

**PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED LOCAL LAW # 3 of 2023
PROVIDING REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND AMBULANCE
WORKERS PURSUANT TO SECTION 466-A OF THE REAL PROPERTY TAX LAW
TOWN BOARD
TOWN OF STEPHENTOWN
26 GRANGE HALL ROAD, STEPEHTOWN, NY 12168
OCTOBER 30, 2023**

The Regular meeting of the Town Board, Town of Stephentown was called to order by **Supervisor Philip Roder** **7:00 PM** at the Town Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

(X) Supervisor Philip Roder	(X) High. Superin. Alden Goodermote
(X) Council Diana Clark	(X) Assessor, Jennifer Van Deusen
(X) Council William Jennings	(X) Code Enforcement Officer, Owen Cassavaugh
() Council Everett Madden	() Supervisor's Bookkeeper, Maureen Seel
(X) Council Kyle Kidney	
(X) Town Clerk Stephanie Hoffman	

A quorum was wasn't established.

1 from the Public were present

REPORT FROM THE TOWN BOARD:

NEXT MEETINGS OF THE TOWN BOARD

- TO FOLLOW AFTER THIS MEETING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET
- SPECIAL TOWN BOARD MEETING TO ADOPT THE 2024 TOWN BUDGET NOVEMBER 13TH, 2023 AT 7:00PM
- REGULAR TOWN BOARD MEETING NOVEMBER 20TH, 2023 AT 7:00PM

Council Jennings provided a brief overview of the proposed local law to provide local volunteer firefighters and EMTs with additional tax exemptions based on years of service.

No public comments were made.

MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 7:03 PM

MOTION BY: JENNINGS

SECONDED BY: KIDNEY

VOTES OF:

4 AYE

0 NAY

****A Workshop Meeting** is held every second Monday of every month at **7:00PM** at the Town Hall.

****The next Regular Meeting** of the Town Board, Town of Stephentown will be held on **Monday, November 20th, 2023 at 7:00 PM** at the Town Hall.

Stephanie M. Hoffman
Town Clerk

EXHIBIT A

Section 1. Legislative Intent and Purpose.

- a. The Town of Stephentown Town Board finds and determines that attracting and retaining quality volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel is one of the most critical problems facing the Town of Stephentown and that maintaining effective emergency protection depends on the ability to train and retain volunteers.
- b. The Town Board finds and determines that it is essential for the municipality to provide real property tax exemptions as an incentive to attract new volunteers and help combat a persistent and alarming decline in the number of volunteers serving as active responders to fire and medical emergencies and unless recruits are found to replace retiring volunteers and seasoned members are encouraged to continue their volunteer service, the health and safety of citizens served by the volunteer firefighter and emergency medical personnel corps may be jeopardized.
- c. The Town Board further finds and determines that real property tax exemptions are an appropriate way to recognize the personal sacrifices and dedication of these community-spirited men and women who unselfishly give their time and risk their safety to protect their neighbors without compensation.
- d. The purpose of this Local Law is to adopt the real property tax exemptions provided for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in accordance with Section 466-a of the Real Property Tax Law to read as follows.

Section 2. Real Property Tax Exemption.

Real property owned by an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service or such enrolled member and spouse residing in the County of Rensselaer shall be exempt from taxation to the extent of 10 percent of the assessed value of such property for County purposes, exclusive of special assessments.

Section 3. Qualifications

- Such exemption shall only be granted to an enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance services if:
- a. the applicant resides in the County of Rensselaer and is a member of an incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service which provides service within the city, village, town or school district;
 - b. the real property which is the subject of such exemption is the primary residence of the applicant;
 - c. the real property is used exclusively for residential purposes; provided however, that in the event any portion of such property is not used exclusively for the applicant's residence but is used for other purposes, such portion shall be subject to taxation and the remaining portion only shall be entitled to the exemption provided by this Local Law; and

d. the applicant has obtained and displayed a certificate issued by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department indicating that the applicant has been an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company or fire department for at least two years or the applicant has been certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an enrolled member of such incorporated voluntary ambulance service for at least two years.

Section 4. Twenty-year active members.

Any enrolled member of an incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service who accrues more than twenty years of active service and is so certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service, shall be granted the ten percent exemption as authorized by this section for the remainder of his or her life as long as his or her primary residence is located within the Town of Stephentown.

Section 5. Un-remarried Surviving Spouses of Volunteers killed in the line of duty.

An un-remarried spouse of a volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers killed in the line of duty may receive the real property tax exemption if:

1. Such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an un-remarried spouse of an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service who was killed in the line of duty; and
2. Such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least five years; and
3. Such deceased volunteer had been receiving the exemption prior to his or her death.

Section 6. Un-remarried Surviving Spouses of Volunteers with at least Twenty Years of Service.

An un-remarried spouse of a volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers with twenty years of service may receive the real property tax exemption if:

1. Such un-remarried spouse is certified by the authority having jurisdiction for the incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated voluntary ambulance service as an un-remarried spouse of an enrolled member of such incorporated volunteer fire company, fire department or incorporated volunteer ambulance service who was killed in the line of duty.
2. Such deceased volunteer had been an enrolled member for at least twenty years.
3. Such deceased volunteer and un-remarried spouse had been receiving the exemption of such property prior to the death of such volunteer.

Section 7. Application process.

1. Applications for such exemption shall be filed with the assessor of the town on or before the taxable status date on a form as prescribed by the New York State Commissioner for the Office of Real Property Tax Services.

2. The assessor of the town shall have the duty and responsibility of procuring and filing a copy of such certification prior to granting the exemption provided for by this Local Law.

Section 8. No diminution of current benefits.

No applicant who is a volunteer firefighter or volunteer ambulance worker who by reason of such status is receiving any benefit under the provisions of law on the effective date of this Local Law shall suffer any diminution of such benefit because of the provisions of this Local Law.

Section 9. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect on January 1, 2024 and shall apply to taxable status dates occurring on or after such date.