

Justin Paré, President  
John Simmons, Vice President  
John Costello  
Daniel Donovan  
Mark Gould, Jr.



Darius Gregory  
Andrew Shanahan  
Andrea Slobogan  
Patricia St. Pierre

Town of North Attleborough  
**TOWN COUNCIL**  
43 South Washington Street, North Attleborough, MA 02760  
Phone: (508) 699-0100

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3/19/2025 - Minutes

**I. Pledge Of Allegiance**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Vice-President Simmons called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. and lead the Committee and the audience in the pledge of allegiance.

**Members Present:**

John Simmons Kathleen Prescott

Craig Cameron

John Costello

Pat St. Pierre

Dan Donovan

John Donohue arrived at 7:24PM

Mark Gould- Town Councilor

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

Town Manager Michael Borg

Town Council Clerk, Kerrin Billinghoff

Assistant Assessor Cheryl Smith

**Residents:**

Laura Wagner

Kevin McCarthy

**Invited Guests Present:**

None at this time.

**Documents Reviewed:**

- Finance Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes 02/26/2025
- **Measure 2025-047** - To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals. AMENDED
- **Measure 2025-054 - Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts**, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures
- **Councilor Gould's Power Point** - Senior Exemption Final Presentation 03.10.2025

**II. Approval Of Minutes**

- a. Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of February 26, 2025

Approval of Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of February 26, 2025

Councilor Donovan made a motion to approve the Finance Sub-Committee Minutes of February 26, 2025.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 5-0.**

**III. Resident And Community Comment**

None at this time.

**IV. Old Business**

- a. None at this time

**V. New Business**

- a. Measure 2025-047- To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals. AMENDED

**Measure 2025-047** - To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption of \$1,000, to include a Broader Discussion for Senior Tax Proposals. AMENDED

This special act is designed to provide targeted property tax relief to seniors and help them continue to thrive and be able to afford to live in North Attleboro and additionally provides an added measure of protection from tax increases. The act is entitled: An act authorizing the city known as the Town of North Attleborough to establish a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption.

There have been many communities in the position that North Attleboro finds itself in, cognizant of the tax burden of its senior citizens with rising assessments and taxes for those on fixed incomes. In recent years many communities have adopted special acts in order to shield their aging population that has contributed to the town for decades but finds itself in an untenable financial situation with rising health care costs, medicine, food, and general costs of living that have outpaced their fixed income.

This special act, as many other special acts passed by other communities, is pegged to the Massachusetts Circuit Breaker Income Tax Credit criteria that are substantially as follows and are more completely set forth in the attached proposed special act. This special act would compliment the Circuit Breaker credit and add a layer of protection to Senior Citizens whose income doesn't exceed:

\$72,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household; \$91,000 for a head of household; \$109,000 for married couples filing a joint return; These amounts are adjusted annually and tied to the CPI; And other asset and residential criteria as specified in the attached special act.

Motion: To authorize the Town Manager to petition the Massachusetts General Court for a special act in the form set forth in the special act as amended entitled: "An act authorizing the city known as the Town of North Attleborough to establish a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption", authorizing a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption; provided, however, that the General Court may reasonably vary the form and substance of this requested legislation within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition.

Vice-President Simmons explained that this measure was brought forth at the 3/10/2025 Town Council Meeting and was referred to the Finance Sub-Committee for further review and consideration. He explained that the Council did not want to rush this. We all felt that this deserved a broader based discussion to help as many residents as possible.

Town Councilor Gould was in attendance to address the Finance Sub-Committee and explain his proposal that was brought forward at the 3/10/2025 Town Council Meeting. Councilor Gould presented a PowerPoint Presentation on "Helping Seniors Make Ends Meet and Stay in Their Homes."

- Supporting Seniors, Strengthening Community
- Existing Exemptions for Seniors
- Cost of Existing Exemptions for Seniors
- New High School Project
- Senior Exemption Proposal
- Senior Exemptions Cost Estimate
- Other Assistance for Seniors
- Example- Circuit Breaker and Senior Exemption
- Other Assistance for Seniors
- The Senior Means-tested Real Estate Property Tax Exemption
- What Does "Means-Tested" Mean?
- What are the criteria for this Senior Exemption?
- How does it work?
- Home Room Petition (AKA Special Act)
- Other Communities
- Timeline
- Equity for Seniors

Town Manager Borg stated that the Senior Exemptions are part of the Overlay. He also stated that there are 40 Seniors that are participating in the Senior Work-Off Program which will amount to \$80,000.00. AN additional \$300,000.00 would also come out of the overlay for Seniors, Veterans, and Blind individuals. Councilor Gould's proposal would come out of the overlay as well.

There was discussion amongst the Town Manager, the Committee and Councilor Gould. Discussion included:

- At this time, we are not sure exactly how much the new High School will cost.
- Circuit Breaker Tax Credits/Circuit Breaker Requirements
- It would be advantageous to obtain Census Data to see the Mean Income of the Seniors in Town.
- Home Rule Petition
- Discussion of criteria is a great place to start.
- Should this come out of the overlay? Or should this be a shift? A shift would then take the burden off the budget.
- A shift may be the most consistent way to fund this proposal.
- How about a Freeze? -Would need to be Fair & Equitable

- How about freezing amount due?
- 4C vs. 4D
- Workload for Assessor's Office would not be increased that much.
- Would like to help as many residents as possible.
- What if Senior Circuit Breaker was raised?
- Number of Seniors in Town that are homeowners? Is this possible to find out?
- Should criteria be considered? Example: You need to have lived in Town for at least 10 years.

This measure and discussion will be held until the next Finance Sub-Committee Meeting.

John Donohue made a motion to continue this discussion of Measure 2025-047 to the next Finance Sub-Committee Meeting.

Councilor Costello seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 6-0.**

- b. Measure 2025-054 – Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures

**Measure 2025-054 – Acceptance of M.G.L. c. 59, § 50: Affordable Housing Property Tax Exemption Guidelines for Municipalities in Massachusetts, including acceptance, criteria, and application procedures**

**SUMMARY**

- The exemption was created by St. 2023 c. 50, signed into law on October 4, 2023.
- It applies to residential unit owners renting to income-qualifying persons at affordable rates.
- Municipalities must vote to accept the exemption, with the first available fiscal year being 2025.
- Acceptance can be revoked after three years, also by vote.
- The exemption applies only to class one residential units, with no domicile requirement unless locally specified.

**SCOPE OF ABATEMENT**

- Exemption amount is locally determined, not exceeding the tax due based on assessed

value.

- Residential unit owners must rent to income-qualifying persons at rates set by the municipality.
- Occupants' income must not exceed 200% of area median income, as defined by HUD.
- Units must be rented annually to qualifying persons for the entire fiscal year.

### **APPLICATIONS TO ASSESSORS**

- Applicants must submit STF 50 annually to local assessors, including signed leases and proof of income.
- Applications are due by the first actual tax bill's due date.
- Abatements granted will be charged against the overlay account, impacting annual overlay needs.

This measure was brought forth to the Town Council by Councilor Donovan. Councilor Donovan reviewed this measure with the Sub-Committee.

There was discussion amongst the Town Manager, Assistant Assessor, and the Committee. Discussion topics included:

- This would cause additional pressure on the overlay.
- Would we be ready to absorb this in the overlay?
- Funding cap could be put on this.
- Criteria for renters
- Do Sober Homes qualify?
- Can administration put together a potential proposal?
- Owner occupied is advantageous.

Councilor Donovan made a motion to continue discussion of this measure to the April 2, 2025 Sub-Committee Meeting.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 7-0. (Including Town Councilor Gould of the Town Council).**

## **VI. Adjournment**

Mr. Donovan made a motion to adjourn both the Finance Sub-Committee and the Town Council Meeting.

Councilor St. Pierre seconded the motion.

**Motion carried 7-0.**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.**

