

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held on Monday, July 6, 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 and City Councilors Drake Waldron, Sharon Waagner, Paul Cavagnero, Anne Ruwet and Frank Rubino. Councilor David Oliver was absent.

The meeting was also joined by City Clerk Carol Anderson, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, Personnel Director Jaime LaMere, City Treasurer Daniel Farley, Purchasing Agent Pennie Zucco, Public Works Director Ray Drew, City Engineer Paul Kundzins, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Fleet Manager Emil Castro, United States Solar Corporation Manager Peter Schmitt and New Britain Pride Chairman John Board.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:44 p.m.

Minutes Approved

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held June 15, 2020. Councilor Waldron abstained.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the special meeting held June 22, 2020. Councilor Cavagnero abstained.

Roll Call Vote: NAA Proposals

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously, with five votes in favor, to accept the proposals from KidsPlay Children’s Museum, Inc., the Susan B. Anthony Project and the United Way of Northwest CT, Inc. for participation in the 2020 Neighborhood Assistance Act program. Councilor Ruwet expressed her support for the proposed projects.

Roll Call Vote: CDBG – Coronavirus Funding

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously, with five votes in favor, to approve the submission of an application to the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus funding under the CARES Act (up to \$170,000) for 2 additional staffing positions under the Northwest Homeless Diversion program.

Small Cities

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council considered business by the Small Cities subcommittee and voted unanimously to approve the following Small Cities projects:

Project #	Amount	Address	Description
TO18-031	\$15,675	67 Oak Avenue	Various Home Improvements
TO18-026	\$24,199	476 Litchfield Street	Various Home Improvements
TO18-034	\$11,575	24 Sherman Street	Various Home Improvements

Affordable Housing Plan Technical Assistance Grant

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Rubino the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to submit an application to the State of Connecticut Department of Housing for the maximum grant assistance of \$15,000 to help fund the preparation of an affordable housing plan and update the City’s Plan of Conservation and Development.

Mayor Carbone provided a brief background and explained that the grant would afford the City an opportunity to bring in technical assistance to help develop the plans. Councilors Cavagnero and Ruwet expressed concerns that surrounding municipalities might not be in compliance with the state-mandated affordable housing obligations. Councilor Cavagnero also expressed his concerns regarding the possible connection between affordable housing and special education placements. Mayor Carbone reported that Torrington met the affordable housing requirements and she described how the grant could help the City to achieve a better understanding of affordable housing in the region.

Management Resolution Policy Updates

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner the Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed updates to the Management Resolution policies described in the Personnel Director’s memo dated June 25, 2020 including a 2% wage increase for Fiscal Year 7/1/2020 (retroactive to 7/1/2020) and increasing the Medical Insurance Employee cost share from 14% to 14.5% effective 7/1/2020. Councilor Ruwet expressed her support and noted that actual wage increase would only be 1.5% since the employees’ cost share for Medical Insurance would also increase. Atty. LaMere agreed.

Resolution 143-206: Pride in the City

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to adopt the following resolution #143-206 formally establishing the month of June as “Pride in the City” month:

***City of Torrington, CT
Board of Councilmen
Resolution #143-206***

WHEREAS, members of this Council support the rights, freedoms, and equality of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTBQ+), and;

WHEREAS, the modern history of the LGBTQ community started with individuals who took a stand for human rights and dignity at the Stonewall Inn in New York City on June 28, 1969, and;

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court in 2015 recognized the marriage of same-sex couples under the 14th Amendment of the United States, and;

WHEREAS, decisive moments in history are the story of the LGBTQ community and have put our nation on a positive course to achieving full equality, and;

WHEREAS, individuals of this city who are LGBTQ have made and continue to make, vital contributions to every aspect of our city, including in the fields of education, law, health, science, business, research, economic development, architecture, fashion, sport, technology, music, civil rights, politics, and;

WHEREAS, LGBTQ individuals serve and have served in our local police and fire department, state national guard and all branches of the United States Military with honor, distinction, and bravery and;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Councilmen of the City of Torrington:

- 1. Recognizes that LGBTQ rights are human rights and are Constitutionally protected;*
- 2. Recognizes that all residents should be treated fairly and equally regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity;*
- 3. Endorses and lends its support for the federally proposed Equality Act (H.R. 5, 119th Congress)*
- 4. Agrees that the City of Torrington must strive to ensure that the promise of equality is realized for all.*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNCILMEN OF THE CITY OF TORRINGTON, that we hereby declare the month of June as, “Pride in the City” month and encourage all individuals to partake in events celebrating the progress of the LGBTQ+ community.

Councilor Waagner expressed her support and appreciation to the Mayor for bringing the resolution forward. Councilor Ruwet sought clarification that the language included in the resolution was consistent with the language adopted by the State and New Britain Pride Chairman John Board confirmed that it was. Councilor Ruwet also asked how many other municipalities adopted similar resolutions and Mr. Board reported that Torrington would be the second, only behind New Britain, with Middletown shortly thereafter.

US Solar

United States Solar Corporation Manager Peter Schmitt presented on a potential solar development at the old Torrington landfill. He explained that US Solar was proposing to lease the land from the City. Councilor Ruwet expressed her support for the project and questioned whether the CT Siting Council would be less likely to approve the project due to Verogy’s proposal to construct a solar farm on East Pearl Road. Mr. Schmitt clarified that the two projects would be on different sections of the utility grid and he stated that he did not believe the Siting Council would not take issue with both solar projects being proposed concurrently. Councilor Cavagnero also expressed his support for US Solar’s proposal and expressed similar concerns about two solar projects being proposed at the same time.

On a motion by Councilor Cavagnero, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Mayor to enter into a 60-day non-binding letter of intent with the US Solar Corporation to lease the landfill property, subject to a public hearing.

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to schedule a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on July 20, 2020 to solicit citizen input regarding a potential lease option and solar easement for the landfill property.

Contract Award: Road Reconstruction Phase 2020.6

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer to award the contract for the Reconstruction of Various Roads Phase 2020.6 project to B&W Paving & Landscaping, LLC of Waterford, CT for the total amount of \$1,284,322.85 with an expenditure allowance up to \$128,432 for quantity fluctuation and contingencies and authorize the Mayor to act on behalf of the City regarding the award and execution of the contact agreement.

Contract Award: Electrical Maintenance & Repair Services

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Purchasing Agent's recommendation to award the contract for Miscellaneous Electrical Services and Repairs to Viking Electrical Contracting, LLC of Newington, CT for the 2020/2021 fiscal year at the rate of \$50/hour for Journeymen and \$44/hour for Apprentice.

Contract Award: Painting of Police S.E.R.T. Vehicle

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Fleet Manager, Police Chief and Purchasing Agent to award the contract for the painting of the Police S.E.R.T. vehicle to DATTCO, Inc. of New Britain, CT for \$12,500 with funding from the Equipment Maintenance chargeback account and authorize the Mayor to act on behalf of the City regarding the execution of the contract and its administration.

TABLED - Contract Award: TPD Crime Van

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council reviewed and discussed Chief Baldwin's request to purchase a new crime van for the Torrington Police Department from MHQ for the total amount of \$283,029.50. Councilor Waagner commended the Chief for his memo regarding the proposed vehicle purchase. Councilor Rubino expressed his concerns regarding the anticipated funding sources and approval process. Chief Baldwin described the funding sources, including amendments to the vehicle replacement plan and he clarified that asset forfeiture funds must be used for law enforcement purposes. Councilor Ruwet expressed her support for the proposed vehicle purchase. Fleet Manager Emil Castro stated that the TPD's current crime van was in need of replacement and he cautioned against pushing off the replacement of two cruiser vehicles. Councilman Cavagnero agreed with Councilor Rubino's concerns and expressed his support for the purchase of a new crime van but requested that it be revisited by the City Council at a later date with the funding sources clearly outlined.

On a motion by Councilor Cavagnero, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted with four votes in favor and one (Councilor Ruwet) opposed, to table Chief Baldwin's request to purchase a new crime van for the Torrington Police Department to the next regular City Council meeting on July 20, 2020.

Contract Award: Forensic Computer

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of Lt. Brett Johnson and the Purchasing Agent to award the contract for a Forensic and Data Recovery computer for the Torrington Police Department to HTCI EDAS Fox, LLC of Laredo, FL for \$9,520 with funding through the Police Department Asset Forfeiture Account and authorize the Mayor to act on behalf of the City regarding the execution of the contract and its administration; pending approval by the Board of Public Safety.

Release of Liens

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, 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 July 6, 2020.

Tax Collector Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the seven tax refunds indicated on the list dated July 6, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council herein acting as the WPCA voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the sewer usage refund indicated on the list dated July 6, 2020.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. City Clerk Carol Anderson reported that the City Clerk's Office received 505 absentee ballot applications in the mail in one day and clarified that the absentee ballots would not go out until July 21, 2020, yet the application form instructs voters to call the Town Clerk's office if they do not receive their ballots within five days.

Business by Mayor & Members


On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and Council members. Councilor Waagner thanked the Mayor for bringing forward the *Pride in the City* resolution for the Council to vote on and congratulated the Mayor and Five Points Center for the Visual Arts for closing the deal on the old UConn Torrington campus. Councilor Cavagnero thanked the Mayor for bringing forward US Solar's proposal to develop a solar array at the landfill site and clarified that he will support the purchase of a new crime van once his concerns are addressed. Councilor Rubino also reiterated his concerns about the process for approving the funding and purchase of a new police crime van.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

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

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK