

**BEFORE THE NEBRASKA TAX EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW COMMISSION**

IN THE MATTER OF EQUALIZATION  
OF VALUE OF REAL PROPERTY  
WITHIN HALL COUNTY, NEBRASKA,  
FOR TAX YEAR 2014

COUNTY NUMBER 40  
FINDINGS AND ORDERS ADJUSTING  
VALUE

**APPEARANCES FOR THE COUNTY:**

Janet Pelland, County Assessor for Hall County.  
Jack Zitterkopf, Deputy County Attorney for Hall County.

**SUMMARY**

The following findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order are issued pursuant to a motion adopted by a majority of the Commission. The Tax Equalization and Review Commission, as part of its equalization proceedings held pursuant to Neb. Const. art. IV, §28 and Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5022 *et. seq.* (2012 Cum. Supp.) finds that the level of value of certain real property in Hall County for tax year 2014, fails to satisfy the requirements of the Nebraska Constitution and law. The Commission therefore orders an adjustment to the value of certain real property within Hall County.

**I.  
REPORT AND OPINION  
OF THE PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATOR**

Hall County (“County”), as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1514 (2012 Cum. Supp.), timely filed its Abstract of Assessment for 2014. The Property Tax Administrator (“Administrator”), based on that abstract and other information available to the Administrator, has filed certain statistical and narrative reports with the Nebraska Tax Equalization and Review Commission (“Commission”) and further has certified the Administrator's opinion regarding the

level of value and the quality of assessment of real property in Hall County for tax year 2014, as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5027 (2012 Cum. Supp.).

## **II. REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

The level of value for any class or subclass of real property is indicated by its median assessment/sales ratio unless that ratio is deemed unreliable, the sample from which the ratio is drawn is not representative of the class or subclass, or the level of value has been determined based on other generally accepted mass appraisal techniques

## **III. APPLICABLE LAW**

1. The Commission is required to meet annually to equalize the assessed value and special value of all real property as submitted by the county assessors on the abstracts of assessment and equalize the values of real property which is valued by the state. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5022 (2012 Cum. Supp.).
2. An assessment/sales ratio is a tool used under professionally accepted mass appraisal methods to measure and evaluate the level and uniformity of assessed values. The ratio is determined by dividing the assessed value of a parcel of real property by the sales price of that parcel. The assessment/sales ratio is expressed in terms of a percentage. 442 Neb. Admin. Code, ch. 9, §002.02 (06/11).
3. The Commission is required to raise or lower the valuation of a class or subclass of real property as necessary to achieve equalization. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5027 (2012 Cum. Supp.).

4. To achieve equalization the Commission is required to increase or decrease the value of a class or subclass of real property in any county or taxing authority or of real property valued by the state so that all classes or subclasses of real property in all counties fall within an applicable acceptable range. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(1) (Reissue 2009).
5. An applicable acceptable range is the percentage of variation from a standard for valuation as measured by an established indicator of central tendency of assessment. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(2) (Reissue 2009).
6. The median has been adopted by the Commission as the preferred established indicator of central tendency. 442, Neb. Admin. Code, ch. 9, §004 (06/11).
7. The applicable acceptable ratio range for the median of the assessment/sales ratios is from 69% to 75% of actual or fair market value for the class and subclasses of agricultural land and horticultural land not receiving special valuation pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1344; 69% to 75% of special valuation for the class and subclasses of agricultural land and horticultural land receiving special valuation pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1344; and 92% to 100% of actual or fair market value for all other classes and subclasses of real property. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(2) (Reissue 2009).
8. Whether or not the level of value determined by the Commission falls within the applicable acceptable range may be determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-5023(5) (Reissue 2009).
9. If the Commission makes an initial determination that the level of value of a class or subclass of real property within a county fails to satisfy the requirements of section 77-5023, the Commission is required to issue a notice to the county for a hearing, on five

days' notice, at which legal representatives of the county and interested persons may show why an adjustment should not be made. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5026 (Reissue 2009).

10. Any increase or decrease of value shall cause the level of value determined by the commission to be at the midpoint of the applicable acceptable range. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(3) (Reissue 2009).
11. Any decrease or increase to a subclass of property shall also cause the level of value determined by the Commission for the class from which the subclass is drawn to be within the applicable acceptable range. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(4) (Reissue 2009).
12. An increase or decrease to the value of a class or subclass of real property in Hall County may only be made after a hearing held not less than five days after mailing notice of the hearing to the county clerk, county assessor, and the chairperson of the county board for Hall County unless notice is waived by a legal representative of the County. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5026 (Reissue 2009).
13. The Property Tax Administrator annually shall make and issue comprehensive assessment ratio studies of the average level of assessment, the degree of assessment uniformity, and the overall compliance with assessment requirements for each major class of real property subject to the property tax in each county. The comprehensive assessment ratio studies shall be developed in compliance with professionally accepted mass appraisal techniques and shall employ such statistical analysis as deemed appropriate by the Property Tax Administrator, including measures of central tendency and dispersion. The comprehensive assessment ratio studies shall be based upon the sales file as developed in subsection (2) of this section and shall be used by the Property Tax Administrator for the analysis of the level of value and quality of assessment for purposes

of section 77-5027 and by the Property Tax Administrator in establishing the adjusted valuations required by section 79-1016. Such studies may also be used by assessing officials in establishing assessed valuations. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-1327(3) (2012 Cum. Supp.).

14. On or before nineteen days following the final filing due date for the abstract of assessment for real property pursuant to section 77-1514, the Property Tax Administrator shall prepare and deliver to the Commission and to each county assessor his or her annual reports and opinions. For any county with a population of at least one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants according to the most recent Federal Decennial Census, the reports and opinions shall be prepared and delivered on or before fifteen days following such final filing due date. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5027(2) (2012 Cum. Supp.).

15. The annual reports and opinions of the Property Tax Administrator shall contain statistical and narrative reports informing the commission of the level of value and the quality of assessment of the classes and subclasses of real property within the county and a certification of the opinion of the Property Tax Administrator regarding the level of value and quality of assessment of the classes and subclasses of real property in the county. Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5027(3) (2012 Cum. Supp.).

#### **IV. EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COMMISSION**

The Commission may consider and utilize the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of Nebraska, the laws of the United States, the laws of Nebraska, the Code of Federal Regulations, the Nebraska Administrative Code, any decision of the several

courts of the United States or the State of Nebraska, and the legislative history of any law, rule, or regulation, without making the document a part of the record. The Commission may without inclusion in the record consider and utilize published treatises, periodicals, and reference works pertaining to the valuation or assessment of real or personal property or the meaning of words and phrases if the document is identified in the Commission's rules and regulations.

Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016(3) (2012 Cum. Supp.). The Commission pursuant to statute has identified various published treatises, periodicals and reference works for its consideration and utilization. 442 Neb. Admin. Code, ch. 5, §32 (06/11). The Commission heard testimony and received exhibits. No information or evidence, except that permitted by law, may be considered.

Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016(3) (2012 Cum. Supp.). The Commission may evaluate the evidence presented utilizing its experience, technical competence, and specialized knowledge.

Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5016(5) (2012 Cum. Supp.).

## **V. FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Commission finds and determines the following concerning classes and subclasses of real property in Hall County:

### **PROCEDURAL**

1. A statistical and narrative report informing the Commission of the level of value and the quality of assessments of the classes and subclasses of real property for Hall County and certifying the opinion of the Property Tax Administrator regarding the level of value and the quality of assessment of real property in Hall County for the tax year 2014 was timely received by the Commission. (E40).

2. The level of value for any class or subclass of real property is indicated by its median assessment/sales ratio unless that ratio is deemed unreliable, the sample from which it is drawn is not representative of the class or subclass, or the level of value has been determined by the Property Tax Administrator based on other generally accepted mass appraisal techniques.
3. The Commission's Order to Show Cause and Notice of Hearing dated April 22, 2014, proposing an adjustment to the level of value of real property in Hall County was mailed to the County Clerk, County Assessor, and Chairperson of the County Board for Hall County on April 22, 2014.
4. A hearing on the Commission's order proposing an adjustment was held on May 1, 2014.

**RESIDENTIAL CLASS OF REAL PROPERTY  
AND ITS SUBCLASSES**

1. The level of value indicated by the median for the residential class of real property is 92% of actual or fair market value as shown by the Reports and Opinions of the Property Tax Administrator. (E40:6).
2. The statistical studies of the level of value are reliable and representative of the level of value for the residential class of real property.
3. The level of value for the residential class of real property as indicated by the median is within the applicable acceptable range set by state law as determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques.

### **Valuation Group 16 subclass of residential property**

1. The level of value indicated by the median for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property is 90.16% of actual or fair market value as shown by the Reports and Opinions of the Property Tax Administrator. (E40:25).
2. The statistical studies of the level of value and the quality of assessments are reliable and representative of the level of value and the quality of assessments for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property.
3. The level of value for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property is not within the applicable acceptable range set by state law as determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques.
4. The level of value of the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property in the County fails to satisfy the requirements of Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023(2) (Reissue 2009).
5. An increase in the amount of 6.47% must be made in order to bring the level of value indicated by the median for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property to the midpoint of the applicable acceptable range as determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5023 (Reissue 2009). (E109:2).
4. If an increase in the amount of 6.47% is ordered, the level of value indicated by the median for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of residential class of real property, determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques, will be 96% of actual or fair market value. (E109:2).



5. If an increase in the amount of 6.47% is ordered, the level of value indicated by the median for the residential class of real property, determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques, will be 92% of actual or fair market value. (E109:1).

### **COMMERCIAL CLASS OF REAL PROPERTY AND ITS SUBCLASSES**

1. The level of value indicated by the median for the commercial class of real property is 93% of actual or fair market value as shown by the Reports and Opinions of the Property Tax Administrator. (E40:6).
2. The statistical studies of the level of value are reliable and representative of the level of value for the commercial class of real property.
3. The level of value for the commercial class of real property as indicated by the median is within the applicable acceptable range set by state law as determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques.

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND AND HORTICULTURAL LAND CLASS OF REAL PROPERTY NOT RECEIVING SPECIAL VALUATION**

1. The level of value indicated by the median for the agricultural land and horticultural land class of real property not receiving special valuation is 72% of actual or fair market value as shown by the Reports and Opinions of the Property Tax Administrator. (E40:6).
2. The statistical studies of the level of value are reliable and representative of the level of value for the agricultural land and horticultural land class of real property not receiving special valuation.

3. The level of value for the agricultural land and horticultural land class of real property not receiving special valuation as indicated by the median is within the applicable acceptable range set by state law as determined to a reasonable degree of certainty relying upon generally accepted mass appraisal techniques.

#### **IV. VOTE**

The Findings and Order of the Commission were approved by a majority vote of the Commission after a motion and discussion at the hearing, with the following Commissioners voting to approve the order: Salmon and Hotz, and the following Commissioner voting not to approve the order: Freimuth

#### **VI. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over Hall County and the subject matter of this order.
2. An adjustment to the level of value of real property in Hall County is required by law.

#### **VII. ORDER**

##### **IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

1. No adjustment by a percentage by the Commission shall be made to level of value for the residential class of real property in the County, excepting an adjustment to a subclass, for tax year 2014.
2. The level of value for the Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property in the County shall be adjusted by an increase in the amount of 6.47% of the subclass so that the level of value indicated by the median of the subclass will be 96%.  
  
The ordered adjustment shall be made to all land and improvements, however classified

or coded within Valuation Group 16 subclass of the residential class of real property, as shown in the County's 2014 abstract of assessment.

3. No adjustment by a percentage by the Commission shall be made to level of value for the commercial class of real property in the County, or a subclass thereof, for tax year 2014.
4. No adjustment by a percentage by the Commission shall be made to the level of value for the agricultural land and horticultural land class of real property not receiving special valuation in the County, or a subclass thereof, for tax year 2014.
5. These Findings and Orders shall be served on the Property Tax Administrator of the State of Nebraska via personal delivery, the Hall County Assessor via Certified United States Mail, return receipt requested, the Hall County Clerk, the Chairperson of the Hall County Board and the Hall County Attorney via First Class United States Mail sufficient postage paid, on or before May 15, 2014, as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5028 (Reissue 2009).
6. On or before June 5, 2014, the Hall County Assessor shall recertify the County Abstract of Assessment to the Property Tax Administrator, which Abstract shall reflect that the ordered adjustments have been made as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5029 (Reissue 2009).
7. The Property Tax Administrator shall audit the records of the Hall County Assessor to determine whether this Order was implemented, as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5029 (Reissue 2009).
8. On or before August 1, 2014, the Property Tax Administrator shall certify to the Commission that this Order either was or was not implemented by Hall County, as required by Neb. Rev. Stat. §77-5029 (Reissue 2009).

9. This order is effective the date it is signed and sealed.

**SIGNED AND SEALED: May 6, 2014**

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*Robert W. Hotz, Commissioner*

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*Thomas D. Freimuth, Commissioner*

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*Nancy J. Salmon, Commissioner*