Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Aldermanic President John Anglace called the meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 6:35 p.m.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President - present
Alderman John “Jack” Finn – present
Alderman Stanley Kudej – present
Alderman Joseph Lanzi - absent
Alderman Kenneth Olin - absent
Alderman Christopher Panek - present
Alderman John P. Papa – present
Alderman Randy York - absent

There was a quorum of 5 present, 3 absent.

Agenda Items

Waiver of Bids – Lane Street

Alderman Papa MOVED to waive the bidding for Lane Street Sewer Project per the recommendation of the Director of Finance (Purchasing Agent) and the WPCA and authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to negotiate this project; SECONDED by Alderman Finn.

Alderman Papa stated, the Mayor said he would be here, but that he would be late.

Alderman Finn asked, why did the WPCA commission decide to waive the bidding process. I spoke to Mr. Cawthra tonight and asked him if he had any rationale behind the letter that they received from the Sewer Commission. He said no, this is their recommendation to waive the bid process. It would seem to me that you’d want to re-bid.

Alderman Papa stated, they’re the ones that wanted to waive. They said the bids were too high.
Alderman Finn stated, if the bids were too high, we many times have rejected and told them to re-bid. They’re asking for a waiver of bid and have the Mayor negotiate with one of the three individuals that bid on the project to lower their pricing.

Alderman Papa stated, we won’t know until the Mayor is here.

Alderman Anglace stated, the Mayor and Sewer Commission believe they can negotiate a better price and waive the bids. I’d keep it open and hold it in abeyance until the Mayor arrives to explain the specifics.

Alderman Panek stated, this seems to defeat the whole bidding process.

The Board went on with the other scheduled business of the Special Meeting, held several public hearings that were scheduled, and resumed at 8:45 p.m. with Mayor Mark A. Lauretti.

Alderman Anglace stated, we had this on the floor, Item #1, Waiver of Bids, Lane Street, maybe you could explain it to us.

Mayor Lauretti stated, If you recall back in the summertime, I believe in August I mentioned before the Board there were two projects we had gone to bid on and both came in extremely high and we thought we could do better by negotiating - one was Rocky Rest Road Spoke Drive Wagon Drive sewer shed project. Lane Street is a forced main – the second project - for two properties at the beginning of Lane Street that the guy wanted an awful lot of money to do the installation and Tom thought it was way out of whack. So I said, listen, if you think you can get someone to come in at the number you think you can, let’s go for the waiver and then once we get the waiver we’ll negotiate with the other contractors and the Board of Aldermen is going to have to ultimately approve it anyway so there’s no harm in waiving the bids on it and allowing us to come back with the better price.

Tom feels, I can’t really say that I do because he’s a lot closer to it than I am, that he can get a better price. We try to find ways to save money and make a project more financially viable.

Alderman Papa stated, it’s amazing the prices on those – one guy bid $350,000, another guy bid $56,000.

Alderman Finn stated, the lowest bidder if you look at it just for two homes is $27,000 per home. I have to agree – that’s outrageous.
Mayor Lauretti stated, so at a minimum, let us take a shot at it, give us an opportunity to do better. If we can’t do better, you know what the numbers are, if I come back to you with numbers that are similar or better or worse, the decision will be easy.

We may have to rebid; we’ll just wait until the springtime. Tom is trying to get these projects done now. They’re small enough projects where we probably can. The goal is to try to get Rocky Rest Road done and paved now – we know we’re not going to get the entire project done, but you’ve already approved that one so we’re working on that. Sometimes when you bid these projects other people are busy. I can’t enumerate them tonight. If you think it’s a good idea, do it. I’m looking for the best price.

Alderman Panek stated, my only concern is that it’s kind of defeating the bidding process. It’s discouraging bidders to bid on a project and be the low bidder, and now we’re going ahead and waiving it. I would be more in favor of putting it out to rebid. If Tom Sym thinks it’s something specific, well tell me what specific he wants to negotiate and let all the bidders – he might get six other people to bid on it because now you’re changing the scope of the work. You certainly don’t want to hold up the project, but from a bidding perspective, to have someone be the low bidder and now have the Board of Aldermen say, we’re going to step in and waive the bid because it’s too high. Well I’d like to see what he was anticipating and why is the bid higher than anticipated?

Mayor Lauretti stated, there are a number of factors that affect that and experience will allow you to understand that and buy into it at some time. If you’re worried about the low bidder, I have to tell you, publicly, I am not. I am worried about the best price for the taxpayer. So that is how I’m guided and that’s where I go. If he can do a better job, you know, sometimes when you bid these project, other people are busy, and they don’t bid on them because they’re up to their eyebrows in work. So there are a lot of factors that weigh in on it, and I’m not going to try to enumerate them tonight, and I’m not going to try to make anybody believe it. If you think it’s a good idea, do it. If you don’t, I don’t care. I’m just looking for the best price.

Alderman Panek stated, I would agree you’re looking for the best price, but if you change the scope of the project, how do you know, you might get 10 people to bid on this but you say it’s changed, instead of negotiating with one or two.
Mayor Lauretti stated, let me give you an example of one that recently came about. Elizabeth Shelton School. We had one bidder that was $330,000. They went and negotiated and got $130,000. How do you argue with that? What do you do? Chris, your kids go to school there.

Alderman Panek stated, that was an emergency situation.

Mayor Lauretti stated, why was it an emergency, Chris?

Alderman Panek replied, because the State told us that the boilers were no good and we had to replace them and the heating season is coming up in a month.

Mayor Lauretti stated, no, wrong. The State said you’ve got a leak. We’re not going to approve the boilers – you’ve got to fix the leak. We could remedy the leak for a couple of thousand dollars.

Alderman Panek stated, well that’s not the reason that I,

Mayor Lauretti stated, well, that’s reality. We could remedy the problem. If you want to find fault with what we’re doing, vote against it. No problem.

Alderman Anglace stated, if we go out to bid, I’d imagine Apportionment and Taxation rejected the bids.

Alderman Finn stated, according to Mr. Crawford, I spoke to him tonight, they only rejected the bids on the advice of the WPCA. There was no rationale behind why they rejected it.

Alderman Anglace stated, we need to understand the situation. We need five votes to pass this. If we don’t have a unanimous vote, we’re not passing it.

Alderman Panek stated, it’s going to go to rebid then, because they’ve already rejected the bids. If we don’t waive the bid, and one person up here is opposed to it, I’ll assume it’s going out to rebid. The whole problem with this is there’s no documentation in here for me from Tom Sym that says why he thinks he’s going to get a better price and also, I’m not necessarily in favor of throwing out the bidding process, certainly want the lowest price for the taxpayers, but when you have companies bidding on work, to me that faults the entire bidding process. Why are we going out for bids if we’re going to waive them and let somebody negotiate?
Alderman Anglance stated, supposing we rebid the project and we don’t get any better bids. I’m sure these two people are not going to want to pay $27,000.

Alderman Panek stated, this particular project that’s going to these two homes – the Mayor brought up Elizabeth Shelton School, which to me was an emergency situation. The heating season is a month away and the boilers are no good. Is this an emergency situation on this street? Is this project going to be done before winter?

Alderman Papa stated, he said he wants to do it now. But it could be done next year.

Alderman Finn stated, Alderman Panek has a point. Elizabeth Shelton School with the boilers, we were told that the State closed down the boilers. We were told by a member of the Board of Education.

Alderman Papa asked, is that fact? Do you have a letter saying that the State closed them down? Like Mark said, they could have fixed the leak.

Alderman Finn stated, that was an emergency situation. Here you have two homes, yes, they’re on septic systems. Will the septic systems last into spring? Probably yes. The Mayor indicated tonight that by waiving the bids and allowing him to enter into negotiations he could probably get people involved in the process who didn’t bid on the project because they were busy. That’s fine. That brings to light, he can have that happen now. If we go out to re-bid these same people that would be interested in the project that didn’t bid on it originally can bid on it and give us a price on it as well.

Alderman Papa stated, all I can say is, if he talked to Tom Sym who is in charge of water pollution and all this, and he thinks this is a high price and he thinks he can do better, what do we have to lose?

Alderman Panek stated, I just don’t see how it’s fair to the other bidders.

Alderman Papa stated, I want the best price for my taxes. I’m not worried about the bidder.

Alderman Panek asked, if you were a bidder, are you going to bid next time on the project for this?
Alderman Anglase stated, your position is that you’re not going to support the waiver. The only alternative is to suggest that they go out to rebid. We don’t have to take an action to do that. If you want to go on record,

Alderman Panek stated, I would say that maybe if I had more information from Tom Sym – is he going to redraw the scope, what is he negotiating, who is doing the negotiating? Can the project wait until spring? Certainly everybody wants the best price, and even the low bid is too much for two homes.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION FAILED 3 Yes, 2 No (Finn, Panek).

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**Request for Funding – Landscaping – Plumb Memorial Library**

Alderman Papa MOVED to accept the low bid of Robert Hansen Landscaping, LLC for landscaping services at the Plumb Memorial Library with funding not to exceed $2,100 to come from LOCIP; and further,

MOVED to add this item to the Capital Improvements List; and further,

MOVED to authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to sign all necessary documents; SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Alderman Anglase stated, we’ll keep this meeting open until the Mayor returns.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Papa MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej; A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Clerk
Board of Aldermen
DATE APPROVED: ________________________ BY: ________________________

Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton