairman until a new Chairman is elected at the next meeting.

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6. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Roche adjourned the meeting at 8:55 A.M.

Chairman