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Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee Meeting Minutes
Location: Basement Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall
June 13, 2018 7:30 pm

I. Call to Order

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

Absent: Mark McDermott

J. Vergara called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and took roll call.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of the Minutes, May 1, 2018

1. J. Vergara moved to accept the Minutes from the 5/1/2018 meeting. P. Tallman seconded.
Passed unanimously

IV. Reports on Progress with Research

At the beginning of the meeting, J. Vergara asked the Assessor, Ross Murray, if there is a Forum with Assessors from other CT towns. He said, they did, however, the ordinance isn't typically discussed. The committee decided that all of the Research our committee is doing, should be within the following 14 towns;

Trumbull

Darien

Easton

Greenwich

Newtown

Redding

Ridgefield

Westport

Wilton

New Canaan

Weston

Farmington

Glastonbury

West Hartford

All were in agreement on these towns being included in our studies throughout our time on the committee. Many of these towns recently "revised" their ordinance, and we plan to get up dated information form databases that are available online.

V. Discussion of Tax Assessor's Report to the RTM (June 18, 2018)

- a) **Compare numbers to last year**

Assessor, R. Murray, discussed the applicants for Senior Tax Relief that were not eligible. 53 who applied were disqualified because they were over the income limits set.

He also added that the average relief for 2018 was \$2,529.90, compared to \$2,540.36 in 2016,

- b) **Determine questions to be asked in committee**

By researching the 14 towns listed in Section IV, we will get a better idea of how we can disburse funds to Seniors in town.

c) **Determine whether changes in participation reflected in report impact this committee's approach to reforming the relief programs**

Some of R. Murray's suggestions were to increase income levels and raise the caps on those in the following income brackets;

\$0 – 17,600 (less than 20 households this year were in this tier)

\$17,601 - \$25,100 (again, less than 20 households this year were in this tier)

On the higher end of the brackets;

\$53,201 - \$84,000 (less than 32 households this year were in this tier)

He also said that he would like to see the Medical exception (that may cause a withdrawal from investments or savings creating an increase in income) to be allowed for not just one year, but two.

He would also like to see the QTAV eliminated, replaced with an assessment limit. This would also be easier to administer. J. Vergara echoed this last statement, would like to see the income brackets to 100K, and increase the caps, especially for those whose income is under 45K. She added that per capita, our tax relief program is not as generous as many surrounding towns.

VI. New Business

J. Vergara touched base again on the number of filers going down year over year. She also led the discussion regarding possibly surveying those who didn't refile for tax relief, surveying those who have sold their home, or just didn't refile for some other reason. Per R. Murray, this year there were 10 households who didn't refile this year. The committee agreed that reminders need to go out to those turning 62 -64, to get them prepared for when they are eligible to file for relief.

VII. Public Comment

John Wynne of 144 Harbor Road was present and discussed that he will always be a resource to our committee.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by C. Perham to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by J. Vergara. Unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Perham, Secretary