

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL & WPCA
BOARD OF FINANCE AND
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL JOINT MEETING
City Hall Auditorium / Zoom
December 5, 2022**

A **SPECIAL JOINT MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), the Board of Finance, and the Board of Education for the City of Torrington was held at the City Hall Auditorium on Monday, December 5, 2022. Present at the City Hall auditorium were Mayor Elinor Carbone, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, City Councilors Drake Waldron, and Anne Ruwet, Board of Finance members Chris Beyus, James Wright, Laurene Pesce, Deborah Iannacito, and Christopher Anderson, and Board of Education members Fiona Cappabianca, John Kissko, Ellen Hoehne, Edward Corey, Cathy Todor, and Glenn Burger. Also present at City Hall were Superintendent Susan Lubomski, Public Works Director Ray Drew, Acting Fire Chief Dave Tripp, Tax Collector Launa Goslee, Deputy Public Works Director – City Engineer Paul Kundzins, Treasurer Dan Farley, Facilities Director Jamie Sykora, and Building Committee Co-Chair Ed Arum. Councilors David Oliver and Paul Cavagnero joined via Zoom. Also joining via Zoom were Comptroller Robin Stanziale, Building Committee Co-Chair Mario Longobucco, and Director of Information Technology Gerry Crowley. Councilors Keri Hoehne, Armand Maniccia, Board of Finance member Mark Buska, and Board of Education members Jessica Richardson, Gary Eucalitto, and Susan DePretis were absent.

Mayor Carbone opened the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Discussion

Superintendent Susan Lubomski explained to the Boards that the Torrington Board of Education has been a partner with Ed Advance for many years, and since 2019 they have helped run the special education, expulsion, and transitions programs out of East School, so selling the school to them would make sense. She said that having these programs right in town saves them on the cost of transportation and provides a comfort level to the students. Ms. Cappabianca further explained the benefit of selling East School to Ed Advance is a huge cost saving to the Torrington Board of Education. She said that they have a place to house students who are expelled from school and need the same hours as regular students. She went on to say that with the ongoing maintenance issues with the school and other repairs Ed Advance is willing to take on. Mayor Carbone went over the terms of the proposed contract from Ed Advance to purchase East School. She mentioned that Ed Advance would make a \$500,000 payment to the City of Torrington upon transfer of title, along with paying for half of the cost for obtaining a land survey, honoring the arrangements established between the Board of Education and Ed Advance for year 4 in their lease, and adding a new 10-year agreement between Ed Advance and the Torrington Public Schools which would include an annual tuition discount of 20% for students for the first 5 years and then reduced to 10% for the next 5 years. She went on to say that over the course of the next 10 years, the savings will roughly be 10 million dollars. Mr. Beyus wanted to ensure that the terms of the contract would remain the same if Ed Advance were to sell the building within the next two years, Ms. Cappabianca stated that the contract stated the specific programs that would be covered, that they would have to be notified yearly as of December 31st of any changes that are being made, and that after the 10 years they will still honor spaces for students. Atty. Vic Muschell reiterated that the services are what the contract is covering and not the building itself, and he will ensure that it is written in the contract that if they move, those same levels of services will still be provided. Jeffrey Kitching, the Executive Director of Ed Advance, let the Boards know that they need to be based in Torrington because that's where they are most needed. Mr. Beyus asked about the renovation plans for East School, Mr. Kitching let him know that the renovations will be done in phases, with phase 1 being the high-priority items that need to be addressed. Mr. Anderson wanted to ensure that the \$500,000 would be earmarked for the Board of Education come the budget season, Mayor Carbone assured him that it would be and that it would be considered a one-time revenue payment.

East School – Vote by the Board of Education

On a motion by Mr. Corey, seconded by Mr. Burger, the Board of Education voted unanimously to return the East School building to the City of Torrington effective as of the date of the transfer of title to Ed Advance.

East School Referral to Planning & Zoning Commission – Vote by City Council

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to refer to Planning & Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review of proposed lot line revisions to two City of Torrington properties. Property A: Joe Ruwet Playground, Map Block Lot (MBL): 039/003/028, and Property B: Former East School, MBL 139/002/010 as detailed on Map #0873.

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to refer to the Planning & Zoning Commission for a Section 8-24 review of the proposed sale of the Former East School, MBL 139/002/010 as detailed on Map #0873.

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously that pending a favorable recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission Section 8-24 review to authorize the Mayor to negotiate the sale of the Former East School, MBL 139/002/010 as detailed on Map #0873 to Ed Advance. Mayor Carbone let Council know that Planning & Zoning will be meeting on December 21, 2022 and will have this recommendation on their agenda for review.

Presentation

Michelle Miller Project Manager/Architect and Jim Peckingham Senior Mechanical Engineer from Silver Petrucelli & Associates (SPA) gave a presentation on the District Wide Facility Study results for the Torrington Public Schools. Ms. Miller explained the process that SPA had gone through for reviewing each School Building. She said that the company reviewed the existing documents and drawings for each building, then the Architect and Engineer toured the buildings with staff for a visual assessment. In that assessment, they are looking at the civil, architecture (exterior and interior), structural, plumbing and fire protection, mechanical and electrical. They then developed narratives from visual observations, created spreadsheets of violations and repairs for each building, prioritized them by high priority, and then added the cost.

The total cost to fix everything found in all the School Buildings was \$32,341,529. This is broken down by schools:

Forbes: Built in 1928, renovations/additions in 1985 with 88,128 square feet – Facility Conditions Project total cost - \$7,318,879.

Vogel Wetmore: Built in 1944, renovations/additions in 1996 with 98,280 square feet – Facility Conditions Project total cost - \$7,841,328.

Torrington: Built in 1952, renovations/additions in 2005 with 90,292 square feet – Facility Condition Project total cost - \$8,192,772.

Southwest: Built in 1904, renovated in 20001 with 53,620 square feet – Facility Condition Project total cost - \$5,437,228.

Torrington Middle School: Built in 1993 with 164,539 square feet – Facility Condition Project cost - \$3,551,332.

Councilor Ruwet asked if there were any grant opportunities available through the state, Ms.

Cappabianca explained that there was a grant opportunity, but the requirements were very specific, and a lot of schools didn't qualify. She went on to state that the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) is involved to change the requirements for this grant for the different schools that may have not qualified before. Councilor Ruwet also asked if they had the Capital Reserve in their budget for the costs of these renovations, and Ms. Cappabianca said no. Mayor Carbone asked if they have priced out just the HVAC system upgrades for the district, Ms. Cappabianca said that they haven't gotten definitive pricing yet with an architectural review. Mayor Carbone also asked about the Middle School roof, since there has been a sense of urgency to get it repaired or replaced over the past few years, but wasn't mentioned in the Facility Study done, it stated that it still had 20 years left. Ms. Cappabianca stated that Mr. Barlow, Public School Maintenance, says this is an urgent matter based on the leaking roof. Mr. Barlow explained that there are three options for the roof, a whole roof replacement, a cover system that goes over the existing roof, or a maintenance system that would provide a roof coating. He went on to say that it's the roof leaking issues, not water just pouring into the building. Councilor Cavagnero asked why Council is involved now, Ms. Cappabianca explained that the Facilities Study was done to find the issues and prioritize those items over the next 10 years. Mr. Anderson asked if the City was also doing a Facility Study on all of its buildings, Mayor Carbone let him know that Public Works Director Ray Drew, and Facilities Director Jamie Sykora are currently working on that for the City Buildings.

Capital Reserve Expenses – Vote by the Board of Finance

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Beyus, the Board of Finance voted unanimously to authorize the re-appropriation of funds received from the State School Construction Grant Reimbursement for THS ADA Improvements and Elevator Improvements, in the amount of \$106,000 to be used for the Eversource Retro-Commissioning Program, \$15,420, and the Bartholomew Contract Interiors contract (BCI), \$51,800. The difference between those numbers is to be held in reserve for future consideration for appropriation. Mrs. Pesce asked for further explanation for each item, Superintendent Lubomski said that BCI is for blinds for the new windows to help prevent the glare on the whiteboards. Mr. Barlow explained that Eversource will investigate energy efficiency savings for the Torrington Middle School.

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Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Beyus, the Boards voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by
Heather Abraham, Asst. City Clerk*

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK