

Real Property Tax Committee Minutes  
December 1, 2020 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairwoman Sandra Winney; Committee Members Eric Connolly, Tara Gaston, John Lant, Jon Schopf, Tom Wood, Benny Zlotnick; Supervisor Ed Kinowski; Chad Cooke, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Anna Stanko, Real Property Tax; Andrew Jarosh, Terri Wrisley, Treasurer.

Chairwoman Winney called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, the minutes of the November 9 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Connolly, to pull auction item #43, SBL #262.5-1-69 in the Town of Stillwater. The motion passed. Ms. Gaston and Mr. Schopf were opposed.**

Mr. Kinowski said that this is a family owned home on 14 West Street. Mr. Kelly has been very active in trying to secure the monies needed to pay his back taxes. Mr. Kinowski said that Mr. Kelly paid the current year taxes last week, and has additional funds to pay additional years of taxes. Mr. Kinowski said that he certainly will be able to complete by March. Ms. Wrisley distributed a copy of the receipt for the current year paid taxes. Ms. Wrisley said that at this point the remaining balance is \$13,806.19. Mr. Connolly confirmed that this will buy the property owner enough time until the next auction. Mr. Kinowski said that he has secured one more year of taxes from family, second will be securing a loan through the bank, and the third from assistance from friends. Mr. Kinowski said that Mr. Kelly feels very confident that he can keep his home with this extension. Ms. Winney confirmed with Mr. Kinowski that the property owner is aware this is the last pull that can be provided. Mr. Connolly asked Mr. Kinowski if this has been put in writing to the property owner. Mr. Kinowski said that all discussions have been in a written format. Mr. Jarosh said that bidding on this property is currently active and the current high bid is \$40,600. Mr. Connolly asked if historically, the committee is liberal with approving second pulls. Mr. Dorsey said that he does not recall any second pulls being denied in the last ten years or more. Mr. Dorsey said that the Board's policy has always been to restore ownership to the former owner wherever possible as long as they have a realistic plan being worked on.

Ms. Gaston asked if there was any problem with the committee pulling the parcel while it is currently being bid on. Mr. Dorsey said that the terms and conditions included a warning that any parcel could be pulled up until today. Mr. Dorsey said that when this meeting was scheduled, it was made known that this meeting was to approve second pulls. Mr. Dorsey said that he also sent an email to Auctions International when he first got wind of this potential second pull, that this was a property that could come off on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Jarosh added that the current high bidder may not be happy if the property is pulled at this point. Ms. Stanko said that the online auction is a new process for the County. In the past, pulls were allowed up to one hour prior to the auction starting. This is a unique circumstance, where the auction was ongoing for a little over 2 weeks. Ms. Stanko said that she would strongly urge the committee to review the policy for the next auctions. In her opinion, those deadlines should be before the auction starts, not before the auction

ends. Ms. Stanko said that the auction firm is now losing their 6% buyer's premium on this property and additionally, in her opinion, it looks like the County is putting items up for auction and now renegeing on them. Mr. Dorsey said that tender offers have also been received during the auction period, and yesterday Supervisor Lant had a first pull on a property which had a high bid of \$45K. In the case of the property that Supervisor Lant pulled, it was a situation where two disabled women were living in the home, and to let it go to auction, the buyer would have had to evict these disabled people from the home. The property was owned by a trust, the trustee was in jail and was just recently released. Mr. Dorsey said that he also got a request around a hour ago for two pulls in the Town of Milton. Mr. Zlotnick said that no one has contacted him yet about these parcels.

Mr. Dorsey said that certainly in future auctions, tender offers and pulls can be cut off up until the start of the auction, but it has always been the policy of the Board to try to restore ownership back to the former owner whenever possible. Ms. Winney and Mr. Lant agreed with Ms. Stanko that removals should be before the auction, not during. Mr. Zlotnick confirmed that this was the first time the County conducted an online property auction, and said that going forward the committee can revise the rules to set a deadline of 1 hour prior to the start of the auction. Ms. Winney expressed frustration with situations where people are paying last minute and not paying their taxes when they are due each year. Ms. Gaston and Mr. Schopf said that they do not agree with pulling properties in the middle of an auction.

**On a motion made by Mr. Lant, seconded by Mr. Zlotnick, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Therese Connolly  
Deputy Clerk of the Board