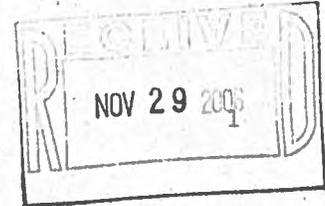


VOL 0194 PAGE 041

ORIGINAL

VERBATIM PROCEEDINGS



WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

RE: ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING
FOR VETERANS' TAX EXEMPTION

NOVEMBER 14, 2006

WEST HARTFORD TOWN HALL
50 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

POST REPORTING SERVICE
HAMDEN, CT (800) 262-4102

HEARING RE: ORDINANCE
NOVEMBER 14, 2006

1 . . .Verbatim Proceedings of hearing
2 before the West Hartford Town Council in the matter of an
3 Ordinance Amending the Procedure for Applying for
4 Veterans' Tax Exemptions held on November 14, 2006 at
5 5:15 p.m. at the West Hartford Town Hall, 50 South Main
6 Street, West Hartford, Connecticut. . .

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8
9
10 MAYOR SCOTT SLIFKA: We're going to open
11 the 5:00 public hearing. Could we have a roll call, Mrs.
12 Cronin?

13 (Whereupon, roll call was taken.)

14 MAYOR SLIFKA: Thank you, Mrs. Cronin.
15 Mr. Spada, could you, please, read the subject matter?

16 MR. ART SPADA: I can, Mr. Mayor.
17 Ordinance Amending the Procedure for Applying for
18 Veterans' Tax Exemption.

19 MAYOR SLIFKA: Thank you, Mr. Spada. Mr.
20 Alair, a presentation from the administration.

21 MR. ALAIR: Yes, and I will be mercifully
22 brief. For the record, Patrick Alair, Deputy Corporation
23 Counsel, the ordinance before you is actually intended to
24 accomplish two things. As you are all aware state law

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1 provides for an exemption from property tax for veterans.
2 There is a provision in the statutes, which also allows
3 by local option the town to match or mirror that
4 exemption. Our ordinances have implemented that local
5 option, but this ordinance is intended to mirror the
6 process for applying for it.

7 The state statute requires that you apply
8 only ever other year for the state piece. Our ordinance
9 required an annual application. We are conforming our
10 ordinance to the state statute for the application
11 period. And in addition, for this year because this is a
12 new program, we've discovered a number of people who did
13 not get the word about it.

14 We are extending the deadline for
15 applications for this year and this year only from
16 October 1 of 2006 to February 20, 2007. The reason for
17 the February 20th date is that is the time - that's the
18 deadline for filing tax appeals with the Board of
19 Assessment Appeals. And we thought it was a logical date
20 as people come in to complain about their taxes to file
21 their tax appeals the staff could contact them and say,
22 gee, do you know about the exemption. They could apply
23 before they leave.

24 That's all the ordinance does.

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1 MAYOR SLIFKA: Thank you, Mr. Alair. I
2 don't see Joe Klyzinski here. I'll -- he may come to the
3 meeting later. I wanted to give a thanks to him. Joe is
4 a resident of West Harford. I don't want date him, but I
5 think he's approaching 90, if he hasn't already passed
6 that. Joe is a World War II vet and he's the person who
7 brought some of this to our attention. He called me up
8 and he was one of the veterans that -- he had actually
9 been visiting the old country and was gone for a
10 substantial period of time. He missed the time to sign up
11 again and asked what we could do to help. And in doing
12 the research very quickly Mr. Alair came up with these
13 additional options. So I want to thank Joe for coming to
14 us, and Mr. Alair for finding this.

15 What I do want to ask, Pat, is the
16 extension for one year to the February deadline, what was
17 the ground for that? That's the tax appeal piece.

18 MR. ALAIR: Well, the logic for the date
19 that we chose was that's when people will have to file
20 their tax appeals by. We were trying to find a date - we
21 didn't want to extend it too far out. If you extend it
22 too far out it puts the Council in the position of going
23 into the budget process without solid numbers for how
24 much we are exempting. So we didn't want to extend it

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1 too far out.

2 February 20th is the deadline for filing
3 tax appeals. It seemed like a logical date. That way when
4 people come in to file their appeals that -- that's an
5 opportunity for us to have our staff cross sell, if you
6 will, the notion that they may be eligible for this
7 exemption and not know about it. So that was why we
8 chose that date.

9 MAYOR SLIFKA: And what is the rationale
10 for just doing it for this one year and not making that
11 permanent?

12 MR. ALAIR: The state program deadline is
13 October 1. So if we had a different deadline going
14 forward it might actually mislead people and cause them
15 to file too late for the state exemption.

16 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay.

17 MR. ALAIR: So we wanted as much as
18 possible to make the two programs completely consistent,
19 deadlines and application periods.

20 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay.

21 MR. ALAIR: And just because it may come
22 up for those of you who will recall October 1 this year
23 happened to fall on, if I remember correctly, a Sunday.
24 Ordinarily, we would extend the application period until

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1 the next Monday. That next Monday, however, was Rosh
2 Hashanah or Yom Kippur. I think it was Yom Kippur. As a
3 result we actually extended it to the next day, the
4 Tuesday. So we did give people as much leeway as we
5 thought we could under the terms of the ordinance. But
6 Mr. Klyzinski or I think --

7 MAYOR SLIFKA: -- you got it right.

8 MR. ALAIR: Did not get back from the old
9 country until later in the week, so he was past even that
10 extended deadline.

11 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay. Thank you. Are
12 there any questions from the Council? Mrs. Carpenter.

13 MS. BARBARA CARPENTER: Yes, kind of the
14 one I always ask is concern about how do veterans apply
15 for this if they're not aware of the extension. And just
16 some people just aren't real aware of these programs.

17 MR. ALAIR: I talked to the assessor. We
18 had -- we had done everything that we thought we could do
19 to get the word out. One of the things that happened, as
20 you recall, over the last couple of years we've modified
21 the exact -- the actual veterans' exemption program to
22 expand it to include people who weren't previously
23 eligible for it. And we had put it on our website. We
24 had put information out there on cable access TV. I

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1 think at one point we talked about writing a letter.
2 Unfortunately with the reval going on and the assessor's
3 office staff being just overwhelmed nothing happened, no
4 letter went out to everyone. But I think that the
5 intention would be to send out -- perhaps send out a
6 letter with tax bills in December so that people are
7 aware of it again before the deadline.

8 MS. CARPENTER: Thank you.

9 MAYOR SLIFKA: Thank you, Mrs. Carpenter.
10 Anything else? Dr. Thornberry.

11 DR. CAROLYN THORNBERRY: Let me just
12 piggyback on what Mrs. Carpenter, you know, said, which
13 is true. And I know that Councilman Spada and I worked on
14 this several years ago on one of the veterans' benefits.
15 But this one is so different and it has the capacity to
16 capture many more people. And I think I'm concerned, as I
17 know others are here, that those individuals who may not
18 have qualified in the previous several years could
19 possibly qualify under this program. And it would be to
20 their benefit to please call the town hall, call anyone
21 of us we'll tell you who to call too because it's really
22 important. The scope of the taxes change and the income
23 thresholds are different. So it's important.

24 So thank you. And I'm glad that there is

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1 an extension as well, that's important.

2 MR. ALAIR: And you're absolutely right.
3 And one of the frustrating things from our perspective is
4 without sending out a letter to every household in town
5 we have no way of capturing who might now be eligible who
6 wasn't before. It's just not a list of data that we have
7 anywhere. So it's very frustrating from that perspective.

8 DR. THORNBERRY: To make it even further
9 frustrating, as if we actually want that, I remember a
10 time when Mr. Spada and I were working on this and we
11 were working on also people who were overseas or had been
12 overseas. I contacted the state and they couldn't tell
13 us. I wanted at least to know, you know, where the
14 veterans -- couldn't they at least tell us everybody who
15 was here whether they qualified under the scope of the
16 benefit or the income thresholds, at least tell us
17 everybody. That would certainly narrow down the amount of
18 mail that we would have to put out.

19 MR. ALAIR: Right.

20 DR. THORNBERRY: You know. They couldn't
21 do that. So, yes, I know, so it relies on this -- you
22 know, telling people and -- so thank you.

23 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay. There is a sign up
24 sheet for this hearing. Do we have anybody signed up?

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1 MR. ALAIR: I don't think anyone signed
2 up. The sign-up sheet is blank.

3 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay. With that, we'll go
4 back to if anymore comments or questions from the
5 Council. Okay. Mr. Alair, I trust you're done.

6 MR. ALAIR: Yes.

7 MAYOR SLIFKA: Okay, seeing that, we will
8 close this public hearing. And we will be back in just a
9 couple of minutes to start the 5:30 hearing.

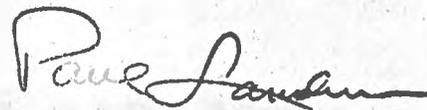
10 (Whereupon, the hearing was adjourned at
11 5:25 p.m.)
12

CERTIFICATE

I, Paul Landman, a Notary Public in and for the State of Connecticut, and President of Post Reporting Service, Inc., do hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing record is a correct and verbatim transcription of the audio recording made of the proceeding hereinbefore set forth.

I further certify that neither the audio operator nor I are attorney or counsel for, nor directly related to or employed by any of the parties to the action and/or proceeding in which this action is taken; and further, that neither the audio operator nor I are a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties, thereto, or financially interested in any way in the outcome of this action or proceeding.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and do so attest to the above, this 28th day of November, 2006.



**Paul Landman
President**

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