

LEVERETT TAX RELIEF COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2017

Present: Don Robinson, Shirley Thomas, Jason Noschese, Jim Hicks, Judy Weinthaler

Approval of minutes of January 5, 2017; unanimous

Determination of tax relief awards to the 11 applicants:

Awards will apply to the Spring, 2017, tax bill and are given once a year.

The criteria used was the percentage of income applicants spent on taxes. Assets were not considered given the lack of verification and documentation available as part of the application process.

Percentages ranged from 8% to 35%. The applications were ordered according to this figure with the highest percentage receiving \$750 and the lowest \$250.

The total funds available is \$8,266 and the committee agreed to allocate \$5050.00 this distribution. The funds available cover the past 2 years of donations and a reserve is needed given the unknown level of donations in the future.

Jason will send notifications to the recipients regarding the amount that will be deducted from the upcoming tax bill and clarify that this is a yearly distribution and will not be given for the fall bill.

Discussion of improvements to the procedure for applications:

All applicants also received the Chapter 41C abatements of \$1,000 but it would be helpful to distribute information about all the tax relief funds that are available.

Application form needs to be modified:

Clarify that all household income needs to be reported and all wage earners need to submit income tax returns.

Phrase the minimum requirements as questions.

Ask a question to verify that applicant now lives in the residence

Clarify where forms are submitted and dates for applications

Ask for information about any extenuating circumstances relating to amount of award

When forms are submitted to the Assessors, someone (Steve?) will check the applications for completeness and notify the applicant of any additional information needed.

The Committee will develop a handout of Procedures including eligibility requirements (for seniors and persons with disabilities), application requirements and timeline, review process, awards, and how to donate. This will be posted on the Town website.

Discussion of need for more publicity regarding the program and need for funds:

Information in Town newsletter, inserts into tax bills, directions on how to contribute (check, direct pay, etc.), presentation at Town Meeting, handout at TM, Website information (programs description, procedures and application), phone message when tax bills sent out to encourage people to donate any amount of money.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, March 25, 9:00 a.m. at Town Hall

To discuss revisions to applications, development of a Procedures flier, and publicity to encourage donations, including Town Meeting information.

Minutes submitted by Judy Weinthaler