

RTM Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee

Thursday, October 6, 2022

**2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, OLD TOWN HALL
611 OLD POST ROAD, FAIRFIELD, CT
AND
VIA WEBEX**

Special Meeting of the Town of Fairfield Representative Town Meeting Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee was held on 10/06/2022 in the 1st floor Conference Rm of Sullivan Independence Hall, Town of Fairfield, CT.

In attendance: Chair of Committee: Representative Jill Vergara (District 7); Vice-Chair of Committee: Representative Cindy Perham (District 2); Secretary of Committee: Representative Hannah Gale (District 6) via WebEx: Committee member: Representative Mark McDermott (District7).

Orders of Business

- 1) **Call to Order: 7:10 PM**
- 2) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3) **Discussion on need for Hardship Exception and/or Appeal Process for Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Application**

-Need clear guidelines for public as to whom to address their appeal.

-Other programs have listed that applicants can appeal to Board of Selectman or Board of Assessment Appeals.

-Rep. Vergara believes that there is, according to state statute, supposed to be an appeals process and she believe that it is supposed to be to the Board of Assessment Appeals

-Applicant that was denied opportunity to resubmit application after asset depreciation did not contact office in time to resubmit before May 13, 2022 deadline, according to Ross Murray, Town of Fairfield Tax Assessor, who places speaking to the applicant about this matter in June 2022.

-Need ordinance to have a specific date by which to finalize assessment of assets.

-Rep. McDermott suggested looking into AARPA Covid Recovery Assistance per household, as there were only 17 applications and \$180,000 remain undisbursed. Rep. Perham pointed out that other organizations also contributed to this fund and there may be even more funds available. Deadline is either 2024 or 2025.

-Rep. McDermott suggests that an appeal should rightly be made to the Board of Assessment Appeals. Discussion ensued regarding adding this to their duties.

-Rep. Gale suggested that this might fall more properly in the duties of the Board of Finance, and Rep. McDermott suggested that it should be a combined committee of Board of Finance and RTM, as is being proposed in general, to address Senior and Disabled Tax Relief for the Town of Fairfield

-Rep. Vergara expressed wish that some leniency could be applied for the applicant being discussed, given that there was so much attrition in the program.

-Rep. Vergara agreed to contact the applicant and advise her to speak to Julie DeMarco regarding the AARPA funds.

-General agreement that there needs to be an appeal process.

-Rep. Vergara said that she would look into the state statute.

.

4) Discussion on potential formation of Joint Board of Finance/RTM Committee

-Rep. Vergara reported she has spoken to the Chair of the Board of Finance, Lori Charlton, and she will place question of joint committee on BOF agenda when Ross Murray, Tax Assessor, can be present. Data with attrition was addressed and it was agreed that this would be well addressed by a joint committee.

5) Discussion of new research findings regarding Deferral programs

-Rep. Perham reminded that the question that needs looking into is why Deferrals are an underutilized resource in many towns.

-Rep. McDermott brought up the issue of the higher age requirement as a significant obstacle that should be addressed.

-The issue of liens on the property was also mentioned.

6) Adjourned: 7:37 PM

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-O8m9JundI>