

Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2016

Location: 1st Floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall

Present: Alex Durrell, Hank Ference, Dru Georgiadis, Mark McDermott, Cindy Perham, Jill Vergara and Carol Way

Guest: Donald Ross, Assessor for Town of Fairfield

I. Call to Order:

Hank Ference called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Don Ross was introduced to the Committee members and to the public.

II. Approval of Minutes:

A date and spelling edit were made. The Committee approved the minutes with that edit and correction

III. New Business

Don Ross gave copies of his end of the fiscal year report which had been presented to the RTM earlier this year. The Committee and the Assessor reviewed certain aspects in a summary of key points in the report. The Committee discussed the amount made available in most recent years and the fact that any unused portion reverts to the general or contingency area of the Town budget with no requirement that it be used specifically for seniors. In addition, concerns were raised about numbers of participants going down, and the need to know how many have left Fairfield to move to another state, how many have died, and how many were displaced and may have moved to another CT town because of Storm Sandy. Questions were raised about additional ways of getting information to seniors about this program. Don Ross suggested piggybacking with a mass mailing by the Registrars of Voters, in addition to the variety of past methods that have been used.

There was a discussion of some statistics, such as: 19,500 residences & 31, 600 commercial properties', the reasons for country clubs and the beach club paying so little in taxes (their property falls under the Farm Guide and Public Access Act No. 490, number of seniors who sold property, became deceased, between February 1 through May 15th.

Once again the "Homestead Credit" concept used in many other states was mentioned. There was a mention of the Town of Redding CT having something that works like a Homestead credit. The Committee was interested in following up on this.

The Tax Assessor, Don Ross, suggested that there is a need for an Fairfield Administrative Guide and Policy Manual for Fairfield Ct in the area of Senior & Disabled Tax Relief. Currently he works with the State of CT policy manual to produce answers to questions..

IV. Public Comment

The following individuals spoke about difficulties and the need for additional reforms:

Gordon McKenzie, 11 Palmer Bridge representing Fairfield Senior Advocates.com; **Joan Fortuna, 38 Pine Creek Avenue, Palma Senatore, 19 Pilgrim Lane, Nancy Legare 245 Unquowa Road,, Bob Frigo 39 Campbell Road, Barbara Thumm 45 Sturges Road, and Laura Incerto 89 Pine Creek Avenue** all spoke to the value of taxpaying seniors and the small payout that the Town of Fairfield has to make in contrast to the amount that seniors contribute. In addition, they spoke to the need of calling our "Tax Relief program" an incentive program to encourage seniors to stay in Fairfield. In addition, they spoke to programs that are available in other states and some other CT communities.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Way, Secretary