



**Board of Aldermen  
Shelton, Connecticut  
Public Hearing on Ordinances  
February 24, 2004**

---



---

**CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti opened the Public Hearing at approximately 7:30 p.m.

---

**ROLL CALL**

Aldermanic President John F. Anglace, Jr. - present  
Alderman John "Jack" Finn - present  
Alderman Stanley Kudej - present  
Alderman Joseph Lanzi - absent  
Alderman Diane M. Marangelo - present  
Alderman Nancy Minotti - present  
Alderman Kenneth Olin - present  
Alderman John P. Papa - present

---

**LEGAL NOTICE - CITY OF SHELTON – published February , 2004**

LEGAL NOTICE  
CITY OF SHELTON

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FOLLOWING:

**MERIT SYSTEM – TUITION ASSISTANCE  
CONTRACT – CHIEF OF POLICE**

SAID PUBLIC HEARING SHALL BE CONDUCTED ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2004 AT 7 P.M. IN THE AUDITORIUM AT CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON.

ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST THEREIN MAY APPEAR AND BE HEARD IN RELATION HERETO.

**1. MERIT SYSTEM – TUITION ASSISTANCE**

---

*Robin Skowronski*

I am Robin Skowronski and for those of you who do not know me, I handle employee benefits for both the City of Shelton and the Shelton Board of Education, and I am a Merit System employee.

I am here to make a couple of comments on the Tuition Assistance Ordinance which is number one of at least three benefits that are offered to union employees, but not to Merit System employees.

Although the \$500 per calendar year maximum would be used up by taking one college course, the inclusion of this benefit to the Merit System is at least a foot in the door.

In case you are not familiar with current college costs, Sacred Heart University for instance, where the bulk of my college credits are, costs \$355 per credit – that is \$1,065 for one three-credit course. Southern Connecticut State University with recent increases is not far below that.

I hope that some of you have wondered or asked – how long has this \$500 cap been the magic number? Five, 10, I don't know, maybe 20 years, and it's never gone up for any of the other unions, I don't believe. And, does anyone know how many employees in the other City unions take advantage of this benefit? What does this actually cost the City annually to offer tuition reimbursement to an employee? Do any other City employees take advantage of it? None that I know of in City Hall, although I don't know all of the answers to that question.

Secondly – regarding the statement, “Correspondence courses are excluded,” the words “Correspondence course” in your ordinance, it is item B, is an outdated stereotype.

Today it is called “distance learning.” Numerous online universities are accredited by both the Higher Learning Commission and the North Central Association, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

Distance Learning allows you to participate in discussion boards, contribute to virtual study sessions and communicate with professors and fellow students whenever and wherever is best for you. It allows you to balance your personal and professional responsibilities and allows you to control your own schedule. Success in a distance-learning environment does require a self-directed, well-organized person who is comfortable with technology.

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

Degree programs are plentiful in many core areas.

My suggestion is that limitation B be clarified or struck from the ordinance, because it's almost like taking a Merit System test in which you're answering a question about typewriters. I would also hope that Distance Learning, if not written in specifically, will indeed be an acceptable institute of higher learning, and eligible for the tuition reimbursement.

Thank you.

Mayor Lauretti asked if any other person wished to speak on the Merit System. Being none, we'll continue.

## **2. CONTRACT – CHIEF OF POLICE**

---

*Alderman John Anglace*

I'd like to read into the record a letter that was delivered to me as President of the Board of Aldermen.

*Dear President Anglace and Members of the Board of Aldermen:*

*As he concludes his fifth year of service as Chief of Police, the Shelton Police Association is pleased to offer its vote of confidence for Chief Robert A. Voccola, and encourages the*

*Shelton Board of Aldermen to approve his proposed contract extension.*

*Under Chief Voccola's leadership, the Shelton Police Department currently enjoys the reputation of one of the more progressive police departments in Fairfield County, as well as in the State of Connecticut. He is a proponent of community-oriented policing.*

*We have computerized our department with a state-of-the-art mobile data terminal system, streamlining our operation. We have trained our own personnel to become trainers and now enjoy hosting other police departments for various learning sessions led here in Shelton. Our Detective Bureau is now fully staffed and producing amazing results. More officers are patrolling the City streets in vehicles that are in optimum running condition. Close bonds have been forged between the Shelton Police Department and the Connecticut State Police, who now often come into our City to assist in special enforcement operations.*

*Chief Voccola has promoted from within the ranks in a fair and decent manner. He works in conjunction with the union rank and file and for all of the reasons listed above, morale is up overall.*

*There is no doubt that this Chief has taken the Shelton Police Department into the new millennium in a forward-thinking manner. We anticipate even more progress in the coming years under his command.*

*Sincerely, Sergeant Orville Smith, President, Shelton Police Association*

Being no other speakers, Mayor Laretti closed the public hearing.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At the public hearing closed at approximately 7:36 p.m. A five-minute recess was observed prior to the Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen that immediately followed.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Regan  
Clerk  
Board of Aldermen

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark A. Laretti  
Mayor, City of Shelton