



Board of Aldermen
Shelton, Connecticut
FINANCE COMMITTEE – September 23, 2004

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Stanley Kudej, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8 p.m. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Roll Call - Finance Committee

Alderman Stanley Kudej, Chairman, present
Aldermanic President John F. Anglace, Jr. - present
Alderman Nancy Minotti - present

Alderman John Finn

Public Session

Alderman Kudej asked if any member of the public wished to address the Finance Committee. Being none, he declared the public session closed.

Add-Ons

Alderman Anglace MOVED to add Item 4a- Real Estate Appraisal – Tall Farm to the agenda; SECONDED by Alderman Minotti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

1. Approval of Minutes

Alderman Minotti MOVED to recommend to the full Board to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of August 26, 2004; SECONDED by Alderman Anglace. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

2. September Statutory Refunds

Alderman Anglace MOVED to recommend to the full Board that the report of the Tax Collector relative to the refund of taxes for a total amount of \$42,188.27 be approved and that the Finance Director be directed to make payments in accordance with the Certified List received from the Tax Collector. Funds to come from the Statutory Refunds account #001-0000-

311.13.00; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

3. *Litigation Fees – Michelson, Kane, Royster & Barger - SIS*

Alderman Anglace to recommend to the full Board to authorize a total payment of \$5,786 to Michelson, Kane, Royster & Barger, PC for services rendered per statement dated August 10, 2004 with funds to come from the Shelton Intermediate School Arbitration and Litigation Account 001-0100-411.80-92; SECONDED by Alderman Minotti. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

4. *Additional Funding – Charter Revision*

Alderman Minotti MOVED to transfer \$3,000 from Contingency General, account #001-9900-900.99-00 to Charter Revision account #001-0300-412.80-93 to cover expenses through the end of the current fiscal year; SECONDED by Alderman Anglace. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

4-A *Real Estate Appraisal – Tall Farm*

Alderman Anglace MOVED to recommend to the full board to authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to get an appraisal done of the Tall Farm Property; SECONDED by Alderman Minotti.

This is a professional service - we don't have to bid or put out any money up front.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

5. *Special Tax District for Condominiums*

Alderman Anglace explained that the Finance Committee has been talking about this. It appears more and more that the decision on where we're going with this is a matter of the individual condominiums themselves. The direction we're going is, the State law provides that if the individual condominium associations want to do the work to make this happen, they can.

At the last meeting the Committee asked Alderman Anglace to contact Gloria Kovac, the Assessor, about Stamford's special tax district for condominiums. Gloria has responded and said Stamford has six different taxing districts. There is no specific "special district for condominiums" in Stamford. She explained that Stamford has District A – a super block district that encompasses downtown, it gets all the City services, and has a

separate mill rate. District B gets almost all services and has another mill rate. District C covers neighborhoods with no sewers, and has its own mill rate. District D is a neighborhood that has sewers and has a separate mill rate, automobiles have their own mill rate and personal property has its own mill rate. It seems like a nightmare. There is no garbage pickup or snow plowing for condominiums in Stamford. If the condo complex falls into a lower tax district, it gets that district's mill rate. That is the tax break.

Alderman Anglace has been contacted by a lady who lives in Country Place Condominiums and read about this discussion in the paper. She said that Country Place has 98 units and they are currently discussing a special tax district. She has been asked to share some of their information so we can share it and learn from it. She said she would, but didn't drop it off for tonight's meeting. They have been discussing this and have hired an attorney to set up the special tax district.

The way it works is that if a condominium association doesn't receive all of the City services, they can petition by vote to form a special tax district, but they have to take over. We supply them with all of our assessed valuations, and they do the assessment of all of the individual condominiums and they determine what the rates are going to be. They have to hire a clerk and a manager. That's the law. The benefit to the individual living in the condominium is that they can take the difference as a deduction from their federal taxes. There are as many people for it as are opposed, because they paid \$7,000 to get an attorney to set this up, they will have to pay a clerk and a manager to keep it going, and what they get back as a result of this, an itemized deduction that is only a small percentage. So therefore some are questioning the value of doing it. That might be the major reason why more condominiums haven't done it.

Oronoque in Stratford does it. They have a different situation because they also hire security. They spend money for a lot of things that the City doesn't provide and that is all figured in and they get deductions on that. Suffice to say that we are a little farther along.

Corporation Counsel is going to check the State law and give us an opinion. The way it looks is that this isn't something the City is going to do, this is something the individual condominium associations do on their own. That is the intent of the law.

Alderman Finn suggested providing additional services to the condominiums, such as cleaning the catch basins. The city won't maintain the drainage systems, but will clean the catch basins.

Also, have the condominium associations send the City a check for snow removal. We don't do it because their roads don't comply with City standards. We can then return the check to condominium association for IRS purposes.

If the Corporation Counsel can explore procedures such as sending checks to the City and the City reimburses them - and find out how that works.

Alderman Anglace noted that this research is going to take time, and the committee will continue to discuss it.

6. Motor Vehicle Tax Exemption – Disabled Persons

Alderman Anglace stated that he understands that the City of Shelton taxes all vehicles at the tax rate given to us from the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The DMV does not give the City a value other than that of the automobile or van. That value does not include the cost of any modifications that have been made to a vehicle. For example, if it cost \$20,000 to modify a van for a handicapped person, that is not taxable. Currently, I checked with Corporation Counsel to make sure. That is his understanding. We are not taxing the modifications to the vehicle. We tax only the basic vehicle value.

Alderman Anglace concluded, my concern was, and I believe that if we were taxing added value to the vehicle because of the modifications, that was wrong. They assure me that they're not doing that.

7. Vehicle Tax Exemption – Disabled Residents

Adjournment

Alderman Anglace stated, if I may, I will provide you with one more bit of information. Alderman Finn and I are working with Corporation Counsel on an Ethics Ordinance. We are not ready to present it, but when we do, we will present it jointly. We are reviewing it now. We have to look at it very carefully. Our intent is to develop it to the point where we think it's worthy, and then present it to the full Board for their review, study and then come back to us, and we'll sit with Counsel and make any changes and make sure the changes are done legally.

Alderman Finn added, we're also sending it out to the Ethics Committee.

At approximately 8:25 p.m., Alderman Minotti MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Anglace. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder
Clerk, Board of Aldermen