

SENIOR TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE

October 9, 2013

Attending: Rebecca MacGregor, Steve Colella, Pat Nelson, Pauline diCesare, and Anne Gilbert. Also present was Julie Secord, COA Director.

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 AM. There were three observers at the meeting, but no public comment.

Rebecca told us that we now have a committee member number of 7 with quorum of 4, approved by the selectmen.

We reviewed the minutes of the last meeting. Rebecca is still looking into what members' duties might be for the town boards that they represent. Ellen Brideau, Director of Assessing, is reviewing the fliers we are working on, but has not yet finished. The minutes of the August 14, 2013 meeting were approved as written.

Rebecca reported that she had research done at the state archives to get background information on the 1986 tax relief bill relative to the 41C exemption. Unfortunately, there is a void in the archives of the year prior to 1986. We need to review the material found before we go further. Julie is looking into finding Rep John Flood who introduced the bill in 1986 to try to explore the history and intent of the bill.

A suggestion was made regarding the draft of the tri-fold brochure for tax relief options to add the specific clause reference number and further detail to the various exemptions mentioned in the brochure.

Julie provided an overview of the Tax Work Off program administered by the COA which provides up to \$500.00 in tax relief to 50 seniors who work at least 62 hours as volunteers. The IRS has mandated that the Tax Work Off participants must be considered employees of the town for the 62 hours of service so are subject to Medicare withholding and OBRA withholding. OBRA – Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 is an alternative to social security. Town employees who are not eligible to participate in Middlesex County Retirement are mandated to participate in the MA Deferred Compensation SMART Plan. The 7.5% OBRA deduction is refundable upon request after completion of the 62 hours. Unfortunately the complexity of the application process coupled with the earnings statement at year end has discouraged some people from participating in the program, although more than 50 people have again applied.

The next meeting of the committee will be December 11, 2013 at 8:00 AM. We will continue to discuss how to proceed with a formula adjustment to statutory exemptions where parameters have not been altered since the mid-1980s. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Gilbert, Clerk

