



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON, CT
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2021
Shelton City Hall, 54 Hill Street
Live-Streamed at www.cityofshelton.org

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Laretti called the Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 4:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Shelton City Hall. All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President – Present
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President – Present
Alderman Cris Balamaci – Present via Phone
Alderman Michele Bialek – Present
Alderman Lorenzo Durante – Present
Alderman Porter McKinnon – Present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti – Present
Alderman Bernie Simons – Not present

Administration

Fran Teodosio, Corporation Counsel – Present
Thomas Cotter, Assistant Corporation Counsel – Present
Jack Bashar, Administrative Assistant – Present via Phone

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Laretti asked if anyone wished to address the board. There being no one wishing to speak, he closed the public portion.

AGENDA ITEMS

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

Alderman Anglace MOVED to waive the reading and approve the following meeting minutes:

- 1.1 Board of Aldermen Special Meeting on November 10, 2021
- 1.2 Board of Aldermen Special Organizational Meeting on November 16, 2021

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken, the motion PASSED unanimously (7-0).

5.1 FINANCE COMMITTEE

5.1.1 NO ITEMS

5.2 PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

5.2.1 NO ITEMS

5.3 STREET COMMITTEE

5.3.1 NO ITEMS

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

NO REPORT.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Alderman Anglace: I just want to make a comment and welcome our newly elected members, Ward 1, Porter McKinnon, Ward 2, Michele Bialek and in Ward 4, Lorenzo Durante. Thank you all for putting yourselves in harms way and agreeing to serve the people of the City of Shelton.

Alderman Simonetti: Is there a special organizational meeting to approve?

Mayor Lauretti: No, we approved both of them in one motion.

6 – LEGAL REPORT

6.1 CORPORATION COUNSEL BILLING

Mayor Lauretti: We don't have any billings.

6.2 ASSISTANT CORPORATION COUNSEL BILLING

Alderman Anglace MOVED to authorize a total payment of \$709.50 to Assistant Corporation Counsel Thomas Galvin Cotter for services rendered for statements dated November-December 1, 2021 with funds to come from the Legal Fees Account.

Seconded by Alderman Balamaci.

A voice vote was taken, the motion PASSED unanimously (7-0).

7– LEGISLATIVE – OLD

7.1 NO ITEMS

7.1 A. NO ITEMS

8 – FINANCIAL BUSINESS – OLD

8.1 NO ITEMS

9 – FINANCIAL BUSINESS – NEW

9.1 DECEMBER STATUTORY REFUNDS

Alderman Anglace MOVED that the report of the Tax Collector relative to the refund of taxes for a total amount of \$18,488.39 be approved and that the Finance Director be directed to make payments in accordance with the certified list received from the Tax Collector with funds to come from the Statutory Refunds Account 001-0000-311.13.00.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken, the motion PASSED unanimously (7-0).

Mayor Lauretti: Jack Bashar, are you on the line?

Jack Bashar: I am.

9.2 MERIT SYSTEM WAGE REVIEWS

Mayor Lauretti: Why don't we put the motion on the floor and then Jack, you can give a quick explanation?

Alderman Anglace MOVED to increase the total compensation for non-union, merit system employees, by an amount not to exceed \$48,000, which is allocated pursuant to Section 5.6 of the Merit System and Personnel Rules, retroactively to July 1, 2021. Further, move to amend the Merit System Salary Schedule for non-union employees by an increase of 2% to the minimum and maximum rates for all classes, effective July 1, 2021.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: Before we get into discussion, Jack, do you want to give everyone a quick overview of what this is all about?

Jack Bashar: Sure. Good afternoon everyone. As you know, non-union employees, full-time employees of the city, are under the Merit System Ordinance. Each year we do an analysis of not only other town increases, but we also take a look at the cost-of-living increases. I have given you a memo proposing that there be a 2% increase in the grid for all grades and that the board authorize \$47,000 to fund any increase for non-union employees as the Mayor will determine based on merit.

Mayor Lauretti: There was one thing I was thinking that you probably should cover. This is done annually and this is done based on the cost-of-living increase index.

Jack Bashar: That is correct. It is done annually pursuant to Section 5.6 of the Ordinance.

Mayor Lauretti: Okay, we will go into discussion at this point. Anybody have any questions?

Alderman Anglace: For the benefit of the new members, this is 5.6 of the Merit System. Section 5.6, goes into detail as to how this is to be done. Jack gets a little nervous when I verify what he has done, by checking every calculation, but I assure you that the calculations are accurate and that they are in conformance with the Ordinance.

Mayor Lauretti: I can assure you, if you are not retired, you will not have the time to do this. Any other questions?

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.3 FUNDING FOR REPAIR OF ADMINISTRATIVE VEHICLES

Alderman Anglace MOVED to authorize an amount of \$23,000 for the repair of administrative vehicles with funding to come from Contingency General Account #001-9900-900.99-00.

Seconded by Alderman McPherson.

Mayor Lauretti: Motion is made and seconded. Before we get into the discussion, let me give you a little background as to how we got here. This is an absolute first for us. About three to four years ago we determined that we would try to buy used vehicles for the administrative people at the Police Department. It is not uncommon in different parts of the country for companies to buy these vehicles and refurbish them in some form or another. We thought that we were getting a completely refurbished vehicle; actually there were three of them. There were two 2017s one was a 2018 with relatively low mileage on them. We picked them up in error, I must say, and much to my dismay found out that these vehicles were defective. So, at that point in time Corporation Counsel and myself discussed the possibility of legal action against this company, which we bought these vehicles from in New Jersey. That is where they came from. With that said, the pandemic struck and everything was shut down so for the last

two years we were not able to do anything legally but we did get title from these people and it is our belief that when they pass a title to you they do that in good faith that the vehicles are not defective in any shape or form. That was not the case. Apparently, these vehicles were in accidents and the frames were compromised. After these vehicles had sat around for three years down at the city yard, I decided that we should try to make an attempt to get them repaired. We did get them repaired. This is the dollar amount that repairs all three of them. I did get a letter of certification from the body shop that is certified through the State of Connecticut as a repair shop and he certifies that these vehicles meet the factory standard in terms of safety. These were pursuit rated vehicles for the Police Department. We decided that rather than go back down that road again for pursuit rated, that we would use them for administrative purposes, which is a much less intense use. We are trying to cut our losses here, if you will. I do believe that we are going to pursue some legal action, or try to pursue legal action, against this company in New Jersey if they are still in business after the pandemic. In any event, there is a whole file on these things. I want everybody to know that I feel very satisfied with the repair done on the vehicles, so much that I will be driving one of these myself for at least a month before I send it to some City department. We have three of them.

Some of our use is just around town as opposed to police vehicles or public works vehicles that are on the road constantly and put miles and miles on these vehicles each day. Some of the things that other City employees do, do not require that type of intensity in terms of use. So that is why I decided that we would just use them for administrative purposes and believe me there is a need, there is no question that there is a need.

Alderman Anglace: Just for information purposes, as of November 10th we have \$120,000 available in the Contingency General Account which is more than enough for the Board of Aldermen contingency.

Mayor Lauretti: Anybody have any questions with respect to anything I said?

Alderman Bialek: John, could you please repeat how much we have allocated?

Alderman Anglace: We have \$120,000 in the Board of Aldermen Contingency Account. That is where the money to make these repairs, that is where it is coming from. I just wanted you to be assured that we do have the money in the account.

Mayor Lauretti: Through the annual budget, we have a contingency that we set aside for anything and everything that may occur that is not planned for or budgeted for during the course of the year.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.4 FUNDING FOR OVERRUNS FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF EAST VILLAGE PARK COURTS (LOCIP PROJECT #126-21-030)

Alderman Anglace: Just before I read the motion, I just want you to know that I am going to vary the motion as it is prepared in front of you; I am going to add something to it.

Move to approve and add to the Capital Improvement Plan an amount of \$5100 for overruns for reconstruction of the East Village Park Courts, LOCIP Project #126-21-030, which was added to the Capital Improvement Plan at the June 10, 2021 Board of Aldermen regular full board meeting, for a total project cost of \$294,395 to come from LOCIP.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: This project was bid, it was bid with a certain specification. After the bids came in, Ronnie Herrick who is the Parks and Recreation Director, and I agreed that some changes should be made to the design of the courts up at East Village Park to accommodate Pickle Ball, which is a fast-growing competition throughout the country. The Parks and Recreation Commission agreed with that and that is the reason for the overrun.

Alderman Anglace: Just for the benefit of the new members, LOCIP is the Local Capital Improvement Program. Its money comes from the State. They give us a certain amount every year, around \$200,000 that we can spend on projects of this type. It all has to be done in conjunction with their approval. We spend the money, they approve it, we submit it, they reimburse us.

Mayor Lauretti: Any questions? Pretty straight forward.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.5 FUNDING FOR REHABILITATION & EXPANSION OF AN ADA-COMPLIANT PLAYGROUND & PAVILION FOR OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AT SUNNYSIDE SCHOOL

Alderman Anglace: Move to authorize an amount of \$150,000 for the rehabilitation and expansion of an ADA-compliant playground and pavilion for an outdoor classroom at Sunnyside School with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter. Further authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the same.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: In your packet we provided a schematic of some of the things, it is really an aerial view of the back of Sunnyside School and playground. You should know that the PTA is also making a contribution of \$20,000 towards this project. We have, over the years, made a lot of changes to this playground, never to this extent. So, when I have been meeting with the group of PTA and school officials, particularly the Principal, I agreed to do some other things that I think make a lot of sense. This project will be more than \$170,000, but this gets us started right now. Some of the work will be done in-house through Public Works and through the Parks Department. I don't know to the extent that they will be able to cut costs, but it will be determined at a later date. I just want you to know that we will be back probably for more funding to complete this rehabilitation/redesign of the back of Sunnyside School. You can see on the schematic that there is a road that is going to be a, a driveway, not a road, a driveway that is going to be put in the back of the school and that will be for student pick up for parents. The principal has assured me that it will be gated on both ends and it will be locked and will only be used for that purpose. So, with that said, I agreed to go along with it. As you know I am a big believer in that parents should put the kids on the school buses because most of them come to school, come to the building empty. We spend a lot of money on school transportation, as does every other municipality in the state, so to my way of thinking that is the way it should be, but that is not the way it is. You will see there is a big cul-de-sac in the back there that is just blacktop. There are going to be some changes made to that. There were two basketball courts that were put in in the 60's down there. They are going to get removed and rebuilt in a different area on the playground. The playground itself is going to be moved closer to the school. I hope you think this is a good project. I think it will keep us compliant in this day and age. Parents need something to do with these kids when they are at a certain age and this does that.

Alderman Anglace: It is important that the education community is part of this project planning.

Mayor Lauretti: Unlike other schools, schools have a regulation that do not allow people to use the playgrounds during the school hours. I can certainly understand that. Years ago, we did something different up at Riverview Park and put in a playground that was available to the parents all the time. This is one of those sites where the city maintains control of the grounds in the back of the school. This will be made available to parents on a regular basis. We may monitor some of the traffic coming and going and we are going to have to work with the school Principal there so it doesn't interfere with school activities, particularly the letting off or the picking up the kids.

Alderman Simonetti: I have a question. Some schools, going back 20-30 years now, the playscapes were put together by the Father's Clubs or something like that. This is going to be installed by the company?

Mayor Lauretti: Yes.

Alderman Anglace: The Parks and Recreation Department is overseeing the buildout?

Mayor Lauretti: We have hired a landscape architect who we are all familiar with, who will be overseeing all the activities there. They also will be providing instruction to our personnel that is going to be doing some work on site.

Alderman Durante: Is there some type of warranty on this?

Mayor Lauretti: Yes. All this stuff has a warranty that comes with it.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.6 FUNDING FOR TECHNOLOGY FOR HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL

Alderman Anglace: Move to authorize an amount of \$19,000 for technology for Holy Trinity School with funding to come from Contingency General Account #001-9900-900.99-00.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Alderman Anglace: It looks like this was originally thought to be coming from the Municipal Covid Relief Funds. Was that found to be inaccurate?

Mayor Lauretti: We decided to shift gears and take the path of least resistance. I'll explain in more detail, or Paul Hiller I should say will explain in more detail at our special meeting on Monday.

Alderman Bialek: I just have a question, is it just because – it is a parochial school, is this something that happens at a lot of municipalities where they fund the private sector of schools?

Mayor Lauretti: I really don't know what other municipalities do. I have never been guided by what they do. I try to stay focused on what I think we need to do. We have done this before in different capacities. In light of Sandy Hook we did some security, we took some security measures for that school. Look, they are our kids too regardless of whether they go to a parochial school or not. Their parents live and pay taxes in this city and I think we have an obligation to keep them as safe as possible, just like kids in the public school. It is not uncommon for us to do things like that. It is a small amount. There has been a big influx into the parochial schools around the State this year because most public schools had been closed. Parents opted to send their kids to parochial schools and their enrollment is up. Anybody have any questions?

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.7 AMENDMENT TO SEPTEMBER 9, 2021 ITEM 9.4 FUNDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF PARKS AND RECREATION VEHICLES

Alderman Anglace MOVED to amend the funding portion of item 9.4, Funding for the Purchase of Parks and Recreation Vehicles Resolution, passed at the September 9, 2021 meeting from \$55,000 to \$53,252.

Seconded by Alderman McPherson.

Mayor Lauretti: We are making this correction so that our accounting records are accurate and reflect what we actually spent. If someone looks at these records at any time in the future, whether it is ten years from now or 30 years from now, they will have an accurate number.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Alderman Anglace: The one comment on that, the motion that we passed back on September 9th carried with it the connotation that the funding would come from Municipal Covid Relief Funds. Is that still accurate?

Mayor Lauretti: It is as we sit here today. Paul Hiller is verifying that, but I believe he got an okay from the Office of Policy and Management at the State. Again, it was not an accurate number because when we appropriated the money, the bid was not in.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

9.8 OVER-EXPENDITURE FOR SENIOR CENTER TRAVEL FOR TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM CENTER

Alderman Anglace MOVED to authorize the over-expenditure of the Senior Center other compensation/travel account through the end of fiscal year 2021-2022.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: Is there any discussion?

Alderman Anglace: Yes Mr. Mayor. For the benefit primarily of the new members, Section 7.10 Financial Procedures, Subsection B authorizes the Board of Aldermen to approve the over-expenditure of a department budget subject to certification by the Finance Director that there will be an excess in other department budgets at year end. Otherwise, the board will have to provide an additional appropriation. So, I contacted Paul Hiller just to be sure and he texted and told me it was certified and it's okay to proceed.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

10 – LEGISLATIVE – NEW

10.1 ITEMS TO PUBLIC HEARING

10.1 NO ITEMS

Mayor Lauretti: At this time, I will entertain a motion to go into Executive Session.

11 - EXECUTIVE SESSION

11.1 A. REQUEST TO MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Alderman Anglace MOVED to go into executive session at 4:27 pm and invited Corporation Counsel Fran Teodosio, Assistant Corporation Counsel Thomas Cotter and Jack Bashar, Administrative Assistant.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Alderman Anglace MOVED to reconvene the meeting at 4:55 pm and noted that there were no votes taken in Executive Session.

SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

11.1 DAN LORIS WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Alderman Anglace MOVED to accept the recommendation of Assistant Corporation Counsel Thomas Cotter as presented in the Executive Session.

Seconded by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

11.2 PURCHASE OF PROPERTY

Fran Teodosio: An appropriate motion would be: ‘Move that the Mayor of the City of Shelton be authorized to negotiate and sign a final Real Estate Purchase Agreement with the Wells Holding, LLC to purchase approximately 25-26 acres on Old Mill Road.’

Alderman Anglace: So moved.

Seconded by Alderman McPherson

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Alderman Anglace: I just want to make a point in discussion that counsel in a recommended motion authorizes the Mayor to negotiate, to finalize, so to speak, negotiations and purchase. He will come back to us with the final resolution.

Mayor Lauretti: I have to because I have no money to pay for it.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

11.3 AGREEMENT WITH UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEE’S UNION (SHELTON SUPERVISOR’S UNION)

Alderman Anglace MOVED to approve the tentative agreement reached with the United Service Employees Union, Shelton Supervisors, as presented in the summary from Jack Bashar dated December 1, 2021

Seconded by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Anglace MOVED to adjourn the Board of Aldermen Special Meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Fonda

Donna Fonda
Acting Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED _____ BY: _____
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti