

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

CHERYL J. HALDA,  
APPELLANT,

CASE NO: 20R 0414

V.

DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD  
OF EQUALIZATION,  
APPELLEE.

DECISION AND ORDER  
AFFIRMING THE DECISION  
OF THE DOUGLAS COUNTY  
BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

**I. BACKGROUND**

1. The Subject Property is an improved residential parcel in Douglas County, parcel number 2537720628.
2. The Douglas County Assessor (the County Assessor) assessed the Subject Property at \$89,200 for tax year 2020.
3. Cheryl J. Halda (the Taxpayer) protested this value to the Douglas County Board of Equalization (the County Board).
4. The County Board determined that the taxable value of the Subject Property was \$89,200 for tax year 2020.
5. The Taxpayer appealed the determination of the County Board to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission (the Commission).
6. A Single Commissioner hearing was held on June 8, 2022, at Omaha State Office Building, 1313 Farnam Street, Room 227, Omaha, Nebraska, before Commissioner Steven Keetle.
7. Cheryl Halda was present at the hearing for the Taxpayer.
8. Scott Barnes and Kurt Skradis with the County Assessor's Office (the County Appraisers) were present for the County Board.

## II. APPLICABLE LAW

9. All real property in Nebraska subject to taxation shall be assessed as of the effective date of January 1.<sup>1</sup>
10. The Commission's review of a determination of the County Board of Equalization is de novo.<sup>2</sup>
11. When considering an appeal, a presumption exists that the "board of equalization has faithfully performed its official duties in making an assessment and has acted upon sufficient competent evidence to justify its action."<sup>3</sup> That presumption "remains until there is competent evidence to the contrary presented, and the presumption disappears when there is competent evidence adduced on appeal to the contrary. From that point forward, the reasonableness of the valuation fixed by the board of equalization becomes one of fact based upon all the evidence presented. The burden of showing such valuation to be unreasonable rests upon the taxpayer on appeal from the action of the board."<sup>4</sup>
12. The order, decision, determination, or action appealed from shall be affirmed unless evidence is adduced establishing that the order, decision, determination, or action was unreasonable or arbitrary.<sup>5</sup>
13. Proof that the order, decision, determination, or action was unreasonable or arbitrary must be made by clear and convincing evidence.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-1301(1) (Cum. Supp. 2020).

<sup>2</sup> See Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-5016(8) (Reissue 2018), *Brenner v. Banner Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 276 Neb. 275, 286, 753 N.W.2d 802, 813 (2008). "When an appeal is conducted as a 'trial de novo,' as opposed to a 'trial de novo on the record,' it means literally a new hearing and not merely new findings of fact based upon a previous record. A trial de novo is conducted as though the earlier trial had not been held in the first place, and evidence is taken anew as such evidence is available at the time of the trial on appeal." *Koch v. Cedar Cty. Freeholder Bd.*, 276 Neb. 1009, 1019, 759 N.W.2d 464, 473 (2009).

<sup>3</sup> *Brenner v. Banner Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 276 Neb. 275, 283, 753 N.W.2d 802, 811 (2008).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 283-84.

<sup>5</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-5016(9) (Reissue 2018).

<sup>6</sup> *Omaha Country Club v. Douglas Cty. Bd. of Equal.*, 11 Neb. App. 171, 174-75, 645 N.W.2d 821, 826 (2002).

14. A Taxpayer must introduce competent evidence of actual value of the Subject Property in order to successfully claim that the Subject Property is overvalued.<sup>7</sup>
15. The Commission's Decision and Order shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law.<sup>8</sup>

### III. FINDINGS OF FACT & CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

16. The Taxpayer alleged that the assessed value of the Subject Property should be lowered due to its condition.
17. The Taxpayer presented photographs of the windows, bathroom, kitchen cabinets, basement, furnace, fence, and garage trim, window, and ceiling.
18. The Taxpayer stated that as of the assessment date the Subject Property had an old roof but did not present any estimates or other information to show its age or condition or quantify the cost to replace the roof of the Subject Property.
19. The Taxpayer stated that the picture window on the Subject Property was new but that the others were original 1963 windows.
20. The Taxpayer acknowledged that the Subject Property has new siding.
21. The County Board presented the Property Record File (PRF) for the Subject Property. The PRF contains information about the characteristics of the Subject Property and information regarding the qualified sales that occurred in the economic area of the Subject Property. This information was used to determine the value attributed to each of the characteristics of residential properties in the area, including the Subject Property.

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<sup>7</sup> *Josten-Wilbert Vault Co. v. Bd. of Equal. for Buffalo Cty.*, 179 Neb. 415, 418, 138 N.W.2d 641, 643 (1965) (determination of actual value); *Lincoln Tel. and Tel. Co. v. Cty. Bd. of Equal. of York Cty.*, 209 Neb. 465, 468, 308 N.W.2d 515, 518 (1981) (determination of equalized taxable value).

<sup>8</sup> Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-5018(1) (Reissue 2018).

22. The PRF indicates that the Subject Property is a 910 square foot ranch style property constructed in 1963 with a condition rating of fair.
23. The County Appraisers stated that the photographs of the Subject Property were consistent with a fair condition rating.
24. The Taxpayer did not present information to show that the determination of condition made by the County Assessor's office were unreasonable or arbitrary.
25. The County Appraisers stated that any bathroom with a sink, toilet and shower or tub was considered a full bath with additional bathroom fixtures being added as a separate item if necessary.
26. The County Appraisers stated that the County Assessor's office did not add value for fences.
27. The County Appraisers presented information regarding valid sales of properties in the Subject Property's market area and stated that the assessed per square foot value of the Subject Property was below the per square foot sale amount for any property with a fair condition rating in the market area.
28. The Taxpayer has not produced competent evidence that the County Board failed to faithfully perform its duties and to act on sufficient competent evidence to justify its actions.
29. The Taxpayer has not adduced clear and convincing evidence that the determination of the County Board is arbitrary or unreasonable and the decision of the County Board should be affirmed.

#### **IV. ORDER**

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

1. The decision of the County Board of Equalization determining the taxable value of the Subject Property for tax year 2020 is affirmed.
2. The taxable value of the Subject Property for tax year 2020 is:

Land	\$10,000
<u>Improvements</u>	<u>\$79,200</u>
Total	\$89,200

3. This Decision and Order, if no further action is taken, shall be certified to the Douglas County Treasurer and the Douglas County Assessor, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 77-5018 (Reissue 2018).
4. Any request for relief, by any party, which is not specifically provided for by this Decision and Order is denied.
5. Each party is to bear its own costs in this proceeding.
6. This Decision and Order shall only be applicable to tax year 2020.
7. This Decision and Order is effective on July 14, 2023.

Signed and Sealed: July 14, 2023



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Steven A. Keetle, Commissioner