

Elderly Tax Relief Program

Deputy Mayor Fortunato moved **"TO INCREASE THE PROPERTY TAX PROGRAM FOR THE ELDERLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED FROM THE PRESENT INCOME AND TAX CREDIT LIMITS TO THE FOLLOWING: INCOME LEVELS OF \$0 - \$35,300 AT 15% OF TAX TO A MAXIMUM CREDIT OF \$500 AND INCOME LEVELS OF \$35,301 - \$40,000 AT 15% OF TAX TO A MAXIMUM CREDIT OF \$400"**, seconded by Councilor Forrest.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that a proposal concerning an elderly tax freeze was introduced by Councilor Drake in 2006 and that the Budget Committee has held numerous meetings on the topic and voted to move forward with raising the income limits and tax credits for the elderly. She said that approval of increases could result in a possible estimated loss of revenue in the amount of \$12,000 - \$20,000. The Town Manager stated that State Statutes require that income limits be included in the property tax relief program. She said that the Budget Committee was amazed that the limits have not been raised since the mid 1980's.

Councilor Kotkin thanked the Town Manager, Finance Director Lisa Hancock, and Assessor Jan Neumuth for the information provided. He commented that he supports the proposal stating that when the Town first adopted the tax credit of \$350 in 1989 that amount represented a much larger percentage of the typical tax bill than it does today; therefore the increase has been long overdue. Councilor Kotkin addressed the concern of those whose income level is just above the limit and that the Budget Committee had thought to possibly extend the limit to \$45,000; however, they decided instead to see how many will qualify up to the \$40,000 limit first. Councilor Kotkin said that he is very comfortable with the proposal as it stands, since he was not in favor of blanket relief. He pointed out that, by State Statute, the tax relief could not contain residency length stipulations.

Councilor Kirsche, having served on the Budget Committee, thanked both Ms. Neumuth and Ms. Hancock for their hard work. Councilor Kirsche commented that although he dissented to the original vote to deny the formulation of a citizens committee to further pursue the tax freeze, he will vote in favor of this proposal since it is overdue. He stated that the one-year residency restriction was a big hurdle, but he will support the motion only after opposing the vote to decline the formulation of the previously stated committee.

Councilor Cascio thanked Ms. Neumuth and Ms. Hancock for their work on this topic, and wished Ms. Neumuth luck in her upcoming retirement. He thanked the Budget Committee for their work and also Councilor Drake for bringing this issue to the attention of the Council, since it hasn't been reviewed since the 1980's.

Councilor Drake thanked everyone for the work they put into this proposal, although he is somewhat disappointed with what is being proposed, since it misses what he was trying to accomplish. He said that the credit is nice; however, he was looking to address more of those in Town who don't have a pension and are saving for their retirement. Councilor Drake stated that in the fifteen years between now and his retirement age, his taxes in Wethersfield will most likely increase at least three or four times to an amount that he anticipates will be his largest expense during his retirement. He said that what he had desired for the proposal was that once a resident reaches age sixty-five, his/her taxes would be limited to an increase by only a designated percentage such as 2%, 3%, 4%. Councilor Drake stated that possibly in another year, the property tax issue can be discussed again through the formation of a citizens' committee. He, once again, thanked all who worked on the proposal and stated that he will support the proposal since it

13836

provides some relief, although, as he stated, it does not accomplish what he had set out to do.

Councilor Forrest stated that he supports the proposal since it helps those who really need the tax relief. He commented that he did not support the residency requirements since those who have lived in Wethersfield for a longer period should not be granted an advantage.

Councilor Walsh thanked the Budget & Finance Committee members as well as the Town staff for their work on this proposal. He stated that it is his belief that tax relief should be based on need, stating that whether you're in a job that offers a pension or not, there's no guarantee of what one will do when they retire. He said that what the Committee has done is to try to help those people with the most need. Councilor Walsh said that he is very pleased to see the bipartisanship displayed by both the Budget & Finance Committee and the Council on this issue.

Chairperson Adil commented that this proposal was a very laudable goal on Councilor Drake's part, and that the issue needs to be even further addressed, especially with regard to the residency requirements. He stated that the actual outcome of the Committee is excellent and appreciates the compromises that were made during the many months of deliberation. Chairperson Adil stated that there have been property tax exemption increases extended to seniors and disabled veterans in the past couple of years and that he appreciates Councilor Drake's efforts in bringing forward this proposal for those in Town who need it most.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson, voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

#### Financial Policies

Councilor Kotkin moved **"TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FINANCIAL POLICIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION"**, seconded by Deputy Mayor Fortunato.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien explained that as part of the Townwide Strategic Plan, she has recommended that the Town's current Financial Policies be reviewed. She said that the Policies were referred to the Budget & Finance Committee in July, 2006 and after several meetings and revisions of the Town of Wethersfield Financial Policies as put together by Finance Director Lisa Hancock, the Committee has approved the copy currently forwarded to the Town Council for action. The Town Manager said that the only policy that had been previously adopted by the Council was the Debt Management Policy and that the adoption of the proposed Town of Wethersfield Financial Policies is all encompassing.

Councilor Kirsche stated that he was on the Budget & Finance Committee and he supports the motion to approve the Policies. He recognized Councilor Kotkin's efforts in allowing the Committee to pick his brain since he has particular expertise in this area.

Councilor Kotkin thanked Councilor Kirsche for his comment and Ms. Hancock for her efforts in working back and forth with the Budget & Finance Committee. He said that Ms. Hancock listened to the suggestions of the Committee and explained to them why certain policies were included in the set of Financial Policies. Councilor Kotkin stated that the Wethersfield Financial Policies are a statement to financial agencies and the Wethersfield citizenry that the Town is going to be responsible in how money is managed.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien commented that these Policies will be a big boost to bond agencies when

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RECEIVED

7:00 P.M.

DEC 7 1987

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK  
TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD.  
CONNECTICUT

ORDINANCE REGARDING PROPERTY TAX RELIEF  
FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE ELDERLY AND HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE DISABLED

Be it ordained, that Chapter 4-1 of The Wethersfield Code of ordinances is hereby amended by adding Sec. 4-1-16 which Section reads as follows:

SECTION 4-1-16. . PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE ELDERLY AND FOR HOMEOWNERS WHO ARE DISABLED

a) Pursuant to Public Act 87-91, the Town of Wethersfield does hereby provide property tax relief as the same is defined in CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 12-129n as amended by P.A. 87-91, with respect to real property owned and occupied as a principal residence by residents of Wethersfield who are eligible in accordance with applicable federal regulations to receive permanent total disability benefits under social security, or have not been engaged in employment covered by social security and accordingly have not qualified for benefits thereunder, but have become qualified for permanent total disability benefits under any federal, state or local government retirement or disability plan, including the Railroad Retirement Act and any government-related Teacher's Retirement Plan, in which requirements with respect to qualifications for such permanent total disability benefits are comparable to such requirements under social security.

b) Pursuant to the said CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 12-129n, the Town of Wethersfield does hereby also provide property tax relief, with respect to real property owned and occupied as their principal residence by residents of the Town of Wethersfield, who are sixty-five years of age and over, or whose spouses, living with them, are sixty-five years of age or sixty years of age or over and the surviving spouse of a taxpayer qualified in the Town of Wethersfield under CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 12-129n as amended at the time of his death or with respect to real property on which such residents or their spouses are liable for taxes under CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 12-48.

c) Such tax relief shall be provided to those eligible persons under either sections a) or b) provided such residents or their spouses have been taxpayers of the Town of Wethersfield for one year immediately preceding their receipt of tax benefits under this ordinance, and meet the requirements of the Town with respect to maximum income allowable during the calendar year for the tax relief provided for in this ordinance. No such property tax relief, together with any relief received by any such resident under the provisions of sections 12-129b and 12-129c, 12-129h or 12-170aa shall exceed, in the aggregate seventy-five per cent of the tax which would, except for said sections 12-129b, and 12-129c, 12-129h or 12-170aa and this section, be laid against the taxpayer.

d) This ordinance shall be applicable to the assessment year commencing 10-01-87 and each assessment year thereafter.

e) Incorporated by reference thereto are all of the other applicable provisions of CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTE 12-129n as amended by PUBLIC ACT 87-91.

Purpose:

TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR  
PERMANENTLY DISABLED AND ELDERLY  
PERSONS WITH RESPECT TO REAL  
PROPERTY OCCUPIED AS THEIR PRINCIPAL  
RESIDENCE BY RESIDENTS OF WETHERSFIELD

Prepared by:

Vincent F. Sabatini  
Town Attorney

Introduced by:

Lucille Vaughan

Date:

December 7, 1987

RESOLUTION CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

RECEIVED  
4:04 PM, C5m

DEC 3 1987

OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK  
TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD  
CONNECTICUT

WHEREAS, The Wethersfield Property Tax Relief Committee has studied the issue of whether the Town of Wethersfield should offer tax relief to elderly and permanently disabled under age 65 resident taxpayers and,

and, WHEREAS, said committee has issued a report concerning such tax relief

WHEREAS, the Wethersfield Town Council has adopted an ordinance regarding property tax relief for homeowners who are elderly and homeowners who are disabled,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Wethersfield Town Council hereby accepts said report and hereby adopts maximum income allowable criteria and other financial criteria in accordance with the table shown below for the assessment year commencing 1 October 1987.

Qualifying Income	Tax		Tax Credit Ceiling	
	Married	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried
	0%	10%	\$0	\$350
\$13,500-\$16,200	10%	5%	\$350	\$175
\$16,201-\$18,299	10%	0%	\$350	\$0
\$18,300-\$21,000				

PURPOSE :

To establish income and other financial criteria for property tax relief

PREPARED BY :

Town Manager

INTRODUCED BY :

Lucille Vaughan

DATE :

7 December 1987