

The August 31, 2023, meeting of the Ordinance Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of Selectmen was convened at 4:00 p.m. in the Town Hall central meeting room by Sheila McCreven, Chair.

Present: Sheila McCreven, Joseph Crisco, David Vogel

Staff: Administrative Officer/Director of Finance Anthony Genovese, Town Counsel Gerald Weiner, and Clerk Geraldine Shaw

Guests: Fire Chief Sean Rowland, Human Services Director Jeanette Glicksman, and Selectman Dr. David Lober

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the those present.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the April 26, 2023, meeting, were approved (Vogel – Crisco).

CHAPTER 382, TAXATION, ARTICLE IV – RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED, SECTION 7 – ELIGIBILITY D. (1) THRU (2)

Mr. Genovese explained that the income eligibility thresholds follow the State program. In 2022 the Town program cost \$97,000. He also noted that the Assessor has no suggestions for any change to the language of the ordinance.

Action – The Ordinance Committee agreed that they had no recommendations at this time.

CHAPTER 382, TAXATION, ARTICLE IX – TAX ABATEMENT FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL, SECTION 382-21 A THRU C – ABATEMENT GRANTED

Fire Chief Sean Rowland explained that the program, adopted in 2018, is an incentive in recruitment of volunteer firefighters. He explained that rigorous training and hours of involvement required to qualify as a volunteer. He also noted that the qualifications to participate in the program are more strident than those in the State statute (CGS 12-81w)

Mr. Genovese said that the program costs \$23,000 - \$15,000 per year. Twenty-two (22) firefighters qualified in 2022.

Chief Rowland asked the Committee to consider the following revisions:

382-26 –Qualifications:

Revise Tier A to read: **For two or more years of service abated by a maximum of \$2,000.**

Reference Connecticut General Statute 12-81w – Such tax relief may provide either (1) an abatement of up to two thousand dollars in property taxes due for any fiscal year, or (2) an exemption applicable to the assessed value of real or personal property up to an amount equal to the quotient of two million dollars divided by the mill rate, in effect at the time of assessment, expressed as a whole number of dollars per one thousand dollars of assessed value. “

Delete Tier B & C

382-23 – Application of abatement:

Strike first sentence and substitute **“The tax abatement under this article shall be applied at the sole discretion of the volunteer firefighter to either real property taxes or motor vehicle taxes”**

382-25 – Applicability:

Include in this section language applicable to “property held in trust(s)” similar to 382-7.1 of this code.

Action – The Committee **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – Vogel) to recommend the discussed revisions to the Board of Selectmen.

REVIEW STATUS – CHAPTER 75, ARTICLE III, SECTION 22.C. – FIRE COMMISSION DUTIES AND POWERS

The Committee reviewed a memo from Fire Commission Chair Karen Kravetz, requesting that under Article III of Chapter 75-22 C regarding the evaluation of the performance of the Woodbridge Fire Marshal be deleted as it is no relevant or appropriate as the Fire Marshal works under the daily supervision of the [Fire] Chief – and, to her knowledge, such evaluation has not been done since 2017.

Action – The Committee **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Vogel – Crisco) to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Chapter 75-22 C be deleted.

FOR DISCUSSION

Senate Bill No. 634 – granting municipalities the discretion to establish a local veterans advisory committee.

Human Services Director Jeanette Glicksman also acts as the Woodbridge Veterans’ Advocate. She was present at the meeting. She said that her office works with regional Veterans Administration Offices and has no problem handling requests from veterans.

Action – There is no recommendation for change at this time.

Chapter 42, Article I – Country Club Enterprise Fund

Action – The Committee **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Vogel – Crisco) to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that Chapter 42, Article I – Country Club Enterprise Fund be deleted from the Town Code as the country club no longer exists.

ELDERLY TAX RELIEF – Dr. David Lober

Dr. Lober explained that 2/3rds of the annual budget supports the schools, and currently, the school enrollment is increasing. He said that his proposal would be an incentive for residents over 65 years of age to stay in their homes, reducing the likelihood of younger families with school age children purchasing these homes.

Proposal – Freeze taxes at the current rate on homes of owners over 65 years of age. Place a lien on the property – which will be satisfied when the property changes ownership.

Action – The Committee **VOTED UNANIMOUSLY** (Crisco – Vogel) to refer Dr. Lober’s proposal to the Board of Selectmen for discussion.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to schedule future meetings as needed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Geraldine S. Shaw, Clerk