

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday – January 28, 2008  
Flynn Building – 7:30pm**

**Present:** Chuck Woodard, Jamie Gossels, Bob Jacobson, Jim Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragonas, Sheila Stewart, Ralph Verni (arrive 8:15pm), and Debbie Zurka

**The meeting was opened at 7:35pm.**

**Article #38 – Senior Property Tax Relief:**

Ralph Tyler made a presentation to the committee in support of his Senior Property Tax Relief article. He began the presentation by thanking the committee for having him tonight and for the service of performing a difficult job. He realizes the difficult decisions that they are faced with.

Ralph Tyler stated that the article is in its beginning stage. He is using tonight's meeting to receive input from the FinCom, and has already made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

Ralph Tyler started the presentation by comparing how the tax bill rates have risen since 1988 through 2007. The average tax bill in 1988 was approximately \$2,000, and has risen to approximately \$10,000 in 2007. He believes this to be the main reason for seniors moving out of town in their early 50s.

Jamie Gossels stated that she remembers seeing a lot of these slides at prior town meetings. She believes he will face a lot of questions if he presents the article this way.

Ralph Tyler stated the Bd. Of Selectmen suggested creating more housing for seniors such as Frost Farms. Mr. Tyler believes the town needs to get a handle on the budget, and the way to do it is to maintain the senior's residency. He does not think more housing needs to be created, with the seniors separated from the community.

Chuck Woodard asked if there is data that shows that if we reduce the senior's tax bill by 10%, that this would be enough that they would stay in town. Ralph Tyler stated that a 10% reduction would not keep seniors in town.

Marty Ragonas asked what he would recommend to keep seniors in town. Ralph Tyler believes the town needs to communicate that they want the seniors to remain in town. He does not believe there should be a means limit, but it should be based on the amount of your tax bill. He would like to see something passed to show that something is being done to keep the seniors in Sudbury.

Marty Ragonis stated that she would be interested in the PTERC report. The last time this was looked at, the seniors were not taking advantage of the exemptions being offered from the town. Ralph Tyler stated that he would have to follow up on this. He has been told more seniors are using what the town has to offer, and believes more seniors are using the deferral exemption that is offered.

Debbie Zurka asked if there are other towns that already have a model prepared, or is Sudbury leading the way. Ralph Tyler stated that very little is being done in this matter. He believes there are some communities that offer better exemptions to the seniors. Bob Jacobson stated that he does not know of any town offering better exemptions, because the state legislature stated that this is a problem across the state of Massachusetts.

Ralph Tyler thanked the committee for their time.

**Other Business:**

Bob Jacobson gave the committee an overview of what has been taking place at the Budget Working Group meetings. The working group has decided to put forth an approximate override of \$1.8 million. The Bd. Of Selectmen will be discussing this at the future meeting, because they are inclined to put it on the ballot before bringing it to town meeting.

**There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:20pm.**