CALL TO ORDER

President Anglace called the Public Hearing on the Budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 to order at 7 p.m. 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
Alderman Jim Capra - present
Alderman Stanley Kudej – present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti – present
Alderman David Gidwani – present
Alderman Noreen McGorty - present

CITY OF SHELTON

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PURSUANT TO SECTION 7.6 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF SHELTON, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 ON MONDAY, MAY 14, 2018 AT 7:00 PM IN THE AUDITORIUM AT SHELTON CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON, CT 06484.

ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST THEREIN MAY APPEAR AND BE HEARD IN RELATION THERETO. COPIES OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE.

WRITTEN COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS MAY ALSO BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING.

ANTICIPATED REVENUES

Government Grants 8,759,618
May 14, 2018
Board of Aldermen
Special Public Hearing on the Budget

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Local Taxes</td>
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<td>Other Local Revenue</td>
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<td>General Fund Surplus</td>
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**TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES**
124,092,880

**PROPOSED EXPENDITURES**

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### Agenda Items:

The rules of the hearing were explained by President Anglace.

Alderman Anglace asked the audience if anyone wished to speak.

**Lauren Moore, 5 White Birch Court**

Ms. Moore stated that she is registered to vote and is a Republican. She spoke about the following topics:

**Buses** – She cannot believe that the City will not allow the Board of Education to use the taxpayer-funded school buses, and feels it will cause the Board of Education to have to spend another $1 million that they don’t have. The teachers are in need of new computers. She doesn’t want to see the classrooms and the children have to do with less because the Board of Education has to pay for buses. She asked the Aldermen to be held accountable and get the computers for the teachers.

**School Resource Officers** – she feels that retired police officers can be hired at a fraction of the cost. She feels that the Shelton Officers that come into the schools, while greatly appreciated by the teachers, parents and students, have their police work to do and should not be spending their time in the schools. She feels that the City can afford to hire police retirees, and the children and staff should feel safe when they’re at school. She asked the Aldermen to consider employed retired police officers as school resource officers.
School Counselors – She feels that times have changed and the elementary schools need full-time counselors.

Another issue with the transportation development – with the Board of Education needing to pay nearly $1 million for buses, there is nothing left to cut and class sizes will increase. The Board of Education has cut all that they could and are facing almost a $1.75 million shortfall. She feels this is not fair and the class sizes should be kept small with the demands on students and teachers.

Funding for school supplies – The Board of Education has cut because the money is not there. The PTO is purchasing supplies that the City should provide.

The Board of Education budget is not being fully funded, and the City is talking about adding another $1 million for buses to their burden while it has the City-owned buses sitting in a lot down the street. The City has the money.

Alderman Anglace noted the five-minute mark.

Ms. Moore concluded that the money is there - she is not asking for a tax increase, or a decrease in the mill rate. Spend the tax dollars on the roads, parks, buildings, and Board of Education.

Paul Littlefield, 3 Earl Street

Mr. Littlefield feels that cutting the mill rate is ridiculous, and that the City should give the Board of Education at least $1 million more than they requested in their budget. City employees are not expected to provide copy paper or supplies for their offices; yet the teachers are expected to provide their own copy paper and supplies. In the business world, the employer provides the employees the resources they need. He would support an increase in the tax rate in order to fully fund the Board of Education.

He moved to Shelton because he heard how well the City is managed. But not he sees the condition of the roads, the public land near his house doesn’t get mowed, all kinds of things that make the City look run down. The High School parking lot should be paved. He feels the City can raise the mill rate without hurting anybody in town. And if the mill rate stays the same and give some extra money to the Board of Education it would benefit the children. He feels that if the City destroys the children’s future, they’re not going to come back to live in Shelton and contribute.

Angela Pellegrino-Grand, 935 Howe Avenue

Ms. Pellegrino-Grand noted that her family moved to Shelton from Maryland three years ago and has been renting. She has had children in the Shelton Public School system and is now looking at where her family is going to buy a home and reside until her kids are out of school. She noted that they’ve been really impressed with what the Board of Education has been able to do with an extremely limited budget, but are
disheartened by seeing the constant budget cuts and nickel and diming, the decreases to the mill rate, when the schools are barely treading water. She is not interested in investing in a community long term that is not willing to invest in the children. She appreciates the low mill rate but does not see the point in saving money on property taxes when she will have to spend that money on private school education. She feels that Shelton has done a good job with dedicated public servants and a low tax rate, but at some point people are going to start to realize that this is not a community interested in investing in the children for the long-term.

Quality of Life – She came from Montgomery County, MD, which has high taxes but a high level of municipal services. She lives less than a quarter-mile from a really nice playground that she cannot walk to with her children because there are no sidewalks. She feels the City should have a genuinely walk-able downtown; that residential areas should have sidewalks around parks and playgrounds. She feels that represents a lack of investment in the community and in quality of life.

Jamie Crenwick, 27 Longmeadow Road

Ms. Crenwick has lived in Shelton 11 years, and has been an educator in another district for over 20 years. She and her husband are very involved in the Mohegan School PTO, having a son in 1st grade, and another son in Perry Hill School.

She stated that she knows there are two sides to every story. She asked, has Mayor Lauretti said that even if every parent in town doesn’t vote for him, he’ll still win the election? She asked if he has referred to the town’s buses as his buses. She stated that Mayor Lauretti and the Board of A&T denied the Board of Education’s proposed budget, In her opinion a reasonable, goal oriented budget with the hope of moving Shelton to the top 25 percent of the districts in the State. She feels it is fact that if we don’t get the bus situation resolved the Board of Education will have to operate with $2.6 million less. She feels another fact is that after completing the purchase of the school buses with taxpayer money for the purpose of transporting taxpayer’s children to and from school, the City now proposes to sell the buses that the Board of Education clearly needs.

She stated that Mohegan School’s 2nd grade is at max capacity as well as many classrooms at all the other elementary schools. Some teachers have 18 students; some have 27. Teachers are using old computers to deliver curriculum that requires the use of technology in compliance with common core standards. PTOs are raising money for basic needs such as playground mulch and upkeep, Chromebooks, reading books. School parking lots are in disrepair. New developments are being built with no regard for the students that will fill these homes. There is a consistent budget surplus year after year. While this board maintains the lowest taxes in Fairfield County, when and where will the surplus be allocated? “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest” – Benjamin Franklin. Is there room to add funding to the school budget? If not the taxpayers have to take a stand; we need to behave like other municipalities in Fairfield County and allocate funding for schools without a contentious process.
Chersey Hoy, Roger Hoy, 7204 Evelyn Drive

The Hoy’s are parents of student at Perry Hill Elementary who has played in the orchestra for two years. At PHS there are 47 students in the orchestra; 18 moving on to 7th Grade. There are four students from SIS that provide their own transportation to PHS after school in order to continue to play in the orchestra because there isn’t a string element at the middle school. They attended the SIS open house and were extremely disappointed that SIS doesn’t offer an orchestra program for students to continue from PHS, meaning that the students miss two years and then return to strings in High School.

Shelton High School just added a live orchestra to the Spring musical for the first time in over 10 years. Before, Shelton High School had to hire out strings because they didn’t have the students. There are 47 kids at the elementary level; we do have the students. The students need the opportunity to participate in band, orchestra, concerts, ensembles, musicals in order to continue their progress in the musical field.

Each year orchestra and the music program continue to suffer budget cuts. Unacceptable. We want an orchestra teacher at SIS to bridge the gap between PHS and Shelton High School. We want a music program at all levels.

We have spoken with the superintendent and the mayor, and have meetings scheduled with principals. We have volunteered to spearhead a group of parental boosters to back the music program. We’re invested.

Our last message to you is, we are here to support you; it is time for you to please support us.

Kristen Campbell, 26 Sunrise Circle

I have three daughters at Mohegan School with the oldest in 4th Grade. I come to these meetings year after year to speak in favor of funding the school budget. It is frustrating that year after year the budget is underfunded, the teachers go without basic, necessary supplies and trainings. Due to teacher layoffs last year there are 26 students in my 2nd grader’s class. Shelton is among the lowest in expenditures per pupil in the state. We vote for you to support us and our families; our families include our children. I urge you to support and fully fund the Board of Education proposed budget.

Janine Meeker, 59 Rocky Rest Road

I am here again to speak on behalf of the Board of Education. I have seen what you’ve been working on in your workshops, the other components of the City budget. I find it interesting that they have been nitpicked for miscellaneous items in their budget, yet the City itself has a $1.3 million miscellaneous line item, a single dollar
for a drug and alcohol commission and a debt service of $10.8 million. If you raised the mill rate a single point you can chip away at that over a very short amount of time.

The fact that this committee continues to be fiscally irresponsible and continues to badger the Board of Education drives me nuts when we claim to have a surplus. Where does it go? What is going on with the funds that the City gets back; where does it go? We have mysterious line items in the City budget.

I’d like to know why the buses were taken off the table, which immediately caused a crisis for the Board of Education budget.

**Michelle Good, 37 Princess Wenonah Drive**

I have been a resident for 15 years and was a teacher for 18 years. My son is a very talented guitar musician, one of two Shelton students who auditioned and was selected for the western regionals. He was one of only two guitar players in Fairfield County to earn a spot out of 40 middle schools with children auditioning.

I taught for 15 years in Milford. Ms. Good compared Milford’s music program with Shelton’s music program. She recognized Shelton’s teachers for what they do with minimal resources. She contributed $150 to a Gofundme so Mr. Bilotta could purchase sheet music. In Shelton there are only two music teachers servicing 763 students. In order to be comparable, Shelton should have five music teachers at the Intermediate School alone.

**Hirdesh Upadhyay, 143 Summerfield Gardens**

His concern is first about the old technology with the teachers using 10-year-old desktop computers. He questions why the Board of Education is not getting sufficient funding. He also questions the reason why the Board of Education is not able to use the City’s school buses with a new vendor.

He also raised concern about road safety, and feels that the roads in Shelton are among the worst and most unsafe roads in Connecticut. He feels there should be more stop signs in place, and more police patrols and speed enforcement on roads such as Shelton Avenue, Long Hill, and Perry Hill.

**Kate Kutash, 275 Beardsley Road**

**Member, Shelton Board of Education**

She feels it’s the same story, different year, and this has been happening for the 20 years she’s been attending these meetings. She is a proponent of the music program and expressed her frustration that year after year Shelton Public Schools fight for funding to meet the status quo. The Mayor’s current recommended allotment to the Board of Education is more than $700,000 short of what we need to maintain the schools’ current programs and negotiated contracts with staff. If the
Board of Education is not allowed to use the buses that were purchased by the taxpayers’ dollars to transport students, it is likely to incur over $1 million in additional costs. Ms. Kutash implored the Board of Aldermen to marshal your forces and take a stand to direct the Mayor to let the Board of Education use the buses.

She stated, the full amount of the ECS funds should be shared in their entirety directly to the Board of Education. This would cost zero dollars in additional taxes. Any additional funding that can be approved for the Board of Education will help prevent many things that are being proposed to make up the deficits. She discussed all of the things that could be eliminated and urged the Board of Aldermen to invest wisely in the children of the City.

Ron Pavluvcik, 287 Eagles Landing, Aspetuck Village

Mr. Pavluvcik is unofficially representing Aspetuck Village tonight, a complex with 450 units with everybody paying about $5,000 in property taxes and car taxes. He gave Superintendent of Schools Clouet a handout. He noted that he finds Dr. Clouet to be a very impressive, respectful individual. Mr. Pavluvcik is using the published copy of the budget as the basis for his comments this evening.

Overall he thinks Shelton is doing great and he is happy with progress, development, the businesses that come in. He has had some personal involvement with a number of the departments such as Planning & Zoning, the Senior Center, Probate, the volunteer Fire Department, the Police Department, the Library (although he would like to see an elevator in the Library). He noted a personal instance where EMS responded to his home, and he feels they are doing a great job.

He feels the elephant in the room is the Board of Education. He explained his own teaching history and feels the teachers are well compensated and they could certainly buy a couple of boxes of pencils. They will never be happy no matter how much money you put into the Board of Education. Sometimes we’re in the paper too much.

Mr. Pavluvcik supports the budget as summarized, he is sure the bus situation will be resolved. He noted that Mayor Lauretti likes to make deals and he feels the emotional outbursts from the teachers and parents are over the top.

Chris DeMartino, 23 Elderberry Lane

He introduced his son, Sam, who spoke to the Aldermen: “Hi, my name is Sam, and I want to state that at the school, the teachers’ computers are always slow, and sometimes they don’t even work at all. And, I’d like to say during the evacuation drills there are no sidewalks, which is dangerous. You never know what might happen. If you just put an extra amount of money in there and buy sidewalks it will make all the difference.”

The Aldermen applauded Sam’s words and thanked him for speaking.
Debra Brown, 171 Myrtle Street

Ms. Brown agrees that the roads need attention and noted the many car crashes in the City.

She spoke in favor of full funding for the Board of Education as it is in the best interest of the children. She feels that the teachers, principals and the school system makes do with so little and they do so much. She noted that her daughter is a special education student and is the school has helped her very much. She feels that when the City starts cutting education budgets it will hurt students like her daughter who need that one break, that one person, who knows they can make a difference and a change and to keep growing. She asked that the Board look at the numbers and look at the people.

Martha Parkins, 15 Serene Drive

Ms. Parkins spoke in support of the Board of Education budget. She has two children in the school system and she is a teacher at Elizabeth Shelton School. She explained that she has met with Superintendent Clouet and believes in the vision he has for the school district. His vision is aligned with her desire to have her children to go to schools that are in the top 25 percent of districts. She feels it can be achieved with the support of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

She noted that with the recent development of the bus situation, less of the education budget will go toward the classroom. She feels that if the Board of Education is not allowed the use of the City-owned buses, classroom resources will be reduced and the Superintendent’s vision will not come to fruition. By allowing the Board of Education to use the buses and giving the ECS funding that were not included in the Mayor’s budget to the school system, the school system will continue as it is right now, continuing to provide an excellent education for the children of the City. She encouraged the Aldermen to support the Board of Education and do what is best for the children of Shelton.

Michelle Bialek, 10 Weybossett Street

Ms. Bialek has been before the Board before and has spoken out on many issues in the City. She discussed the percentage of the budget that is spent on the Board of Education each year. While most cities spend 60-63 percent of their budget on education. Shelton spends less than 60 percent; Shelton spends less as a City. The amount of how much per student we spend is embarrassing, especially with the touting of how much money our City has.

With the bus situation it’s numbers. Ms. Bialek is completely uncomfortable allowing the City to “see what happens” and piecemeal something together for the care and transportation of her children.
Ms. Bialek has a child that is newly in the special education forum. She noted that there are so many more children that need special care, transportation, don’t speak English, and the City is supposed to be caring for the people of our City. The Board of Aldermen is ultimately responsible for helping the City’s children succeed. She feels that the children deserve what we can afford, and that is at least 60 percent of our budget. She asked the Board to be reasonable, to understand that we are in 2018 and the needs of the children are different.

Joann Brooks, 32 Sycamore Drive

Ms. Brooks has lived in Shelton for over 18 years, started as a single person with a condo and now lives in a single-family home with her family. She is happy that the Aldermen and the Board of Education made full-day Kindergarten happen. She feels the parties can find a solution with the budget and the buses.

She does not feel what Dr. Clouet is proposing is outrageous. She is very impressed with the education her daughter is receiving at Booth Hill School. She feels they’re doing a great job getting around the outdated technology. The PTO raises funds and fixes broken playground equipment.

Ms. Brooks feels it’s a shame that the City has paid off these buses and now the Board of Education is not even going to be able to use them. She feels it doesn’t make sense.

Judson Crawford, 8 Jordan Avenue

Mr. Crawford noted that Mayor Lauretti has used the philosophy for spending taxpayers money by exercising tight fiscal control. He noted that for the most part the increased costs for education are contractual obligations set by the state. It’s up to the Aldermen to set the budget. He asked why the teachers are required to buy school projects.

Mr. Crawford asked Alderman Anglace why the City’s Technology Committee has not updated the technological needs of the school system.

Jackie Hanesh, 6 Old Dairy Lane

Ms. Hanesh has three daughters at Elizabeth Shelton School. She is speaking in support of the Board of Education’s budget request. She feels that even a fully funded budget is bare bones but a step in the right direction. She noted that while overall enrollment is down, the dynamic of the student pool has changed dramatically. The increase in students with complex needs has grown by 65 percent. These students need the tools and resources for their success. We cannot adequately support the general ed population when so much of the budget is going toward contractual obligations. There is $682,000 in newfound ECS funds not yet allocated by the Mayor. Couple that with $500,000 of incremental revenue from the Grand List expansion, and the sum is close to $1.2 million. This is on top of the $1.2
million the City will save once the bus payments end at the end of June. That is $2.4 million that can and should be allocated to education without having to raise taxes. She urged the Aldermen to put this money toward education.

She also requested the Board of Aldermen to allow the Board of Education utilize the City-owned school buses. She does not understand why the City of Shelton completed this purchase and is not considering selling those buses.

Ms. Hanesh described a walk through the halls of ESS with overcrowded classrooms, outdated technology, and teachers lacking basic supplies. She asked if there will be an appropriation to fund new computers. The PTO purchased 40 fire extinguishers in response to the Shelton Police Department’s recommendation.

She requested Security Resource Officers at every school to be prepared and ready to protect. She asked that the Shelton Police Chief come up with a plan and make this happen.

She would like to see Shelton Public Schools in the top 25 percent and feels the City needs to invest in the children of the City.

Marissa Papa-Telesmanick, 262 Soundview Avenue

Ms. Papa-Telesmanick was born and raised in Shelton, and is a mom and a realtor in the community. She loves Shelton and feels all the development in the City is exciting. Every year it becomes increasingly difficult to sell Shelton schools. Every year the budget process is the way it is with fighting back and forth. She encouraged the Aldermen to support and fund the budget because she feels it is essential to the overall success and we really need to invest in our children.

Alderman Anglace called for a 10-minute recess at 8:10 p.m.

At 8:22 the public hearing was called back to order.

Jessica Mitchell, 208 Lenore Drive

Ms. Mitchell agrees with fully funding the Board of Education budget. She and her husband bought their home in Shelton because of the low taxes. She did not know that the education of her children would be a hot topic. She is concerned about cutting teachers resulting in large classroom sizes. Ms. Mitchell teaches college English for a private university in Connecticut and her classroom size is 15. Her daughter is in a class of 19 in Kindergarten at ESS and if the budget is cut she will be one of 25 or 27. She is trying to decide whether to stay in Shelton or now, whether to enroll her daughter in private school. Nobody can replace a teacher. She volunteers every Friday and whenever she tries to use a computer it won’t work. She urged the Board of Aldermen to fully fund the Board of Education’s budget.

Lauren Osso, 89 Okenuck Way
Ms. Osso expressed her frustration that this budget process and public outcry repeats itself every year. She noted that every year there seems to be a major confusion or big deal (school buses) that comes up right when the budget needs to be passed. She feels this is gas lighting and it is done intentionally.

Ms. Osso stated that her focus is her children, who attend Elizabeth Shelton School. She feels they accomplish a lot with limited resources, but does not believe it is sustainable without the resources. She believes the teachers deserve to be spoken very highly of and there is only so much they can do.

What matters most to Ms. Osso is getting School Resource Officers into every school on a full-time basis, especially at Elizabeth Shelton School due to the large enrollment there. She feels the Board should fund a full time school counselor. She suggested taking the Board of Education out of this and look at the Police Department budget and figure out a way to employ School Resources Officers in every school, especially at ESS. The SROs can serve as problem solvers, youth advocates, school and community liaisons, mentors, classroom instruction, positive role models. This position could help alleviate some of the need in terms of what kids are faced with in 2018.

The art room at Elizabeth Shelton does not have a sink and this requires the teacher to fill and carry buckets of water back and forth for painting class. The art teacher deserves a sink.

Hillary Voytek, 25 Hiawatha Trail

Ms. Voytek spoke in favor of fully funding the Board of Education budget request. She stressed the need for real resources for high-achieving students such as her children, not just the basic curriculum. She would like the funding provided for education in Shelton to be increased to better support the teachers in their endeavors.

The infrastructure isn’t there for the warmer months; not having air conditioning on 90-degree days is difficult. There are a lot more things that the schools need above baseline funding.

Dila Ostertag, 171 Village Drive

Her son graduated from Shelton High; she has two daughters, one in ESS and one in Perry Hill School. She would like the Board of Education budget to be fully funded. Ms. Ostertag is disgusted with how behind the times Shelton schools are, especially with technology. She doesn’t understand the apathy of the Board about enriching the lives of the students of Shelton.

In addition, she cannot understand why the roads and parks are in such bad condition, and there are not enough sidewalks. She has to drive two blocks to the
May 14, 2018
Board of Aldermen
Special Public Hearing on the Budget

kids' bus stop. Elizabeth Shelton School is busting at the seams. The whole school system needs more money, needs more help.

Ms. Ostertag feels the school bus situation is ridiculous. She said that people don’t care if they have to pay a more in taxes, but she knows we don’t have to. She begged the Board of Aldermen to do something with the Mayor and get more funding for the Board of Education and for the children of Shelton.

Duangkaew Randall, 29 Molnar Drive

Ms. Randall has three children attending Mohegan School. She grew up in Thailand and attended 12 years of private school. Her husband grew up in Shelton and doesn’t want to leave Shelton. She would like the City to invest in the children’s education and future. She asked the Board to work with the Board of Education and fully fund their budget request.

Mark Holden, Board of Education

Mr. Holden noted that he is CERT-trained and works with Stratford, because there is an unfunded line item in the budget for Certified Emergency Response Team – line 001-2000-519.01-04. CERT does a lot of things, such as set up and man an emergency shelter. Mr. Holden has been trained with CPR and Narcan, and can do very basic triage to make sure that people with the most critical needs get to the doctors the quickest. The cost to set up a CERT program is between $5,000 to $7,000, and then about $1,000 to $2,000 a year to maintain the program. It would be a good resource in a natural disaster.

The Board of Education budget is $750,000 away from treading water or maintaining the level of services we have today. We are $1.6 million away from where the Board of Education feels it should be in order to reach the goal of having the top 25% for student achievement in the state. That is a very worthwhile goal for a community like Shelton that wants to be known as the best place to live in the state.

The school bus fiasco is potentially another $1.1 million of expense to the Board of Education, which now means we’re at $1.86 million away from treading water. The Board of Education will do the best it can with whatever is allocated to them. The teachers and staff are fantastic people who care about what they do for our students. If we need to make up $1.86 million from our budget, there is no low-hanging fruit. Every year we are funded at perhaps 40 percent of an increase of what we ask for. We have found all of the easy things to find. The things that are left in our budget are things that we must do. If we need to solve that kind of a shortfall we will lose valuable people. I encourage you to look for ways to help solve this problem. There are multiple ways to do it. We would love to have a lower cost for our buses and were happy to work with the City until it got to the point where our existing bidder said, we need to start the work now – if you don’t award us the job we’re going to walk away because we don’t have the time to do it properly, unless we start now.
Thank you for your consideration.

Alderman Anglace stated, Mr. Holden, you should approach the Aldermanic Public Health & Safety Committee with the CERT program. I’m sure they’ll be interested in discussing that with you. As far as the school bus situation, the Board of Aldermen will hold a special meeting here next Monday at 6:30. Two people who were assigned to work in cooperation with the Board of Education on that subject will explain to the full Board of Aldermen what we did, why we did it, and why we’re not pursuing this any further. We hope to clear up a lot of the misunderstandings that exist. We look forward to continually work with the Board of Education to save money in many ways, if you give us the opportunity.

**Jamie Crenwick, 27 Longmeadow Road**

Ms. Crenwick stated that she attended the hearing last year, and Mayor Lauretti engaged and answered our questions. Will the Board answer questions?

Alderman Anglace replied no, we don’t. This is a public hearing for the Board to listen, not engage in controversy or comments back. You can ask anything.

Ms. Crenwick stated that she feels the bus situation is not going to get resolved. She asked the following questions.

Did the school district follow the standard bid process for selecting a contractor for bus services? Yes, they did. The bids were opened in December.

Did school officials work with City officials to explore potential cost savings? Yes. There were many meetings, some including Mayor Lauretti and Board Chair John Anglace.

Did the Superintendent send the City a framework for a memorandum of agreement re- the potential for working with the City on student transportation? Yes, on May 2\textsuperscript{nd}, receipt of which was acknowledged.

Did the City ever share any written plan for setting up a student transportation service? No.

Did they indicate what potential savings there might be? No.

Did any City officials ever communicate with the school district re-their new plan to sell our buses that we paid for with our tax money? No.

Why did the cost to providing the bus services go up? Principally due to a combination of severe shortage of bus drivers and an improving labor market. Many potential drivers do not want part-time and are exploring other more lucrative opportunities.
Why would the City, after completing their purchase of the school buses with our money for the purpose of transporting our children to and from school, now propose to sell the buses when they're clearly needed? We still don’t know why, and it doesn’t seem like this is going to get resolved.

Dr. Chris Clouet, Superintendent of Schools, 69 Country Place

I know that you are dedicated volunteer leaders and I appreciate that. But let’s say no to fake news. Many of you know, but I think that not all of you know that in fact there have been many meetings about this transportation issue, and we work in good faith to try and come to a solution with you and some of the team members that the Mayor appointed. But you know that I did turn in a draft MOU on the night of May 2nd, I left a copy here with the secretary. I did that at 9:30 at night and the receipt was acknowledged. That was good faith on my part. I was working to communicate with you, to continue the conversation. On the issue of transportation, the Mayor’s office can expect a communication tomorrow from the school district. I would say that if there’s a special meeting that the Board of Aldermen intends to hold regarding this issue, please invite me. I’ve been a part of this.

Alderman Anglace stated, we haven’t been invited to your special meetings on this. Why?

Dr. Clouet replied, that’s just not true.

Alderman Anglace stated, it’s certainly true. We have offered and kept the options open to meet with you.

Dr. Clouet stated, that’s not true.

Alderman Anglace stated, we have consistently said, you pulled the rug from under us. You pulled the rug from under us the next day after May 2nd. On May 3rd at 1 o’clock in the afternoon you expressly dismissed us via a memorandum to the Board of Aldermen without even a communication to the people that were working with you.

Dr. Clouet stated, since the City has made it a point of communicating with me via a reporter from The Connecticut Post, about the issue of potentially selling the buses, I really don’t want to be lectured about who is communicating with whom. I have been to many meetings and you have been to many of them. I did provide, the deadline that the Board set for me, an MOU to you that night, and the next day I spoke with you by phone and was waiting to hear some kind of response, and got more of the “some day down the road maybe the lawyer will have a chance to look at it,” and at that point I turned, based on the direction from the Board, to a reliable, qualified bus company and not a set of conversations that we had. In good faith they were conversations, people worked hard on that, but you weren’t ready. It’s too complex to make a bus company in three or four weeks, and you just simply weren’t ready. We went with a qualified one.
But that’s not all I want to talk about today.

Alderman Anglace stated, just for the record, you are certainly invited to come next Monday night. We’d be glad to have you.

Dr. Clouet thanked Alderman Anglace and stated, so we’ll talk next Monday night and perhaps we might have something resolved even before if that’s possible.

Dr. Clouet continued, another thing about fake news. Some of the old myths that just get repeated over and over again. One of the myths is that we used to have a certain amount of students and a certain amount of teachers, there are fewer students now, so we need fewer staff. That is just not true in the modern world we live in. The world we live in requires us to prepare the kids for the 21st century – not the early 20th century, not the mid-20th century – for the challenges they’re going to face. Sometimes I hear City officials say things like, “well Bridgeport spends more or Derby spends more.” We’re not Bridgepor; we’re not Derby. I have nothing against those towns but that’s not Shelton and we do need more funding to do the work we really need to take care of.

Let me mention school security. Oftentimes members of the Board of Aldermen, within their rights, love to analyze the school district budget and make critiques and make suggestions. I, too, like to study budgets. I know and you know that there are areas in the City budget that year after year after year result in surplus, and some of that money could be used to hire retired policemen. [inaudible due to applause].

What I want to do is very simple. We should be in the top 25 percent of student achievement in the State of Connecticut. It’s a simple goal. We’re close to it; we can do it, we should do it. I mean in terms of student achievement. Sometimes, and here’s another myth, “well, we can do it with some after school programs – that’ll be cheap – we’ll have after school programs and kids will learn how to do the SATs, that will be great.” That is not what we’re talking about. We’re talking about mastery and skills that happens over time. Second graders that become 3rd graders and 4th graders building their skills in math and language and science, so when they take the test they don’t just pass the test – they actually know things and can do things as adults. We’re talking about top 25 percent but not with a quick, after school fix, but with a real, built in way of dealing with the educational needs of our kids.

We heard a lot about computers. We do need a one-to-one program. It can happen incrementally, and I know we’ve had some disagreements about that and I respect that. The reality is, many districts in the United States have it already, and Trumbull right down the street has it - their kids are advantaged over our kids because they’re willing to make the commitment. The staff computers – I handed in tonight, again, a quote for staff computers. There’s been some talk, there’s been no guarantees, but there’s been some expression of interest in funding staff computers. We can’t use 10-year-old computers. The gentleman earlier tonight held up his smartphone. I thought that was a great device to make the point. We can’t use the computers for instruction, which is what we need them for, because their motherboards are too
slow and they can’t handle the digital media that we use in this day and age. They just can’t do it. We need to make the investment.

ECS money – the education cost sharing money. The education. Cost sharing. Money. We need that in our budget. There is an increase that was not in the Mayor’s budget, it was not in our budget. An increase of over $600,000 – we need you to pass that to us with no fighting or complaints. We need that money and it doesn’t cost one penny from the taxes.

Look, you can do better. I want you to be fair. But we can do better with you, and we’re willing to work with you. Our budget request can be funded with no new taxes. You can fund our budget with no new taxes. So yes, represent and support elders, I support that. Support business, support infrastructure, but support our youth; they need excellent schools and they deserve it. Let’s do it together.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Anglace declared the Public Hearing closed at 9 p.m. and thanked everyone for coming and sharing their points of view.

Alderman McPherson MOVED to adjourn the Public Hearing; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Patricia Bruder*

Patricia M. Bruder
Administrative Secretary

DATE APPROVED: __________BY: _____________________________

Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton