

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) of the City of Torrington was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Monday, February 5, 2024. Present at the City Hall Auditorium were Mayor Elinor Carbone, Corporation Counsel Michael Magistrali, City Councilors Stephen Ivain, Molly Spino, Anne Ruwet, Paul Cavagnero, and David Oliver, Police Chief William Baldwin, Deputy Police Chief Bart Barown, City Engineer Paul Kundzins, and Director of Human Resources Denise Kurpiewski. Fire Chief Eric Borden, Public Works Director Ray Drew, and Treasurer Dan Farley participated via Zoom. Councilor Drake Waldron was absent.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

Public Comment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public, in accordance with Section 4(e) of the City Council & WPCA Meeting Rules of Procedure.

Mayor Carbone welcomed Troop 3 of Boy Scouts to this evening's meeting, they are working on their Citizenship in the Community merit badge.

Colin Elkind, a City resident, would like Ordinance 194-4 Winter Parking Ban repealed or amended. He said that the Ordinance is a burden to residents who must park off the street in the Winter if there is no snow. He went on to say that there should be a way to alert residents if needed for a parking ban to be in place if there is a big snow or ice storm, and to keep the fines in place during that period.

Mayor Carbone took a moment to recognize John Palladino and Dale Carter, recent retirees from the City of Torrington. Mr. Palladino worked as a Building Inspector for 18 years, and Mr. Carter worked as an Engineering Technician I for 15 years.

Mr. Palladino thanked everyone, and for investing in the City, for making it better than when you found it.

Mr. Carter thanked everyone and said he enjoyed his job, working with the Public and all the Contractors.

Approve Minutes

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Spino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Regular Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2024.

Conservation Commission Appointment

On a motion by Councilor Cavagnero, seconded by Councilor Spino, the Council voted unanimously to appoint George Craig as a regular member of the Conservation Commission to fill the remainder of a term set to expire on September 4, 2024.

Board of Assessment Appeals Appointments and Reappointments

On a motion by Councilor Ivain, seconded by Councilor Spino, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's appointment of Pascale Nejaime as a regular member of the Board of Assessment Appeals to fill the remainder of a term set to expire on December 5, 2025.

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's appointment of Katherine Ruth Hass to the Board of Assessment Appeals to fill an alternate vacancy for a term to expire on December 5, 2025.

On a motion by Councilor Ivain, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's reappointment of George Noujaim to the Board of Assessment Appeals for a three-year term to expire on December 5, 2026. Mayor Carbone acknowledged George for the time and effort he has put into working for the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Contract Amendment – Torrington Police Union (Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 52)

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to execute and amend the police union contract, "Agreement between City of Torrington, Connecticut and Torrington Police Union, Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 52," dated July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026, as further explained in the Director of Human Resources memo dated February 2, 2024. Councilor Ruwet asked if there were any changes regarding a pension, Mayor Carbone told her that there were no changes to that, it is something that is negotiated separately. Councilor Ivain asked what the total cost for this contract was and how the funds were allocated, Mayor Carbone explained that she didn't have the total cost, but could get that number. She went on to say that the funds have been allocated in this year's budget, also there are savings with the current vacancies in the department. Councilor Ivain asked if they had done a competitive analysis to ensure that this was a competitive package, Mayor Carbone said that they compared 30 different Police Departments and this contract

makes Torrington more in the middle by being competitive, instead of being at the bottom. This contract makes the City more attractive for recruiting, retaining, and rewarding current employees. Councilor Ruwet said that she would like to see the City even further above the middle, to be more competitive with municipalities that are around the same size as Torrington. Councilor Ivain asked if the Police Department accepts lateral transfers, Deputy Police Chief Barown said that they do accept lateral transfers and it is already part of the application process. Councilor Cavagnero asked about the base equity adjustment number and how it impacts other departments, Mayor Carbone explained that there are going to be adjustments across the board.

Management Resolution

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to approve the revision of the Management Resolution document dated February 5, 2024. Mayor Carbone explained to the Council that Management Resolution wage increases have for years been tied to what was awarded to the Supervisors Union. She went on to say that the wages in Management Resolution weren't competitive, it was an opportunity to look at this agreement and allow the City to move into a performance-based pay scale approach. Councilor Ivain asked if employees could only earn two weeks of vacation, Mayor Carbone said that employees can max out at 25 days of vacation.

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to approve \$77,942.56 as the funding pool related to Management Resolution non-elected official wage/salary changes for the 23/24 fiscal year. Mayor Carbone said that this amount is retro back to July 1, 2023, including all the employees in the Management Resolution. She said that this was tied into the budget adoption for FY 23/24.

Fireworks Extension

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Spino, the Council voted unanimously to extend the current bid contract for Fireworks Display for FY 24/25 at the same price and terms as the current contract, in the amount of \$24,000, to Zambelli Fireworks Mfg. Co., of Warrendale, PA, as further explained in the Purchasing Agent's letter dated February 1, 2024.

Board of Education – Teacher Contract (2024-2027)

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to ratify the Agreement between the Torrington Board of Education and The Torrington Education Association for July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027. Mayor Carbone told the Council that the teacher negotiations are all Board of Education, however, they must bring the negotiated document to the Council, to approve or ratify, take no action or silent approval, or deny the contract. Councilor Ivain asked what the highlights of the changes were, Director of Human Resources Kim Schulte explained that the language changes were summarized in the document provided, and it comes down to providing the teachers the time that they need along with being able to run the schools properly. Councilor Ivain asked where the additional teacher prep hours came from, Mrs. Schulte said that with the current schedules, the teachers are already getting most of these minutes, they also changed the teacher's start time and end time, so the contract language just clarified that they had the right coverage for student safety. Councilor Oliver asked when the teachers' start and end time had changed to five minutes before and after, Mrs. Schulte said that it had been that way for at least three contracts that she has been here for. Councilor Ivain asked why teachers only get a final raise, Mrs. Schulte explained that teachers get a step movement every year, and the final step is when the teachers will get a 3% raise.

Building Permit Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council, on the recommendation of the Corporation Counsel, voted unanimously to authorize the Building Department to refund the permit fee of \$1,003 to Korca Enterprises LLC, owner of record of 1347 East Main St, as further explained in Attorney Magistrali's memo dated February 1, 2024. Councilor Ivain asked if this has been done before, Mayor Carbone said yes, but infrequently. Atty. Magistrali explained that they had already reapplied for a new permit to do the work.

Lien Releases

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to release the liens listed in the Corporation Counsel's memo of February 5, 2024.

Tax Collector Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the tax refunds indicated on the list dated February 5, 2024.

Sewer Usage Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Cavagnero, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated February 5, 2024.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads.

Police Chief Baldwin thanked the Council for approving the Police Union Contract. He also thanked Denise and Deputy Chief Barown for their support.

City Clerk Carol Anderson congratulated Ruth Febbroriello on her retirement. We are attending lots of Zoom calls with the Secretary of the State and the Registrars for information on early voting.

Corporation Counsel Atty. Magistrali shared that this is his first Council meeting and that he is excited to work with everyone.

Business by Mayor & Members

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and City Council members.

Councilor Ruwet thanked the Corporation Counsel for attending the first Ordinance Committee meeting of the year. She shared that the Ordinance Committee had met before this meeting, and they are going to be busy this year. She said her goal is to clean up the Ordinances and remove any old ones that are no longer applicable. She voiced concerns regarding complaints about the winter shelter at Trinity Church. She suggested finding another location, Mayor Carbone said that she has brought this up, as it is a State and Regional problem and something the COG towns will have to figure out.

Councilor Spino asked how the COG meeting was this morning and if there was any information about a winter shelter for next season, Mayor Carbone told her that at this time with the funding sunseting, there would be no staff to run a shelter. There would need to be staff that can deal with mental health and addiction.

Councilor Ivain addressed Councilor Ruwet's concerns about the shelter, he said that they have people ushering the individuals to the food kitchen during the afternoon. He also asked about a way to accommodate a more temporary parking ban, to be in place for weather events, instead of months during the winter. Councilor Ruwet explained that they just recently revised that Ordinance and do not see the Committee revisiting it at this time. Mayor Carbone said that it's not necessarily a big snow or ice event, but it is when the snow melts and refreezes that the Public Works department needs to get out and sand. This is when it is important for cars to not be on the road.

Mayor Carbone shared that the budget Subcommittee had been established, and the budget will be handed down on February 15, 2024. She said, if necessary, they can extend the date, if the budget isn't ready for the February 15th deadline. She told the Council that there is a court date tomorrow February 6, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. for the Yankee Pedlar. Corporation Counsel and I will be attending the hearing, they are hopeful that the Judge will take appropriate actions and award the conservatorship to the City.

Public Comment (in-person only)

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public to comment on agenda items only. No one from the public wished to speak.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Heather Abraham, Asst. City Clerk

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK