

DRAFT Minutes

Tax Exemption Policy Committee

Minutes of February 5, 2025

Attendees: Councilor Nathan Fennessy, Chairperson; Councilor Michele Horne; Councilor Jim Schlosser; and Mayor Byron Champlin; Councilor Karen McNamara – Absent; Fred Keach – Absent.

City Staff: Jonathan Rice, Director of Real Estate Assessments

Public Attendees: Michaela Towfighi - Concord Monitor; Norman St. Hilaire - Resident

The meeting was opened at 12:02 pm by Chairperson Fennessy.

Councilor Schlosser moved to accept the minutes of January 31, 2024; Councilor Horne seconded; all affirmed by roll call.

A spreadsheet, comparing the same information for thirteen (13) other cities and towns was provided to the committee. It was noted that Concord ranked 6th most giving among the fourteen comparative communities relative to overall value given in the form of exemptions and credits as a percentage of taxable value. In 2023, Concord also ranked 5th. Committee members reviewed the exemption and credit amounts adopted by the various communities specifically reviewing income and asset amounts for elderly, Veterans and All-Veterans credit amounts, and disabled exemption amounts. Councilor Schlosser noted that he would like to move up in ranking from #6. Chairperson Fennessy was sympathetic to those on a fixed income and the cost that would bore to the taxpayers, he would like a balanced approach. Mayor Champlin noted that he was sensitive to both sides.

The committee reviewed the current and potential exemptions and credits available to Cities and Towns to adopt and amend. The committee reviewed the October 9, 2024 - Report to Honorable Mayor and Committee on Disabled Exemption and updated summary along with the Deaf Exemption. Chairperson Fennessy discussed the 15% ratio that exists between the number of disabled exemptions as compared to elderly exemptions as a reasonable measure to estimate how many may potentially qualify in Concord if we adopted the disabled exemption. Mayor Champlin requested the qualifications for RSA 72:37-b: Exemption for the Disabled. Chairperson Fennessy looked up the RSA and federal qualifications. Councilor Schlosser noted that his priority would be on modifying the income in order to aid applicants on fixed income. He would like to aim for Londonderry/ Hooksett levels listed on the spreadsheet. Chairperson Fennessy stated that he did not want to strive to be Londonderry as they vote on a default budget year to year but agreed that we should focus on income. Councilor Horne and Mayor Champlin agree to focus on elderly income and help those who already qualify.

The historical exemption and credit amounts for Concord and Penacook were presented.

The number and reasons for denial of elderly exemptions were reviewed. The 2024 Social Security cost of living adjustment including the monthly and yearly benefit increase for single and married applicants.

The committee reviewed the income limit for tax year 2024, the average yearly increase for social security, and closest income denials as reported for 2024. Councilor Schlosser suggested a 5% increase to the exemption amount for both single and married applicants. The recommendation for increase was \$44,100 from \$42,000 for single applicants and \$63,000 from \$60,000 for married applicants. Councilor Horne moved to recommend the increase and Councilor Schlosser seconded; all affirmed by roll call.

The committee did not recommend any changes to the assets limit of \$150,000 for the elderly exemption. The committee did not recommend any changes to the exemption amounts until revaluation is complete.

Committee reviewed the difference between the 2008 and 2024 municipal values before exemptions and the tax rates for those years. The committee found the information helpful.

The Committee reviewed the blind exemption amount of \$125,000 and recommended no changes.

The committee reviewed the 2022-2024 impact on the increase to the Optional Veterans'/ All Veterans' Credits from \$150 to \$300. Committee discussed moving from \$300 to \$400 eventually towards \$500. Councilor Schlosser discussed going to \$500 this year. The committee reviewed the estimated impact and decided that they did not want to move \$500 at this time. The committee did not recommend changes to the \$2,000 total and permanent disabled veterans' credit. Councilor Horne moved to recommend increasing the veterans' and all veterans' credit from \$300 to \$400, Councilor Schlosser seconded; all affirmed by roll call.

Councilor Horne noted that there was no need to add an exemption for the deaf or disabled. Chairperson Fennessy confirmed that there were no taxpayer requests for the exemptions. Committee requested that the Assessor report annually if exemption is requested by taxpayers.

Chairperson Fennessy moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Horne seconded; all affirmed by roll call.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm.