

Meeting Notes
RTM SENIOR & DISABLED TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE
Old Town Hall 2st Floor Conference Room
Monday, April 24th, 2017, 7:00 PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm.

Committee Members in attendance: Tom McCarthy, Hank Ference, Mark McDermott, Cindy Perham and Alex Durrell (arrived at 7:35pm)

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of minutes from March 30th.
 - Moved by Cindy Perham, seconded by Hank Ference, unanimously approved.
2. New Business:
 - Review available data on tax relief applications disqualified on the basis of income.
 - Tom McCarthy to email a copy of the approximately 15 examples of those disqualified as provided by Ken Carvell. Application process is stopped once income level is determined to be higher than the programs top level of \$73,500 for the Credit Program.
 - Comments concerning abuse of the system made in meeting held March 30, 2017, Stanton Lesser – Fairfield Town Attorney advised that “Under penalty of false statement”, could be incorporated into the process and procedures manual.
 - Reviewed and discussed US Census Bureau data for Fairfield, CT demographic 65 years and over.
 - Lengthy discussion concerning increasing top rate income level, \$73,500.
 - Tom McCarthy proposed \$78,000
 - Mark McDermott proposed \$82,000 - \$85,000
 - Committee agreed on \$80,000
 - Goal to level and/or increase participation in the program for those that are just over the current top level \$73,500, without going over what is budgeted for the program, \$3,713k.
 - Discussion on asset level change – Mark McDermott proposed \$50,000 - \$100,000 increase. No conclusion
 - Cindy Perham & Mark McDermott to make proposed modifications to the current town ordinance.
 - Committee to refine presentation to RTM which will include an update to the code.
 - New RTM Senior & Disabled Tax Relief Committee to be formed at the first RTM meeting in January 2018. Focus on what they will need.

4. Public Comment

1. John Wynne, Harbor Road
 - Residency requirements should mirror the state of CT.
 - Audit & validate. Residents knocked out of program for spending 3 months out of town.
 - Consider locally administered STAR Program like New York, school tax reduction program.
 - Freezes amount seniors pay for BOE and/or Town Budget.
 - No limit on income in some municipalities.
2. Urban Leimkuhler, Spruce Street
 - Make recommendations to improve the process at the tax assessor's office. Empower them to make decisions.
 - We need to keep our seniors.

- Provide retention incentives for those that do not qualify for the tax relief program – Redding does this.
- Reach out to them as part of the long term town strategic process.
- Typical household is losing income.

3. Palma Senator, Pilgrim Lane

- Seniors are frustrated and resentful that money is not going to more senior services, but instead going to others in the town. Town gives little to us, needs to contribute more
- Seniors are vibrant voting members of the community and bring value.
- Families with two incomes benefitting 60%, demanding more from the town and getting more and more every year. Town gives little to seniors.
- No one is asking the others to give more, so the seniors are subsidizing everybody else. We are not the welfare department for the budget.
- No money for the Sr. Center. Kicking the can down the road.
- My taxes were \$5,000 in 1999 and are now at \$16,500 and climbing.
- Town needs some out of the box thinking and look at it from a different perspective.

4. Consider any other new business presented

- Next meeting date May 10, 2017

5. Adjournment

- 8:34pm motion to adjourn moved by Cindy Perham, seconded by Alex Durrel, unanimous.