



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON
REGULAR FULL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 9, 2023
SHELTON CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON CT
Live-Streamed at www.cityofshelton.org

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Lauretti called the regular Board of Aldermen meeting to order at 5:30 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
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President – Present
Alderman Cris Balamaci – Present
Alderman Lorenzo Durante – Present
Alderman Porter McKinnon – Present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti – Present
Alderman Bernie Simons – Present
Alderman Kevin Kosty – Present

Administration

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti
Fran Teodosio, Corporation Counsel
Thomas Cotter, Assistant Corporation Counsel
Kellie Vazzano, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor
Frances Freer, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

**PROCLAMATION HONORING NICHOLAS VERDICCHIO AS “FIRE FIGHTER OF THE
YEAR”
FOR THE CITY OF SHELTON**

Mayor Lauretti: Nick, we have been involved in a lot of things over the years, but never this! For those of you who do not know, Nick was honored at the Aqua Turf a couple of weeks ago for Fireman of the Year, representing the City of Shelton. We want to further recognize that distinction that he has. The proclamation reads as follows:

Whereas, Nicholas Verdicchio, a 32-year member of the Shelton Volunteer Fire Company #4, Pine Rock for the Shelton Fire Department, currently holds the position of Assistant Chief.

Whereas, he has served Shelton in many other capacities including Firefighter, Apparatus Operator, Lieutenant, Captain and Chairman of the Officers Council.

Whereas, Nick has held leadership positions for more than 25 years. He currently serves as Shelton's most senior chief officer. For over a decade his regional service includes being a member of the Valley Fire Chief's Emergency Plan and a Director of the Valley Fire Chief's Regional Training School.

Whereas, Nick has been instrumental in implementing and maintaining our emergency communication system. Throughout his tenure on the Officer's Council, he has ensured our department members' voices and suggestions are being heard. As a result, new equipment, procedures and safety measures have been implemented. He has been an inspirational leader and a mentor to many generations of firefighters.

Whereas, Nick has been chosen as firefighter of the year for Shelton. In addition, being recognized by the Connecticut District Exchange Club, Salute to the Bravest, and he represents high ideals and accomplishments in fire prevention.

Therefore, I, Mark A. Lauretti, Mayor of the City of Shelton, thank you, Nick Verdicchio, for your dedication and commitment to the Shelton Fire Department and your willingness to serve and protect the residents of the City of Shelton. Congratulations and thank you.

PUBLIC PORTION

Mayor Lauretti asked if anyone wished to address the board.

*Jerry Bloom
24 Fairfield Avenue*

Good afternoon. First of all, congratulations Mayor Lauretti on your reelection. I don't know if it is some kind of a record, but you have really become an institution here in Shelton. Over the past few months, I have been informed that things will be done here in Shelton. For example, the lamps outside of Plumb Library that need repairing and replacing. I've been talking about that now for 5-6 months. They still need to be repaired. Also, the damaged fence across the street in the parking lot has been damaged for a couple of months now and that hasn't been repaired. I also suggested that the Riverside Park road be repaired, paved with asphalt. I was told recently that that would be done as well; it has not. However, Kneen Street Extension has been paved; it didn't need it but was paved. Sunnyside School parking lot was paved recently. That didn't need it. How many here know that Coram Avenue and Coram Road is the same street? It is. Coram Avenue has been partially paved. Also, would you please fully fund the Board of Education.

My pet peeve, of course, are the YouTube Frauditors which I have encouraged Mayor Lauretti to issue some sort of executive order protecting Shelton from them. You can find all about them on YouTube if interested. Various towns in the country are taking action, passing laws and such. It just brings up that old adage, it is not always true but someone once said if voting could change things, it would be illegal. Thank you.

*Michele Vichiola-Van Wart
22 Wright Street*

Good evening. This is concerning the creation of a Riverfront Wildlife Refuge and Open Space and also references Joe Bienkowski’s September 14, 2023 letter to Mayor Lauretti.

I, Michele Vichiola-Van Wart, am in favor of moving forward with McKinney Wildlife Refuge and Open Space Project for the Island Sand and Gravel property, approximately 20 acres, in south Shelton. The following neighbors in the area of River Road, Wright Street, Catlin Place, Ladas Place, and Hawthorne Avenue, and beyond in the general Sunnyside area are also in favor:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Cris Balamaci (Alderman) | 14. Chris and Donna Hasiotis |
| 2. Richard Van Wart | 15. Evelyn Corporan |
| 3. Laura Lavin | 16. Margie and Dennis Broadnax |
| 4. Nancy Satkowski | 17. Emily and Jason Mikan |
| 5. Ryan Van Wart | 18. Elaina and Rob Carlucci |
| 6. Micaela Garrison | 19. Joe and Julia Martinetto |
| 7. Kelly and Corey Walsh | 20. Donna Deecken |
| 8. Francis Jones | 21. Wioletta and Witold Szpara |
| 9. Erin and Brian Sepkaski | 22. Arthur and Debra Brown |
| 10. John Anglace (Alderman) | 23. Ashley and Benjamin Brandi |
| 11. Joe Bienkowski (CAG Chair) | 24. Jennifer and Bill Bittar |
| 12. Carmelo Nieves | 25. Michael and Natalie Vena |
| 13. Sharon Herman | 26. Amy and Oscar Montero |

Joe Bienkowski

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen and congratulations on your recent election. I am Chair for the Citizen’s Advisory Board and proposed the Wildlife Refuge. I just want to go on record tonight that I think it would be a great asset for the City and the whole lower Naugatuck Valley. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEMS

Alderman Anglace MOVED to add to the agenda item 8.7, Payment for Printing and Mailing of the Charter Revision Explanation sheet.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

No discussion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

1. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

1.1 BOARD OF ALDERMEN SPECIAL MEETING – OCTOBER 11, 2023

Minutes can be viewed on the city website: www.cityofshelton.org.

Alderman Anglace MOVED to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the October 11, 2023 Board of Aldermen Special meeting subject to the minor changes noted which will be given to the clerk. Items on pages 1 (add meeting), page 6 (add of) and page 8 (remove second “turf”).

Seconded by Alderman Kosty.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0)

5.1 FINANCE COMMITTEE

5.1.1 NO ITEMS

5.2 PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

5.2.1 NO ITEMS

5.3 STREET COMMITTEE

5.3.1 NO ITEMS

REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Lauretti: No report at this time.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Alderman Anglace: I have no report at this time.

6- LEGISLATIVE – OLD

6.1 ITEMS FROM PUBLIC HEARING

6.1 A.NO ITEMS

7 – FINANCIAL BUSINESS – OLD

7.1 NO ITEMS

8 – FINANCIAL BUSINESS – NEW

8.1 NOVEMBER STATUTORY REFUNDS

Alderman Anglace MOVED that the report of the Tax Collector relative to the refund of taxes for a total amount of \$7,660.15 be approved and that the Finance Director be directed to make payments in accordance with the certified list received from the Tax Collector with funds to come from the Statutory Refunds Account 001-0000-311.13.00.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

No discussion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.2 FUNDING FOR LIGHTING FIXTURES FOR THE RIVERWALK, HUNTINGTON GREEN AND VARIOUS OTHER CITY LOCATIONS

Alderman Anglace **MOVED** to appropriate an amount of \$104,500 for the purchase and installation of lighting fixtures for the Riverwalk, Huntington Green and various other city locations with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to 7.16 of the City Charter.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Discussion:

Mayor Lauretti: I will say that the prices on these things have jumped significantly since the last time we bought them, significantly.

Alderman Anglace: \$5,225 each.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.3 FUNDING FOR REPLACEMENT WINDOWS FOR CITY-OWNED PROPERTY AT 279 SOUNDVIEW AVENUE - LOCIP ELIGIBLE

Alderman Anglace **MOVED** to add replacement windows for city-owned property at 279 Soundview Avenue to the Capital Improvement Plan in an amount of \$10,077.05 with funding to come from LoCIP.

Seconded by Alderman Balamaci.

No discussion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.4 WAIVER OF BID FOR ADDITION TO STORAGE BUILDING NEAR SHS CONCESSION STAND

Alderman Anglace **MOVED**, per the Finance Director, to waive the bidding process for the addition to be put on the storage building near the Shelton High School concession stand.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Discussion:

Mayor Lauretti: I am told that this did go out to bid and there were no bidders. This is not a big project. It is an extension of an already existing building right next to the concession stand that we just spent quite a bit of time and money on refurbishing. This is in addition to the storage

building that we approved last month for the back of the high school parking lot. Storage is a big thing up there. All the sporting programs that use the fields, the upper fields and the football field and the track will have the opportunity to store the equipment that they need and use during the course of the school year/school season.

Alderman Anglace: I want to probably reiterate what you said in a different perspective. This project did go out to bid. There were no bids received. We solicited quotes after that and received only one quote. We are waiving bids to make full disclosure, but a bid waiver technically is not necessary. I applaud the process and the result and what we are going to do.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.5 350 HOWE AVENUE, SIDEWALK REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Alderman Anglace MOVED to approve a reimbursement of \$4,270.00, made payable to Kalici Management LLC, 350 Howe Avenue, Shelton, CT 06484, for the repair of a sidewalk at 350 Howe Avenue, per Ordinance #877 (Section 14-9 of the Code of Ordinances) with funding to come from the Sidewalk Reimbursement Account #001-3600-713.80-43.

Seconded by Alderman McPherson.

Discussion:

Alderman Anglace: This was recommended by the Street Committee. There were questions along the line as to whether this has to be approved by the Street Committee. I think it is a good idea to have the Street Committee approve all of these prior to the Full Board approving them. That way we have dotted the i's and crossed the t's.

Mayor Lauretti: If you are going to do that then you probably should tell the property owner who is repairing the sidewalk not to do anything until he gets the green light because maybe they won't do it then. The ordinance is in place to motivate property owners to repair their sidewalks, particularly in an area of high foot traffic. It is either the cart before the horse or the cart after the horse.

Alderman Anglace: All I am saying is technically, after it is done, bringing it to the Street Committee to make sure that everything was done that had to be done and was done right.

Alderman McPherson: When the process actually starts, they see the City Engineer who reviews everything and will issue the permit and then will go out and do all the inspections. Once it is done the Engineer will contact the Street Committee as he has here with his letter that the conditions have all been met and then we would approve it or whatever.

Mayor Lauretti: The City Engineer has to sign off on this and the permit before they can do anything.

Alderman McPherson: Exactly.

Alderman Anglace: But that does not ensure that it is done right. They get the permit and go ahead and start doing the work. That is where the Street Committee comes in at the end of the process to check it out.

Mayor Lauretti: Maybe we better change the ordinance. If I was a property owner and I had to repair my sidewalk and somebody on the Street Committee didn't like me for some reason, and don't think it does not happen because it does.

Alderman McPherson: Then it comes to the Full Board anyway.

Mayor Lauretti: The same thing applies in this day and age unfortunately.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.6 LEASE RENEWALS FOR CITY OWNED PROPERTIES

Alderman Anglace MOVED to authorize the Mayor and Corporation Counsel to negotiate and enter into leases based on the terms presented in the attached document.

Further authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to sign any and all documents to effectuate said leases.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Discussion:

Alderman Anglace: These are existing leases that are renewals for the Center Stage, Living Hope Church and the Valley United Way.

Mayor Lauretti: There is nothing left to do right Kellie?

Kellie Vazzano: No. Just approve the terms and we will put the leases together.

Mayor Lauretti: The motion says to authorize the Mayor and Corporation Counsel to negotiate. That has already been done. The copy of the final product is before them. So, they are either going to approve or disapprove.

Kellie Vazzano: Correct.

Mayor Lauretti: We will leave the motion the way it is, but just so everybody understands, this has already been done and you are approving a final document.

Alderman Anglace: Are the monthly rents any different from the current monthly rents?

Mayor Lauretti: There is in at least one situation.

Kellie Vazzano: If you look at the chart for Living Hope Church, the monthly lease will go up on that one on a graduated basis per year. Otherwise, Center Stage and Valley United Way will be staying the same.

Mayor Lauretti: I think both of those organizations that are non-profits are struggling a little bit. I don't think it is wise to increase their burden.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

8.7 PAYMENT FOR PRINTING & MAILING OF CHARTER REVISION EXPLANATION

Alderman Anglace MOVED to authorize the payment of Invoice #815716 to Corporate Mailing Services, LLC for the printing and mailing of the Charter Revisions summary in an amount of \$12,801.62 with funding to come from Contingency General Account #001-9900-900.99.00.

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

Discussion:

Mayor Lauretti: With respect to the Charter revisions, I talked to several people and when they got the correspondence in the mail it was kind of lengthy, not really, but some people thought it was kind of lengthy and they don't read it. My suggestion is when you do the Charter revision again that you get out in front of this and maybe there are two publications to inform people. It is easy to vote no on something when people feel it is too complicated or they don't understand what the changes are that are being proposed. Let's face it, the Charter is a lengthy document, it is a technical document and is not for everyone's edification, unfortunately.

Alderman Anglace: It is a living document. It is the document by which we run the City; we are empowered to run the City. From time to time that document needs to be changed as you have limits on spending as an example. If we think those need to be changed, you ask the electorate to change the charter so you can change the limits.

Mayor Lauretti: My point is simply the vast majority of people just don't understand it. I think they are confused by it. We know the Charter has to be changed, State law requires you to change it. State laws change and you have to incorporate those State changes into your Charter. You get to the point where your Charter is outdated. I've always been a big proponent of the Charter. It is part and parcel to the success that we enjoy here in Shelton that maybe a lot of other communities do not enjoy. Our Charter is pretty well defined and delineates the sections of power and authority for the respective Boards and Commissions. It is necessary. We have passed Charter revisions before. The last two went down, this one went down significantly, but it is not like we haven't passed Charter changes before because we have. I'm just saying that our approach has to be a different approach other than just spending \$12,000 on one document.

Alderman Durante: Is there an opportunity to break the sections of the Charter and have them vote on each section. Let's say we have three items on that Charter revision. They approve on two of them, but they say on one section the constituents say ...

Mayor Lauretti: I'll let Corporation Counsel answer that.

Attorney Teodosio: The way you present the questions is your option. You can present the questions as one or you can present ten different questions. Regardless of how you present them, you still have to explain them.

Mayor Lauretti: As an example, we had, in years gone by, questions on the ballot, as an example one was the Charter and one was for a large purchase of open space, do the votes of Shelton approve a couple of million dollars for the purpose of this piece of property, yes or no. So, things like that. We have had two or three different questions on the ballot before. Actually, we have had quite a bit of success. I just think that the easiest thing for people to do when they don't understand it is either don't respond to it or say no.

Alderman Kosty: I would say I have faith in the voters that they looked into things and I trust their vote on the matter. I would question who approved the wording of this letter before it went out? Was anyone in charge of approving the letter?

Mayor Lauretti: No. The Charter Revision Commission looked at it.

Alderman Kosty: So, the Charter Commission approved it?

Mayor Lauretti: The Charter Revision Commission is the one commissioned to authorize any changes that go into the document, then it comes before the Board of Aldermen and this is a summary of the changes. No one had to authorize it.

Alderman Kosty: No one had to authorize the language?

Mayor Lauretti: No one had to authorize it.

Alderman Kosty: It seems a little odd.

Mayor Lauretti: I don't know what is odd about it. It is pretty straight forward. Here is what it was before and here is what it is now.

Alderman Kosty: I just felt if it was going to be a mailing from the City to the voters, it seems like someone should be in charge of reviewing the language of it if not this Board.

Alderman Anglace: Counsel did review the legality of the presentation and the questions and the content. They have done this before in previous Charters. When we have put out information it has always been reviewed by Counsel, whoever the Counsel is for the City at that time.

Mayor Lauretti: It is really the political process that may determine the fate of a document like this, especially when you drive around town and you see signs up that say Keep Education Bipartisan. It has nothing to do with the Charter, absolutely zero.

Alderman Kosty: Except the Charter was trying to change it to make the Board more partisan.

Mayor Lauretti: No, not at all. It is partisan now because it calls for 5/4, no more than five (5) people from one party. So, what do they mean by that? Don't you think that is being disingenuous when someone says keep it bipartisan?

Alderman Kosty: No. Certain votes require six (6) votes, correct? According to the rules.

Mayor Lauretti: That has nothing to do with the membership.

Alderman Kosty: So, if you have 5/4, it requires at least one person from the minor party to vote in favor.

Mayor Lauretti: No. The vote has nothing to do with anything. The change was about the membership on the Board from how many people from one political party. That's all it is. In fact, it is partisan now. There is nothing bipartisan about that. It is a 5/4 membership. That's pretty basic.

Alderman Kosty: 6/3 makes it more partisan.

Mayor Lauretti: Okay, but it does not maintain a bipartisanship is what the point is.

Alderman Kosty: The vote is over; do we really need to re-debate this right now?

Mayor Lauretti: You brought it up.

Alderman Kosty: I'm actually responding to your statement on the partisanship question.

Mayor Lauretti: Okay, you got my response. Pretty basic answer and pretty direct. There is nothing bipartisan about the membership on the Board of Education. It calls for one party as opposed to another.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

9 – LEGISLATIVE – NEW

9.1 ITEMS TO PUBLIC HEARING

9.1 NO ITEMS

9.2 RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CREATION OF A RIVERFRONT WILDLIFE REFUGE AND OPEN SPACE AREA IN SOUTH SHELTON – TWO MILE ISLAND

Alderman Anglace MOVED to approve the following resolution:

Whereas, the Shelton Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) has recommended the creation of a Riverfront Wildlife Refuge and Open Space Area in south Shelton consisting of 2-mile island and abutting adjacent coastal property, and

Whereas, the CAB suggests that the most expeditious way to secure the preservation of this riverfront gem would be to apply for its inclusion in the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, and

Whereas, this suggestion has received an overwhelming show of support from neighborhood residents and citizens throughout the Shelton community,

Now therefore, the Board of Aldermen does hereby endorse such proposal and asks Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to pursue such CAB recommendation with all Connecticut Congresspersons and Senators asking their consideration and assistance to petition the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge for adoption of this most worthy and everlasting undertaking.

Respectfully submitted for adoption,

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr. President and Alderman Cris Balamaci

Seconded by Alderman Simonetti.

No discussion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0).

10 - EXECUTIVE SESSION

10.A. REQUEST TO MOVE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

10.1 NO ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Anglace MOVED to adjourn the Board of Aldermen Meeting.

Seconded by Alderman Kosty.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously (8-0). Meeting adjourned at 6 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Fonda

Donna Fonda
Acting Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED _____

BY: _____
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti