Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call

BOARD OF ALDERMEN:
Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President
Alderman Lynne Farrell
Alderman John “Jack” Finn
Alderman Stanley Kudej
Alderman Noreen McGorty
Alderman Eric McPherson
Alderman John P. Papa
Alderman Anthony Simonetti

BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT AND TAXATION
Mark Holden, Chairman
Christopher Besecheck
Judson Crawford
Faith Hack
John Zikaras
Charlotte Madar

Administration:
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti
Administrative Assistant Thomas Taylor
Corporation Counsel Thomas Welch

1. Per City Charter Section 7.2, Mayor Lauretti Presents his Budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 to the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Apportionment and Taxation

   Good evening Members of the Board of Aldermen & Board of A&T:

   Tonight marks the 20th budget address for me as Mayor of the City of Shelton. I recall February 21, 1992’s message portrayed a very grim financial picture. That budget presented many economic challenges. Issues such as overstated tax collection rates, high debt service increases, employee lay offs, use of one time revenues to balance in the operating budget, large
reductions in ECS funding, limited growth in the Grand List, high unemployment, and national recession, just to name a few. That year I announced a 7.86 increase in the mill rate or 27% increase in taxes.

Fast forward 20 years and the highlights show a very different picture. And, to that point, I might add, we are in a most enviable position given the fiscal condition of other municipalities, our state, other states and the federal government find themselves in. It is also fitting to ask ourselves how we did it ... how we got to the financial position where we are recognized nationally as "one of the Best Affordable Suburbs to live in" and how our taxes continue to be the lowest around and how we continue to be the Community of Choice for our business partners.

Difficult choices had to be made, like reducing the workforce and the amount of our debt. We then had to rewrite the book on how to provide constituent services within their ability to pay.

While the state and other municipal governments adopted defined benefit plans with unsustainable benefit costs, we choose to provide defined contribution retirement plans for our employees; a decision that today has made us the fiscal envy of many around the state.

We have developed a financial structure that has created economic stability even in recessionary years. We have seen our Grand List grow from just under $1 billion in 1991 to over $5.3 billion in 2010. This year's Grand List will generate $837,000 in new tax (dollars) revenue to help our taxpayers through difficult economic times.

In addition to Grand List growth our long term debt also plays a major role in our economic stability. We have invested in educational infrastructure (buildings and fields), purchased Open Space and have voter approval to begin significant road improvements without impacting our overall debt.

Those are just some of the issues we have had to deal with over the past 20 years and our handling of them has brought us to this year where we find ourselves on course. We have not fallen prey to reckless spending. Our revenues exceed spending in this budget by some $203,000 thereby enabling us to provide some assistance in the form of a small tax decrease. I'm sure that Shelton taxpayers will be helped as they find themselves burdened with the call from our Governor for "Shared Sacrifice." We have not been deterred by special interest or political critics or second guessing by the media, but decisions that have been made with an eye to benefit all residents.

Over the years we have had to deal with continued passage of unfunded educational mandates by the state and federal governments; laws, I might add that still remain on the books and which, year after year, fail to win repeal or change. The state legislature's majority party fails to grant municipalities relief from these unwise, unfair and deficit causing practices which adversely affects educational results. At the same time, my budget fully funds our educational request and continues necessary municipal services at current levels.
Finally, the State of CT may be realizing that they cannot spend beyond their means. The big question remains whether or not the majority party in Hartford is willing to reign in their excessive spending.

I am personally grateful to those department heads and bargaining units who have worked with my administration in a true spirit of awareness and cooperation.

I am therefore proposing a tax decrease for every taxpayer. The mill rate will go from 18.61 mills down to 18.57 mills and the budget is based on revenues projection of $112,116,632.00 and expenditures of $111,913,313.00.

As I have said over the years, the budget process is 5 ½ months long and some information may change requiring the Board of Aldermen to make adjustments.

I close by wishing you well during budget deliberation as we all work to provide a high quality of life based on our residents’ ability to pay.

• Adjournment

This meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Ballaro, Clerk
Board of Aldermen