



STATE TAX COMMISSION OF MISSOURI

KEITH GAITHER,	)	Appeal No. 23-32971
Complainants,	)	
v.	)	
PHIL LEVOTA, COUNTY EXECUTIVE,	)	
JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI	)	
Respondent.	)	

DECISION AND ORDER UPON APPLICATION FOR REVIEW AFFIRMING DECISION AND ORDER OF HEARING OFFICER

On September 4, 2026, Complainant filed an Application for Review of a Decision and Order issued by a Hearing Officer for the Commission pertaining to property classified as residential. Complainant alleged overvaluation and further alleged that the true value in money of the subject property on January 1, 2023 was \$171,000. Following an evidentiary hearing on August 4, 2026, the Hearing Officer found that the Complainant did not produce substantial and persuasive evidence to support his claim, but the Hearing Officer did find that the county's assessment exceeded the 15% increase limitation imposed by state law and by the State Tax Commission's August 6, 2024 Order.

The Decision and Order issued by the Hearing Officer is attached hereto and incorporated by reference. The Commission adopts as its own the findings of fact and conclusions of law set forth in the Decision and Order issued by the Hearing Officer.

In his Application for Review submitted via email on September 4, 2026, Complainant alleged several grounds for review. Each ground for appeal, and the reason(s) why each

ground for appeal is denied, are as follows:

1. “The decision order letter states that I have not made any improvements since buying the home for \$171,000. This is absolutely untrue, and I said that and can prove that I have made improvements of which I told the BOE.”

The Commission denies this ground for appeal because, if true, any improvements to the home would only tend to increase, not decrease, the market value of the home.

2. “The letter also said my garbage disposal is not working: I have proof that I had it repaired in January, 2026.”

The Commission denies this ground for appeal because the relevant valuation date for purposes of this appeal is January 1, 2023, not some date in 2026.

3. “And the Decision Letter states that Mr. Gooden testified that there was no new construction or improvements? I have a police-report that states someone tore down the fence in my yard! Furthermore, he said he came by my home for inspection: he cannot prove such a drive by; he didn't leave a note, nor did he contact me by any means to let me know he would and or did!”

The Commission denies this ground for appeal because, during the evidentiary hearing, Complainant offered no evidence that directly supported his opinion that the property is worth \$171,000, nor any evidence to prove that the alleged loss of a fence resulted in a decrease in property market value.

4. “To raise the value of my home {\$31,000} to whatever price you set forth is to satisfy my neighbor. The BOE has identified how much I get paid via poking it's nose in my finances & deciding if I make certain cutbacks; that I can save here and there: I am

newly divorced, and the BOE cannot see around the corner, or know of any arrangements I made to pay of this debt, furthermore, my Ex has the right to make me pay a more substantial amount. I had to quit my job due to various reasons and one being due to pain! You force me to pay because I don't have a lawyer, but the BOE is too weak to raise taxes on the rich. This stolen land and slavery were once very legal; now taking my land {how can I own this property if you keep rising the value???} by increasing it to \$31,000 - that is great- greater. And America is still in debt. Now the BOE wants to act like a child and put me in the same boat when the USA was giving all this free land and labor, yet still failed.”

The Commission summarily denies these grounds for appeal.

5. “No one came to my home; anyone can say that they did anything – where is the proof.”

If Complainant is talking here about the Jackson County Assessment Department’s failure to perform a physical inspection as required by Section 137.115 RSMo, the result of such failure is to limit the assessment increase to 15%. In his Decision and Order, the Hearing Officer has already reduced the County’s assessment increase down to the 15% increase limit. No additional relief is available to Complainant based upon this claim.

CONCLUSION AND ORDER

The decision of the Hearing Officer determining the true value in money of the subject property on January 1, 2023 to be \$188,600 is affirmed.

Judicial review of this Order may be had in the manner provided in Sections 138.432 and 536.100 to 536.140 RSMo within 30 days of the mailing date set forth in the Certificate of Service for this Order.

If judicial review of this decision is made, any protested taxes presently in an escrow account in accordance with this appeal shall be held pending the final decision of the courts unless disbursed pursuant to Section 139.031.8 RSMo.

If no judicial review is made within thirty days, this decision and order is deemed final and the Collector, as well as the collectors of all affected political subdivisions therein, shall disburse the protested taxes presently in an escrow account in accord with the decision on the underlying assessment in this appeal.

SO ORDERED September 29th, 2026.

Gary Romine, Chairman

Debbi McGinnis, Commissioner

Greg Razer, Commissioner

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing has been sent electronically or mailed postage prepaid October 2nd, 2026, 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



STATE TAX COMMISSION OF MISSOURI

KEITH GAITHER,	)	
Complainant(s),	)	
	)	Appeal No. 23-32971
v.	)	Parcel No. 352300320000000000
	)	
PHIL LEVOTA, COUNTY EXECUTIVE	)	
JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI,	)	
	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	

DECISION AND ORDER

Complainant, Keith Gaither, appeals the Jackson County Board of Equalization's (BOE) decision finding the true value in money (TVM) and, therefore, the Assessed value of his property on January 1, 2023. Complainant alleges only overvaluation.¹ For the reasons explained herein, the decision of the BOE is set aside. The TVM is \$188,600 and the Assessed value of the subject property is \$35,834 as of January 1, 2023.

An Evidentiary Hearing was held on August 4, 2026, via WebEx. Complainant appeared pro se. Respondent is represented by counsel, Eric Honea. The evidentiary hearing was held before Todd D. Wilson, Senior Hearing Officer.

¹ 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.

Complainant posed several questions regarding the assessment process and how it affected his mortgage payment. Complainant stated that his home has not been improved since he bought it in 2016 for \$171,000. Complainant stated that he has had trouble getting contractors to come and give him bids for repairs on the property. Complainant stated that the foundation of the property needs to be repaired, the garbage disposal is not working and there is an issue with wildlife getting into the attic. Complainant stated that one contractor gave him a bid for around \$42,000 for repairs, but did not identify the contractor or what work was to be done. Complainant did not have any bids or other estimates of costs. Complainant did not provide any information regarding a comparative sales method, cost method or income method for valuing property. When asked what he believed the value of the property should be, Complainant stated, that his purchase price, \$171,000, is probably high but would be acceptable.

Respondent presented the following Exhibits, all of which were received without objection:

Exhibit #	Description
1	Reassessment Notice (Notice of Value)
2	Physical Inspection Photo dated 7-8-2021
3	Property Record Card
4	System Comparable Sales
5	BOE Decision letter for \$198,500

Respondent presented the testimony of Daniel Gooden, a certified appraiser in the State of Missouri who works in the Assessment office of Jackson County. The testimony of Mr. Gooden is credible. Mr. Gooden testified that the 2022 TVM of the property as shown by the Assessor's office records was \$164,000, with an assessed value of \$31,160. The Reassessment Notice (Exhibit 1, referred to by the witness as the Notice of Value), valued the property at a TVM of \$276,610 with an assessed value of \$52,556. The BOE changed the value set by the Assessment Office to \$198,500 as shown on Exhibit 5. Mr. Gooden stated that this amount is in excess of the

15% limit for increase, and that the Assessment office currently shows the TVM and assessed value of the property at \$188,600 and \$35,834, respectively, in accordance with the STC Order. Mr. Gooden had reviewed the value of the property, the comparable sales used by the CAMA system and had reviewed comparable sales for property in the area of the subject property from the MLS, all of which supported the current value of the property. Mr. Gooden also testified that there was no new construction or improvements to the property.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Subject Property's 2022 Assessment.

The property had an assessed value on January 1, 2022, of \$31,160, with a TVM of \$164,000 and was classified as residential property.

2. The State Tax Commission's Order of August 6, 2024.

The Commission takes official notice of the fact that on August 6, 2024, the Commission issued an Order pursuant to its general supervisory duties vested in it by the constitution and statutes of the State of Missouri (hereafter "2024 Order.") The 2024 Order was directed to the Jackson County Executive, the Jackson County Board of Equalization, and the Jackson County Director of Assessment.

In its 2024 Order, the Commission ordered the Jackson County assessing officials to correct the 2023 Assessment Roll to reflect assessed valuations of all parcels of subclass (1) real property, excluding increases due to new construction or improvements, that equal the valuations determined by Jackson County assessing officials, or valuations that do not exceed fifteen percent since the last assessment, whichever is less. The Commission further ordered that the assessed valuations for 2024 subclass (1) real property shall remain the same as the assessed valuations in

the 2023 assessment roll, as corrected by the Order, excluding increases due to new construction or improvements.

3. Jackson County Assessing Officials' Refusal to Comply With The 2024 Order.

The Commission takes official notice of the fact that Jackson County assessing officials refused to comply with the 2024 Order.² Jackson County Assessing officials have now complied with the 2024 Order for this property.

4. Jackson County Assessing Officials' Failure to Comply With The Notice and Physical Inspection Requirements of Section 137.115 RSMo.

The Commission takes official notice of the fact that Jackson County Assessing Officials failed to comply with the notice and physical inspection requirements of Section 137.115 RSMo. In its Judgment entered on March 31, 2025 in *Gail McCann Beatty et al. v. State Tax Commission of Missouri*, Case No. 2416-CV25478, the Jackson County Circuit Court, at p. 33, found as follows:

The Court finds from the evidence presented at trial that the Jackson County Petitioners improperly used some parcel by parcel reviews that were attenuated from the 2023 real property assessments; that Petitioners failed to comply with the requirements of physical inspection as set forth in section 137.115 as to certain Jackson County real property owners who were facing assessment increases of 15% or more ; that the Jackson County Petitioners failed to provide adequate notice to approximately 75% Jackson County real property owners who faced increases of 15% or more; that the Jackson County Petitioners sent notices to property owners about interior inspections which misstated the applicable law; that notices were sent out in a time frame in June, 2023, and that provided affected real property owners insufficient time to timely request an interior inspection or file appeals to the BOE. These errors compounded to create a 2023 Jackson County real property tax assessment which resulted in mistaken or erroneous assessments and taxes levied or paid in 2023. The Court further finds from the evidence presented at trial that the Commission acted upon substantial and competent evidence in determining that the errors had occurred

² “Jackson County Petitioners refused to comply with the Order and filed the present lawsuit.” March 31, 2025 Judgment, *Gail McCann Beatty et al. v. State Tax Commission of Missouri*, Case No. 2416-CV25478, Jackson County Circuit Court, at p. 17.

in the 2023 real property assessment and did not act arbitrarily, capriciously or unreasonably in entering its Order.

5. No New Construction Or Improvements.

The 2024 Order does not apply to other Jackson County appeals where such properties had new construction or improvements in 2022. The subject property did not have new construction or improvements in 2022.

6. Mathematical Computation.

The Commission takes official notice that the subject property's 2022 Assessed value \$31,160, increased by 15%, equals \$35,834 which is the amount currently reflected for the property in the Assessment Office of Jackson County's website.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Assessment and Valuation.

Pursuant to Article X, Sections 4(a) and 4(b), Mo. Const. of 1945, real property and tangible personal property is assessed at its value or such percentage of its value as may be fixed by law for each class and for each subclass. Residential real property is assessed at 19% of its TVM as of January 1 of each odd-numbered year. Section 137.115.5(1)(a) RSMo.

2. The 2024 Order is Valid and is Applicable to the Subject Property.

The 2024 Order is a valid order, issued pursuant to the Commission's constitutional and statutory authority, and within its powers which are commensurate with its responsibility and designed to enforce the law and assure uniformity. *Cassilly v. Riney*, 576 S.W.2d 325 (Mo. banc 1979); *Cuivre River Electric, Inc. v. State Tax Commission of Missouri*, 769 S.W.2d 432, 435 (Mo. banc 1989).

The 2024 Order applies to all parcels of subclass (1) real property located in Jackson County. Subclass (1) real property is defined as residential property.³

3. Complainant's Burden of Proof. The BOE's valuation is presumptively correct. *Rinehart v. Laclede Gas Co.*, 607 S.W.3d 220, 227 (Mo. App. W.D. 2020). Complainant as the moving party seeking affirmative relief must prove the vital elements of the case that the assessment was "unlawful, unfair, improper, arbitrary, or capricious." *Westwood P'ship v. Gogarty*, 103 S.W.3d 152 (Mo. Ct. App. 2003). The taxpayer's evidence must be both "substantial and persuasive." *Snider v. Casino Aztar/Aztar Mo Gaming Corp.* 156 S.W.3d 341, 346 (Mo. 2005). "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 Com'n of Missouri*, 722 S.W.2d 72, 77 (Mo. 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"). A taxpayer does not meet his burden if evidence on any essential element of his case leaves the STC "in the nebulous twilight of speculation, conjecture and surmise." See, *Rossman v. G.G.C. Corp. of Missouri*, 596 S.W.2d 469, 471 (Mo. App. 1980).

4. Analysis. The Complainant failed to show by substantial and persuasive evidence that the current value of the property for 2023 is incorrect or what the value should be. Complainant presented no evidence of value. Complainant provided no evidence to support one of the three

³ Mo. Const. Art. X Section 4(a) and 4(b)(1).

recognized methods of valuing property in Missouri, the comparative sales approach, the cost approach or the income approach.

CONCLUSION AND ORDER

The BOE decision is set aside. The assessed value of the subject property as of January 1, 2023, was \$35,834 with a TVM of \$188,600.

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 Jackson 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 20th, 2026.

STATE TAX COMMISSION OF MISSOURI

Todd D. Wilson
Senior Hearing Officer

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 21st, 2026, 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