

**APPROVED BOARD OF FINANCE MINUTES  
TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2010**

Members Present: Peter Gomez, Chairman; Jill Bornstein, Marty Heiser; Dave Ulmer; Margaret Price Sims

Town Officials: Kevin Redmond, Al Garzi, Jane Berendsen-Hill

AGENDA

Mr. Gomez called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m.

Discussion on Interest Rate to be Charged for the Senior Tax Deferment program

Mr. Garzi outlined the two types of senior tax relief currently available. (1) Senior Tax Credit - This credit was first put in place in 1976. The program allows seniors a credit to their property tax and the amount of the credit is currently \$1,048 per year. The amount of the credit is set by the Board of Selectmen. There is no income requirement in order to qualify for the credit. This credit is accounted for as a separate line item in the calculation of the mill rate.

(2) Tax Deferment Program – This deferment was first put in place in 1988. The program allows seniors to defer their property taxes; however, seniors must meet an income requirement in order to participate in the program. Interest accrues on the deferred tax and the interest rate is currently 4%. The terms of the program specify that the interest rate charged approximate the borrowing cost to the Town. The deferment is accounted for through the reserve for uncollectable receivables.

Mr. Gomez asked when the last time a committee reviewed the deferment program. Mr. Garzi responded that it was reviewed in 2002.

Mr. Gomez discussed benchmarking these programs with other area towns. Most towns similar to Ridgefield had few, if any, such programs. Exceptions include Westport and Easton which have senior tax programs similar in magnitude to Ridgefield's programs.

Mr. Ulmer inquired as to whether these other towns have a means test in order to qualify. Mr. Garzi responded that he believes, other than Redding, the other towns do have a means test.

A discussion also ensued on the interest rate charged by other towns. Ms. Bornstein noted that if the interest rate changed on the deferment program, it would apply prospectively, not retroactively.

Regarding the Senior Tax Credit, Mr. Heiser noted that this a good deal for the seniors and the program is doing what it intended to do.

Mr. Gomez stated that it would be beneficial for the Board of Selectman to review both programs, including eligibility requirements and amounts. Mr. Ulmer agreed and thought that a committee should be formed to review these programs. Mr. Gomez stated that he would recommend to the First Selectman that the Board of Selectmen initiate a review these programs.

Regarding the interest rate charged on the deferment program, Ms. Bornstein made a motion to keep the rate at 4%. Mr. Heiser seconded the motion. Vote, all in favor, unanimous. Motion carries

The meeting was recessed at 9:15 and called back into session at 9:40 p.m.

#### Referendum Reading

Mr. Gomez read to the Board the Referendum Reading below proposing the mill rate for fiscal year 2011:

#### REFERENDUM READING

I so move that the tax rate for the Town of Ridgefield be 20.40 mills on the Grand List of October 1, 2009 and that said taxes shall become due and payable on July 1, 2010. Each motor vehicle tax bill shall become due and payable July 1, 2010. Each real estate and personal property bill in excess of \$100.00 may be paid quarterly. If any quarterly installments that shall not be paid within thirty (30) days after the same becomes due, then the unpaid quarterly tax thereof shall be subject to interest at the rate of eighteen (18) percent annually or one and one-half (1.5) percent each month from the due date or a minimum interest fee of \$2.00 (State Section #12-146). Each motor vehicle tax bill shall be paid in full by August 1, 2010, and if not so paid, interest shall be charged at one and one-half (1.5) percent each month from July 1, 2010 or a minimum interest fee of \$2.00 (State Section # 12-146).

Mr. Gomez moved to vote on the motion; Mr. Heiser seconded it. Vote, all in favor, unanimous. Motion carries.

Mr. Gomes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 p.m.; Ms. Bornstein seconded it. Vote, all in favor, unanimous. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin Redmond  
May 12, 2010