

Tax Relief Committee  
Weekly Meeting  
New Town Hall Conference Room  
February 27, 2023

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Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

**Attendance:** Louis Gingerella, John Olsen, Connie Berardi, Betty Russ, Anne Nelson. Brian Rathbun arrived at 6:40 pm

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to Accept Connie, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Betty.  
5 approved, 1 abstention

**Public Comment:** None

Lou met with Bob Carlson and Sarah Nelson regarding the state circuit breaker funding for reimbursements to towns. Evidentially, the state has not provided any reimbursement to any towns since 2016; the town has funded the program.

Lou provided a copy of the draft proposal for our recommendations which we spent the evening reviewing and making changes.

Both Lou and John discussed the proposal in the amount of dollars.

The town current assistance is \$39,000, the additional proposed (maximum estimate) would be \$68,000 for a total of \$107,00. Because we are estimating and there are unknown values it would be .17% of the town budget. Currently, the \$39,000 is providing relief for 61 people.

Our proposal would add \$79,000 to total \$118,250 which is .5% of the 2023 budget. This represents the best guess of 15 additional households.

**Fire Department:**

After some discussion on their proposal the committee endorsed the current proposal submitted by the Fire Department Chief. Motion made by Betty, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Connie. The motion passed unanimously.

**Recommendations for Immediate Consideration:**

1. Circuit breaker, increase in guidelines in exhibits as illustrated in the Report that will be submitted to the BOF.

John discussed the number of taxable/untaxable lots in North Stonington. He was told the lot count was 3,444 taxable lots and 219 tax exempt lots. The lot assessments file he received had 3180 listings, some with multiple listings assigned to the same street address. There were 2830 residential and 350 commercial. Additional information will be included in the Report to the BOF.

**Current Residential Tax Range # of Taxpayers**

\$0-\$1000	440
>\$1000-\$2000	177
>\$2000-\$3000	192
>\$3000-\$4000	396
>\$4000-\$5000	547
>\$5000-\$6000	412
>\$6000-\$7000	302
>\$7000-\$8000	182
>\$8000-\$9000	88
>\$9000-\$10000	53
>\$10000-\$11000	18
>\$11000-\$12000	7
>\$12000-\$13000	4
>\$13000-\$14000	4
>\$14000-\$15000	1
>\$15000-\$16000	2
>\$16000-\$17000	1
>\$17000-\$18000	1
>\$20000-\$21000	1
>\$25000-\$26000	1
>\$31000-\$32000	1

Commercial lot taxes were not presented, nor discussed.

**Changes on the Draft:**

*All member's had input into the changes. Changes are in italics*

Page 2: The Board of Selectmen, with the concurrence of the Board of Finance, created the Tax Relief Committee to review current tax relief programs and to make recommendations, *within current state laws*, if any, for changes to current policy, to the Board of Finance.

Page 3: Unlike in most other states, Connecticut law does not allow cities and towns *to institute local income or sales taxes*. Accordingly, because of Connecticut localities' heavy reliance on property taxes, taxpayers have *one* of the highest per capita property tax burdens in the nation. While originally designed to fully reimburse towns for their mandatory programs, the State typically reimburses only a small fraction of towns, *if any*.

Page 4: *The Circuit breaker program (CGS 12-170aa to 12-170cc) is overseen* State's Office of Policy and Management; *it requires local municipalities to qualified applicants who are low-income older adults.*

The Town's contribution to this program is estimated to total approximately *\$107,000 or .0034% of the FY 2023 Town budget.*

Page 5: These programs are viewed as cost-effective *incentives* to positively impact recruitment and retainment, *rather than the cost of retaining full time paid fire fighters*. Take out entire middle paragraph on the incentive program.

Page 6: For circumstances where tax payments cannot be *paid* due to financial hardship, allow for taxes to be deferred until the property is sold *or a payment is made on the property*

John will address Establish and alternative revenue model.

Page 7: *Take out Paragraph 6 (The Circuit breaker program and fire fighters...)*

Page 8: Correction Standard Tax Relief for Veterans: \$6,000

John will send out information on Alternative Tax Relief Program as a PDF.

Anne suggested in long-term considerations that affordable housing may assist in the tax-relief programs and provide housing to seniors, families just starting out, teachers, service employees and the disabled.

**Adjournment:** A motion made to adjourn by Betty, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Connie.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 6 at 6:00 pm, New Town Hall Conference Room.

Submitted by: Anne Nelson, Secretary