

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board
Week Ending – October 7, 2024

1. Kristen Hagerty - Revolutionary Road

Dear Chair Hartman and Members of the Board,

Thank you for holding the recent public hearing on the residential tax exemption. It is always good to see hearty citizen turnout, and I appreciate the Board's willingness to seek feedback to inform their decisions.

As an avid follower of town committee meetings, I appreciate that the Select Board is composed of members with differing viewpoints. That ability to hold differing viewpoints and respectful, transparent discussion, although not easy, are essential to both good decision making and maintaining public trust.

Clearly the issue of high property taxes is a challenging topic to discuss, address, and take action on. It is not the only challenging issue that this Board or other Boards have or will have to tackle. It's the nature of your public service, and I appreciate your willingness to do the hard work.

As a concerned citizen, I look to the Select Board to be leaders and uniters - focusing on the problem at hand, seeking and considering public input, and making decisions for the best interest of the community- rather than dividers. You have the opportunity to allow citizens to air their differences of opinions, promote respectful discourse, and help to reconcile them in a way that we can all live together with the result. Tone is critical to that effort.

So I was disappointed when Select Board member Mr. McKennitt was the first to speak in a hearing designed for him and the other Board members to listen. While Mr. McKennitt maintains the right to free speech along with every other citizen, as a member of the Board seeking public input, it would seem more appropriate for him to listen during the public comment portion and share his views during deliberation. Instead, in my opinion, Mr. McKennitt's remarks set an adversarial tone, establishing opposing camps, rather than recognizing the legitimacy of both points of view and the need to come together to make a decision.

The Select Board plays a critical role in modeling how we want our town to feel. I hope to see our town discuss, listen to each other, disagree respectfully, and to ultimately come together with space for our differing views. We look to our elected policy makers to set the tone and help us to manage our differences in a constructive manner. I urge the members of the Select Board to reflect on the events of the public hearing, the opportunity you have to act as uniters, and the responsibility you have to model the civility we all hope to enjoy in Concord.

Sincerely,

Kristen Hagerty

Revolutionary Rd