

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
NOVEMBER 26, 2012**

The Annual Organizational Meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, November 26, 2012, at the Education Center, Kings Highway, Fairfield, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 P.M. by First Selectman Michael Tetreau.

PRESENT: 50 ABSENT: 0 VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Becker, Herley, Meyer, Richmond, Sundman, P. Ambrose, Jennings, Mitola, Steele, Varian, Bateson, Conley, Ference, Mackenzie, McCullough, Dean, DeMartino, Hug, Mezoff, Palmer, M. Ambrose, Garskof, McAleese, Smey, Stamler, Brogan, Campbell, Gottlieb, Marmion, Wolk, Hochberg, Hoffkins, Newman, Patten, Schwartz, Braun, Kery, Marks, McCarthy, Stopa, Domeika, Felner, Jacob, Mirabile, Pontrelli, Abercrombie, Hannum, Lee, Ryan, Way

ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MOMENT OF SILENCE

First Selectman Mike Tetreau led the Body in the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence. Mr. Tetreau asked those present to keep in their thoughts Rep. Becker's grandfather, Rep. Bateson's mother, Rep. Richmond's mother and Rep. McAleese's father, all of whom passed away recently.

Hurricane Update: First Selectman Tetreau gave the Body an update on Hurricane Sandy, and thanked Town departments for their response to the emergency.

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: TO ELECT A MODERATOR AND DEPUTY MODERATOR FOR THE ENSUING YEAR

Mr. Tetreau asked for nominations from the floor for a Moderator.

Michael Herley, District 1, nominated Jeff Steele, duly seconded by Hal Schwartz, District 7.

Upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, nominations for Moderator were closed.

VOTE: Mr. Steele was elected Moderator by unanimous voice vote.

The Moderator asked for nominations from the floor for Deputy Moderator.

Peter Ambrose, District 2, nominated Hank Ference, duly seconded by John Mitola, District 2.

Upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, nominations for Deputy Moderator were closed.

VOTE: Mr. Ference was elected Deputy Moderator by unanimous voice vote.

The Moderator instructed the RTM on the Town Charter Standards of Conduct, ethical matters, Freedom of Information matters and conflicts of interest. He reminded members that e-mailing a majority of the Body constitutes a meeting under FOI regulations.

RTM MINUTES
NOVEMBER 26, 2012

The Moderator asked that Standing Committees send their minutes to him and the Town Clerk in a timely manner. He reminded the Body and members of the public that personal attacks would not be tolerated and asked those present to respect other people's opinions. He asked that cell phone use be limited, and reminded the members to inform the Town Clerk if they arrive late or leave early.

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO NOMINATE AND ELECT MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Majority Leader Peter Ambrose nominated David Becker, District 1; Joe Palmer, District 4 and Joe Felner, District 9, to serve on the SLMC, duly seconded.

Minority Leader Hal Schwartz nominated Hal Schwartz, District 7 and Kevin Hoffkins, District 7, to serve on the SLMC, duly seconded.

The nominated members of the SLMC were approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 4 ON CALL: APPROVAL OF 2013 MEETING CALENDAR

Upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, the 2013 meeting dates were approved as recommended by the Town Clerk, as follows:

January 28	April 22	July 22	October 28
February 25	May 6 & 20	August 26	November 25
March 18	June 24	September 23	December 16

ITEM NO. 5 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD OCTOBER 22, 2012

Upon motion made, duly seconded and carried with 47 in favor, 1 abstention (Patten) (M. Ambrose and Newman not present to vote), the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Moderator noted that Item Number 6 was eligible for the consent calendar.

VOTE: Item No. 6 was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL: REAPPOINTMENTS OF SHEILA M. DRAVIS AND SHARON B. PISTILLI TO SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMISSION

This item was on the Consent Calendar. Ms. Dravis and Ms. Pistilli were present.

ITEM NO. 7 ON CALL: APPOINTMENT OF WENDY BRANDT MARTINENAS TO THE SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING COMMISSION

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded. Ms. Martinenas was present.

**See Committee Reports Attached Hereto

VOTE: The appointment Ms. Martinenas was approved by unanimous voice vote.

RTM MINUTES
NOVEMBER 26, 2012

ITEM NO. 8 ON CALL: TO HEAR AND CONSIDER FOR THE FIRST TIME AMENDMENTS TO THE TAX RELIEF FOR THE ELDERLY ORDINANCE, SECTION 95-7 TO SECTION 95-15.4 OF CHAPTER 95, ARTICLE III, OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, SPONSORED BY THE SENIOR TAX RELIEF ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

The Moderator moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Tom McCarthy, District 8, presented the amended ordinance and explained the new language.

Ed Bateson, District 3, questioned the language, "subject to availability," under the deferral option in tax relief. He said that once a law is adopted, it is the law and cannot be made available only upon availability.

Mr. McCarthy explained that the intention of expanding the deferral option is to be self-funding in the long run, but that if one hundred people sign up the first year it will bankrupt the program because we would not be able to finance it. The language would need to be tweaked, and the phrasing has yet to be approved by the Town Attorney.

Carolyn Richmond, District 1, said that the tax relief ordinance is funded by four percent of town tax levy, which is currently approximately \$9,000,000. We have never come close to reaching that threshold in tax relief in the past.

Marc Patten, District 7, said that there had been an intent to cap the percentage, such as saying applicants to the deferral program cannot exceed a certain amount.

Assessor Don Ross pointed out that the tax relief ordinance is supported by four percent of real property taxes, not all taxes collected. He said that applicants must request a specific program and must meet eligibility requirements, including income criteria.

Mr. McCarthy acknowledged that the ordinance would have to be implemented in a measured approach since it is a more generous program.

Josh Garskof, District 5, asked what the predicted cost of the new program would be.

Mr. McCarthy said that the upper level of income would increase the number of seniors eligible by twelve percent, and adding the second tier would be an additional twelve percent. The current cost of the program is about \$3.4 million, and it is anticipated that the new program would cost approximately \$5 million.

Heather Dean, District 4, asked if the language would be modified, to which Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Patten replied affirmatively.

David Mackenzie, District 3, asked why this is not a line item in the budget.

First Selectman Tetreau said that this is contained in the budget under "reduction in revenue," which can be found in the front of the budget.

Peter Ambrose, District 2, said that the Stamford and Greenwich budgets which had been provided to members to show examples, include tax relief in the budget.

RTM MINUTES
NOVEMBER 26, 2012

First Selectman Tetreau said he would be happy to look at the examples.

John Mitola, District 2, asked where the “not to exceed” numbers come from, and asked if we can afford the program if it hit the outside number.

Mr. McCarthy said that the percentage is based on the average, and that there is a assumed safety net.

Dana Kery, District 8, questioned the reasoning behind the particular filing period. Assessor Ross explained that the filing dates correspond with the State tax relief program.

Ms. Richmond spoke in support of the amended ordinance.

Mr. Mackenzie said that including a cap to the program is appropriate.

Mr. Bateson spoke of his concern about the increased number of people eligible for inclusion in the program.

First Selectman Tetreau pointed out that the deferral program has the potential to be self-sustaining, and that we will see the revenue when people sell their houses.

Ellen Jacob, District 9, asked if the interest rate would change, to which Mr. McCarthy responded they did not expect it to.

As this item is an ordinance, it shall be held over for one month.

OTHER BUSINESS

Carolyn Richmond, District 1, announced that tonight was her last RTM meeting as she is moving from Connecticut. She thanked the Body, and received an ovation.

Amy Mezoff, District 4, thanked First Selectman Tetreau for his outstanding response to Hurricane Sandy.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and upon motion made, duly seconded and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne
Town Clerk

Recorded by: Ann Roche