

**Ridgefield Senior Tax Committee
May 8, 2025- 3:00 pm**

Town Hall – Large Conference Room

Minutes

Location: Town Hall Building Ridgefield CT—Large Conference Room

Members Present:

- Leonard Comberiate - Secretary
- Joseph Adams, Jr
- Gary Roman - Chair
- Linda Massie – Vice Chair
- Carl Forcheski
- James Bertoluzzi
- Andrew Okrongly

The eighth Senior Tax Committee (STC) meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Roman and commenced at 3:00 pm. Mr. Roman made a motion to accept the Minutes from April 24, 2025, meeting, and the motion was seconded by Linda Massie. The Minutes were ratified with no changes.

Public Comment Period:

Steve Lockfort, a resident of Ridgefield, attended the session to observe the STC committee proceedings. He did not ask any questions to the STC during his attendance at the STC meeting,

Review of the survey responses from April 26, 2025 EXPO:

The STC reviewed and discussed the survey responses obtained from April 24, 2025, Ridgefield Senior EXPO. Chairman Roman assessed the responses and concluded that Town should provide more communications and awareness to the senior residents of Ridgefield as to the availability of the numerous programs available including the \$1,048 senior tax credit, the property tax deferral program, the tax

credit available to volunteer firefighters, the state of CT homeowners program, the state of CT tax credits for renters and the recently enacted CT tax credits for disabled veterans. In addition, the deadlines for the programs should be more widely communicated within the community to avoid seniors missing the applicable deadline for each program.

Meetings with Town Officials to determine the Feasibility of Potential Changes and Modifications of the Senior Tax Credits.

Carl Forcheski was delegated to review any potential senior tax credit changes including potential new programs with the Town assessor, and the Town Tax Collector. Both town officials, after meeting with Mr. Forcheski, agreed that the preliminary policy ideas discussed thus far could be implemented without adding additional resources or expenses.

Both town officials encouraged STC to better define any policy changes and proposals and once done were open to revisit the question, including as an invited guest to a STC meeting as an agenda item, to further explore and answer questions related to the administrative duties of the revised policy.

Mr. Forcheski also asked the Town Clerk Wendy Lionetti about the possibility of reviewing past BoS meetings when Senior Tax Relief was discussed, to get a flavor for the discussion pros and cons among elected officials and town residents. Ms. Lionetti later replied to Mr. Forcheski that she was able to find minutes of relevant meetings and extended an invitation to research such documents in Town Hall. James Bertoluzzi offered to assist Mr. Forcheski in reviewing the archives to accomplish this review.

Review by the STC committee members as to proposed changes and additions to existing Ridgefield Senior Tax Programs

Chairman Roman distributed to the STC committee members a file that included a detailed summary of the proposals from all STC committee members discussed at the last meeting. The STC reviewed and discussed each of the six proposed

modifications and discussed in detail the essence of each submitted proposal. All modifications or additions to tax credit programs are being studied by the STC, with the eventual goal of making a recommendation to the Board of Selectpersons and the Board of Finance. The proposals included:

- 1) Updated property tax credit to reflect the CPI adjustments since the \$1,048 was last increased in 2008 and indexing the amount on an annual basis thereafter.
- 2) Increase the income limit for the Ridgefield property tax deferral program from the current \$65,000 to a higher income limit.
- 3) Propose a new income based Senior tax Relief program to address the number of senior citizens living below the poverty level.
- 4) Adopt a freeze on property tax increase for seniors with an AGI of \$65,000 or less.
- 5) Adopt a provision for tax relief for senior renters based on the CT automobile tax which applies to homeowners and renters
- 6) Adopt a new program to provide an additional senior tax credit based on longevity of residency in the town of Ridgefield.

Knowing fully that several of the proposal's costs would need to be estimated when considering the impact on the town's budget and mill rate, Andrew Okrongly, a member of the Town's Board of Finance, was charged with preparing a spreadsheet to determine the cost of the proposals outlined above based on the relative importance discussed below. The spreadsheet will be completed by the STC on May 29, 2025.

Further, after much discussion, the STC arrived at a consensus to prioritize the relative importance of the six proposals outlined above on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important and 3 being the least important.

- Item # 1 –most important

- Item # 2—most important
- Item # 3-most important
- Item # 4- least important
- Item # 5- least important
- Item 6—most important

Additional Topics:

No other open topics were introduced by the Committee members in attendance.

Next Meetings

The next committee meetings will be held as follows:

- May 29, 2025, at 4 pm
- June 12, 2025, at 4 pm

There being no other business for the Committee, a motion was made and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting of the tax committee at 4:30 pm.

Submitted.

Leonard Comberiate

Secretary