



SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON, CT
THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021
Shelton City Hall, 54 Hill Street
Live-Streamed at www.cityofshelton.org
MINUTES

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti called the Special Virtual Meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 5:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Shelton City Hall. 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 via Zoom

Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President- Present

Alderman Cris Balamaci- Not Present

Alderman Joanna Carloni – Present

Alderman David Gidwani- Not Present

Alderman Noreen McGorty- Not Present

Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present

Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

Administration

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti - Present

Fran Teodosio, Corporation Counsel – Present

AGENDA ITEMS

1. FUNDING FOR ROOF REPLACEMENT WORK ON PLUMB LIBRARY AND NIKE SITE – LOCIP ELIGIBLE

Alderman McPherson MOVED to add the roof replacement work on the Plumb Memorial Library Roof and the Nike Site Roof to the Capital Improvement Plan with funding in the amount of \$46,480 to come from LOCIP. Further authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the same.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: By way of background for this and the next couple items, these are small roofs and now is the time to get it done because we don't do this stuff in the wintertime.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

2. FUNDING FOR PERRY HILL PORTABLE ROOF REPLACEMENT – LOCIP ELIGIBLE

Alderman McPherson MOVED to add the Perry Hill Portable Roof Replacement to the Capital Improvement Plan with funding in the amount of \$71,844 to come from LOCIP. Further authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the same.

SECONDED by Alderman Carloni.

Mayor Lauretti: The Perry Hill portables are the city portable buildings that are at the Perry Hill School on Perry Hill Road. They were once upon a time used for construction, because we had enrollment problems way back when, which we no longer have, in fact enrollment has gone the other way. Many years ago, we needed the classroom space so we used those for portable classrooms. We have had them a very, very, long time.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

3. RESCISSION OF ACTION ITEM 9.2 REHABILITATION/REPURPOSING OF FIRE TRUCK – JANUARY 21, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING

Alderman McPherson MOVED to approve the rescission of action for “Item 9.2 Rehabilitation/Repurposing of Fire Truck” in an amount of \$15,000 from aldermanic bonding passed at the January 21, 2021 meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Alderman Anglace: Can you explain why you are asking us to rescind this action?

Mayor Lauretti: I had asked for some seed money to repurpose the old ladder truck that was over 25 years old. As you know, we bought a new ladder truck this past year to replace it. I thought it would make sense to try and use this one for other purposes. It did go out to bid and the bid came in between \$50,000 and \$70,000. I thought that was a little bit much for what we were going to end up with. We were not sure that the purpose we were going to use it for would be accomplished. We have put that project on hold.

Alderman Anglace: Makes sense.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

4. FUNDING FOR AUTOMATED REFUSE TRUCK

Alderman McPherson MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$298,382 for the purchase of an automated refuse truck with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: Some of you may remember that some years back we bought our own refuse trucks, like we did the school buses, and we did a rehab on two of the trucks. Now it's time to buy a new one. The technology changes so fast on this stuff, it's hard to keep up with it but I don't think we can continue to rehabilitate these vehicles after so many miles and so many years.

Alderman Anglace: Can you confirm that the new truck was bid and that the contract has been extended for three years?

Mayor Lauretti: Both of those have occurred. It was bid and these are the numbers that it came in at which is not uncommon. In fact, the lead time to get one of these vehicles now, like everything else in the country, is about 15 months. I know that the refuse contract with Oak Ridge was extended but I can't recall what the term limit was.

Alderman Anglace: The original contract allows us to extend it for up to three years, so that would be appropriate.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

5. FUNDING FOR TRANSFORMER & ELECTRICAL UPGRADES AT SHS

Alderman McPherson MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$205,550 for transformer and electrical upgrades at Shelton High School with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Mayor Lauretti: This transformer was the original transformer at Shelton High School which puts it in the 40-year category. I think we got our money's worth out of it. The new state-of-the-art one that we are getting will probably be a little more energy efficient. It's long overdue. As most of you know, we have taken over the capital projects for the school system and this is another example of that. There is no such thing as flat funding.

Alderman Anglace: Is this project subject to any state reimbursement?

Mayor Lauretti: I don't know the answer to that. If it is, then we are probably going to wind up foregoing it because we have already been out to bid. We can only replace the transformer when the school is shut down because the school will be without power for a few days or

maybe a week and the wintertime is not the time to be doing this type of work. Again, that usually comes from the Board of Education. We used to have someone over there who dealt with the state reimbursements and we haven't had someone over there doing that for a few years. This is one example how this puts us at a disadvantage. We don't have a point person at the Board of Education who keeps records, has direct correspondence with the state as the state generates the funding and the BOE are the only ones who the state will talk to. I don't even know if it was eligible for reimbursement.

Alderman Anglace: I don't have my documentation in front of me right now and I don't recall whether that was on the six-year capital improvement plan. It is one more example of how we are cooperating and communicating and collaborating with the Board of Education.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

6. FUNDING FOR BRIDGEPORT MAGNET SCHOOL TUITION COSTS

Alderman McPherson MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$252,000 for Bridgeport Magnet School tuition costs with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman Simons.

Alderman Simonetti: I know that the Board of Education made a payment. Is this the final payment?

Mayor Lauretti: Fran, why don't you give the Board a rendition of what this is all about?

Fran Teodosio: There was a lawsuit that was filed against the Board of Education with regard to payment that was required under the state law that taxed the community from where the student lived at \$3,000 per student. The Board of Education was notified about four or five years ago that there was a claim by Bridgeport and then a lawsuit by Bridgeport regarding payment due from Shelton. The Board of Education through Attorney Stanek and the Mayor have been negotiating with Bridgeport and they have come to an agreement to pay all back responsibilities if you will, and the total amount is \$652,000 and the Board of Education last night approved the settlement.

Mayor Lauretti: There is a little bit more to it than that. When the magnet schools were established by the State of Connecticut, they were done so with the provision that the student who went there did not have to pay tuition. The State of Connecticut would reimburse the city or community, i.e., Hartford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and New Haven. That's where the magnet schools are. What happened in Bridgeport is the enrollment dropped. Sound familiar? The enrollment dropped and they were down about 500 kids in that one school. The superintendent at the time had to have the legislation changed to allow Bridgeport to charge surrounding communities such as Shelton, Stratford, Fairfield, Trumbull and Monroe. They were

successful in being able to do that. This lawsuit was generated by Bridgeport and it named the City of Shelton and the Board of Education as part of the lawsuit. Under the arrearages, which was in the ballpark of \$840,000, I spent some time with the superintendent of schools from Bridgeport, as well as our superintendent of schools to try to discuss an approach going forward because my feeling was, and I said this to the Board of Education when I was there last night, that we are actually paying twice to educate these kids. We have the Shelton School System education that we provide for every child, and if a kid wanted to opt out and go to Fairchild Wheeler magnet school in Bridgeport, we have to pay an additional \$3,000. I said to the superintendent of Bridgeport that from my standpoint we should stop sending kids there. He conveyed to me that his goal was never to charge surrounding communities because he knew this would come back to bite them eventually, I think eventually it will because money is always an issue for cities and towns across the country. His goal was to try and get more kids into the school. So, our superintendent and myself met with him and agreed to try and get more kids to participate from Shelton and when that happens that number of \$3,000 per student that we would pay would decrease. So that's still under negotiations and being considered. It's either that or we have to ask parents to pay or pull the plug. I said that to the Board of Education last night as opposed to paying twice. The caveat in our discussions is that I asked for a reduction, with the caveat that we would make an overall effort to get more kids into Fairchild Wheeler school system which helps them. So, we ended up getting a \$50,000 reduction off of the settlement price. I had more discussions with Jim Orazietti and John Fitzgerald from the Board of Education, who are here tonight to talk about the city's participation in paying this cost. I have agreed to pay \$250,000 of that cost. The Board of Education can take \$400,000 from their surplus that they generated this year to make that payment. In addition to that they have also paid Bridgeport an additional \$150,000 which is this year's share of the tuition. Out of their surplus they have actually taken \$550,000. Jim, if you and John could explain to the Board of Aldermen what else you are going to do with additional surplus monies that may or may not occur. You can see there are a lot of moving parts here but that's how it is when you are dealing with education.

Jim Orazietti: First of all, I want to thank everyone for not kicking this can down the road and coming to this commitment for us. It's actually a big deal. What we had talked about with the many discussions with the Mayor, John, myself, Mr. Hiller and our attorney is that the remaining surplus monies that come from our accounts, we have \$233,000 at this point, which we are waiting for some more bills to be coming in, whatever we have in surplus we would like to put into what we call a Rainy-Day Insurance Fund. We made this agreement with the Mayor and I just couldn't be more satisfied with the outcome for what you are going to pass tonight. This is something that has happened over the past four or five years and we are going to put money into this account for the lawsuit that came up. Over the years, the Board of Education obviously did not do that. It's a lot of money for us to be paying \$400,000 of our surplus but with the Board of Aldermen we will put this issue behind us. Just thank you from the Board of Education to the Mayor for all the work that the Mayor has put in. The cooperation between the Mayor's office and the Board of Education was excellent. This is what we intend to do with the surplus funding and again from John Fitzgerald and myself and the rest of the Board of Education, thank you very much for your cooperation.

Mayor Lauretti: Paul, do you want to refresh the Board's memory on that account that we set up?

Paul Hiller: About four years ago we set up an account, a reserve account, and put \$500,000 in it. Basically, as Mr. Oraziotti put it., I call it a Rainy-Day fund. We are self-insured. That money has been invested and is probably up to a value right now of \$630,000 to \$640,000 and the money that the BOE tends to contribute will be placed into that account. We have also asked our auditor, that in the coming audit, that the account be specified on what its intent is and what it's for. It's for the City and/or the BOE if needed.

Alderman Simonetti: Only for medical purposes?

Paul Hiller: Yes, just for medical insurance costs that are incurred.

Alderman Anglace: I appreciate the Board of Education's money management and their cooperation with you to create this year's budget BOE surplus. I tracked it throughout the year and I know from reading their Finance Committee Meeting Minutes and from talking with them that there was a lot of behind-the-scenes effort made with you and contrary to what public opinion has been in comments that are made, this was an effort on both parts and that \$500,000 Special Revenue Account that was set up four or five years ago which is described as a Rainy Day Account certainly is a big help in the management of these financial issues but more important is the fact that there is total cooperation between the Board of Education, those who wish to cooperate, and your administration. That's healthy for the city, good for our tax payers and it's good for everybody and I appreciate it and just want it known. Thank you.

Mayor Lauretti: I think you stand corrected on one comment that you made in regards to public opinion. I don't share the same belief that it is public opinion. There may be some people within the public, but not public opinion.

Alderman Anglace: Yes, some people who are trying to misconstrue the facts.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

7. FUNDING FOR ROAD REHABILITATION

Alderman McPherson MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$378,195 for the rehabilitation of city roads with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Alderman Anglace: This brings our total road rehabilitation pledge this year close to a million dollars.

Mayor Laretti: A month back we appropriated \$600,000 and I think I said then that we were going to need more. I also want to clarify that it says "rehabilitation of roads", meaning that's all encompassing. That's resurfacing, crack sealing, repair and anything associated with the roads.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

8. FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021 YEAR END TRANSACTIONS

Alderman McPherson MOVED, as recommended by the Finance Director, to transfer funds in various accounts as designated in the below document titled "FY 2020-2021 Year End Transactions."

See attached transactions.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken, the motion passed 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Theresa Adcox

Theresa Adcox
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED _____ BY: _____
Mayor Mark A. Laretti

