

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Monday, March 2, 2020. Present were Mayor Elinor Carbone and City Councilors Drake Waldron, Sharon Waagner, Frank Rubino, Anne Ruwet, Paul Cavagnero and David Oliver.

Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, City Engineer Paul Kundzins, Purchasing Agent Pennie Zucco, City Comptroller Alice Proulx, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Brett Simmons, Torrington Public Schools Superintendent Susan Lubomski and Executive Director of Student Services Laura Klimaszewski were also present.

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

Minutes Approved

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held February 18, 2020. Councilor Rubino abstained.

Open to the Public

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

Raymond Bottass stated that he was pleased with the 41st annual St. Jude Telethon and expressed support for renovating the Yankee Pedlar Inn. He also expressed his concerns regarding manholes as they pertain to new paving projects.

Nicholas Tella expressed support for extending the rail line from Waterbury to Torrington and requested that the Board of Education seek additional funding from the State, not the City. He also expressed his concerns regarding the City's grand list.

Board of Education Presentation: Special Education

Supt. Lubomski and Ms. Klimaszewski presented an update regarding special education at Torrington Public Schools. Supt. Lubomski reported that enrollment trends were down and student demographics were changing. She also reported that the amount of students receiving free and reduced meals and the number of English Language Learners were on the rise, while student outplacements for special education services have decreased. Ms. Klimaszewski discussed federal legislation which guarantees certain educational rights to all students in the United States and described some of the efforts to improve special education at TPS. She emphasized the variability of special education services depending on students' needs and highlighted the importance of proper identification for special education services. Ms. Klimaszewski reported that the percentage of students identified for special education services and the percentage of students outplaced decreased since the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year. She explained that the reductions would help TPS students and have a positive impact on the budget.

Councilors Oliver and Cavagnero requested clarification regarding the prior places of residence for the District's new students in need of special education services and the selection criteria by which the Department of Children and Families places students in TPS. Councilor Ruwet suggested that the relocation of families and placement of students with special needs are matters that should be addressed at the State level. Councilor Waagner commended Supt. Lubomski and Ms. Klimaszewski on their presentation and Councilor Rubino expressed his concerns regarding insufficient reimbursement from the State.

Paving Contract

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to accept the City Engineer's recommendation to award the contract for Reconstruction of Various Roads Phase 2020.1 to B & W Paving & Landscaping LLC of Waterford, CT for a total bid price of \$2,176,395.75, with up to \$217,640 allowed for quantity fluctuation and contingencies, and to authorize the Mayor to act on behalf of the City regarding the execution of the contract.

Councilor Rubino question why the lowest bidder was not awarded the contract and Mr. Kundzins explained that Grasso Companies, LLC was rejected based on past experience with failure to follow bid processes.

OPEB Actuarial Services

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Finance Department's recommendation to waive the bid process and authorize the Mayor to extend, execute and administer the current Pension and OPEB Contracted Actuarial Services Contract with Hooker & Holcomb for two additional years.

Portable Toilet Rental

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Purchasing Agent's recommendation to extend the current bid contract with Suburban Sanitation Services, Inc. for Portable Toilet Rental for FY 2020/2021 for the same prices and terms as the current contract.

Downtown Garden Beds & Planters

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Purchasing Agent's recommendation and authorize the Mayor to extend the Still River Gardens, LLC contract for the Maintenance of Downtown Garden Beds & Planters at \$13,500 for FY2020/2021.

Mayoral Appts. – Cultural Affairs Committee

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Mayor's appointment of Sally Bergad and Tamara Williams to the Cultural Affairs Committee for their first of two four-year terms to expire December 31, 2022.

Outdoor Basketball Court & Parking Lot Improvements

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation's recommendation to award the Outdoor Basketball Court and Parking Lot Improvements bid to Constantine Paving & Sealing of Glastonbury, CT for \$17,968 as described in the memo dated February 27, 2020.

Liens Released

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, 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 March 2, 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 46 tax refunds indicated on the list dated March 2, 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 32 sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated March 2, 2020.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. No business was reported.

Business by the Mayor and Council Members

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by the Mayor and Council members. Councilor Waldron expressed his condolences for the passing of Torrington resident and volunteer, Joseph Gelormino. Councilor Waagner praised the Sullivan Senior Center and its staff and announced that the Torrington Library will hold an amnesty week for people to return overdue items in exchange for donating non-perishable items. Councilor Rubino requested an update on the grand list and Mayor Carbone reported that the Assessor's Office identified a growth of 2.42% for 2019 over 2018. Councilor Ruwet expressed her appreciation for the presentation from the Board of Education. Councilor Cavagnero asked whether the City has an emergency response plan to deal with the COVID-19 Corona Virus and Mayor Carbone reported that the City along with the Torrington Area Health District, Trinity Health, and Charlotte Hungerford Hospital came up with a plan and are prepared to combat the virus if it comes to Torrington. Lastly, Mayor Carbone stated that the budget subcommittee will begin meeting on March 11, 2020 and she emphasized the importance of economic development, growing the grand list and improving transportation.

Open to Public for Agenda Items Only

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

Laurene Pesce expressed her appreciation for the information provided by the Board of Education and stated that it is important for the City to talk to the State legislators about zoning. She noted that Torrington is the only municipality in the northwest corner with reasonably priced homes due to its minimum lot size requirements compared to the rest of the region.

Raymond Bottass expressed his satisfaction that the *Republican American* announced the City Council meeting in the newspaper.

Barbara Gall requested that the Council adopt a moratorium on future developments in Torrington.

Executive Session

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to enter Executive Session pursuant to C.G.S. § 1-200 (6) (A) concerning Personnel Director Mark Dumas at 7:51 p.m. They were joined by Atty. Muschell.

Open Session

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to return to Open Session at 8:10 p.m.

Separation Agreement – Atty. Dumas


On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept Corporation Counsel’s recommendation and authorize the Mayor to finalize negotiations and execute a separation agreement with Mark Dumas.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

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

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK