



## ***Legislative & Rules Committee – Board of Representatives***

Phil Berns, Chair

Sean Boeger, Vice-Chair

# **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** *This meeting was held remotely.*

The Legislative & Rules Committee met as indicated above.

Present were Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger, and Committee member Reps. Blank, Cottrell, Fedeli, Matheny, Sherwood, and Vandervoort.

Absent/excused were Rep. Pierre-Louis.

Also present were:

- Ex-officio Reps. Camporeale, de la Cruz, Morson, Summerville, Walston, Watkins, Weinberg and Williams.
- City staff members Dana Lee City attorney; Carmen Hughes, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Gregory Stackpole, Tax Assessor
- Kieran Edmondson, Veterans Resource Center volunteer; Vincent Giordano, local Sierra Club chapter volunteer
- Members of the public.

Chair Berns called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Invitee(s) or Designees
1. <a href="#">LR31.100</a>	<p><b>ORDINANCE</b> <u>for public hearing and final adoption</u>;  Requiring a Citywide Transition to Electric  Landscaping Equipment in the City of Stamford  04/08/25 – Submitted by Rep. Camporeale, de la Cruz,  Weinberg and Berns  04/29/25 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0  05/27/25 – Recommitted to Steering 8-0-0  06/24/25 – Recommitted to Steering 7-0-0  07/29/25 – Recommitted to Steering 6-0-2  08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 1 approved by  Committee 6-1-0  08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 2 approved by  Committee 6-1-0  08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 3 approved by  Committee 7-0-0  08/26/2025 – Proposed amendment 4 approved by  Committee 6-1-0  08/26/2025 – Approved as amended for public hearing  by Committee 5-1-0  09/02/2025 – Approved for publication 28-6-0  <b>09/30/2025 – Motion to divide the question</b>  <b>approved by committee 8-0-0</b>  <b>09/30/2025 – Motion to Amend 211-4(2) months</b>  <b>failed by Committee 2-5-1</b>  <b>09/30/2025 – Motion to Amend 211-4(3)(a) and (b)</b>  <b>failed by Committee 2-6-0</b>  <b>09/30/2025 – Approved by Committee 7-1-0</b></p>	<p><b>APPROVED BY</b>  <b>COMMITTEE</b>  <b>7-1-0</b></p>

Chair Berns opened the public hearing on Item No. 1 (LR31.100) at 7:26 p.m. After the pre-registered [speakers list](#) [pre-registered speakers include: Doran Welch, Diana Kolaj, Bekim Ukperaj, Mark Nowotarski, Melanie Hollas, Kieran Edmondson, Jack Egan, Nelson Munoz, and Sue Halpern] was exhausted, the Chair then called on any members of the public who raised their hands in turn to speak [additional speakers include: Timothy McGrath, Anne Chang, Annie Hornish, Fern Galperin, Amy Ziffer, Vincent Giordano, Dave Adams, and Eleanor Blomstrom]. Once all members of the public present who wished to speak had spoken, the public hearing session was closed at 8:25 p.m.

A motion to amend Item LR31.100 as per the amendment language regarding § 211-4. Use Restrictions (2) (to change the allowed months of gasoline-powered leaf blowers to read as may not be used from January, February and March and Memorial Day through Labor Day) and to add § 211-4 (3) Acreage-Based Exception language was made, seconded and discussed. During discussion, the motion was changed to a motion to divide the question so the changes to 211-4(2) and the addition of 211-4(3) could each be discussed and voted upon separately. The motion to divide the question was approved via unanimous voice vote of 8-0-0 (Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Blank, Cottrell, Fedeli, Matheny, Sherwood, and Vandervoort approved).

Discussion regarding the proposed amendment to the changes in the months when gasoline-powered leaf blowers ensued. A motion to amend Item LR31.100 for the proposed amendment of [Sec.211-4.A.(2) Change from: "Seasonal Exception: Notwithstanding subsection (1), gasoline-powered leaf blowers may be used only during October, November and December. Use in all other time periods is prohibited." to "Seasonal Exception: Notwithstanding subsection (1), gasoline-powered leaf blowers may not be used from January, February, and March and Memorial Day through Labor Day"] was made, seconded and failed via roll call vote of 2-5-1 (Reps. Matheny and Sherwood approved; Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Blank, Cottrell and Vandervoort voted against; Rep. Fedeli abstained).

Discussion regarding the proposed amendment to add the acreage-based exception language to Sec. 211-4.A.(3) ensued. The exemption was presented as a way to help larger properties and organizations manage the cost of switching to electric rechargeable leaf blowers and the possible additional labor costs such a change could incur. It was pointed out that there is already a hardship exception process built into the current draft of the proposed ordinance under Sec. 211-5.B.(2) which would address the cost issue. A motion to amend Item LR31.100 for the proposed amendment of adding Sec.211-4.A.(3) Acreage-Based Exception language was made, seconded and failed via roll call vote of 2-6-0 (Reps. Matheny and Cottrell approved; Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Blank, Fedeli, Sherwood and Vandervoort voted against).

A motion to approve Item LR31.100 was made, seconded and approved via roll call vote of 7-1-0 (Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Blank, Cottrell, Fedeli, Sherwood, and Vandervoort approved; Rep. Matheny voted against).

2. [LR31.108](#)

**ORDINANCE;** for publication; regarding Veterans Tax Exemption  
09/04/2025 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
**09/30/2025 – Approved by Committee 8-0-0**

**APROVED BY  
COMMITTEE  
8-0-0**

Chair Berns advised the Committee that per a request he received from the Mayor's Office, Item 2 on the agenda (LR31.108) would be heard first and so was, then opened the floor to the presenters to speak to the committee on the item. Director Hughes gave a general overview of the proposed ordinance amendment to **Chapter 220: Taxation**, to add additional veterans' property tax

exemptions (which will to expand the existing coverage provided to disabled veterans a tax exemption on their property). It was stated that the State of Connecticut set a precedent last year by Governor Lamont signing into Public Act 24-26 vital tax exemptions to veterans with permanent and total disabilities. Tax Assessor Stackpole then presented the specifics on the proposed expansion of the existing veterans' tax exemption program to cover the larger group of veterans who reside in Stamford.

Tax Assessor Stackpole outlined the 2 local exemption programs as being:

1. Expand the current local program in effect as mandated since the 2024 Grand List which allows for permanently and totally disabled/partially disabled veterans an exemption benefit that is equal to the value of their dwelling if they qualify with a 100% disability rating
2. For residents who normally do not qualify for the above veterans benefit because they did not serve during wartime (currently, peacetime disabled veterans are not eligible for any exemption benefit), to provide them with a limited \$5,000 exemption off of the value of their residence, which equates to about \$120 off of their property taxes a year.

During discussion, the following questions arose from the committee, and were answered by Tax Assessor Stackpole and Director Hughes:

- How many veterans are expected to apply to the expanded program?
  - Per the cost analysis run on both programs using data from the 2020 US Census, there were about 2500 veterans living in Stamford. Of those, about 1500 are thought to qualify for the peacetime program.
- How much will the two (2) expanded exemption programs cost the City in lost tax revenue?
  - Based on the figures in the prior answer, it is estimated the cost to the City for the peacetime program would be about \$120,000. These individuals would have to apply biannually for the program.
  - For the permanently totally disabled/partially disabled veterans program: the City reviewed the existing recipients who had already applied to get an idea of how many there were: at present, there are less than 10. They would still have to reapply for this program annually to ensure their disability rating still complies with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs.
- Will the City need to request an additional appropriation to cover the difference of the expected lost tax revenue?
  - No, as the proposed changes to the veterans' tax exemption program would not take effect until the next Grand List year
- How will the expanded programs be advertised/communicated to residents?
  - A mailing from the City will be done on the program.
  - The tax office is also looking at including a mailer included in the next real estate tax bill mailing.
  - Workshops on the expanded programs will be held at the Veterans Resource Center.
  - There will also be public outreach at community events such as the recent Veterans Standdown event held at UConn Stamford where the tax office had a table and had a one-page pamphlet available on the current program.
- How much of a paperwork burden will the expanded programs be?
  - The tax office is already familiar with processing the paperwork involved for the existing programs
  - With the projected number of additional applicants, the proposed expansion of the two (2) programs is not projected to negatively impact the processing capacity of the Tax Office staff

After the discussion period, Vice Chair Boeger called on Mr. Edmondson to give his presentation and statement regarding the importance of this ordinance to expand the existing Veterans Tax Exemption. Chair Berns called for a motion to approve Item LR31.108; a motion was made,

seconded and approved via unanimous voice vote of 8-0-0 (Chair Berns, Vice Chair Boeger and Reps. Blank, Cottrell, Fedeli, Matheny, Sherwood, and Vandervoort approved).

Chair Berns adjourned the meeting at 10:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Berns, Chair

This meeting is available on video ([Part 1](#)) & ([Part 2](#)).