



City of Saint Paul

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Minutes - Final

Legislative Hearings

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Thursday, May 2, 2019

9:00 AM

Room 330 City Hall & Court House

- 4 [RLH TA 19-202](#) Ratifying the Appealed Special Tax Assessment for property at 62 MOUNDS BOULEVARD. (File No. CG1901A2, Assessment No. 190055)

Sponsors: Prince

Reduce from \$98.58 to \$46.79. (Pending Q1 2019 assessment to be deleted)

Mary Bollman, property owner, appeared.

Chris Swanson, Staff:

The resident is here to appear the special tax assessment at 62 Mounds Boulevard in the amount of \$96.08 with a service charge of \$2.50 for a total assessment of \$98.58. This assessment is for garbage service for Quarter 4, 2018, for a medium cart, provided by Highland Sanitation. The stated reason is that the resident wishes to opt out of the program because they do not generate any garbage at that property as they do not live full time at this address. They consider it an urban cabin. Under citywide trash service, all residential properties are required to have trash service, even ones that are used periodically. We do have smaller cans available. Because this is still considered a living unit in the City of St Paul, we think this assessment amount should stand.

Moermond:

I note here the owner said she wishes to opt out. I don't believe there is that ability.

Swanson:

We don't have the ability to opt out of the trash program. We have the option of stopping service temporarily to reduce the bill. We have another form if it is going to be vacant for a number of months, a resident can fill that out. I don't know if either of those apply in this instance but I can provide more information on those options.

Mary Bollman:

My husband and I live near Rochester. We bought this small house in '07 to visit our children or when we do something in the City. We rarely cook there. About once every six weeks, we take home a small bag of garbage. I have garbage service where I live. I don't live here. I don't generate garbage. I know the system requires, but the system is a problem because there doesn't seem to be an option for me to opt out. The garbage truck rolls right by but I've never had the lid open. I don't know what to do. It is not a vacant property. How many months can you say it's vacant?

Swanson:

Unoccupied dwelling will go on until it is changed. Until it is said to be occupied. I can talk more with you about that. A couple of months at least.

Moermond:

Is there any record of the family contacting the City so the City would know to work on this?

Bollman:

I've contact the City and also Highland Sanitation. I didn't think it was going to be a problem. I know other people who have this situation and I don't know how they are dealing with it. I'm looking for some relief.

Swanson:

Looking through our records, I don't have any record of phone calls about this property. I don't know when you called...

Bollman:

You don't have any record of anything, huh?

Swanson:

No.

Bollman:

I called the sanitation company and they said you go back to the City. What can I do?

Moermond:

You can fill out a form stating it's not being occupied. Is that a temporary measure or permanent?

Swanson:

This goes for a full year and gets renewed annually

Bollman:

I can do that. That's no problem, but I feel like I'm not being truthful, but if that's a way to deal with it...

Moermond:

Is it a homesteaded property?

Bollman:

I'm told it doesn't make any difference in taxes. I don't know.

Moermond:

Just curious. The other thing is to get the smallest cart size possible.

Bollman:

That's what Highland suggested, but I'd rather pursue the other way if it is possible. If you were to take the number of days I would be gone, I would be gone a majority of the time.

Moermond:

7-10 days in the property a month?

Bollman
Sometimes not even that.

Moermond:
How would you guys view that?

Swanson:
I think we would not go that detailed into that paperwork. More often than not, this is not an occupied dwelling, and not your primary place of residence. You don't have a tenant living there. You are there intermittently. I would be willing to sign off on that.

Bollman:
Would I have to come to a hearing? Of just make a phone call? There hasn't been any changes for 12 years.

Moermond:
No hearing. Mr. Swanson has the paperwork; you can fill that out today. I have asked Mai Vang to check the 1st quarter 2019 status.

Bollman:
It's unpaid. I wasn't going to give Highland the \$98 for nothing. They don't even have to stop.

Moermond:
That isn't a reason to get out from under the assessment. The idea that you are not living there, is. I want to acknowledge that you talked to Highland and they didn't give you a good reason. But you didn't follow through with the City. I would like to split the difference of the amount owing and then you won't have a bill going forward.

Bollman:
I didn't realize I could do anything with the City.

Moermond:
The mailing the City sent you has been really clear that you could. That would have been from the first letter onwards.

Swanson
There were four direct mailers sent to the owner and to the property, that outlined the program and how it works, who the hauler was and general information, including ways to reduce your trash cost by selecting the cart size as well as some of these more detailed opt out, well not opt out, service hold information. Those started going out in May and continued until the program started in October.

Bollman:
I think I called the City at least once and I don't know if they...I didn't fill out any paperwork. They basically said there's nothing they could do. I could reduce the cart. I don't have anything. They come on Wednesday, but we are here on weekends. If we put it out, it would sit there for two weeks.

Moermond:
You are essentially a vacant unit. You can explain you aren't living there as a primary residence and only occasionally use the property. What happens to the cart?

Swanson:
Is the cart accessible?

Bollman:
Yes.

Swanson:
We'd ask you put it by the street. They can come and collect the cart.

Bollman:
When should I put it on the street?

Swanson:
If you could this week, that would be great. Normally it takes a week or two for them to collect the carts.

Bollman:
I will put it where they can see it easily. If they don't take it, we are coming back next week and I will put it out if it hasn't been taken.

Moermond:
We have today's bill for the 4th quarter of 2018. You have the 1st quarter 2019 that hearing is scheduled for next Thursday. That amount is for \$110.48. For this first bill, I will cut it in half if you turn it in the paperwork today. For next week's hearing, I will recommend it gets deleted. You are welcome to talk to the City Council about the rest of the bill. I think that is fair and we have it resolved moving forward. It will save you another trip down here anyway.

Bollman:
OK. Thank you. I didn't know about the other one. Do they have quarterly hearings about them?

Moermond:
Yes. Mr. Swanson will work with you on the form.

Referred to the City Council due back on 5/22/2019