

Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2018
Location: 2nd floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall
5:30 pm

Present: Mark McDermott, Cindy Perham, Peter Tallman, and Jill Vergara.
Absent: Michael Herley

I. Call to Order:

J. Vergara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and took roll call.

II. Introduction of town's Tax Assessor, Ross Murray

R. Murray gave us a short report about where he and his department are in the current filing season of Senior and disabled tax relief. J. Vergara asked Ross for a breakdown of disabled and senior residents who are currently receiving a benefit R Murray would like to keep the program simple. He confirmed that there were 7 income brackets and told us that the computer has the capability to add up to 10 more.

III. Review of Current Ordinance

1. J. Vergara started the discussion with the 265-day residency requirement. M. McDermott talked about how the state tax code is 6 months and a day. (183 days) Assessor Murray also would like to use October 1st as the first anniversary to apply for the benefit for the following year. Example, those who have owned a home in town for 1 year as of October 1, 2018, can apply for benefits in 2019.
2. Tax Delinquency was such a small amount of those who have applied for benefits so far this year. Five applicants were turned away since the February 1st 2018 application process. The committee discussed removing this criterion.
3. QTAV as it currently stands has seen 4 applicants turned away thus far in 2018. J. Vergara and M. McDermott shared with the committee the Newtown form as a possible guide for next year's application season.
4. Per Assessor Murray, The Circuit Breaker program, is not being funded by the State. Also, Assessor Murray noted that no one is currently on the Freeze Program with the town of Fairfield. J. Vergara added that Redding and Ridgefield have Homestead Credits, and we need to understand if these towns are retaining seniors in a meaningful way.

IV. Discussion of Income Levels for the Tax Credit Program

Another item that was brought up was that the Senior Center and the Assessor's websites need to have a link to the income brackets included in the town program.\

V. Administration of the program

J. Vergara asked Assessor Murray to get to us the number of applications received thus far this year. And what information is available online. Are the applications available at the Senior Center? How else can we reach those Senior and Disabled residents? What type of excel spreadsheets are available to make sure all those who can benefit are reached. Assessor Murray also added that there is a renter's program available.

VI. Public Comment

John Wynne of 144 Harbor Road and Urb Leimkuhler of 83 Spruce Street, Southport and Carol Way of 324 Villa Avenue had comments

J. Wynne agreed that we need to reach all seniors by having the most up to date and accurate data base available to mail to. C.Way said that her understanding was that 25% of all town residents were 65 or older. U. Leimkuhler understood it to be closer to 18%.

VI. Adjournment

Motion made by J. Vergara to adjourn meeting. C. Perham seconded. Unanimously passed.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Perham, Secretary