A **SPECIAL JOINT MEETING** of the City Council and the Board of Finance was held on Thursday, May 21, 2020. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, this meeting was held remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. Participants included Mayor Elinor Carbone, City Councilors Drake Waldron, Sharon Waagner, Paul Cavagnero, Frank Rubino, David Oliver and Anne Ruwet and Board of Finance Members James Wright, Laurene Pesce, Christopher Beyus and Christopher Anderson.

The meeting was also joined by Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, City Treasurer Daniel Farley, City Comptroller Alice Proulx, City Planner Martin Connor, Torrington Public Schools Superintendent Susan Lubomski, Interim Director of Business Services Ed Arum, Board of Education Chairwoman Fiona Cappabianca, Bond Counsel Sandra Dawson, Financial Advisor Bill Lindsay, O&G Industries Asst. Vice President Kenneth Biega and Kaestle Boos Principal-in-Charge Brian Solywoda, Educational Designer Craig Olsen and Project Manager Jennifer Mangiagli.

Board of Finance members Lance Boynton and Mark Bushka were absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

PRESENTATION: THS BUILDING PROJECT

Supt. Lubomski presented an overview of Torrington Public Schools' accomplishments, the process of developing plans for a new high school and the school district's vision for the future. Kaestle Boos Principal-in-Charge Brian Solywoda presented an overview of the proposed school building for Grades 7-12 and introduced site plans for renovating the existing building and constructing a new facility. O&G Industries Asst. Vice President Kenneth Biega discussed the anticipated construction costs and state funding available for maintaining the current facility, renovating the current facility and constructing a new facility. Mr. Solywoda then outlined the proposed schedule for project completion, including a referendum in September, 2020. Mr. Solywoda and Supt. Lubomski explained the need for a new facility. Board of Education Chairwomen Fiona Cappabianca expressed her support for the project and requested that the City Council and Board of Finance give the taxpayers the opportunity to vote on the project at referendum. Mrs. Pesce requested clarification regarding the reimbursement rate for the construction project and Kaestle Boos Project Manager Jennifer Mangiagli clarified that Torrington's designation as an Alliance District did not qualify the project for additional reimbursements.

PRESENTATION: DEBT IMPACT ANALYSIS

Hilltop Securities Managing Director Bill Lindsay presented the Debt Impact Analysis for the proposed THS Building Project. He discussed underlying assumptions, the City's existing debt, the financing plan for the new high school and the anticipated debt impact, mill rate impact and tax impact of the proposed project.

PRESENTATION: CREDIT RATING ANALYSIS

Mr. Lindsay presented the Credit Rating Analysis for the proposed project. He discussed the City's current bond rating, the rating process, and how the additional debt might negatively impact the City's rating.

Mr. Anderson requested clarification regarding the total cost and the amount of interest that would be incurred from the project, as well as the anticipated savings from reduced outplacements. Mr. Lindsay confirmed that the interest alone would cost taxpayers a total of approximately 35 million dollars and Supt. Lubomski clarified that outplacements at the high school level cost the City approximately 2.5 million dollars per year. Ms. Cappabianca discussed the positive effect that a combined building for Grades 7-12 could have on reducing the number of outplacements. Mr. Anderson also requested clarification regarding the Board of Education's plan for the other school facilities and Ms. Cappabianca stated that the existing middle school would likely be used for Grades 4-6.

Mr. Beyus expressed his concerns about the timing of the project and questioned how the plans for the new high school advanced as far as they did without a building committee. Mr. Arum described the process which began in 2018 and explained that the State requires the establishment of a building committee. Ms. Cappabianca further clarified the role of the building committee and explained several factors for why the City should move forward with the project immediately, including available grants and the poor condition of the existing facility.

Councilor Rubino stated that he would be abstaining from the votes on the THS Building Project due to his employment with O&G Industries and questioned what the Board of Education's plan was for Grades K-3. Supt. Lubomski stated that the future of the City's remaining schools would be dependent upon enrollment figures.

Councilor Waagner expressed her support for the THS Building Project and the proposed referendum.

Mr. Anderson questioned why the Board of Education proposed holding the referendum in September and not on Election Day in November. He also questioned what the cost would be to hold the referendum and how it would be funded. Ms. Cappabianca stated that it was not recommended to have the referendum on the same day as a Presidential Election. Mayor Carbone stated that the approximate cost to hold a special referendum would be roughly $30,000 and Ms. Cappabianca stated that the Board of Education would provide the funding.

PRESENTATION: BOND RESOLUTION TIMELINE

Sandra Dawson, Esq. of Pullman & Comley, LLC presented the Bond Resolution Timeline.

Councilor Ruwet requested to move the votes forward regarding Resolution #143-203 and the possible referral of the project to the Planning & Zoning Commission for §8-24 review. Mr. Anderson agreed and Councilor Cavagnero expressed his opposition to the proposed THS Building Project. Ms. Cappabianca disagreed with the Councilman's remarks and expressed her support for holding a referendum. Councilor Waldron expressed his support for constructing a new high school but stated that he believed a September, 2020 referendum might be too early to garner enough public support.

CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION #143-203: ROLL CALL VOTE

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the City Council voted to adopt Resolution #143-203, whereas:

> *IT WAS RESOLVED that the Torrington Board of Education is hereby authorized to apply to the Commissioner of Administrative Services and to accept or reject a grant for the Torrington High School Building Construction Project at Torrington High School.*
>
> *IT WAS RESOLVED that the Torrington Board of Education is hereby established as the building committee with regard to the Torrington High School Building Construction Project at Torrington High School.*
>
> *IT WAS RESOLVED that the preparation of schematic drawings and outline specifications, and a project scope and budget for the Torrington High School Building Construction Project at Torrington High School is hereby authorized.*

Councilors Waldron, Waagner and Ruwet voted in favor, Councilors Cavagnero and Oliver opposed and Councilor Rubino abstained.

PROJECT REFERRED TO PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION FOR §8-24 REVIEW

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the City Council voted to refer the proposed THS Building Project to the Planning and Zoning Commission for §8-24 review. Councilors Waldron, Waagner and Ruwet voted in favor, Councilors Cavagnero and Oliver opposed and Councilor Rubino abstained. Mayor Carbone clarified that the project would be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission on June 10, 2020.

AUTHORIZATION TO PREPARE BOND RESOLUTION DOCUMENTS

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the City Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to engage Bond Counsel to prepare draft bond resolution documents for the proposed THS Building Project. Councilors Waldron, Waagner and Ruwet voted in favor, Councilors Cavagnero and Oliver opposed and Councilor Rubino abstained.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Boards voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carol L Anderson

CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK