

PROPERTY TAX EQUITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

DRAFT Minutes of the Meeting November 20, 2003

Members Present: David Levington, Tara Nolan Reed, Steven Wishner, Michael DuCros, Dave Costello, Bill Maloney, Marilyn Goodrich, Claire Schlosser, Ralph Tyler, Basil Pallone, Joe Meeks, Mark Collins, Susan Iuliano, Karen Darmer, Bill Sheehan, Paul Pakos, Andy Schwarz, Arletta Cioffari, John Nikula and Mark Collins

Also present were members of the press and public, including Messrs. Young and Mighdoll.

Meeting came to order at 7:32 p.m.

1. The meeting opened with public comment from Messrs. Young and Mighdoll. Mr. Young presented a hand-out with a proposed mechanism for developing a point system whereby residents would get points based on various attributed including: duration of residency, age, military service and handicapped status. The total number of points that a person receives would determine the level of tax relief for which they are eligible. Dave Levington pointed out some of the issues that the PTERC must work with and Massachusetts Constitutional limits on some possible solutions. Mr. Migdoll presented comments regarding his perspectives on the progress of the Committee, the fact that he thoughts Sudbury's demographics were unusual and his thoughts for areas of additional focus.
1. Minutes of the PTERC meeting of November 13, 2003, were passed with amendments.
1. Karen Darmer presented a summary of currently available programs and suggestions for maximizing those programs. After discussion by the Committee A motion was made and seconded that "the PTERC urge the Selectmen to modify the MGL c. 59, Sec. 5K programs (tax work-off Programs) to maximize the tax work-off program in terms of hourly rates paid, total positions available and total amount of reduction in taxes available to participants. Motion passed 17 - 1 Abstain

1. After discussion based on suggestions presented by Karen Darmer, regarding specific proposals to extend the 41C benefits under the Senior Tax exemption program, a motion was made and seconded to “Request the Selectmen to take any necessary actions to maximize the benefits under Section 41C. The motion passed unanimously.

1. There was also discussion about an improving the tax relief information on the Town Website. A motion was made and seconded that “PTERC recommend that the Selectmen make improvements to the Town website to provide information about tax relief programs available to Sudbury residents.” The motion passed unanimously.

1. Michael DuCros reported the status of a survey to be distributed to seniors in Sudbury. There is some delay in obtaining funding. Member of the Committee felt the time is of the essence and a group of members’ lead by Michael, agreed to privately fund the survey. Those member may be reimbursed if PTERC obtains funding from the Sudbury Foundation.

1. The Committee reviewed and discussed the eligibility requirements that had been discussed and voted in prior meetings. After such discussion it was moved and seconded that the eligibility requirements for participation in a new PTERC recommended tax relief program be as follows:
 - a. Principal residence in Sudbury
 - b. Minimum residency duration of 5 years in Sudbury
 - c. Must be age 65 or over or currently on long-term full disability, as defined by Social Security. (People on long-term full disability qualify only for the duration of that disability)
 - d. Assessed value of house can not exceed 1.25 multiplied by the average assessed value (Today that formula yields a value of approximately \$600,000)
 - e. Income thresholds matching those defined in the CPA in terms of income level and actual income measured as the sum of Adjusted Gross Income from IRS form 1040 plus tax free dividends and interest, less then-current deductions available under the CPA.
 - f. Property taxes must exceed 10% of income as defined above.

PTEEC voted in favor of the above eligibility test.

1. After much discussion there was a motion made and seconded that “The program be funded by a surcharge of 2% per year on all tax payers, with downward adjustments to reflect any excess funds from the prior year(s).” This motion passed 17 – 1 opposed. It was noted that in a home rule petition the Selectmen may wish to seek authority to have a higher surcharge, the higher rate to be implemented only after further town meeting and ballot approval. The committee would only suggest at this time applying a 2% surcharge.
1. There was a motion to exclude all people over 65 from the surcharge, regardless of need. The motion was not seconded.
1. There was a motion made and seconded to exclude from the surcharge any homeowner that qualifies for the program or otherwise would qualify for the program based on criteria A, B, D and E above. (see Item 7) The motion passed 17- 1 opposed.
1. The Committee voted unanimously to approve a limit on an individual’s benefit under any proposed incremental program. “The benefit to any individual will not exceed 25% of the then-current average residential tax bill for Sudbury households.” Motion passed 18 - 0
1. There was discussion about the projected costs of the program and the various formulae discussed to apportion relief funds to qualifying people. The working group determined to gather before the next meeting so that a final formula can be voted at the meeting scheduled for December 1.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m. [check time with]

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tara Nolan Reed, Co-Chairman.