

Board of Civil Authority Meeting

Minutes

July 15, 2026

1. Open Meeting and Establish a Quorum – Town Clerk and Treasurer Zachary Brown called the July 15, 2026, meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Those present included Dillon Begin, Alfred Buckley, Alan Leigh, Krista Rodrigue, Fern Owen (Brown), and Zachary Brown. Noreen Labrecque, Tana Trammell, Tom Trammell, and Jean Wilson joined the meeting in person, representing the Board of Listers and Assessors for Canaan. No other member of the public joined either via Zoom or in person. Town Clerk and Treasurer Brown counted the members present, totaling six members, he reported that a quorum was present as the BCA is formed of 9 members.
2. Elect A Chairperson – Town Clerk and Treasurer Brown asked if there were any nominations for chairperson. After a brief lull in discussion or nominations, Fern Owen made a motion to elect Zachary Brown as the chairperson for the meetings and hearings. This motion was seconded by Krista Rodrigue. Town Clerk and Treasurer Brown, asked for any discussion on the motion. Seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion carried in the affirmative, (5 In favor, 0 Opposition, and one Abstention for Zachary Brown.)
3. Additions Or Deletions to The Agenda – No additions or deletions were made to the agenda.
4. General Public Comment – No general public comment was had prior to the hearings.
5. Disclosure of any Conflicts or Appearance thereof – Chairman Brown asked if there were any conflicts or appearance thereof for any of the tax appeal hearings. Rodrigue stated that she believes she has a conflict with the first appellant as they are neighbors and have used her property as a comparable. Chair Brown stated that he believed that would be a legitimate conflict. He stated that if there was no objections, Krista will simply abstain from discussion and official actions. This was limited to just official acts as a Justice of the Peace and a member of the board of civil authority. Owen wanted it known that Zach and her are related (Mother/Son). Brown asked if the board felt that there were any reasons for abstentions. The board had none.
6. Administer Board of Civil Authority Tax Appeal Oaths – Chair Brown swore in the Board of Civil Authority. He asked each member of the board to swear to the following oath: “I do solemnly swear that I will well and truly hear and determine all matters at issue between taxpayers and listers submitted for my decision, under the pains and penalties of perjury” All members present stated: “I do” All members present signed the oath as formal acknowledgment.
7. Tax Appeal Hearings –
 - a. Marc and Francine Bigney – 161 Jackson Lodge Road – R21036-C – 6:30 P.M. – Chairman Brown opened the Bigney tax appeal hearing by stating the appellant names, address, and parcel ID. Brown stated that the appellants are not present, but that they did submit a letter stating their regrets and their reasons for their tax appeal. Brown stated that this was in their packets and was given to the listers, as well.
 - i. Administer Oaths to the Appellant and the Listers – Chairman Brown asked all present who wished to give testimony or answer questions to please raise their right hand and swear to the following oath: “Under the pains and penalties of perjury, do you solemnly swear that the evidence you give in the cause under consideration shall be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?” Noreen, Tana, Tom, and Jean responded “I do”.
 - ii. Listers’ Description of the Property and Current Assessment – Brown invited the listers to give a description of the property and the current assessment. Jean distributed two packets to each member of the board of abatement, that was labeled as Lister Exhibit 1-26 (Bigney). Wilson informed the BCA that the property was listed as camp on 0.71 acres with 80’ frontage on Lake Wallace. The current value is \$278,800.00. Wilson told the board that the property was first listed at \$293,000 as of 04/01/2026, but was lowered to the current value after the Bigney’s grieved the appraisal.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting

Minutes

July 15, 2026

- iii. Testimony from the Appellant(s) – Brown noted this would typically be the time, where the appellants would present their testimony and evidence for the appeal. He noted that they did provide some information as to their reasoning in their exhibits. Brown wanted to place it on the record that they did go through the correct statutory process. They received a notice of a change of appraisal, filed a timely grievance with the listers, met with the listers, received a notice of grievance decision, and then filed an appeal to the board of civil authority within the statutory timeframe. Brown noted that the valuation established by the Board of Listers is initially presumed to be valid. The appellants have the initial burden of presenting credible and relevant evidence that fairly and reasonably tends to show that the listed value is incorrect and that supports the fair-market value they believe should be assigned to the property. If they present sufficient evidence to overcome the initial presumption in favor of the listers' valuation, the presumption no longer controls the outcome and the listers must present evidence supporting their appraisal. At this time, without the appellants present the board must decide if what they have submitted is enough to move forward with the hearing. Begin asked a quick clarifying question. He asked what the appellants were looking for. Brown stated that they have asked for their assessment to not be more than \$255,000. Begin asked if the listers have been inside the property. Wilson responded that they have not. Begin asked if they should do that before the board moves forward. Brown stated that it is now out of the hands of the listers. Any changes to the assessment of the property now, must come from the board of civil authority. The board discussed what an inspection would look like and what they would have to do. Rodrigue asked if she may ask a question as a member of the public. Brown stated that she could. Rodrigue commented that the pictures presented to the board, as most likely from April or May, as the culvert and beach have settled. She also stated that many properties in or around Lake Wallace share water sources and wells. After some pause and discussion, Brown suggested that the board should move forward. He noted that this is by no means a concession that the listers have made an error, it instead is that based on what was provided a reasonable person could assume that there may be an error in the valuation, that should be explored further by the board of civil authority. Chairman Brown entertained a motion to proceed. Dillon Begin made a motion to move forward with the tax appeal process. Al Buckley seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed in the affirmative (5 in Favor, 0 Opposition, and 1 Abstention from Krista Rodrigue.)
- iv. Testimony from Listers – Wilson provided testimony for the listers. She went through their exhibit, noting a few points that they used to come up with the appraisal. They noted that they have reduced the usable beach frontage using a decreased grade of the land. They have also reduced the value of the property, by decreasing the unit price for the fireplace and for the water source. They produced comparable properties that have recently sold. The board asked questions relating to the appraisal of other nearby properties, including what grade of land they receive and what the value of their lake frontage is. Wilson described the difference between equity and fair market value, noting that the Town uses the latter when determining assessed values. They have supported their assessment using three comparable properties and their sales from the last few years.
- v. Rebuttal from Appellant(s) – As the appellants were not present, there was no rebuttal from them.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting

Minutes

July 15, 2026

- vi. General Discussion and Questions from the BCA – Wilson wanted to point out that the appellants did not present any market data for their appeal. She stated that the testimony/exhibits provided were more of feelings than data. The board stated they'd take that under advisement.
 - vii. Appointment and Scheduling of the Inspection Committee – Chairman Brown asked to set up the inspection committee and to schedule the inspection. Brown noted that there has to be three members on it. He volunteered and asked for two others. Owen stated that she would but was unsure if it would be a conflict. Brown stated that it should not be one, but if there were any other members willing to join, it would probably be best. Alan Leigh and Al Buckley volunteered. Chairman Brown entertained a motion to appoint the three volunteers to the inspection committee. Fern Owen made said motion. Dillon Begin seconded it. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed in the affirmative (5 in Favor, 0 Opposition, and 1 Abstention from Krista Rodrigue.) Brown noted that the committee will now set up a time with the appellants to inspect the property. He will inform the committee and the rest of the board when the inspection will take place.
 - viii. Recess Hearing and Schedule Continuance or Close Hearing– Chairman Brown entertained a motion to recess the hearing until the inspection has been completed, at which point the hearing would need to reconvene. This would give the opportunity for the committee to present their findings, for the appellants to offer any further testimony and for the listers to present any further testimony. Fern Owen made said motion. Dillon Begin seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed in the affirmative (5 in Favor, 0 Opposition, and 1 Abstention from Krista Rodrigue.) Chairman Brown recessed the hearing at 6:58 P.M. to be reconvened after the inspection has been completed.
- b. Vermont Telephone Company – TC1000-4 – Immediately Following (a) – Chairman Brown opened the Vermont Telephone Company tax appeal hearing by stating the appellant names, address, and parcel ID. Brown stated that the appellants are not present, but that they did submit a timely appeal and a stipulation agreement. Brown stated that this was in their packets and was given to the listers, as well.
- i. Stipulation Agreement with the Town of Canaan and Appellant – The board reviewed the stipulation agreement. The board discussed it at length. The board felt that since they have no control over the assessment of communication utilities, and nor do the listers, that signing the stipulation agreement would be the cleanest solution. Brown described the stipulation agreement, stating that it would allow the appellant to move straight to either the Superior Court or VT PVR instead of completing the entire BCA tax appeal process. Brown noted for the record that the appellants did follow all proper statutory procedures to lead up to this hearing. Brown noted that the agreement was first sent to the selectboard, who voted to not approve it, as they felt that it would be best to follow the normal statutory procedures. They also felt that it would be best to have the entire BCA decide. Chairman Brown asked the listers if they had any objections to the BCA signing the agreement. They had none. Chairman Brown entertained a motion to accept the stipulation agreement between the Town of Canaan and the Vermont Telephone Company. Dillon Begin made said motion. Krista Rodrigue seconded it. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Brown executed the agreement.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting

Minutes

July 15, 2026

- ii. Administer Oaths to the Appellant and the Listers (If Needed)– No discussion or action taken.
 - iii. Listers' Description of the Property and Current Assessment (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - iv. Testimony from the Appellant(s) (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - v. Testimony from Listers (If Needed)– No discussion or action taken.
 - vi. Rebuttal from Appellant(s)(If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - vii. General Discussion and Questions from the BCA (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - viii. Appointment and Scheduling of the Inspection Committee (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - ix. Recess Hearing and Schedule Continuance or Close Hearing – Krista Rodrigue made a motion to close the hearing for the Vermont Telephone Company. Al Buckley seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Chairman Brown closed the hearing at 7:03 P.M.
- x.
- c. VTel Wireless Inc. – TC1000-5 – Immediately Following (b) –
 - i. Stipulation Agreement with the Town of Canaan and Appellant – The board reviewed the stipulation agreement. Chairman Brown asked the listers if they had any objections to the BCA signing the agreement. They had none. Chairman Brown entertained a motion to accept the stipulation agreement between the Town of Canaan and VTel Wireless. Al Buckley made said motion. Krista Rodrigue seconded it. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Brown executed the agreement.
 - ii. Administer Oaths to the Appellant and the Listers (If Needed)– No discussion or action taken.
 - iii. Listers' Description of the Property and Current Assessment (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - iv. Testimony from the Appellant(s) (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - v. Testimony from Listers (If Needed)– No discussion or action taken.
 - vi. Rebuttal from Appellant(s)(If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - vii. General Discussion and Questions from the BCA (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - viii. Appointment and Scheduling of the Inspection Committee (If Needed) – No discussion or action taken.
 - ix. Recess Hearing and Schedule Continuance or Close Hearing – Fern Owen made a motion to close the hearing for VTel Wireless. Dillon Begin seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Chairman Brown closed the hearing at 7:05 P.M.
8. Primary Election – August 11, 2026, 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. – Brown reminded the BCA of the upcoming election.
- a. Review New Applicants and Checklist – Brown presented the board with the change audit report from the last time the body met, April 7 to the present. The board reviewed the report. The board asked a few questions. Brown clarified what a purged voter is and the methods in which a voter can be purged. The board reviewed and discussed the report, with no objections, the board moved on.
 - b. Approve Early Opening of Absentee Ballots – Al Buckley made a motion to approve the opening of absentee ballots the day before and the day of the election prior to polls closing. This shall be done by Brown and another election official of BCA member.

Board of Civil Authority Meeting

Minutes

July 15, 2026

Alan Leigh seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.

- c. Approve Ballot Clerks (Assistant Election Officials) – Al Buckley made a motion to approve Dencie Cunningham as the ballot clerk and assistant election official for the August 11, 2026 primary election. Alan Leigh seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Brown noted that he is still looking for a second ballot clerk, who will have to be appointed the day of the election with a quorum of the board present. He noted that he will let the board know ahead of time who will be the second ballot clerk.
 - d. Approve Extra Ballot Counters – Krista Rodrigue made a motion to approve Zach Brown to find and appoint additional ballot counters for the night of the election. Dillon Begin seconded the motion. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Brown noted that he will let the board know ahead of time who will be helping to count ballots. He invited the board to find volunteers as well.
 - e. Approve JPs To Deliver Ballots to Homebound Voters – Dillon Begin made a motion to appoint Fern Owen and Krista Rodrigue as the two justices to deliver ballot to homebound voters. Alan Leigh seconded the motion. A short discussion was had. Chairman Brown asked for any further discussion, seeing none; he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative.
9. Adjourn Meeting – Dillon Begin motioned for the meeting to be adjourned, and Al seconded. Chairman Brown asked if there was further discussion; seeing none, he called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously in the affirmative. Chairman Brown adjourned the July 15, 2026 meeting at 7:11 P.M.