

**Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee Meeting
Minutes for January 7, 2013**

Present: Bill Domeika, Sheila Marmion, Tom McCarthy, Eric Newman, Marc Patten, and Carol Way
Guests: Donald Ross, Tax Assessor, and Cinda Buchter, Tax Collector

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom McCarthy at 7:06 p.m. and began with the pledge of allegiance.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 18, 2012 meeting were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

III. Evening's Business

The committee began discussion in connection with Town's deferral program. Since the last RTM meeting on December 17, 2012, new information had been gathered about the 15 year time limit on the collection of taxes on senior deferrals. While Eric Newman had originally brought this time limit to our attention, it had since been learned that the 15 year limit referred to a standard deferral of taxes as listed in 12.1.74 of the tax code. There is, however, a special deferral and lien for seniors which is stated in 12.1.29 of the tax code. This does not have a time limit for collection. This revelation brought about extensive discussion as to whether there would be a way of adding the original suggested deferral back into the Senior and Disabled Tax Relief changes that had been presented at the last RTM meeting and that would be voted on at the January 29, 2013 RTM meeting. There was agreement that it could not be included for a vote at the January 28th meeting because it would not meet with the requirements for informational background. Discussion then moved to the idea of presenting this new information with the prospect of the revised deferral program being voted on at the February RTM meeting.

Don Ross and Cinda Buchter commented that such action would create an impossible situation for them to be able to have everything ready for the February 15th date that would begin the application process for Senior and Disabled Tax Relief. Just the proposed changes (especially the new variable credits) are certain to be a very difficult challenge for the Assessor's Office. New custom software will have to be developed by a company that serves more than 100 of Connecticut's municipalities. The last time this software company had to customize things for Fairfield it took them over six months. Several members of the committee asked why it takes so long. The answer was that this is the only company that is doing this kind of thing for the 169 municipalities in the State. In addition the Assessor's Office only has three full-time clerical staff and one part-time clerical person who is shared with the Tax Collector's office. Cinda Buchter stated that there are currently 10 people on the old deferral program and they were signed up on the regular deferral program under 12.1.74. Don Ross mentioned that the Operational Audit of 2009 suggested the restoration of clerical staff. The cost would be \$25,000.

III. Public Comment

Palma Senatore of 42 Pilgrim Lane asked us to really try to institute the proposed new deferral program in February.

Nancy Legore of 245 Unquowa Road asked if this Senior and Disabled Tax Relief Committee couldn't be instituted as a standing committee of the RTM.

Helen D'Avanzo of 1446 Jennings Road shared documents dealing with the tax relief programs of Durham & Guilford.

Joan Fortuna of 31 Pine Creek Avenue made a plea for all the items, including the proposed deferral, to be included in this year's vote.

Debra Coleman of 26 Cranston Street added that she had located the 12.1.29 deferral program in a search that she had done.

Representatives Patten and Domeika stated that they would prefer to reinsert the deferral option back into the proposed changes to the tax code for the 2013 tax year in spite of all the challenges; however, as a group this committee held that consequences of any additional delays resulting from yet another amendment outweighed the benefit in doing so. The committee members agreed to re-introduce the deferral option for the following tax year.

Motion: Bill Domeika called for adjournment at 8:40 p.m. Eric Newman seconded. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol J. Way". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "Respectfully submitted,".

Carol J. Way, Secretary