

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DIVISION OF TAXATION

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING

FINAL DECISION AND ORDER

#2025-01

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
DIVISION OF TAXATION
ONE CAPITOL HILL
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908**

IN THE MATTER OF: :
: **Case No.: 22-T-102**
: **Personal Income Tax**
Taxpayer. :
_____ :

DECISION

I. INTRODUCTION

The above-entitled matter came before the undersigned as the result of a Notice of Pre-Hearing Conference and Appointment of Hearing Officer dated November 15, 2022 and issued to the above-captioned taxpayer (“Taxpayer”)¹ by the Division of Taxation (“Division”) in response to a request for hearing. The Taxpayer did not appear at the prehearing conference scheduled for December 12, 2022, but reached out to the Division in an effort to resolve this matter. As this matter could not be resolved, a hearing was scheduled. By letter dated November 12, 2024, the Taxpayer was notified that a full hearing would be held on December 13, 2024. A hearing was held on December 13, 2024 at which time the Taxpayer did not appear. Since the Taxpayer was adequately noticed of hearing,² a hearing was held before the undersigned on December 13, 2024. Pursuant to Section 2.7(G)(3) of the 280-RICR-20-00-2 *Administrative Hearing Procedures* (“Hearing

¹ The Taxpayer had a name change during the course of these proceedings. Division’s Exhibit Nine (9) (probate court record of name change).

² The notice for the December 13, 2024 hearing was sent by first class and certified mail and by email to the Taxpayer to the mailing address and email address on record with the Division. Division’s Exhibit 20 (said notice and print out of the United States Post Office certified mail tracking sheet showing delivery). The email address used was the address used by the Taxpayer when corresponding with the Division. Division’s Exhibit 18.

Regulation”), a default judgment may be entered against the party not appearing at hearing. The Division was represented by counsel and rested on the record.

II. JURISDICTION

The Division has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-1 *et seq.*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-1-1 *et seq.*, and the Hearing Regulation.

III. ISSUE

Whether the Taxpayer owes the Division’s assessment for tax year 2018.

IV. MATERIAL FACTS AND TESTIMONY

Principal Tax Auditor, testified on behalf of the Division. He testified the Taxpayer timely filed his 2018 Rhode Island income tax return using his federal adjusted gross income to calculate his Rhode Island income tax owed. He testified the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”) adjusted the Taxpayer’s 2018 federal adjusted gross income. He testified that by statute, the Taxpayer was required to file an amended return once his income was adjusted. He testified that since the Taxpayer did not file an amended 2018 return, the Division issued a notice of deficiency on the basis of the adjusted income, and said notice explained the federal government provided information about the adjusted gross income and detailed how that changed the Rhode Island tax owed. He testified that Division’s Exhibit 21 shows the amount of tax, penalty, and interest now owed by the Taxpayer as of the date of hearing. Division’s Exhibits One (1) (Taxpayer’s 2018 federal income tax return); Three (3) (notice of deficiency dated September 7, 2021); Four (4) (notice of assessment dated October 7, 2021); Five (5) (Taxpayer’s request for hearing); Six (6) to 13 (various attempts by Division to schedule preliminary conference); and 14 (August 31, 2022 letter to Taxpayer advising matter would be sent to administrative hearing since unable to hold preliminary review).

V. DISCUSSION

A. **Legislative Intent**

The Rhode Island Supreme Court has consistently held that it effectuates legislative intent by examining a statute in its entirety and giving words their plain and ordinary meaning. *In re Falstaff Brewing Corp.*, 637 A.2d 1047 (R.I. 1994). If a statute is clear and unambiguous, “the Court must interpret the statute literally and must give the words of the statute their plain and ordinary meanings.” *Oliveira v. Lombardi*, 794 A.2d 453 (R.I. 2002) (citation omitted). The Supreme Court has also established that it will not interpret legislative enactments in a manner that renders them nugatory or that would produce an unreasonable result. See *Defenders of Animals v. DEM*, 553 A.2d 541 (R.I. 1989) (citation omitted). In cases where a statute may contain ambiguous language, the Rhode Island Supreme Court has consistently held that the legislative intent must be considered. *Providence Journal Co. v. Rodgers*, 711 A.2d 1131 (R.I. 1998).

B. **Relevant Statutes**

R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-59 provides in part follows:

(a) Subject to regulations of the tax administrator, if the amount of a taxpayer's federal taxable income reported on his or her federal income tax return for any taxable year beginning on or after January 1, 1971, is changed or corrected by the United States Internal Revenue Service or other competent authority, or as the result of a renegotiation of a contract or subcontract with the United States, the taxpayer shall report the change or correction in federal taxable income within ninety (90) days after the final determination of the change, correction, or renegotiation, or as otherwise required by the tax administrator, and shall concede the accuracy of the determination or state wherein it is erroneous. Any taxpayer filing an amended federal income tax return shall also file within ninety (90) days thereafter an amended Rhode Island personal income tax return and shall give any information that the tax administrator may require.

R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-2.6(a) provides that Rhode Island taxable income means a taxpayer's federal taxable income. Thus, the State's income tax is based on a taxpayer's federal adjusted gross income.

C. Whether the Taxpayer Owes the Assessment for Tax Year 2019

It was undisputed the IRS adjusted the Taxpayer's 2018 federal gross income so that the Taxpayer earned more than he reported. The Taxpayer was required by R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-59 to amend his State 2018 return as his 2018 income had changed (increased adjustment). It was undisputed the Taxpayer did not file an amended return with the Division reflecting his change in federal income. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-83(a),³ the Division properly issued the Taxpayer a notice of assessment for the increase in taxes owed due to his 2018 federally adjusted income. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-81 and R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-84,⁴ the Division imposed interest for the late payment of the amount owed. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-85,⁵ the Division imposed a late payment penalty for the late payment of the amount owed.

³ R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-83 provides in part as follows:

(a) General. Except as otherwise provided in this section the amount of the Rhode Island personal income tax shall be assessed within three (3) years after the return was filed, whether or not the return was filed on or after the prescribed date. For this purpose a tax return filed before the due date shall be considered as filed on the due date; and a return of withholding tax for any period ending with or within a calendar year filed before April 15 of the succeeding calendar year shall be considered filed on April 15 of the succeeding calendar year.

⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-84 provides in part as follows:

Interest on underpayment. – (a) General.

(1) If any amount of Rhode Island personal income tax, including any amount of the tax withheld by an employer, is not paid on or before the due date, interest on the amount at the annual rate provided by § 44-1-7 shall be paid for the period from the due date to the date paid, whether or not any extension of time for payment was granted. The interest shall not be paid if its amount is less than two dollars (\$2.00).

R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-81 provides in part as follows:

Notice of deficiency.

(a) General. If upon examination of a taxpayer's return the tax administrator determines that there is a deficiency, the administrator may mail a notice of deficiency to the taxpayer at his or her last known address in or out of this state. ***

(b) Notice of deficiency as assessment and demand for tax. After thirty (30) days from the mailing of a notice of deficiency, the notice shall be an assessment and a notice and demand for tax to be paid at the place and time specified in the notice, together with interest, additions to tax, and civil penalties stated in the notice. ***

⁵ R.I. Gen. Law § 44-30-85 provides in part as follows:

Additions to tax and civil penalties. – (a) Failure to file tax returns or to pay tax. In the case of failure:

VI. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On or about November 15, 2022, the Division issued a Notice of Pre-Hearing Conference and Appointment of Hearing Officer to the Taxpayer.
2. By letter dated November 12, 2024, the Taxpayer was notified that a full hearing would be held on December 13, 2024.
3. A hearing in this matter was held on December 13, 2024. The Taxpayer did not appear. As the Taxpayer was adequately notified of the hearing, a hearing was held with the Division resting on the record. The Taxpayer is in default for failing to appear at the hearing.
4. The Taxpayer did not file an amended Rhode Island personal income tax return for tax year 2018 after the IRS adjusted his federal gross income tax credit.
5. The facts contained in Section IV and V are incorporated by reference herein.

VII. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the testimony and facts presented:

1. The Division has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-1 *et seq.* and R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-1-1 *et seq.*
2. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-59, the Taxpayer was required to file an amended return after the IRS adjusted his 2018 gross income.

(2) To pay the amount shown as tax on the personal income tax return or the employer's withheld tax return on or before the prescribed date for payment of the tax (determined with regard to any extension of time for payment) unless it is shown that the failure is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, there shall be added to the amount shown as tax on the return five-tenths percent (0.5%) of the amount of the tax if the failure is for not more than one month, with an additional five-tenths percent (0.5%) for each additional month or fraction thereof during which the failure continues, not exceeding twenty-five percent (25%) in the aggregate; or

(3) To pay any amount in respect of any tax required to be shown on a return which is not so shown, including an assessment made as a result of mathematical error, within ten (10) days of the date of the notice and demand therefor, unless it is shown that the failure is due to reasonable cause and not due to willful neglect, there shall be added to the amount of tax stated in the notice and demand five-tenths percent (0.5%) of the amount of the tax if the failure is for not more than one month, with an additional five-tenths percent (0.5%) for each additional month or fraction thereof during which the failure continues, not exceeding twenty-five percent (25%) in the aggregate.


3. The Taxpayer owes the tax, penalty, and interest assessed for 2018.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above analysis, the Hearing Officer recommends as follows:

Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-59, the Taxpayer failed to file an amended Rhode Island personal income tax return for tax year 2018 accounting for the adjusting of his 2018 federal income. Therefore, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-1 *et seq.*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-59, R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-81, R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-83, R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-84, and R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-85, the Division properly assessed the Taxpayer for amount of the tax owed on the adjusted income as well as penalty and interest owed as reflected in Division's Exhibit 21.

Date: January 2, 2025

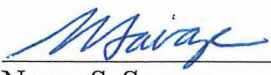

Catherine R. Warren
Hearing Officer

ORDER

I have read the Hearing Officer's Decision and Recommendation in this matter, and I hereby take the following action with regard to the Decision and Recommendation:

ADOPT
 REJECT
 MODIFY

Dated: January 2, 2025


Neena S. Savage
Tax Administrator

NOTICE OF APPELLATE RIGHTS

THIS DECISION CONSTITUTES A FINAL ORDER OF THE DIVISION. THIS ORDER MAY BE APPEALED TO THE SIXTH DIVISION DISTRICT COURT PURSUANT TO R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-30-90 WHICH STATES AS FOLLOWS:

§ 44-30-90 Review of tax administrator's decision.

(a) General. Any taxpayer aggrieved by the decision of the tax administrator or his or her designated hearing officer as to his or her Rhode Island personal income tax may within thirty (30) days after notice of the decision is sent to the taxpayer by certified or registered mail, directed to his or her last known address, petition the sixth division of the district court pursuant to chapter 8 of title 8 setting forth the reasons why the decision is alleged to be erroneous and praying relief therefrom. Upon the filing of any complaint, the clerk of the court shall issue a citation, substantially in the form provided in § 44-5-26 to summon the tax administrator to answer the complaint, and the court shall proceed to hear the complaint and to determine the correct amount of the liability as in any other action for money, but the burden of proof shall be as specified in § 8-8-28.

(b) Judicial review sole remedy of taxpayer. The review of a decision of the tax administrator provided by this section shall be the exclusive remedy available to any taxpayer for the judicial determination of the liability of the taxpayer for Rhode Island personal income tax.

(c) Date of finality of tax administrator's decision. A decision of the tax administrator shall become final upon the expiration of the time allowed for petitioning the district court if no timely petition is filed, or upon the final expiration of the time for further judicial review of the case.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on the 3rd day of January, 2025 a copy of the above Decision and Notice of Appellate Rights were sent by first class mail, postage prepaid and certified mail, return receipt requested to the Taxpayer's representative's address on file with the Division and by electronic delivery to Matthew Williamson, Esquire, Department of Revenue, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02903.

