



# STATE TAX COMMISSION OF MISSOURI

LORETTA WILLIAMS,	)	
	)	
Complainant,	)	
	)	Appeal No. 23-10851
v.	)	Parcel No. 13H230887
	)	
JAKE ZIMMERMAN, ASSESSOR,	)	
ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI,	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	

## DECISION AND ORDER

Loretta Williams (Complainant) appeals the St. Louis County Board of Equalization's (Respondent) decision valuing the subject residential property at \$64,200 as of January 1, 2023. Complainant alleges overvaluation and asserts the true value in money (TVM) of the subject property was \$54,200 as of January 1, 2023. Complainant did not produce substantial and persuasive evidence establishing overvaluation. The BOE decision is affirmed. The TVM of the subject property as of January 1, 2023, is \$64,200.<sup>1</sup>

The evidentiary hearing was held June 9, 2025, via Webex. Complainant appeared *pro se* via phone. Respondent Jake Zimmerman, Assessor, St. Louis County, Missouri, was

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<sup>1</sup> Complainant timely filed a complaint for review of assessment. The State Tax Commission (STC) has authority to hear and decide Complainant's appeal. Mo. Const. art. X, sec. 14; Section 138.430.1, RSMo 2000. All statutory citations are to RSMo 2000, as amended.

represented by counsel, Kevin Wyatt. The case was heard and decided by Senior Hearing Officer Benjamin C. Slawson.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

**1. The Subject Property.** The subject residential property consists of a single-family one-story ranch home built in 1956 on a lot located at 5567 Winchelsea Dr., Saint Louis, MO. The Parcel ID number is 13H230887. The total living space in the home is 1,032 square feet and includes three bedrooms and one bathroom.

**2. Assessment and Valuation.** Respondent determined the subject property's appraised value was \$74,200 as of January 1, 2023. The BOE independently determined that the subject's appraised value as of January 1, 2023, was \$64,200.

**3. Complainant's Evidence.** Complainant introduced the following Exhibits which were all admitted without objection:

<b>Description</b>
Case Brief – Summary of Complainant’s Arguments
Bath Planet of St. Louis LLC Quote
2022, 2023, and 2024 Tax Bills and Assessment history

Complainant testified that she believes Respondent overvalued the subject and that Respondent and the BOE’s value is unreasonable. Respondent’s appraisal to be way to high given the age of the home and its interior problems Complainant stated that her opinion of value for the subject property is \$54,200.<sup>2</sup> Complainant testified as to the appraised values of Respondent in the last few assessment cycles. Complainant testified

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<sup>2</sup> Complainant in her Complaint for Review stated an opinion of value of \$47,800.

that she has lived in the home for 28 years and has never seen such a large increase in her assessment for 2023. Complainant testified she submitted photographs to the BOE showing that her home is in need of repairs, particularly the roof, ceiling, and flooring. Complainant submitted a March 18, 2025, roof estimate from Bath Planet of St. Louis, LLC for \$23,280.

**4. Respondent's Evidence.** Respondent introduced Exhibit 1, consisting of the October 17, 2023, BOE decision letter for the subject property. Exhibit 1 shows the BOE valued the subject property at \$64,200.

**5. Value.** The TVM of the subject property as of January 1, 2023, was \$64,200.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

**1. Assessment and Valuation.** Residential real property is assessed at 19% of its TVM as of January 1 of each odd-numbered year. Sections 137.115.1; 137.115.5(1)(a). The TVM is "the fair market value of the property on the valuation date[.]" *Snider v. Casino Aztar/Aztar Mo. Gaming Corp.*, 156 S.W.3d 341, 346 (Mo. banc 2005) (internal quotation omitted). The fair market value is "the price which the property would bring from a willing buyer when offered for sale by a willing seller." *Mo. Baptist Children's Home v. State Tax Comm'n*, 867 S.W.2d 510, 512 (Mo. banc 1993). "True value in money is defined in terms of value in exchange not value in use." *Tibbs v. Poplar Bluff Assocs. I, L.P.*, 599 S.W.3d 1, 7 (Mo. App. S.D. 2020) (internal quotation omitted). The TVM "is a function of [the property's] highest and best use[.]" *Snider*, 156 S.W.3d at 346. "Determining the true value in money is an issue of fact for the STC." *Cohen v. Bushmeyer*, 251 S.W.3d 345, 348 (Mo. App. E.D. 2008).

"For purposes of levying property taxes, the value of real property is typically determined using one or more of three generally accepted approaches." *Snider*, 156 S.W.3d at 346. The three generally accepted approaches are the cost approach, the income approach, and the comparable sales approach. *Id.* at 346-48. The STC has wide discretion in selecting the appropriate valuation method but "cannot base its decision on opinion evidence that fails to consider information that should have been considered under a particular valuation approach." *Id.*, at 348.

The comparable sales approach "is most appropriate when there is an active market for the type of property at issue such that sufficient data are available to make a comparative analysis." *Snider*, 156 S.W.3d at 348. For this reason, the comparable sales approach is typically used to value residential property. "The comparable sales approach uses prices paid for similar properties in arms-length transactions and adjusts those prices to account for differences between the properties." *Id.* at 347-48 (internal quotation omitted). "Comparable sales consist of evidence of sales reasonably related in time and distance and involve land comparable in character." *Id.* at 348.

**2. Evidence.** The hearing officer is the finder of fact and determines the credibility and weight of the evidence. *Kelly v. Mo. Dep't of Soc. Servs., Family Support Div.*, 456 S.W.3d 107, 111 (Mo. App. W.D. 2015). "Although technical rules of evidence are not controlling in administrative hearings, fundamental rules of evidence are applicable." *Mo. Church of Scientology v. State Tax Comm'n*, 560 S.W.2d 837, 839 (Mo. banc 1977).

**3. Complainant's Burden of Proof.** The taxpayer bears the burden of proof and must show by a preponderance of the evidence the property is overvalued. *Westwood*

*P'ship v. Gogarty*, 103 S.W.3d 152, 161 (Mo. App. E.D. 2003). The BOE's valuation is presumptively correct. *Tibbs*, 599 S.W.3d at 7. The "taxpayer may rebut this presumption by presenting substantial and persuasive evidence that the valuation is erroneous." *Id.* (internal quotation omitted). The taxpayer also must prove "the value that should have been placed on the property" on the assessment date. *Id.* See also *Hermel, Inc. v. State Tax Commission*, 564 S.W.2d 888, 897 (Mo. banc 1978). "Substantial evidence is that evidence which, if true, has probative force upon the issues, and from which the trier of fact can reasonably decide the case on the fact issues." *Savage v. State Tax Comm'n*, 722 S.W.2d 72, 77 (Mo. banc 1986) (internal quotation omitted). Evidence is persuasive when it has "sufficient weight and probative value to convince the trier of fact." *Daly v. P.D. George Co.*, 77 S.W.3d 645, 651 (Mo. App. E.D. 2002); see also *White v. Dir. of Revenue*, 321 S.W.3d 298, 305 (Mo. banc 2010) (noting the burden of persuasion is the "party's duty to convince the fact-finder to view the facts in a way that favors that party").

Property owners are competent to testify to the reasonable fair market value of their property. *Cohen*, 251 S.W.3d at 348. However, if owner's testimony is based on "improper elements or an improper foundation[.]" it is not substantial and persuasive evidence rebutting the presumptively correct BOE value. *Id.* at 349.

#### **4. Complainant Did Not Produce Substantial and Persuasive Evidence of Overvaluation.**

Complainant did not produce substantial and persuasive evidence to support her \$54,200 opinion of value. Complainant introduced no evidence pertaining to a recognized

valuation method. Complainant did not produce any evidence supporting a comparable sales approach, income approach, or cost approach.

The comparable sales approach is typically used to value residential properties improved with a single-family home. “The comparable sales approach uses prices paid for similar properties in arms-length transactions and adjusts those prices to account for differences between the properties.” *Snider*, 156 S.W.3d at 347-48 (internal quotation omitted). Complainant did not offer any comparable sale data for consideration. Complainant did not offer testimony of an appraiser, nor an appraisal of the property as evidence of the TVM of the property as of January 1, 2023. Therefore, Complainant did not produce substantial and persuasive evidence showing that the subject property was overvalued based on comparable sales data.

Complainant testified that she believes that Respondent overvalued her property due to the fact that her house is showing some wear and settling with age and the house is in need of repairs. However, Complainant neither demonstrated that the BOE’s valuation fails to take into account these issues when it valued the subject and examined the photographs she submitted to that forum. Additionally, while Complainant offered an estimate from a contractor to the roof, Complainant did not provide proof of the specific monetary impact that this condition issue had on the TVM of the subject property as of the valuation date, January 1, 2023. Complainant argues that the assessment increase was more substantial in 2023 than in prior years. However, this does not prove the TVM on the assessment date.

Complainant did not produce substantial and persuasive evidence showing that the BOE’s value was incorrect. Further, Complainant’s testimony does not provide the

necessary foundation and elements to support her overvaluation claim. Because the STC “cannot base its decision on opinion evidence that fails to consider information that should have been considered” under a recognized approach to value, *Snider*, 156 S.W.3d at 348, the BOE decision is affirmed.

### **CONCLUSION AND ORDER**

The BOE decision is affirmed. The TVM of the subject property as of January 1, 2023, is \$64,200.

### **Application for Review**

A party may file an application for review of this decision within 30 days of the mailing date set forth in the certificate of service for this decision. The application "shall contain specific detailed grounds upon which it is claimed the decision is erroneous." Section 138.432. The application must be in writing, and may be mailed to the State Tax Commission of Missouri, P.O. Box 146, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0146, or emailed to Legal@stc.mo.gov. A copy of the application must be sent to each person listed below in the certificate of service. ***Failure to state specific facts or law upon which the application for review is based will result in summary denial.*** Section 138.432.

### **Disputed Taxes**

The Collector of St. Louis County, and the collectors of all affected political subdivisions therein, shall continue to hold the disputed taxes pending the possible filing of an application for review, unless the disputed taxes have been disbursed pursuant to a court order under the provisions of section 139.031.

SO ORDERED August 21, 2025.

Benjamin C. Slawson  
Senior Hearing Officer  
State Tax Commission

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing has been electronically mailed and/or sent by U.S. Mail on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025, to:

Complainant(s) and/or Counsel for Complainant(s), the County Assessor and/or Counsel for Respondent and County Collector.

Stacy M. Ingle  
Legal Assistant