

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

Location: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room, Sullivan Independence Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Alex Durrell, Hank Ference, Mark McDermott, Jill Vergara and Carol Way

Absent: Dru Georgiadis, Cindy Perham

Guest: Donald Ross, Assessor for Town of Fairfield

## I. Call to Order:

Chairman Hank Ference called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## II. Approval of Minutes:

The Committee approved the minutes as corrected.

## III. Old Business

- A. Review of some subjects discussed during the previous 2016 meetings.
  1. Homestead-style credit
  2. need for a policy manual for Tax Assessor
  3. Name-change consideration,
  4. Reasons for tax-relief participants not renewing.
- B. Carol Way suggested some sub-committee work on these topics
  1. Jill Vergara will research suggestions that this committee might support and suggest implementing.
  2. Alex Durrell and Carol Way will research why the numbers in the program have dropped and why people did not renew.
  3. Mark McDermott and Jill Vergara will begin work on a possible policy manual and how a name change for this statute/committee might be instituted.
- C. The net value of the Grand List was given as \$10.7 billion, with \$9.9 billion just from real estate, which is primarily residential real estate and a small commercial real estate base (proportionately-speaking). This puts a great burden on the individual homeowner since they are paying the bulk of the funding of Town and Board of Education budgets, which continue to grow each year.

## IV. Public Comment

The following individuals spoke about their concerns and questions: **Gerald Stuhlman of 71 Somerset Avenue** gave some statistical information (claiming that we currently use too few income ranges and that we need to install a cap and percentage benefits, and we need to show loss of revenue to town bodies). He also suggested that other statistics be pursued e.g. number of residents at 65 and above, etc. **John Wynne of 144 Harbor Road** suggested reviewing Fairfield Senior Advocates.com; and **Laura Incerto 89 Pine Creek Avenue** and **Jo Ann Carlson of 294 Eastlawn St.** spoke of needing to know why people dropped out of the program and also how many current senior real estate taxpayers we have and how many are coming on board as seniors in the next five years. **Carol Waxman of 1255 Fairfield Beach Road** suggested contacting the Human Services Department of Fairfield because they have about 50 years of statistics dealing with senior in the community. **Bonita Svrcek of 307 Eastlawn Street** talked of living in Fairfield for 38 years and has never had any children, but she does not begrudge her neighbors and their children's education being supported by our taxes. She does, however, question how little support the Town gives to benefit seniors nor do they seem to appreciate how much of a revenue stream we are for the Town. Others concurred that the Town has never monetized the loss to the Town when seniors sell and leave.

## V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol J. Way, Secretary