Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Jack Finn called the special meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 5:30 p.m. All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President – present (5:35)
Alderman Lynne Farrell - present
Alderman John “Jack” Finn – present
Alderman Stanley Kudej – present
Alderman Noreen McGorty – absent
Alderman John P. Papa – absent
Alderman Eric McPherson - present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti - present

Administration: Administrative Assistant Tom Taylor

Agenda Items

Alderman Finn read aloud the call of the meeting.

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to recess the meeting until the arrival of Aldermanic President John Anglace; SECONDED by Alderman McPherson. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 5-0.

Upon the arrival of Alderman Anglace at approximately 5:35 p.m., Alderman McPherson MOVED to return to regular session; SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 6-0.

Alderman Finn turned the meeting over to Aldermanic President John Anglace.

1. Agreement between City of Shelton and First Student, Inc.

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to approve the license agreement by and between the City of Shelton and first Student Inc. for the use of a piece of City property known as 55 Riverdale Avenue for the sole purpose of parking school buses which are being used on and behalf of the City of Shelton and the City of Shelton Board of Education; and further,
MOVED to authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to sign all documents necessary to effectuate said agreement. SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 6-0.

2. **Funding for Inauguration Expenses**

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to appropriate funding for inauguration expenses in conjunction with installation night held on November 21st with funding in an amount of $2,100 to come from Contingency General Account 001-9900-900.99-00; SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

Alderman Finn stated, as I said last Thursday night, we still do not have the three quotes as required by Charter. I understand from speaking with some individuals that the three quotes do exist, but we do not have the ability to obtain those three quotes until some time after this meeting for me to review.

We are now setting a different course for the inauguration of City officials. This is the first time in my 14 terms that we’ve ever asked the taxpayers to pay for this cost. In the past it usually came out of the campaign treasury of the successful winner in security the office of Mayor. The current Mayor on 10/25/11 as his last financial report showed, he had $20,280 in his campaign treasury. So the ability to pay for the inauguration was there. If you’re starting to set a different course for the City for future inaugurations, I think it would be wise if the Finance Committee came up with policy and guidelines for those to follow in the future. We would not want 10 years down the line somebody to decide to rent out a catering hall, which would be far more expensive than what we currently set with this last one of $2,075. Rounding off to the nearest $100 is good practice for accounting.

When the Finance Committee meets, and I hope you guys take this serious, you sit down and you come up with procedures and a guideline for everybody in the future. We had it at the Shelton Senior Citizens Center – excellent place. They should hold everything there. Firemen’s banquets – any banquet should be held there. But again, when we have these events we should have the three quotes prior to sitting down and approving any funds, so they’re in accordance with the Charter.

Alderman Simonetti stated, I feel the Mayor, whoever it is that is elected, his campaign funds are his – he can do what he wants with them. I don’t think he is obligated in any way, shape or form either by historically what happened to pay for any kind of association or affair that the City is putting on. I feel that the affair was done, as Alderman Finn said, in a wonderful place. It came out very nicely. I think that the people who attended were very pleased with everything that was done there and I feel it was a very simple gesture on the City’s part to say thank you to a number of people. The Board of Aldermen is eight, the Board of Education is nine, the Board of Apportionment and Taxation three, we had 40 people there that were elected and they all deserve to know that their volunteer time, and many, many hours of volunteer time, is worth at least a meal by the City. This is a very small gesture of thank you that the City can do for them.
every two years. Many of them campaigned very hard; some didn’t campaign at all. I believe they do put their time in and this is a small gesture. We should actually probably approve that there be at least $3,000 a year for this in the budget next year for this or any kind of celebration for those people who work so hard for the City and put in so much time.

Alderman Finn stated, we have to remember we have past practices – this is a change in past practices. If we’re going to remain going this course, there should be something in place for those to follow in the future.

Alderman McPherson stated, I would just say that I hope that this payment wouldn’t be held up again. We have done the event. I agree with both Alderman Finn and Alderman Simonetti that it was a wonderful place to have it and everything was well done. I really would hate to hold up the person who did all of the catering and cooking from their payment.

Alderman Finn stated, I agree with you. He provided a service and when they provide a service, no matter who it is, they should be paid in full. There is no question about that.

Alderman Simonetti stated, I understand that there were three quotes. Even last week they just weren’t present at the time. I do believe it should be paid as soon as possible also.

Alderman Kudej stated, the comment was made that the Mayor should have paid for it out of his leftovers but the Aldermen and the Town Committee had their own budgets. You just can’t start saying everybody has to chip in and pay for it. It’s a citywide function. I believe that we should allocate some money. We did something this year that turned out to be pretty good and I think it should be a practice for the future. I agree that there should have been three bids, but being that we had the problem of time, I think we could waive the three bids for this time around. Next time around we should have three.

Alderman Finn stated, if we’re doing a waiver of bids, we need to have a letter from the City Purchasing Agent, which we don’t have in front of us.

Alderman Simonetti stated, we did have the three quotes as I understand it.

Alderman Farrell stated, also, I think maybe we’re forgetting it was a matter of time. What happened was that it was switched from one night to another. Trying to get a caterer to readjust his or her schedule probably was a difficult matter. I know it was a difficult matter for me because I had another meeting of which I am president of the organization, and I had to turn it over to someone else. I’m sure we all had to adjust our schedules, and a caterer would have had to. I think it was a fine celebration and I think at least half of those who attended were elected this year. Probably more were there that helped those people get elected and worked hard on the campaign. I think it was a good thing for our City to show some sort of tribute to all those who worked and were elected and as someone just said a few minutes ago, work without payment for not only
regular meetings but emergency meetings, and work for the public in trying to have a City that is as fine as our City with a tax rate as it is.

Alderman Finn stated, that comes back to what I’ve been saying. If you’re going to start a new procedure on how this is conducted after a person is elected as the top chief elected official, there has to be guidelines in place for the future. Right now, as Alderman Anglace pointed out at the last meeting, past practices, whoever was successful, no matter what party was successful, it was their responsibility back then to use the funds from the campaign treasury to pay for such an expense.

Alderman Anglace stated, I don’t think I said that. Since the last meeting I’ve given this some thought. First of all, the inauguration event is a City function; it’s bipartisan. It is intended to recognize those who the people elected and bring credibility to that. In the past, forever as I can remember, we’ve always had the inauguration right here in City Hall, which lent itself to, you bring everybody in, you fill up City Hall, and you end up with cookies. And everybody scoots out and then the Democrats go one way and the Republicans go the other way. This year was a first, absolutely. It was a first. It was a new location that really lent itself to a different type of a function. It allowed not only the swearing in, but inviting of guests and also a light buffet afterward. It was a great function and I think everybody recognized it. It’s a City function; it’s a City responsibility to fund it. We decided to do it so we fund it. Nobody can control us guys that are elected, we can’t control a campaign’s expenses. That is out of our control; we have no say over that money. So whatever they did in the past, they did it in a highly partisan fashion. The winners went out and had themselves a party and they spent campaign money, which was okay. But we took it to a new level this year, I think, where it was a highly bipartisan effort recognizing the inauguration and recognizing those people that the people chose. I think it was money well spent.

Now, with respect to the quotes. I looked at the Charter also. My reading of the Charter is that our responsibility as the Aldermen, the fiscal authority of the City, is to appropriate money for various functions. At budget time we appropriate the bulk of the money. During the course of the year we also appropriate money for different functions. Our job is to appropriate the money. Our job is not to get the quotes; that’s an administrative responsibility. That is their business. I don’t have a problem if you want to verify that they got it, that’s fine. I don’t think that has anything to do, however, with us appropriating the money. We appropriate $2,100 for inauguration expenses, that’s fine. It shouldn’t be contingent upon whether they got the three quotes. They have to be responsible, the administration, when they spend that money, to spend it in accordance with the Charter. They have to be sure they get the three quotes and each of you can verify that, no problem. I just think that one is not contingent upon the other.

Alderman Finn stated, they need three quotes in order to... and there’s a number of steps after you get the three quotes. If it seem unreasonable to have any more than one quote then they have another form they have to fill out and you have to justify why they only had one quote. The third step is, we need the three quotes and we need that form I just made mention of to go to the Purchasing Agent so they can create a purchase order.
Nothing gets paid out without a purchase order. Various departments throughout the City had their requests sent back to them because they weren’t following the guidelines.

Alderman Anglace stated, and that’s an administrative thing. We appropriated the money – those departments – their money was appropriated either at budget time or some other time. But how they spend the money, that’s what’s being questioned. Did they have the quotes – that’s what’s being questioned. So Jack is right, that’s an administrative function and the administration is questioning of the departments and what was questioned here is not contingent upon whether or not we appropriate the money, the inauguration expenses, but what’s being questioned is another matter for, and I think you saw further that you got enough information to show us there, but appropriating the money should not be contingent upon whether they got the three quotes or not.

Alderman Finn stated, I was told the three quotes were there. The individual who told me...

Alderman Anglace stated, looking at this thing in a bipartisan way, did we do the right thing on the inauguration? Did we do the right thing; did we invite everybody who was elected; was this available to everybody who the people chose and was the function a quality function that would make the people proud of the way we conducted their business? I think the answer to that is a resounding yes.

Alderman Finn stated, there is no question on that. The question comes back to what we’ve been saying right along.

Alderman Anglace stated, incidentally, I don’t think that past practice sets a precedent. Because if past practice sets a precedent, then we would have done it in the same way we did it before – in the auditorium with cookies.

Alderman Finn stated, we used to bring in pot luck dinners. When Mike Pacowta was there everybody brought a dish in.

Alderman Kudej stated, if we’re going to accept this as procedure for the future, I think we should also put a limit on how much is spent because the next one could spend $10,000 and the next could spend $15,000.

Alderman Anglace stated, at budget time if you want to appropriate money for inauguration expenses – you won’t have to do it this year – it’s the following year. That should be part of this discussion; it’s a good point that we should be guided by this now because, not that it’s a precedent but it is as an option available to each administration as they are elected.

Alderman Finn stated so the individual who informed me about the three quotes, and there might be more than three quotes, I consider that person to be one of the most honest people in City Hal and I believe him wholeheartedly. Again, I don’t have them in front of me.
Alderman Anglace stated, it’s not necessary to have them in front of you to appropriate the money. You know what I mean. If you want to follow it up, you’re welcome.

Alderman Farrell stated, I don’t ever remember having quotes in front of us for anything that’s purchased. If they’re quotes, we don’t get the see them; that is administrative. I’m not just talking about this buffet; I mean for other things that are purchased.

Alderman Finn stated, we usually get three quotes and the Purchasing Department attaches the bids to us when we’re voting on various items.

Alderman Farrell stated, but it’s not up to us to solicit the bids.

Alderman Finn stated, what happens is the department head solicits the bids, it goes out to bid and comes back, the Board of Apportionment and Taxation makes their recommendation back to the department head. The Department Head makes his recommendation back to the Board of Apportionment and Taxation and the Board of Apportionment and Taxation if necessary then forwards it on to us. We have all the back up information on all the quotes.

Alderman Kudej stated, we’ve seen the quotes.

Alderman Anglace called the question.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 5 Yes, 1 No (Finn).

Alderman Finn stated, I would like to see the vendor paid; I have no question about that. It’s just that I didn’t see the three quotes.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Clerk
Board of Aldermen

Date Submitted: 

DATE APPROVED: 

BY:  

Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton