

**MINUTES**  
**CITY COUNCIL & WPCA**  
**EMERGENCY MEETING**  
**City Hall Auditorium / Zoom**  
**December 14, 2023**

An **EMERGENCY MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) of the City of Torrington was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Thursday, December 14, 2023. Present at the City Hall Auditorium were Mayor Elinor Carbone, City Councilors Molly Spino and Stephen Ivain. City Councilors Drake Waldron, Anne Ruwet, Paul Cavagnero, and David Oliver participated via Zoom.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ARPA Funds for Temporary Accommodations**

On an amended motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ivain, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the use of up to \$40,000 of Torrington ARPA Funds from the Social Services Feasibility Study line allocation to provide temporary accommodations for Torrington-verified homeless persons through a grant provided to a designated grantee working through a housing collective to provide winter sheltering FY 23-24 through December 27, 2023, or sooner should a 2023-24 winter overflow shelter be established before said date.

Mayor Carbone explained that plans for winter sheltering came to fruition at the very last minute while missing the important step of obtaining the Planning and Zoning Commission's approval. She said the Commission met last evening but will not decide on the petition until December 20<sup>th</sup>. The Planning and Zoning Commission will decide on a second petition they received for Trinity Episcopal Church on December 27<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Carbone said that in the meantime, we know that homeless people are sleeping in the woods, in doorways, under bridges, and out in the elements right now, and given the inclement weather and cold temperatures, she feels that some emergency accommodations need to be found.

Councilor Ivain asked how far the \$40,000 will go. Mayor Carbone explained the hotel accommodations available and their estimated cost of approximately \$26,000 for a full two-week period. If the Commission approves the shelter application on December 20<sup>th</sup>, less funds will be used for hotel rooms. Mayor Carbone added that the YMCA will provide the state-funded, experienced, and skilled staff to monitor the homeless persons' safety while in the hotel rooms. The ARPA funds will provide a backup fund if for any reason state funding fails to support the staff.

Councilor Ruwet asked that the motion's language be amended to clarify the city's role of allocating ARPA funds and not that of managing or coordinating the housing. She said the intent of ARPA funds is that it be spent to serve Torrington residents. Mayor Carbone said she is still working on the determination of who will receive the funds and pay for the hotels, whether it will be the Gathering Place, the Housing Collective, or the YMCA. She said her assistant, Maurette Wall, will be working with the Housing Collective and the hotels tomorrow. Mayor Carbone asked the Council for the authority to move forward with this so that these conversations can occur, and the temporary housing be secured over the weekend.

Councilor Ivain asked if this motion complies with ARPA funding allocation requirements and was assured that it does. Councilor Ruwet added that the guidelines for the ARPA funds require distribution to Torrington residents. Councilor Cavagnero agreed that the funds should be spent as they were originally intended, disagreed with the process, and stated that he would support the motion only because of the urgency of the issue. He demanded that a meeting be held after the holidays to bring together all the parties involved in the issue of homelessness. Mayor Carbone agreed to do so, adding that this is the fourth year she has spent months from July to March working on this issue and that we have a moral obligation to take care of the homeless.

Councilor Spino asked how many homeless there are. Mayor Carbone replied that there are no confirmed numbers but the agencies that serve the homeless know where they are. Councilor Spino asked if this temporary solution is a low-barrier shelter. Mayor Carbone said that because state funds will support the staffing, yes, it is.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Councilor Spino, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn at 5:16 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK