

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL & WPCA
REGULAR MEETING
City Hall Auditorium / Zoom
July 19, 2021**

A **REGULAR MEETING** of the City Council and Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) of the City of Torrington was held at the City Hall auditorium on Monday, July 19, 2021. Attendance was by ZOOM and in person. Present at City Hall were Mayor Elinor Carbone, City Clerk Carol Anderson, Board of Education Interim Business Manager Ed Arum, and City Councilors Frank Rubino, Sharon Waagner, Drake Waldron, Paul Cavagnero, and Anne Ruwet. Councilor David Oliver, Public Works Director Ray Drew, Police Chief William Baldwin, Jr., Police Captain Bart Barown, Facilities Manager Jamie Sykora, Superintendent of Streets & Parks Bill Mayers, Purchasing Agent Pennie Zucco, and Verogy representatives Will Herschel, Bryan Fitzgerald, and Atty. Michael Reiner joined by Zoom.

Mayor Carbone called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

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

Holly and Mark Dailey presented their idea for free family movie nights at the Recreation Hall and Teen Center on East Albert Street and requested that the Council consider moving their proposal forward.

Ray Bottass urged the City to leave the historic Olmsted brothers fountain in front of City Hall and expressed concerns about the parking lot on Franklin Street. He also expressed frustration about inadequate road repairs done by Eversource throughout the City and expressed concern about the City's ability to maintain the new Middle/High School building being constructed at the existing THS campus. Lastly, he expressed his frustration with the teachers' union and mask mandates in schools and expressed his support for Mayor Carbone in the November, 2021 Municipal Election.

Minutes Approved

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Ruwet, the Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the regular meeting held July 6, 2021. Councilor Oliver abstained.

Presentation: Verogy/Torrington Solar One

Atty. Mike Reiner explained Verogy's position regarding a Tax Stabilization Agreement (TSA) for the property off of East Pearl Road that was leased by Verogy for the installation of solar panels. He discussed possible legislation that could result in minimal or no taxes being paid to the City if the TSA is not approved. Mayor Carbone presented the Economic Development Director Rista Malanca's recommendation to hold off on taking any action until Corporation Counsel reviews the agreement for compliance with C.G.S. §32-71a. Councilor Ruwet agreed and Councilors Cavagnero and Waagner noted that they would need additional unbiased information before making any decision on the matter. Verogy CEO Will Herschel discussed Virtual Net Metering and expressed the company's interest in working with the City to come to terms on a TSA.

Contract Award: TPD Dash Cams

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to approve the purchase of camera equipment for 22 police vehicles from Axon Enterprise, Inc. of Scottsdale, AZ for \$469,920.

Contract Award: THS Building Project Construction Manager

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to appoint O&G Industries, Inc. to serve as Construction Manager for the New Middle/High School and Central Office Administration Project for a construction budget and maximum construction price of \$130,790,568.00 and authorize the Mayor to execute the Agreement that has been approved by the Building Committee and Board of Education. Councilor Rubino abstained.

Councilor Cavagnero expressed support for O&G as Construction Manager, but questioned whether the contract would limit the Building Committee's ability to make changes to the floor plan. Mr. Arum clarified that the Building Committee was still in the design phase and would not be restricted by the Council approving the contract with O&G.

Contract Award: Tree Trimming & Removal Service

On a motion by Councilor Waldron, seconded by Councilor Rubino, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Public Works Superintendent and Purchasing Agent, and authorize the Mayor to award, execute, and administer the Tree Trimming and Removal Service for City Departments contract to Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC of Willow Grove, PA and East Windsor, CT.

Release of Liens

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Waldron, 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 July 19, 2021.

Tax Collector Refunds

On a motion by Councilor Waagner, seconded by Councilor Cavagnero, the Council voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the eight tax refunds indicated on the list dated July 19, 2021.

On a motion by Councilor Rubino, seconded by Councilor Waldron, the Council, herein acting as the WPCA, voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Tax Collector and authorize the one sewer usage refund indicated on the list dated July 19, 2021.

Business by Dept. Heads

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

Public Works Director Ray Drew reported that he and Facilities Manager Jamie Sykora will examine the advantages, disadvantages, and potential outcomes of a Virtual Net Metering (VNM) agreement with Verogy and will present a report to the City Council at a later date. Councilor Ruwet questioned whether the City anticipated purchasing electricity from the solar array that is expected to be constructed on South Main Street and Mr. Drew reported that the City will consider doing so if the project goes through. Councilor Cavagnero expressed concerns about the duration of a potential VNM agreement and the speed at which clean energy technology advances. Councilor Rubino also requested a report on the agreements and any savings that have resulted from rooftop solar panels at Tarringford and Forbes Elementary Schools. Councilors Ruwet and Waagner agreed that more research and information is needed before the City agrees to any long-term VNM contract.

Police Chief Bill Baldwin thanked the Council for approving the contract with Axon for new dash cams.

Facilities Manager Jamie Sykora reported on some of the work that he was already doing to examine the feasibility of a potential agreement with Verogy, including contacting Eversource and other municipalities that have entered into similar agreements and analyzing the projected savings.

Business by Mayor & Members

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

Councilor Waagner expressed her frustration about a headline in the newspaper which suggested that the City Council opposed the cost of the new Middle/High School project.

Councilor Ruwet thanked Chief Baldwin for his excellent communication with the City Council and Board of Public Safety.

Councilor Cavagnero questioned whether Eversource intends to fix its unsatisfactory road repairs. Mayor Carbone explained some of the nuances pertaining to liability that result from Eversource subcontracting their road repair jobs. Councilor Cavagnero suggested involving other municipalities and taking a more aggressive approach to hold Eversource accountable.

Mayor Carbone reported that as part of a tourism promotion being conducted by the State of CT in celebration of Frederick Olmsted's 200th birthday, the Department of Historic Preservation plans to visit Torrington in September, 2021 to take an inventory of the Olmsted brothers' designs in Torrington, to be included as part of a Olmsted Trail, including Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Center Congregational Church, Hillside Cemetery, and Fuessenich Park, and the water fountain in front of City Hall.

Councilor Cavagnero requested that the City take a deeper look into the request from Holly and Mark Dailey to offer free family movie nights at the Recreation Hall and Teen Center. Mayor Carbone reported that she has asked Corporation Counsel for a legal opinion with respect to the Parks & Recreation Commission's care and custody of the property.

Adjournment

On a motion by Councilor Ruwet, seconded by Councilor Waagner, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

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

ATTEST:


CAROL L. ANDERSON, CITY CLERK