

Frederick P. and Greselda N. Pitts

v.

Department of Revenue Administration

Docket No.: 18073-99HR

FINAL ORDER

This order responds to the statement filed in accordance with the board's August 23, 2000 order. The board ordered the parties to file statements as to why this appeal should not be dismissed because the "Taxpayers" failed to meet the residency requirements pursuant to RSA 198:51, III (b). The Taxpayers did not file a statement. The department of revenue administration ("DRA") filed its statement on September 7, 2000. The DRA stated it was, "in agreement with the board that the case should be dismissed, without a hearing, due to the Taxpayers' failure to meet the primary residence requirements of RSA 198:51, III(b)." Based on the evidence contained in the file, the board dismisses the appeal because the Taxpayers did not meet the residency requirement of RSA 198:51, III (b).

AUTHORITY

When reviewing the DRA's determination, the board's RSA 198:54, II authority is limited to errors of law or when the board finds the commissioner's actions to be arbitrary or unreasonable. The board finds the DRA's denial of the Taxpayers' Education Property Tax Hardship Relief Application ("Application") was proper for the following reason.

Pursuant to RSA 198:51, III (b), claimants eligible for hardship relief must have resided in their homestead for a period of one year. RSA 198:50, II, defines homestead as “the dwelling owned by the claimant *** and used as the claimant’s **principal place of residence** and the claimant’s domicile for purposes of RSA 654:1 ***.” (Emphasis added.) RSA 654:1 defines domicile as, “the voter’s residence to which, upon temporary absence, he has the intention of returning. This domicile is that place in which he dwells on a continuing basis for a significant portion of each year.” The Taxpayers claim in this appeal was for a property at 17 Becker Lane, New Castle. The Taxpayers had already applied for and been granted education property tax hardship relief for their residential property at 62 Main Street, New Castle. Consequently, the board rules the 17 Becker Lane property does not qualify as the Taxpayers’ “principal place of residence.”

A motion for rehearing, reconsideration or clarification (collectively “rehearing motion”) of this decision must be filed within thirty (30) days of the clerk’s date below, not the date this decision is received. RSA 541:3; TAX 201.37(a). The rehearing motion must state with specificity all of the reasons supporting the request. RSA 541:4; TAX 201.37(b). A rehearing motion is granted only if the moving party establishes: 1) the decision needs clarification; or 2) based on the evidence and arguments submitted to the board, the board’s decision was erroneous in fact or in law. Thus, new evidence and new arguments are only allowed in very limited circumstances as stated in board rule TAX 201.37(f). Filing a rehearing motion is a prerequisite for appealing to the supreme court, and the grounds on appeal are limited to those stated in the rehearing motion. RSA 541:6. Generally, if the board denies the rehearing motion, an appeal to the supreme court must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date on the board’s denial.

SO ORDERED.

BOARD OF TAX AND LAND APPEALS

Paul B. Franklin, Chairman

Michele E. LeBrun, Member

Douglas S. Ricard, Member

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing order have this date been mailed, postage prepaid, to Frederick P. and Greselda N. Pitts, Taxpayers; and Ms. Jan M. Wickens, Hardship Relief Bureau Manager, Department of Revenue Administration.

Dated: September 22, 2000

Lynn M. Wheeler, Clerk

0007