

CITY COUNCIL & WPC AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING

LOCATION: ONLINE/REMOTE

June 1, 2020

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council & WPC Authority was held on Monday, June 1, 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, David Oliver, Anne Ruwet and Frank Rubino.

The meeting was also joined by City Clerk Carol Anderson, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski, Personnel Director Jaime LaMere, IT Director Gerry Crowley and City Treasurer Daniel Farley.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the special joint meeting with the Board of Finance held May 18, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held May 18, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the special joint meeting with the Board of Finance held May 21, 2020.

Mayoral Appointment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Mayor's appointment of Donovan Riley as a regular member of the Planning and Zoning Commission to fill the remainder of a five-year term expiring on December 1, 2021.

Small Cities

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

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Small Cities Project #T018-028 for various home improvements at 97 Louis Circle in an amount up to \$6,750.

TABLED: Local 424-78 UPSEU 2020-2021 Contract Extension

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council, in accordance with C.G.S. §7-474(b), discussed a one-year extension of the Collective Bargaining Agreement by and between the City of Torrington and the United Public Service Employees Union Local 424 – Unit 78, City Supervisory Employees for the period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Atty. Muschell provided a background summary of the proposed contract extension, explaining that the City committed to a 2% raise prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Atty. LaMere informed the Council that they did not have to vote on the contract extension that night. On an amended motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to table the vote until the next regular meeting of the City Council on Monday, June 15, 2020.

Police Dept. Tablet Systems

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to approve the IT Department's request to purchase three Panasonic Toughpad CF-33 tablet systems with docking hardware and printers from Telrepcos of Wallingford, CT for \$17,025 off of the State of CT DAS contract # 15PSX0221 for the replacement Police patrol vehicles purchased this year. Councilor Ruwet asked if the equipment was budgeted for in the 2019/2020 fiscal year budget and Mayor Carbone confirmed that it was.

Senior Center Floor Replacement: Billiards Room

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Senior Center Director and the Purchasing Agent and award the contract for the flooring replacement project at the Sullivan Senior Center's Billiards room to BCI, Bartholomew Contract Interiors of Hartford, CT, using the State Contract #12PSX0307 for the total amount of \$7,146.48 with funding as described in Joel Sekorski's memo dated May 19, 2020.

Senior Center Floor Replacement: Craft Room

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Senior Center Director and the Purchasing Agent and award the contract for the flooring replacement project at the Sullivan Senior Center's Craft room to BCI, Bartholomew Contract Interiors of Hartford, CT, using the State Contract #12PSX0307 for the total amount of \$4,727.68 with funding as described in Joel Sekorski's memo dated May 19, 2020.

Lift Mini Van for Medical Transportation

On an amended motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Senior Center Director and empower the Mayor to sign the DOT-5310 2020 application and purchase, if awarded, of a Lift Mini Van for Medical Transportation with funding as described in Joel Sekorski's memo dated May 19, 2020 **for a total maximum amount up to \$54,000**. *Mr. Sekorski explained that chassis costs increased and he requested that the original motion be amended to include the revised maximum cost of \$54,000.*

Nutrition Program Vehicles

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Services for the Elderly Commission's request to waive the City's bid process and empower the Mayor to purchase two new temperature controlled Hot Shot Meals on Wheels 4X4 delivery vehicles from Delivery Concepts East (sole vendor) of West Hampstead, NC for the total cost of \$48,811 for each vehicle including delivery and graphics.

FY 20-21 Budgets & Mill Rate

Mayor Carbone opened the floor for the Council members to state their expectations regarding the mill rate and budgets for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. Councilor Waagner stated that she did not support cutting the Board of Education's budget. Councilor Ruwet stated that she opposed a mill rate increase and Councilors Rubino and Cavagnero agreed. Councilor Cavagnero also made a suggestion for future budget processes that any Department Heads requesting increases must submit letters of justification describing how their budgets support the growth and development of Torrington. In addition, Councilor Cavagnero requested to have more frequent joint meetings with the City Council and Board of Education throughout the year. Councilor Waagner clarified that she also would not support an increase to the mill rate but expressed her discomfort with additional cuts to the Board of Education's budget.

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to make a formal recommendation to the Board of Finance not to approve any mill rate increase for the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Release of Liens

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 June 1, 2020.

Tax Collector Refunds

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 six tax refunds indicated on the list dated June 1, 2020.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council herein acting as the WPCA voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the five sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated June 1, 2020.

Building Dept. Report

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to approve the Building Department's report for April, 2020. Mayor Carbone reported that revenues were down for the month of April, 2020 but appeared to have rebounded in May, 2020.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads.

Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski updated the Council on the deteriorating condition of the Sullivan Senior Center roof and stated that he received two proposals from Telrepco for the necessary repairs. He explained that the long-term cost of not repairing the roof would be much greater and Mayor Carbone reported that she was identifying various funding sources and would have a proposal on the agenda for the City Council meeting on June 15, 2020. Councilor Rubino requested an update on the Street Department roof repair project and the Mayor reported that funding for the project would be split between the FY 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 budgets. Mr. Sekorski also invited the Council members to assist the Senior Center with its curbside food pickup service and informed them there would be a car hop lunch event during the last three Fridays of June. He commended his staff for their work throughout the COVID-19 crisis and Mayor Carbone commended Mr. Sekorski for seizing the opportunity to complete significant renovations and repairs during the pandemic.

City Treasurer Daniel Farley provided an update on the City's credit card processor. He reported that the Police Chief was interested in adding a credit card machine to the Police Department's Records Division and he found another source that could save the City approximately \$2,000. He also stated that the City was working on changing the processor for the kiosks.

City Clerk Carol Anderson informed the Council that the City Clerk's Office experienced an influx of business in the form of birth certificate requests, marriage licenses and dog licenses. She also provided an update on communications with the Secretary of the State's Office regarding absentee voting.

Business by Mayor & Members

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

Councilors Ruwet, Waagner and Rubino welcomed Atty. Jaime LaMere back as Personnel Director.

Councilor Ruwet requested that a discussion on Verogy's application to build a solar farm near the Torrington Middle School campus be placed on the next City Council agenda and Mayor Carbone confirmed that she would add the item to the agenda for June 15, 2020.

Councilor Waldron informed the Council that Torrington High School would be having a virtual graduation ceremony at the Pleasant Valley Drive-in and the graduating seniors would be filmed walking across the THS stage individually by appointment prior to the virtual screening.

Councilor Waagner congratulated the graduating seniors and commended the Mayor and City Comptroller Alice Proulx for their work preparing and making adjustments to the budgets.


Councilor Cavagnero asked whether adjustments were made to the Board of Education's transportation budget due to school closures. Mayor Carbone reported that there was a renegotiation of the transportation contract and she believed that resulted in a credit against 2020-2021 fiscal year expenses.

Mayor Carbone announced that effective June 8, 2020 City Hall would be reopened to the public by way of the South side entrance only with all common areas remaining closed through July 1, 2020. She also commented on the success of the City's Tele-Town Hall meetings with local businesses and reported that Torrington experienced a couple of small and respectful protests in light of the George Floyd murder.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK