

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Monday, February 3, 2020. Present were Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Councilors Drake Waldron, Sharon Waagner, Frank Rubino and Paul Cavagnero. Councilors Anne Ruwet and David Oliver were absent.

Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, City Treasurer Daniel Farley and Small Cities Grant Administrator Lisa Low were also present, as well as Anthony Tranghese of DiMeo Schneider & Associates, LLC - Fiduciary Investment Advisors (FIA) and Joseph DePalma of Wells Fargo.

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 approve the minutes of the regular meeting held January 21, 2020. Councilor Cavagnero abstained.

**Open to the Public**

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

Nicholas Tella expressed his concerns regarding an influx of students with special needs to Torrington Public Schools and urged the City not to allocate any additional funds to the Board of Education. He also requested information pertaining to CT legislation that would address the SOTA program and stated that the City should not fund the reconstruction of the regional animal shelter facility. Additionally, Mr. Tella expressed his concerns regarding rumors that a City employee used City vehicles for personal use and requested that the Council to adopt a noise ordinance.

Barbara Gall expressed her concerns regarding regionalization and the cost of constructing a new regional animal shelter facility. She suggested that the City build a Torrington only facility instead.

Raymond Bottass stated that he was pleased with the amount of people in the audience and commented on recent news stories in the *Republican-American* newspaper. He also expressed his concerns regarding blighted conditions on Water Street.

Jacques Williams expressed his interest in community-based programs for homeless persons to support their community and build self-esteem.

**Municipal Advising & Financial Services**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to assign DiMeo Schneider & Associates, LLC - Fiduciary Investment Advisors as the City's municipal advisor for defined benefit and contribution plans. Mr. Tranghese explained that FIA recently merged with DiMeo Schneider & Associates but stated that there would be no changes to the City's service team or processes.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to assign The Principal Financial Group as the City's custodial bank for defined benefit plans. Mr. DePalma explained that Wells Fargo sold their defined benefit plans division to The Principal Financial Group but stated that there would be no change in service terms or conditions.

**Small Cities**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously consider business by the Small Cities subcommittee.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to approve the following Small Cities projects and payments "ex post facto":

**Address:** 108 Colorado Avenue North | **Project #** T018-003 | **Amount:** \$2,070

**Address:** 108 Colorado Avenue North | **Project #** T018-003 (Drainage) | **Amount:** \$5,000

**Address:** 204 Oxford Way | **Project #** T018-019 | **Amount:** \$29,997

**Address:** 244 Spring Street | **Project #** T018-025 | **Amount:** \$10,170

Councilor Waldron explained that the projects already commenced or completed and payments were issued.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to approve Small Cities Project #T018-009 for home repairs at 97 Wall Street in an amount up to \$43,236. Councilor Waldron stated that the Small Cities subcommittee recommended approval and Mr. Farley explained why the requested amount increased from \$36,767 to \$43,236. Councilor Cavagnero asked what repairs are needed and Mr. Farley stated that the property is in need of front and rear porch repairs, new rear stairs, entry and interior doors. Councilor Cavagnero also asked how the City would protect its investment. Mr. Farley explained that the original home mortgage is paid off and the City would become the 1<sup>st</sup> mortgagee.

**Liens Released**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, 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 February 3, 2020.

**Tax Collector Refunds Approved**

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the 13 tax refunds indicated on the list dated February 3, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council herein acting as the WPCA voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the nine sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated February 3, 2020.

**Business by Dept. Heads**

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. Mr. Farley introduced Small Cities Grant Administrator Lisa Low and the pair discussed the availability of excess grant funds for no interest Small Cities loans. Lisa Low recommended that the City develop an advertising strategy to encourage low-income homeowners to apply. Councilor Waagner suggested reaching out to the churches to help identify persons or families in need.

**Business by the Mayor and Council Members**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and Council members.

Councilor Cavagnero expressed his concerns regarding rising special education costs and stated that the City needs an explanation and strategy to circumvent the costs. Mayor Carbone confirmed that the number of students in need of special education services is on the rise. She credited much of the imbalance to School Choice which allows public education funds to follow students to out-of-district schools and stated that she is coordinating a meeting with the City's state representatives to discuss that and other matters of concern. Councilor Waagner also expressed her concerns regarding School Choice and announced that TMS students will be performing *The Sound of Music* each night from February 6<sup>th</sup> to February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Mayor Carbone reported that the New York based SOTA program placed three families in Torrington and stated that she was unable to obtain any additional information from the State of New York. She requested that the Ordinance subcommittee meet to review an ordinance that was adopted by the City of Newark, NJ to address the SOTA program. She also provided an update on plans to renovate Torrington High School and addressed the public's concerns regarding the regional animal shelter. She stated that Torrington contributes 75% of the municipal funding for the regional facility, but accounts for nearly 90% of the calls. Lastly, Mayor Carbone stated that developers expressed interest in developing the Hotchkiss building on Water Street and reported that the Winter Festival at Burr Pond State Park was a success.

**Open to Public for Agenda Items Only**

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

Nicholas Tella expressed his concerns regarding the Small Cities loan for the property at 97 Wall Street.

Jacques Williams offered to assist with marketing and promoting the Small Cities housing rehabilitation loan program.

**Adjournment**

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

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

ATTEST:



CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC  
CITY CLERK