

Senior Tax Relief Minutes/ Town Hall Conference Room

January 31, 2019

Chair, Jill Vergara, called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm

Roll was taken by J. Vergara;

M. McDermott, C. Perham, and J. Vergara were all in attendance.

M. Herley, and P. Tallman were absent.

J. Vergara reviewed the proposed changes with the hope that on February 25, the RTM would vote on our changes to the Senior Tax Relief ordinance, but since the BOF has not approved these changes our committee has proposed, we have to wait until application period February 2020 with tax changes taking place July 2021.

This meeting was set to review the ordinance and discuss next steps. We proposed that those within the income limits and the 2x the mid assessment value of \$750,000 could apply for STR. It was also discussed that the lost revenue due to Senior Tax Relief would have a cap of a \$4.1 million cap.

Discussion of the average benefit going down year over year, and taxes going up with the benefit paid out going down. These are significant changes.

Public Comment; Urb Liemkuhler, 83 Spruce Street, asked what are the BOF expectations. He also feels that we need to collect more data from those who apply this year. J. Vergara added that we have much data from years past as well.

J. Vergara added that it is important that we help Seniors now. These \$200, \$300 or \$400 increases to the benefits would help, even a bit, and would help now.

Urb finished his comments with the wondering if the BOF will indicate how the proposed ordinance would drive Senior's actions. Urb also spoke about the time constraints and the need for BOF to review this soon, or else no change will be made until FY22.

Gerry Stuhlman, 64 Somerset Avenue, said that the Seniors have a legitimate concern. He added that it seems that we don't know why Seniors have fallen off the list of those who benefit from the relief. He added that 33 fell off the list in 2016 and then 54 more fell over in 2017.

J. Vergara reiterated that in 2017, Senior Tax relief cost 3.8Million to the town and that 4.1Million potential lost revenue to the town is the maximum that would be spent on our Seniors. This is a budget cap of 1.6%

C. Perham added that we need to ask the BOF, What are you looking for and what can we expect from them? M. McDermott concurred.

Julie DeMarco from the Fairfield Senior Center, Director of Human Services, asked what would happen if the BOF does reject the ordinance, as proposed, and what our committee's next step will be.

J. Vergara answered that she has been discussing this issue with the Moderator.

Bill Lenahan, 72 Alma Drive, added that he felt this was being looked at too much like an expenditure, not as the Investment it is.

C. Perham made a motion to adjourn. M. McDermott seconded. Unanimously passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Perham, Secretary