

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL & WPCA
REGULAR MEETING
ONLINE (ZOOM)
March 1, 2021**

Vol. 26, Page 976

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) was held on Monday, March 1, 2021. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders regarding COVID-19, Board members and the public attended the meeting remotely using the ZOOM online meeting platform. The meeting was attended by Mayor Elinor Carbone, Corporation Counsel Victor Muschell, Purchasing Agent Pennie Zucco, Personnel Director Jaime LaMere, City Comptroller Alice Proulx, Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski, City Treasurer Daniel Farley, Economic Development Director Rista Malanca, Pennrose Regional Vice President Charlie Adams, DiMeo Schneider & Associates consultants Tyler Polk and Anthony Tranghese and City Councilors Frank Rubino, David Oliver, Sharon Waagner, Paul Cavagnero, Drake Waldron and Anne Ruwet.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: Tax Exemption Agreement Approved

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted, with five votes in favor and one opposed, to authorize the City of Torrington to enter into a Tax Exemption Agreement, per C.G.S. § 7-498, for certain real property and improvements located at 100 Franklin Street, Torrington, CT. Councilors Waldron, Oliver, Rubino, Ruwet and Waagner voted in favor and Councilor Cavagnero opposed.

Councilor Ruwet requested clarification regarding the conditions of the agreement and the Economic Development Director Rista Malanca explained that there would be a 16-year tax exemption period, beginning with \$30,000 in taxes due on July 1, 2022 and escalating 3% every subsequent year. Mayor Carbone further explained that the Tax Exemption Agreement was one of the conditions for Pennrose to be able to move forward with construction, in accordance with the terms of the grant that was awarded through the CT Department of Economic Community Development (DECD).

Councilor Cavagnero stated his objections to the Tax Exemption Agreement on the grounds that the City would be giving up too much, he expressed concerns regarding a potential impact on special education costs and he requested clarification regarding ownership of the property. Mayor Carbone explained that Pennrose would be leasing the property from the City for a period of 99 years for the cost of \$1 and she further explained that the property had considerable contamination and the DECD grant placed restrictions on how the property could be developed. Mr. Adams also clarified that the abated taxes would go toward construction costs.

Councilor Waagner expressed concern regarding the duration of the tax exemption period and Mayor Carbone reminded her that the City was not receiving any tax revenue from the property in its current state.

Minutes

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held February 16, 2021.

Local 424-78 UPSEU 2021-2022 Contract Extension

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously, in accordance with C.G.S. §7-474(b), to approve the 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, 2021 to June 30, 2022, as described in Atty. LaMere's letter dated February 18, 2021.

Defined Contribution Plans

DiMeo Schneider & Associates Partner and Senior Consultant Tyler Polk reviewed the City's defined contribution plans and presented a proposal for the consolidation of the City's 457(b) and 401(a) plans, which included evaluating the City's existing recordkeepers and identifying administrative efficiencies.

Councilor Ruwet requested clarification regarding the various types of retirement plans and questioned why the City utilized multiple recordkeepers. Mr. Polk explained that 401(a) plan contributions are negotiated between the City and its employees, whereas 457(b) plans are funded solely from the employees. He also explained that having multiple vendors increased investment options for the retirement plans but he noted that the industry was moving toward greater consolidation of vendors.

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to enter into a contract with DiMeo Schneider & Associates, LLC for the services and fees described on pages 22 and 23 of the March 2021 presentation.

49 Hayden Hill Tax Incentive

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the City to enter into a Tax Incentive Agreement, as described in the Economic Development Director's memo dated February 9, 2021, for certain real property and improvements located at 49 Hayden Hill, Torrington, CT, in accordance with the City of Torrington's Tax Incentive Policy.

Public Hearing Scheduled

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Oliver, the Council voted unanimously to schedule a virtual public hearing to be held at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, March 15, 2021 for the purpose of soliciting public input regarding a resolution that would authorize the City of Torrington to undertake programs and projects authorized under the Connecticut City and Town Development Act under Chapter 114 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Councilor Waagner requested clarification regarding which types of programs and projects were covered under C.G.S. Chapter 114 and Mayor Carbone explained that the legislation provided development incentives for distressed municipalities. She encouraged Councilor Waagner to review C.G.S. Chapter 114 and stated that more information would be provided in preparation for the public hearing.

MOW Vehicle Purchase

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Elderly Services Director and the Services for the Elderly Commission to waive the City's bid process and authorize the Mayor to purchase one (1) new 2021 Chevy Colorado temperature controlled Meals on Wheels 4X4 delivery vehicle from sole vendor, Delivery Concepts East of Hampstead, NC for the total cost of \$50,328 (including delivery and graphics).

CT DECD Survey & Planning Grant

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adopt Resolution #143-212, empowering the Mayor to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the City of Torrington, a Survey and Planning Grant contract with the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development.

Release of Liens

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, 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 1, 2021.

Tax Collector Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the tax refunds indicated on the list dated March 1, 2021.

On a motion by Councilor Oliver, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council, herein acting as the WPCA, voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the sewer usage refunds indicated on the list dated March 1, 2021.

Business by Dept. Heads

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to consider business by Department Heads. Elderly Services Director Joel Sekorski provided an update on the Senior Center's operations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked the Council for approving the purchase of the new Meals on Wheels delivery vehicle.

Business by Mayor & Members


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

Councilor Waagner thanked Mr. Sekorski and the staff at the Sullivan Senior Center for their efforts and commended Emily Olson on a recent article she wrote for the *Register Citizen* newspaper titled “Torrington businesses hopeful for post-pandemic renaissance.” Councilors Rubino and Ruwet expressed their satisfaction with the recent increase to the grand list. Mayor Carbone announced that the Bill to establish a tiered funding stream for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program for State-owned properties, hospitals and colleges passed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

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

ATTEST: 
CAROL L. ANDERSON, MMC
CITY CLERK