

STAY NJ (PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAM) TASK FORCE MEETING

Minutes of the Meeting December 20, 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Stay NJ Property Tax Relief Program Task Force (the “Task Force”) held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 1:36 PM Eastern Standard Time.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD IN ATTENDANCE

Dennis Zeveloff, Governor’s Office, Chief Policy Advisor, Chair Designee
Aaron Binder, Department of the Treasury, Deputy State Treasurer, Cabinet Designee
Dr. Christopher Wheeler, Department of Community Affairs, Chief Data Officer, Cabinet Designee
Jessica Cohen, Public Member
Honorable Adrian O. Mapp, Mayor Plainfield, NJ, Public Member
Honorable John E. McCormac, Mayor Woodbridge Township, NJ, Public Member

This constituted a quorum of the members of the Stay NJ Task Force.

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES

David Ridolfino, Executive Director, Stay NJ Task Force

Christine Machnowsky, Deputy Attorney General
Aimee Manocchio-Nason, Deputy Attorney General
Kavin Mistry, Deputy Attorney General
David Drescher, Governor’s Office
Assad Akhter, Governor’s Office
Robert Joyce, Treasury, Division of Taxation
Marita Sciarrotta, Treasury, Division of Taxation
LaShera Kirk, Treasury, Division of Administration
Seth Hahn, Assembly Majority
Patrick Brennan, Assembly Majority
Elizabeth Mahn, Senate Majority

Chair Designee Dennis Zeveloff presided over the meeting and LaShera Kirk, Treasury, Division of Administration, kept the minutes.

Chair Designee Zeveloff called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM. Chair Designee Zeveloff introduced himself and made the following statement:

I wish to announce that adequate notice of this meeting was provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of today’s meeting was filed with the Secretary of State, distributed by email and mail to the following five newspapers of general distribution: The Courier Post, Times of Trenton, the Asbury Park Press, the Star Ledger,

and North Jersey.com and it was posted in the main entrance at the New Jersey Department of the Treasury and on the bulletin board for the Secretary of State.

Chair Designee Zeveloff turned the meeting over to Executive Director, David Ridolfino for roll call.

The following Board members acknowledged their presence:

Dennis Zeveloff, Governor's Office, Chief Policy Advisor, Chair Designee
Aaron Binder, Department of the Treasury, Deputy State Treasurer, Cabinet Designee
Dr. Christopher Wheeler, Department of Community Affairs, Chief Data Officer, Cabinet Designee
Jessica Cohen, Public Member
Honorable John E. McCormac, Public Member
Honorable Adrian O. Mapp, Public Member

Chair Designee Zeveloff made a general note reminding the Board, due to the virtual nature of the meeting, to identify themselves before making or seconding a motion and moved forward with the agenda.

ITEMS OF DISCUSSION

I. Election of a temporary Acting Secretary until a Secretary is formally appointed by the Governor

Chair Designee Zeveloff nominated David Ridolfino to serve as temporary Acting Secretary until a Secretary is formally appointed by the Governor and asked for other nominations. Hearing none, Chair Designee Zeveloff requested a motion to approve the election of Stay NJ Executive Director, David Ridolfino as the temporary Acting Secretary of the Board. A motion was made to approve the election of David Ridolfino as Acting Board Secretary by Cabinet designee, Aaron Binder, and was seconded by public Member Honorable Adrian O. Mapp, and was approved by the affirmative vote of the six (6) voting members present.

Chair Designee Zeveloff turned the meeting over to Executive Director and Acting Secretary Ridolfino to introduce himself and make a presentation.

II. Executive Director's Introduction and Presentation

Executive Director Ridolfino provided some background as to his experience in State Government and his plans for this first meeting.

Executive Director Ridolfino summarized the two legacy property tax relief programs – ANCHOR and Senior Freeze PTR. He then went on to discuss the provisions of Ch. 75 and the new Stay NJ requirements as outlined in legislation.

Executive Director Ridolfino summarized some of the higher level challenges that the Task Force may face and may want to focus on in development of their recommendations. More specifically he focused on the differences in payment methods, benefit year, income definitions and concerns over the timelines required or recommended for the programs.

Executive Director Ridolfino also summarized some of the local government challenges that may be encountered as a result of the quarterly credits requirement of CH 75.

The meeting was turned over to Chair Designee Zeveloff who asked if there were any questions.

There were no questions and Chairman Zeveloff asked each member if they would like to add a brief statement.

III. Taskforce Member's Statements

Cabinet Designee Aaron Binder - introduced himself and thanked Governor Murphy and Treasurer Muoio for his appointment to the Task Force and thanked legislative leaders and the sponsors of the bill mainly Speaker Coughlin and Senate President's Scutari, for working to develop the important property tax relief program, but also for having the foresight to create this Task Force. Member Binder recognized there were many challenges that needed to be worked through and highlighted the opportunity to develop a successful program.

Member Binder stressed the need to develop recommendations for a program that provides relief to every eligible senior, but also is user friendly for the seniors, understandable, and a program that can be efficiently administered by the Division of Taxation. He recognized the many professionals in the Department of the Treasury that have worked hard to administer the existing programs and who will be called on to help develop and administer the requirements of CH 75.

Cabinet Designee Christopher Wheeler - introduced himself and thanked the Governor and Commissioner Suarez for his appointment to the Task Force. He indicated that this is an exciting opportunity to lower the tax burden for seniors stressing the high tax burden in NJ. He also pointed out some of the challenges associated with implementation, specifically the challenges for local governments specifically timelines related to credits and technology concerns related to the five vendors utilized by NJ municipalities.

Public Member, Jessica Cohen – introduced herself and indicated she was appointed by Senate President Scutari. She noted her excitement to be part of the Task Force and indicated she felt the policy and law are sound and with some tweaking can be implemented in the time frame required.

Public Member, Honorable Adrian O. Mapp - introduced himself and mentioned he was very excited to be part of this process. He indicated that the Task Force needs to find a way to address the state's high property tax burden, particularly for seniors, and make the process less cumbersome. Member Mapp said the Task Force needs to be careful not to pass on costs onto local governments and that this is an opportunity to develop unique recommendations.

Public Member, Honorable John McCormac - introduced himself and identified his background as Woodbridge CFO and Mayor as well as his time as the New Jersey State Treasurer as providing valuable lessons to assist him in his Task Force responsibilities.

He recognized that Governor Murphy assembled a fantastic team for this Task Force. He recognized the major challenges ahead as far as timing in addition to other issues, but said he is willing to do whatever it takes to help tackle these challenges and come out with a good result.

Chair Designee Zeveloff thanked all Board members for their comments. The meeting was turned over to Executive Director Ridolfino to continue with the next agenda item.

IV. Next Steps

Quarterly Reports - The Executive Director outlined the quarterly report requirements required by statute and noted that the first report is due January 1, 2024.

Comprehensive List of Issues and Individual Meetings - The Executive Director noted he is working on a comprehensive list of issues and concerns and hopes to hold individual meetings with Taskforce members.

Public Hearings - The Executive Director indicated that the Task Force may want to consider a format where it can get feedback and suggestions from the public either as a separate meeting or before one of the regularly scheduled meetings.

The Executive Director discussed that a website was being developed that would allow for public comments and suggestions.

Other - Executive Director Ridolfino continued with the following housekeeping items:

Request for information from the Board should go through Executive Director Ridolfino. He will be able to provide information he already has access to or work with the Administration to get the information requested.

Request from the press related to Task Force business should go through Executive Director Ridolfino. Legislation requires that Treasury serve as Task Force support, which will allow Treasury Communications to assist with press inquiries.

The Board meeting was turned over to Chair Designee Zeveloff who reminded the Board members that there will be a need for them to complete Oath and Ethics forms as Members of the Board.

Chair Designee Zeveloff asks for questions from the Board. Hearing none, the meeting continued with the next agenda item.

V. Future Meeting Schedule

A determination was made to schedule the next public Board meeting in late January 2024 and to continue in a virtual format for the time being, with the intent to meet in person in the future. The possibility for a regular schedule will be discussed further in the future.

Additional Discussion

Cabinet Member, Aaron Binder added comments that public access was important and that the use of an email box and then a subsequent public hearing was important for the Task Force to consider. He indicated that during the period when the bill was being discussed, the public had provided some very good comments

The Chair indicated his support and the Executive Director agreed and noted that the mailbox feature would be part of the web site.

Public Member, Honorable Adrian O. Mapp indicated that it would be important to get comments from the Tax Assessors Association, the tax collectors, as well as the GFOA.

Public Member, Honorable John McCormac added that the League of Municipalities and the Conference of Mayors should be added.

Chair Designee Zeveloff agreed that all organizations mentioned should be represented and that the Task Force needs to figure out what format makes the most sense. He added that the mailbox feature was a good start and a discussion on next steps could take place at the next meeting.

Executive Director Ridolfino added that anybody who's working with the senior population and helping to prepare returns and filing property tax relief applications on behalf of seniors should be heard as well. He indicated that an application start date after tax season may not be workable considering the assistance seniors need to prepare applications.

Public Member, Honorable John McCormac agreed with the Executive Director.

Chairman Zeveloff invited additional comments from the Board.

There being no further business, on a motion by Cabinet Designee Binder, and seconded by public Member Honorable John E. McCormac and carried by voice vote from members present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 2:21PM.