

MINUTES
Ordinance Committee
Tuesday, October 21, 2025 – 6:30PM
Norma Drummer Room – Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: Annmarie Drugonis, Fred Stanek and Bob Findley

Others Present: Town Counsel, Richard Buturla; CAO, Kurt Miller; David Kummer, Carmen Potash, Robert Bulinski, Renee Rausch, Rod Grega, Risa Velleco, Terrilynn Krampetz, Mr. Collin, Laura Hunt, Trisha Danka, Theresa Conroy

ITEM #1: Call meeting to order

Meeting was called to order by First Selectwoman, Annmarie Drugonis, at 6:30 P.M.

ITEM #2: Pledge of Allegiance

Everyone saluted the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #3: Public Comment

David Kummer (69 Church Street), a lifelong Seymour resident of over 80 years, spoke about receiving the veterans benefit but noted that his taxes increased by \$1,544 compared to last year. He expressed interest in seeing a program developed to assist seniors and asked whether it would be possible to receive both the veterans benefit and the senior benefit.

First selectwoman Drugonis added that the Assessor's office has run some calculations for homes and the veteran's benefit is \$188,326.08. If you add the house and the land the benefit is \$220,016.70. The State of Connecticut passed a law so that municipalities can provide a benefit for the house and the land. If the Town includes the land as part of the veteran's benefit that would be an increase in the benefit of \$31,690.62.

Robert Bulinski (199 Woodlawn Drive) asked if the veterans benefit for land impacts a condo owner. He has lived in Seymour for 50 years. He made a suggestion to the board.

Carmelita Potash (23 Glen Circle) is 87 years old and has been living in her house for over 51 years. Her taxes went up over \$1,000 and would like to see something done to address this.

Renee Rausch (107 Colony Road) inquired about income limitations and the eligibility requirements for the program.

Rod Grega (5 Meadow Woods Road) discussed his recent email exchanges with the First Selectwoman and noted that his tax bill increased by more than \$2,000. A Seymour resident for 25 years, he suggested the town consider implementing a senior property tax relief program. His proposal included a sliding scale of tax reductions for homeowners aged 65 and older who have paid property taxes for at least 20 years — beginning with a 2% reduction, increasing by 2% each year, up to 10% once the homeowner reaches age 70. He emphasized that rental properties and absentee landlords should not qualify. Additionally, he suggested an immediate 10% tax reduction for those aged 65 or older who have paid taxes for 25 years.

Risa Velleco (8 Brookdale Road) a Seymour resident since 1979, shared that she lost her husband 15 years ago and is now unable to work. She explained that she has had to rely on her savings to remain in her home and expressed concern over the increasing property taxes and the financial hardship they pose.

Terrilynn Krampetz (5 Heritage Drive) has been living in Seymour for 45 years. She discussed taxes going up and expressed her support of the plan.

Mr. Collin, a Seymour resident since 1983, expressed his support for the proposed tax relief initiative. Recently retired, he is looking for ways to save money and inquired about where he could find additional information if the program moves forward.

Laura Hunt (208 West Church Street) a Seymour resident for 20 years, expressed her support for the proposed tax relief initiative. She spoke about the impact of rising taxes on residents who do not qualify for Medicare and shared her concerns about the increasing cost of living and the financial challenges it has created for her and others in similar situations.

Trisha Danka (203 Pearl Street) a Seymour resident for 30 years, expressed her support for the proposed plan. She spoke about her appreciation for the town's diversity in both housing and residents. Trisha emphasized that senior citizens, while not necessarily limited in their abilities, often face financial challenges despite having contributed greatly to their families and the community. She stressed the importance of supporting and caring for the town's most vulnerable residents.

Jenny Rice (58 Skokorat Street) discussed that the tax increase is everyone's issue and not just a senior issue. It is in the best interest for the entire town to look out for the most vulnerable. She wanted to let the senior population know that they are not alone.

ITEM #4: Discussion and possible action regarding a new ordinance for a Senior Citizen Tax Incentive

Town Counsel Richard Buturla reviewed the limited authority municipalities have in providing property tax relief, emphasizing that any such relief must comply with Connecticut state law. He began by outlining two long-standing state programs: the Circuit Breaker Program and the Tax Freeze Program. The Circuit Breaker Program provides property tax deductions for seniors aged 65 or older and for individuals with permanent and total disabilities. The benefit applies only to the home and not to personal property, offering up to \$1,250 in relief for married couples and \$1,000 for individuals. To qualify, applicants must be Connecticut residents for at least one year, meet income limits of \$53,400 for married couples or \$43,800 for single individuals (based on 2023 thresholds), and occupy the property as their primary residence.

The Tax Freeze Program, established in 1967, offers another form of relief for elderly or disabled homeowners. To qualify, applicants must be at least 65 years old, have an adjusted gross income under \$6,000, and have lived in their home for at least one year. This program freezes the property tax amount, with the municipality allowed to place a lien for the difference between the frozen and actual

taxes, collected when the property is sold or upon the homeowner's death. Mr. Buturla noted that these two programs are among the oldest forms of senior tax assistance in the state.

Mr. Buturla also discussed a new statute, Connecticut General Statute § 12-8100, adopted on June 6, 2024. This law allows municipalities to grant property tax exemptions of between 5% and 35% of the assessed value for owner-occupied dwellings, including condominiums and two-unit homes used as primary residences. As of the meeting date, no Connecticut municipalities had yet implemented this new option. Because the statute is broad and has limited legislative history, Mr. Buturla recommended that the Town contact the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for further guidance. He also noted that some municipalities have added local requirements to their tax relief programs—such as New Haven's ten-year residency rule or Madison's additional benefits for residents of thirty years or more—and that the Office of Legislative Research generally agrees that towns may set such local conditions.

In addition to senior tax relief programs, Mr. Buturla reviewed options for veterans' property tax relief under Connecticut General Statute § 12-83e. This statute allows municipalities to grant exemptions for disabled veterans, applying to the residence but not the surrounding land. The Town is considering a local resolution to extend this exemption to two acres of land beneath the dwelling. The statute also includes provisions for surviving spouses and Gold Star spouses, giving municipalities additional flexibility to assist veterans and their families.

During discussion, Bob suggested that a sliding scale approach to tax relief might be appropriate. Mr. Buturla stated that he would continue researching how other municipalities plan to use § 12-8100 and will contact OPM and other towns for further information. The committee agreed that any local tax relief program must be grounded in a clear statutory basis, and § 12-8100 may provide that authority. The next Ordinance Committee meeting was scheduled for November 5 at 6:00 PM to continue gathering information and exploring options for senior and veteran tax relief.

ITEM #5: Public Comment

Rod Grega noted that there appears to be little sense of urgency at the state level. He suggested drafting a strong, proactive ordinance to move the process forward, which could then be adjusted as necessary based on feedback or results.

Mike Kearney of (72 Mountain Road) requested clarification on the difference between tax exemptions and abatements. He suggested that the Board consider offering tax relief or other incentives for town volunteers and also shared his thoughts on the veterans' tax relief program.

Theresa Conroy (177 Skokorat Street) a lifelong resident who has lived in town for 67 years and owned her home for 44 years, spoke about the recently enacted 2024 Homestead Exemption (Connecticut General Statute § 12-8100), passed by the state legislature last year. She noted that this legislation allows municipalities to provide a property tax exemption ranging from 5% to 35% of the assessed value of a qualifying residence. Ms. Conroy highlighted that New Milford was the first municipality in Connecticut to adopt an ordinance under Public Act 24-151, doing so on September 22, 2025, to implement the homestead exemption. She further discussed the ordinance, referenced where it can be found within New Milford's municipal code, and shared additional research and information related to the topic.

ITEM #6: Adjournment

Annmarie Drugonis adjourned the meeting at 7:25 PM

Submitted by,



Lianna McMurray
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,



Annmarie Drugonis
First Selectwoman