

BEFORE THE IDAHO BOARD OF TAX APPEALS

VAWN SMITH,	)	
	)	
Appellant,	)	APPEAL NO. 25-A-1207
	)	
v.	)	FINAL DECISION AND ORDER
	)	
BANNOCK COUNTY,	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	
	)	
_____	)	

**RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY APPEAL**

This appeal is taken from a decision of the Bannock County Board of Equalization modifying an appeal of the valuation for taxing purposes on property described by Parcel No. RPR4013049517. The appeal concerns the 2025 tax year.

This matter came on for hearing November 12, 2025, in Pocatello, Idaho, before Board Member Doug Wallis. Appellant Vawn Smith was self-represented. Bannock County Assessor Anita Hymas represented Respondent.

Board Members Kenneth Nuhn and Doug Wallis join in issuing this decision.

**The issue on appeal concerns the market value of an improved residential property.**

**The decision of the Bannock County Board of Equalization is affirmed.**

FINDINGS OF FACT

The assessed land value is \$125,330, and the improvements' value is \$580,295, totaling \$705,625. Appellant agrees with the improvements' value but contends the correct land value is \$67,615, totaling \$647,910.

The subject property is a 2.57 acre parcel located in Pocatello, Idaho. The property is improved with a 3,634 square foot, two (2) story residence with an attached garage built in 1997.

Appellant did not disagree with the value of the improvements but contended the land value was incorrect. Subject's original assessment notice reflected 8.72 acres of land valued at \$229,326. During the hearing with the Bannock County Board of Equalization (BOE), Appellant advised the subject property is comprised of only 2.57 acres. With the acreage corrected, the BOE changed the land value to \$125,330 and did not change the value of the improvements. Appellant disagreed with the land value, stating that dividing the original assessment value of \$229,326 by the original acreage of 8.72 yielded a price per acre of roughly \$26,300. After applying the concluded price rate to the actual 2.57 acres, Appellant calculated a land value of \$67,615 and requested the Board set the value accordingly.

Respondent confirmed the original assessment notice listed 8.72 acres in error and the necessary correction was made during the BOE hearing. However, Respondent noted the first acre of land, or homesite, for subject's area carries a value of \$86,000, with additional acreage valued at \$19,000 per acre due to market studies demonstrating that buyers are willing to pay a premium for the first acre of land. Thus, subject's land value consisted of \$86,000 for the first acre, \$29,830 for the additional 1.57 acres, and \$9,500 attributable to the well and septic improvements to the land for a total of \$125,330.

In support of subject's assessed value, Respondent offered two (2) extraction analyses using the same three (3) sales. Two (2) sales occurred in May 2024 and the other in October 2024. Sale prices were between \$660,000 and \$767,000. The properties

ranged from 2.74 to 3.85 acres, and the residences ranged between 3,117 to 4,232 total finished square feet. To begin, the first analysis applied an unknown time adjustment factor to the sale prices. Next, Respondent removed assessed values for land, garage, and outbuildings. Then, Respondent compared the residual improvements values against subject's assessed improvements value. The second analysis extracted assessed improvement values from each of the sale properties' prices and compared the residual per-square-foot rates to subject's.

Appellant questioned the inclusion of the septic and well in the land value rather than in the improvements' value, as they are improvements. Respondent explained these are improvements to the land and are assessed with the land. After adding Respondent's first acre value, the value of the additional acreage, and the value for the septic and well, Appellant calculated just over \$122,700 for the land value. Respondent maintained the corrected value of \$125,330 was fair and requested the Board uphold the BOE's decision.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

This Board's goal in its hearings is the acquisition of sufficient, accurate evidence to support a determination of market value in fee simple interest or, as applicable, a property's exempt status. This Board, giving full opportunity for all arguments and having considered all the testimony and documentary evidence submitted by the parties, hereby enters the following.

Idaho Code § 63-205 requires taxable property be assessed at market value annually on January 1; January 1, 2025, in this case. Market value is always estimated as of a precise point in time. Idaho Code § 63-201 provides the following definition,

“Market value” means the amount of United States dollars or equivalent for which, in all probability, a property would exchange hands

between a willing seller, under no compulsion to sell, and an informed, capable buyer, with a reasonable time allowed to consummate the sale, substantiated by a reasonable down or full cash payment.

Market value is estimated according to recognized appraisal methods and techniques. There are three (3) approaches to value: the sales comparison approach, the cost approach, and the income approach. *Merris v. Ada Cnty.*, 100 Idaho 59, 63, 593 P.2d 394, 398 (1979). The sales comparison approach is commonly used in the valuation of a residential property. In general terms, the approach examines recent sales of similar property and considers the differences in property characteristics between subject and the sale properties. In this case, neither party developed a traditional sales analysis.

Appellant argued the BOE incorrectly calculated subject's land value after correction of the acreage. However, Appellant was unaware residential land, in general, is valued higher for the first acre and then at descending values for additional acreage. Additionally, site improvements such as septic and well are included in the land value because they are improvements to the land. In the Board's experience, though it might seem incongruent, this is the procedure used by every county in Idaho. The Board found no error with Respondent's inclusion of well and septic improvements in subject's land value.

Though the Board would have preferred a more traditional sales analysis where sales are compared on a whole property basis and adjusted for differences, Respondent's extraction analysis was the only evidence in the record against which to evaluate subject's market value. As the properties were generally similar to subject's acreage, residence size, as well as location, and subject's assessed value was found to be in the middle of

the range of the adjusted sale prices, the Board found sufficient support for the current assessed value.

In accordance with Idaho Code § 63-511, the burden is with Appellant to establish subject's valuation is erroneous by a preponderance of the evidence. The burden was not met in this instance. Appellant argued subject's land value was erroneous based on an incorrect calculation due to a misunderstanding of how Respondent values parcels greater than one (1) acre in size. With no evidence to support a further correction to the value the Board finds no good cause to disturb it.

The decision of the Bannock County Board of Equalization is affirmed.

#### FINAL ORDER

In accordance with the foregoing Final Decision, IT IS ORDERED that the decision of the Bannock County Board of Equalization concerning the subject parcel be, and the same hereby is, AFFIRMED.

DATED this 14<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026.