

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL & WPCA
REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL AUDITORIUM
ONLINE (ZOOM)
August 3, 2020**

Vol. 26, Page 925

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority was held in the City Hall auditorium on Monday, August 3, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, members of the public were able to attend this meeting remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Board members and City staff also had the option to join the meeting remotely.

The meeting was attended in-person by Mayor Elinor Carbone, City Treasurer Daniel Farley, Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell and City Councilors Anne Ruwet, Frank Rubino, Sharon Waagner and David Oliver. City Comptroller Alice Proulx, Public Works Director Ray Drew and City Councilors Paul Cavagnero and Drake Waldron joined by ZOOM.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the public hearing held July 20, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held July 20, 2020.

Appointments

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's appointment of Mary Ann Berlinski as a regular commissioner on the Services for the Elderly Commission for a three-year term expiring on July 6, 2023.

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's appointment of Edward Wilmot as an alternate commissioner on the Services for the Elderly Commission.

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's reappointment of Gloria Novak and John Silano as regular commissioners on the Services for the Elderly Commission for three-year terms expiring on July 6, 2023.

TABLED: Explanatory Text (2020 Referendum)

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council discussed the proposed explanatory text for the 2020 referendum regarding the THS building project. City Clerk Carol Anderson described the process and parameters for developing the explanatory text and Mayor Carbone explained that the only difference between the two versions that were presented to the Council was the inclusion of mill rate and tax impact projections. Upon the Mayor's request, Assistant City Clerk Jonathan Draper read aloud the portion of the explanatory text that included the question as it would appear on the ballot, an explanation of what the appropriation would be used for and a brief description of the proposed project. Mayor Carbone informed the Council that the Board of Education requested that the mill rate and tax impact not be included in the explanatory text, as it was not included in the explanatory texts for previous referendums. However, she explained that the proposed appropriation for the THS building project would have a much greater impact on the mill rate than either of the previous referendum projects.

Councilors Oliver, Cavagnero and Ruwet expressed their preference for the version of the explanatory text which included the mill rate and tax impact. Councilor Ruwet questioned how the public would be informed of the referendum and Mayor Carbone described what was done in the past for other referendums. She stated that the Board of Education established a marketing committee to disseminate information to the public but noted that they must remain neutral, as no tax payer dollars could be used to market for or against the project.

Councilor Cavagnero expressed his concerns regarding the proposed project and Councilor Rubino questioned the accuracy of the anticipated State reimbursement estimates for maintaining the current building. Mayor Carbone clarified that the anticipated reimbursement rate was for eligible items only and Councilor Oliver expressed his interest in eliminating the building maintenance costs and reimbursement projections from the explanatory text. Councilor Rubino also suggested amending the anticipated State reimbursement line for new construction to remove the percentage amount of 62.5% and include only the anticipated State reimbursement total of \$84,949,820. Additionally, Councilor

Ruwet expressed her concern that the total project estimate for new construction did not match the appropriation amount identified in the referendum question. Atty. Muschell suggested amending the explanatory text to reflect a total project estimate of \$159,575,000 and City net share of \$74,625,180. Councilor Oliver requested confirmation regarding the projected cost and anticipated State reimbursement for maintaining the current building. Councilor Ruwet withdrew her motion to approve the explanatory text and motioned to table the vote.

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to table the discussion and approval of the explanatory text to a later meeting.

KidsPlay Tax Refund

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the refund of taxes paid by KidsPlay Museum in accordance with Corporation Counsel's memorandum dated July 22, 2020; pending authorization from the Board of Finance.

Lease for Elderly Nutrition Program at Senior Center

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to enter into a lease agreement with Lindley Acquisition, Corp. Dba Trio Community Meals for approximately 167 square feet of space at the Sullivan Senior Center to be used as a staging area for hot meals for the Litchfield Hills Northwest Elderly Nutrition Program.

Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski explained that the nutrition program's use of the space would not interfere with the daily operations of the senior center and stated that the arrangement would save the City money and resources. Councilor Rubino questioned the impact that the nutrition program would have on the senior center's electric costs and Mr. Sekorski explained how electric costs were evaluated and accounted for.

Police Department Uniforms

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Purchasing Agent and Lt. Thomas Rouleau and authorize the award of partial bids for Police Department uniforms to New England Uniform, LLC of Danbury, CT for the annualized estimate of \$63,858.50 and OGS Technologies, Inc. of Cheshire, CT for the annualized estimate of \$1,981 as described in Lt. Rouleau's memo dated July 16, 2020; pending approval by the Board of Public Safety.

Executive Session

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to enter executive session pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-200(6)(b) regarding strategy and negotiations with respect to pending claims or pending litigation (Elaine Fabiaschi v. City of Torrington) at 8:18 p.m. They were joined by Atty. Muschell and CRMA-appointed Attorney Johanna Zelman.

Open Session

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to enter open session at 8:45 p.m.

Settlement Agreement

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to enter into a settlement agreement with respect to Elaine Fabiaschi v. City of Torrington.

Release of Liens

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept Corporation Counsel's recommendation and authorize the Mayor, pursuant to C.G.S. §12-179, to release the liens described in Atty. Muschell's memo dated August 3, 2020.

Tax Collector Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the tax refunds indicated on the list dated August 3, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council herein acting as the WPCA, voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated August 3, 2020.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. City Clerk Carol Anderson provided an update on absentee voting for the Presidential Primaries. She described the influx of absentee ballot applications that the City Clerk's office received and stated her concerns regarding the manner in which the Secretary of the State's Office handled the administration and distribution of absentee ballots. She encouraged voters to drop their ballots in the State-issued ballot boxes placed outside of City Hall in order to ensure that the City Clerk's office receives them in time.

Business by Mayor & Members

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and member of the City Council. Councilor Waagner commended City staff and public safety personnel for their work throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Councilor Rubino expressed his satisfaction with the road construction work that was done near his house. Councilor Ruwet expressed her appreciation for Bob Conforti for his years of service to the City of Torrington. Mayor Carbone informed the Council that the City was successful in attracting a manufacturer to the former Stone Container site and Hendey Machine Company building at 200 Litchfield Street. She also provided an update on the corridor management grant and stated that the public safety and public works departments were prepared for the Tropical Storm Isaias.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Jonathan R. Draper, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK