

A **SPECIAL MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held in the City Hall auditorium on Monday, September 30, 2019.

Present were Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Councilors Frank Rubino, Marie Soliani, and Paul Cavagnero. Councilor Anne Ruwet joined by telephone. Councilors Fred Simon and Gregg Cogswell were absent.

Also present were Public Works Director Ray Drew, WPCA Senior Plant Operator Edward Tousey, City Treasurer Dan Farley, and Torrington Water Company President Susan Suhanovsky.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

On a motion by Councilor Soliani, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public and to allow up to three minutes per speaker for comments on agenda items only.

John Williams submitted a written statement to the Council and expressed his concerns regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. He requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 75% of the total cost.

Coffean Powell discussed the financial impact that the sewer installation project would have on her family and requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 75% of the total cost.

Donald and Judith Ruzbasan expressed their concerns regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 75% of the total cost.

Stephen Altschuler read a statement by Lillian Zeiner regarding her concerns about the cost of the proposed sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane.

Rachel D'ambrosio expressed her concerns regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. She questioned why paving costs were included in the proposed contract amount and stated her concerns pertaining to the benefit assessment and future development.

Michael Bayette expressed his concerns regarding the financial impact that the sewer installation project would have on his family and requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 75% of the cost or abandon the project altogether.

Anne Marie Roy questioned why Schedule A and Schedule B of the Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project were put out to bid together and expressed her frustration regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane.

Karen Fiedorowicz expressed her concerns regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 75% of the total cost.

Laurie Roys expressed her concerns regarding the anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and requested that the Torrington WPCA find ways to reduce the cost of the project.

Steven Roy expressed his frustration regarding the lack of notice that residents were given regarding the proposed contract for the installation of sewers on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and criticized the proposed pipe depth outlined in the bid specifications.

Patricia Ryan expressed her concerns regarding the financial impact that the sewer installation project would have on her family and requested that the Torrington WPCA cover at least 75% of the total project cost and offer Small Cities grants to the residents to help finance the remaining portion.

Robert Cusati expressed his frustration with Mr. Drew regarding the anticipated cost of installing sewers on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. He requested that the Torrington WPCA cover at least 75% of the total cost or reduce the cost of the project by changing the pipe depth. He also proposed distributing the cost of the project among all Torrington sewer users.

Susan Suhanovsky clarified that the Torrington Water Company would only be able to provide water at no cost for installation to Homestead Road and not Kimball Lane.

Eric Adams expressed his frustration regarding the lack of notice and anticipated cost of sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. He requested that the Torrington WPCA cover 100% of the total cost.

Joseph Ramirez expressed his opposition to the proposed sewer installation contract for Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and suggested that the project could be reengineered to reduce the cost.

John Rusckowski requested assistance from the Torrington WPCA to pay for the installation of sewers on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane.

Sanitary Sewer Improvements Contract: REJECTED

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Soliani, the Council acting herein as the Water Pollution Control Authority, took from the table and unanimously opposed the recommendation of the Public Works Director and Acting WPCA Administrator to award the contract for the Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project (including the Hartford Avenue easement and sanitary sewer improvements for Lyman Drive, Homestead Road and Kimball Lane) to Morais Concrete Services, Inc. of Springfield, MA, for the total amount of \$1,004,325.

Mr. Drew discussed the failing septic systems in the area of Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and explained that construction and engineering costs increased over time. Bill Storti, Project Manager for Weston and Sampson, explained that the proposed sewer system depth was designed for homes with sewers in the basement and stated that Schedule A and Schedule B were bid together to keep the costs down. Mr. Drew addressed the concern about permanent pavement costs in Schedule B of the proposed contract and clarified that the cost would be deducted through a work change order if the contract was accepted. He also discussed zoning requirements as they relate to future development on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane and explained that the construction of new sewer systems has historically been paid for by the abutting property owners who benefit from them.

Councilor Soliani questioned what the potential outcomes and repercussions would be from not installing the sewers. Mr. Drew stated the septic problems would persist and construction costs would likely increase. He also cautioned that the State could mandate sewage system improvements if pollution became a problem, and explained that the City would have the right to recover those costs from the property owners.

Councilor Cavagnero dismissed Mr. Drew's concerns about potential State mandates from the DEEP, citing a long history of deficiencies with the Woodridge Lake Sewer District's wastewater infrastructure, and expressed his concerns regarding the anticipated cost of the sewer installations on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. He questioned whether the residents had an opportunity to express their thoughts and concerns on the proposed sewer extension prior to going out to bid and Mr. Drew informed him that there was a Public Hearing for that purpose in 2018 (November 13, 2018). Mr. Drew further clarified that the final assessment on the properties could not be known until the completion of construction. Councilor Cavagnero expressed his disagreement with passing the full cost of the project on to the property owners due to depreciating home values in Torrington. He encouraged the residents of Homestead Road and Kimball Lane to form a committee and meet with City Staff to come up with a fair and reasonable approach to solving their sewage problems. Councilor Cavagnero expressed his concerns about the process by which the City handled the sewer extension request and Mr. Drew and Mayor Carbone explained that the City followed all of the State's requirements for doing so, including soliciting public input and securing bids.

Councilor Rubino stated that he would not approve the proposed contract for the Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project due to the opposition from the residents on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. He expressed his opposition to setting a precedent by allowing the City to cover the cost of the sewer extension and suggested reengineering the project to save costs. Councilor Soliani agreed that she also would not approve the contract due to the public's opposition.

Mayor Carbone requested clarification regarding the practicality and anticipated savings that could result from reducing the depth of the sewer lines on Homestead Road and Kimball Lane. Mr. Drew stated that it could be possible to install the sewers at a shallower depth, but explained that property owners would incur other expenses from having to reconfigure the plumbing inside their home. He also explained the process for establishing a benefit assessment and stated that it would not be realistic to expect a 50% savings from reducing the pipe depth. Mr. Storti agreed.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Soliani, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

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

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK