

**MEETING OF THE
ORWELL
BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
July 27, 2026
7:00 P.M.
Town Office**

Present: Richard O. Buxton, Jr, Chair
Mike Audet, JP
Mike Christian, SB
Joe Pouliot, SB
Hans Tudhope, SB
Andrea Treadway, SB
Les Wood, SB

Listers: Kay Firth-Butterfield
Sharon Ronchetti, Chair

Appellants: Jeffrey R Lesniak
Martine E Swain

Virtual: Lisa Limoge, JP

Absent: Stephanie Corey, JP, Glen Cousineau, JP

Anna Golann, Clerk

The Orwell Board of Civil Authority meeting was convened at 6:33 p.m. by Richard O. Buxton, Jr., Chair.

- A. Oath of Office for Appeals Hearing. All BCA members took their oath and signed their oath sheets. The Chair swore in the Listers and Appellants.
- B. Approve the minutes of the July 13, 2026, Board of Civil Authority Minutes.
Andrea Treadway moved to approve the minutes of July 13, 2026, as written. Mike Christian seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- C. Conduct an Appeals Hearing of the Board of Civil Authority for the following Appellants for the year 2026.

APPEALS HEARING:

Appeal of Jeffrey R Lesniak and Martine E Swain property, #042006.001, 5.72 acres located at 12 Martin Hill Rd, \$290,100.

Lister Sharon Ronchetti testified as follows:

The property is located at 12 Martin Hill Road in Orwell. Parcel ID is 042006.001. The Span # is 459-145-10841. It is a 5.72 acre parcel with a housesite. After final grievance, the total value is \$286,500 for the homestead. This is referenced in Exhibit D.

Appellants Jeffrey R Lesniak and Martine E Swain:

Martine showed comps of other area homes. Due to a lack of 1 bed and 1 bath homes, the listings are 2 bedrooms and 1 bath with garages, which 12 Martin Hill Rd does not have. The appellants passed around property comparisons for review of the board. One home was 1 bedroom in Bristol with a live/work situation. All of the comps have larger square footage and are 2 bedrooms or more and almost every comp has a 2 car garage. The subject property has rented containers for storage. The first problem stated with the valuation of the property is that the addition is called a sunroom and she states that the addition does not meet this criteria. They also stated that there is a difference between appraised value and market value. The appellants feel they overpaid initially for the property, due to

having only 720 square feet.

Lister Reply:

Sharon Ronchetti, Lister Chair, stated that the hearing is based solely on the additional structure added, not on the overall value of the property. When the listers visited in March 2026 to update the lister card after permit completion, there were glass panels surrounding the room. In the NEMRC CAMA system, the addition is now recorded as a slab porch with a roof. After discussion during grievance, there was a decrease from \$12,700 to \$8,500 to reflect the change of the removable single pane windows, which were originally reflected as double panes. Additionally, Sharon stated that all numbers in the NEMRC CAMA System are based on the reassessment valuation that was done in 2024. The NEMRC system is used for valuation of all parcels in the Town of Orwell.

Additional Questions from the Board - Hans Tudhope asked for clarification on what was being grieved and it was confirmed that the grievance is based on the \$8,500 increase in value related to the addition. Rick Buxton Jr. stated that he drove by the subject property over the weekend to confirm the pictures. Martine stated that a sunroom is more valuable in real estate terms, and rather than using plexiglass, they worked with Desabrias for keeping snow out. She stated that they were already paying taxes on 277,400 and are requesting not to pay additional taxes based on overpaying for the property. The 3-season room sits on a non-structural concrete slab. Joe Pouliot asked how the town values porches, and they've added 192 covered square footage which should add value to their house. The appellants stated that this should be valued differently than living space. The listers confirmed that this added structure is now written as a screen room and that the value was based on the 2024 value. Hans confirmed that the value was \$12,700 and this value was reduced at grievance to \$8,500 due to the screen walls. Hans is questioning what the grievance is coming from. He stated that there was money spent and therefore it should add value to the structure.

Lister evaluation and supporting evidence.

The appellants stated that they disagreed with the \$8,500 as the added value to their property based on doing the work themselves. The subject property is about 10 years old. Andrea asked why there aren't any comps from the Listers that they based the value on. The Listers stated that they conferred with the district advisor and were told all exhibits looked good. The Listers didn't feel that comps were necessary based on this being due to the added structure only, not the overall valuation of the property. The board discussed whether these could be added at a later date and it was confirmed that listers or appellants could not introduce new information after today.

INSPECTION COMMITTEE

The Chair asked members to form a group of at least three to begin the inspection process for this appeal. Hans Tudhope, Les Wood and Lisa Limoge offered to be on the inspection committee. There was confirmation that comparables and pictures could be taken at the inspection. A date for inspection was set for Thursday, August 13th at 9AM. The inspection committee will meet at the Town Office and drive to the property together.

D. Other Business.

E. Member's Concerns.

F. Adjournment.

The Jeffrey R Lesniak and Martine E Swain portion of the hearing was closed and will reconvene on August 24, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.

Joe Pouliot moved to adjourn the meeting. Mike Audet seconded the motion. Meeting closed at 7:07 PM.