

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Tuesday, January 21, 2020. Present were Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Councilors Drake Waldron, Sharon Waagner and Frank Rubino. Councilor Anne Ruwet participated by telephone and Councilors Paul Cavagnero and David Oliver were absent. Superintendent of Streets Bill Mayers, Fleet Manager Emil Castro, Public Works Director Ray Drew, City Engineer Paul Kundzins, Director of Elderly Services Joel Sekorski and Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell were also present.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Minutes Approved**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the public hearing held January 6, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the regular meeting held January 6, 2020.

**Open to the Public**

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public.

Mayor Carbone recognized retired Building Department employee Emily Barbero for 33 year of service and presented a proclamation of achievement.

Nicholas Tella discussed crime statistics for the City of Torrington from 2017 to 2018 and presented a map of criminal activity in Downtown Torrington over a six-month period.

Barbara Gall expressed her concerns regarding Torrington’s participation in the Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPI) with the Northwest Hills Council of Governments for the construction of a regional animal shelter facility and a regional produce processing service center.

Rachel D’ambrosio expressed her opposition to regionalization for the animal shelter and questioned how maintenance costs would be funded.

Raymond Bottass expressed his concerns regarding a potential influx of homeless persons from New York by way of the Special One-Time Assistance (SOTA) program which provides one year's full rent up front for eligible persons to move within New York City, to other New York State counties, or to another state, Puerto Rico, or Washington, DC. He also expressed his frustration regarding suspected drug traffic in his neighborhood.

Michael Banziruk expressed his opposition to the Litchfield Hills Animal Shelter Facility and requested that the Council table or vote against the resolution to endorse the construction of a regional animal shelter.

**Addition of Section B**

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to add Section B to the agenda.

<p><b><u>Section B</u></b></p> <p>On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to waive the City’s bid process and authorize a contract award to Bartholomew Contract Interiors of Hartford, CT in the amount of \$11,239.20 to replace the existing Thrift Shop carpet with vinyl tile per Proposal #200061 off State Contract #12PSX0307.</p> <p>Councilor Waldron requested clarification regarding the bid process and Mr. Sekorski explained that the contractor was selected from a list that was previously vetted through the State’s bid process. Mr. Sekorski further explained that Council approval was required because the total cost of the project exceeds \$10,000. He stated that he hopes to complete the project over Presidents’ Day weekend in order to reduce the impact on Thrift Shop sales and other programming. Mr. Sekorski clarified that funding for the project would come from donations and fundraisers and Councilor Waagner expressed her support for the project.</p>
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**Regional Performance Incentive (RPI) Program**

Litchfield Hills Animal Shelter Facility: On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution endorsing the proposal for the project entitled “Construction of Litchfield Hills Animal Shelter Facility.”

*It was RESOLVED, that the Legislative Body of the Town of Torrington endorses the proposal for the project entitled “Construction of Litchfield Hills Animal Shelter Facility” under the Regional Performance Incentive Program referenced in Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-124s, (2014 supplement).*

Mayor Carbone addressed misconceptions about the regionalization of the animal shelter and reminded those in attendance that the City has performed regional animal control operations with Litchfield and Goshen since 2012 when a Memorandum of Understanding was approved by the City Council. She also warned that the State could begin imposing fines if the poor conditions of the current facility are not addressed and reiterated that Torrington voters approved for the City to move forward with construction of a new regional facility at the

2018 referendum. Council Waagner recalled being in the audience in 2012 when the City Council approved the MOU and Councilor Waldron asked what incentive the RPI program offers. Mayor Carbone clarified that the RPI program awards grants to participating municipalities.

\*Councilor Ruwet arrived in person at 7:21 p.m.

Regional Produce Processing Service: On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adopt a resolution endorsing the proposal for the project entitled “Regional Produce Processing Service.”

*It was RESOLVED, that the Legislative Body of the Town of Torrington endorses the proposal for the project entitled “Regional Produce Processing Service” under the Regional Performance Incentive Program referenced in Connecticut General Statutes Section 4-124s, (2014 supplement).*

Mayor Carbone provided a brief summary of the regional produce processing service and the existing regional food hub that was created through the NHCOC in an effort to support the farmers in Torrington and throughout the region. She explained how the service would protect open space and farming opportunities and promote public health by providing farm fresh food to schools, hospitals and other markets. Councilor Waagner described her experience with the regional food hub while serving on the Northwest CT Economic Development Corporation and expressed her support for the regional produce processing service. Councilor Rubino requested clarification regarding funding for the proposed project and Mayor Carbone explained that the \$57,975 being requested through the RPI Program would go to the food hub to purchase equipment and provide training to employees. Councilor Waagner added that more funds would also be coming from the Northwest CT Economic Development Corporation.

#### **Street Dept. J-Hook Truck**

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent of Streets, the Assistant Superintendent, Fleet Manager, Vehicle Replacement Advisory Board and the Purchasing Agent and authorize the Mayor to award the purchase of one (1) J-Hook truck with attachments to Freightliner of Hartford, Inc., East Hartford, CT for \$201,749.67 with funding from the Vehicle Replacement account.

Glenn Royals described some of the advantages of the J-Hook truck and stated that it could serve a number of purposes all year round. Freightliner of Hartford, Inc. Sales Representative Greg Martinotti provided additional information about the vehicle and explained that an endless number of bodies or sub-frames could be fitted to the truck, reducing the need for additional vehicles. Councilor Rubino requested information about any warranties on the vehicle and Mr. Martinotti explained that several different warranties will be provided with the truck purchase. Councilor Waagner asked when the truck would be in service and Mr. Martinotti stated that it would likely be in service at some point during late winter or early spring. He also informed the Council that Freightliner of Hartford, Inc. provides free pick-up and return of the truck when it needs to be serviced.

#### **Liens Released**

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 January 21, 2020.

#### **Tax Collector Refunds Approved**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the 23 tax refunds indicated on the list dated January 21, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council herein acting as the WPCA voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the seven sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated January 21, 2020.

#### **Building Department Report**

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Building Department’s report for December, 2019.

#### **Business by Dept. Heads**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. Mr. Mayers informed the Council that he and his staff are working on a snow operations plan and he expects to share the plan with the Council at the next regular meeting.

#### **Business by the Mayor and Council Members**

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and Council members. Councilor Waagner expressed her condolences to the family of Maureen "Mo" Hubert. She also commended *Torrington Collective* creators Michael Kaneb, Rana Justice Rylander-Strawson and Stephanie Burr for creating a YouTube channel about arts and culture events in Torrington and announced that the annual Winter Festival at Burr Pond State Park will be held on February 1,

2020. Councilor Ruwet also expressed her appreciation for Maureen Hubert’s service to the community. Mayor Carbone addressed comments made by the public in regard to the SOTA program and criminal activity in Torrington. She expressed her concerns about the welfare of the families being relocated to Torrington and credited the rise in drug enforcement to the nationwide opioid epidemic. Lastly, Mayor Carbone announced that Torrington made *HomeSnacks*’s list of top 10 best places to live in CT for 2020.

**Open to Public for Agenda Items Only**

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to open the meeting to the public for agenda items only.


Nicholas Tella expressed his concerns about waiving the City’s bid process for the Sullivan Senior Center Thrift Shop carpet replacement project and Mayor Carbone explained that there was a State bid process. Mr. Tella also expressed his concerns about the construction of a new animal shelter and the food processing service. Mayor Carbone informed Mr. Tella that the City received State mandates to address failing conditions at the existing animal shelter facility and stated that the food processing service would be funded through State grants.

Barbara Gall expressed her support for the animal shelter but stated that she disagrees with the City’s strategy for constructing a new facility.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

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

ATTEST:   
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC  
CITY CLERK