



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON
SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING MEETING ON
REVISIONS TO THE CITY CHARTER
MINUTES

AUGUST 24, 2023, 5:30 P.M.

SHELTON CITY HALL AUDITORIUM, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON CT
Live-Streamed at www.cityofshelton.org

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Anglace called the Special Board of Aldermen Public Hearing Meeting on the Proposed Charter 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 Lorenzo Durante – Present
Alderman Porter McKinnon – Present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti – Present
Alderman Bernie Simons – Present
Alderman Cris Balamaci – Present
Alderman Kevin Kosty – Present via phone

Kellie Vazzano, Administrative Assistant to the Mayor

Alderman Anglace asked Alderman McPherson to run the meeting.

1. REVISIONS TO THE CITY CHARTER

Alderman McPherson: This is the Public Hearing on the proposed amendments to the Charter for the City of Shelton. Anybody wishing to speak, please sign in with Donna, the clerk, and she will call your name, you will come up, speak clearly into the microphone.

Joseph Knapik, 23 Stonewall Lane

Before you know it, it will be 2025, time for another Charter change. One was just attempted two years ago. The voters said no. Here the Mayor goes again to seize more power. 95% isn't enough, go for 102%. Assure control of the Board of Education chairmanship because that is what it is all about. Yes, to this Charter change as its roots in the administration not getting along with the past member of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation. Sad to say, Charter revision is a vindictive political thing, not worthy of the City of Shelton. The Charter Committee, appointed by the Mayor, aka Board of Aldermen, unwittingly did their civic responsibility. Now it is up to the aldermen to pass on their efforts probably on a 7:1 vote. Note again, the administration has a stake in a receptive Board of Education Chairman. Thank you.

Ludwig Spinelli 14 Willard Road

Good afternoon. Regarding the Charter revision, item 5.4, Technology – I just have to question the wisdom of how the membership of the Technology Committee was comprised. Is this something that the Board of Education requested? I know that the Board of Ed has separate needs and separate requirements and I want to make sure that should it pass, which I hope it does not, that it does not diminish the work of the Board of Education. I don't know if this came from the City IT director, I don't know if we have an IT director. I looked at the City's website and I don't see an IT department, so I am not quite sure where that is going to come from, but I am concerned about the ability to spend money with the authorization of Board of Aldermen as proposed.

Relating to that, I am concerned also about the lack of speed in updating the City's website. There are many things that are lacking, some of the minutes are very old and the citizens being aware of what is

happening at City Hall, certainly the website needs update and certainly something the Technology Committee or whoever is in charge should be doing.

Regarding bonding, I am not in favor of the increase from 2% to 2.5% to allow more bonding. The budget keeps increasing so therefore the 2% keeps increasing as well proportionally. As we all know, the interest rates have gone up, the Federal Reserve continues to do that to cool inflation and I am not sure if the City has plans to do a lot of bonding. I feel that bonding should only be done in a very needy and urgent requirement. Sometime things do come up, but to go from 2-2.5% I don't think is wise for the City and we should certainly limit the amount of money that we have to bond for or allowed to bond for.

Finally, 5.1.2.1, you have heard about the Board of Education already, I am very concerned that education is becoming too politicized. It needs to be compassionate and collaborative with Republications and Democrats. I am sure that the Mayor was not happy seeing all the signs "Fully Fund the Board of Education" all around town. Well, if you go 6:3, I can assure you that you will further divide the City and there will be three times as many signs. This is not right. You can't keep the taxes low. We all want low taxes. Don't do it on the backs of the children and the Board of Education administration. It just is not right. Shelton is already very low in a per pupil expenditure, why do we want to get to the very bottom. It just does not make any sense to me. We need to continue to support the Board of Education. You can't give them, obviously, a blank check, but let's be realistic. There are many things that they have to do to stay within the budget and I am concerned about that.

Finally, an omission in the Charter Revision. I would have liked to see something about the Master Plan being worked on and updated more frequently or as needed. That was an omission and I was wondering about that. Those are the reasons that I certainly propose that the Charter revision be denied.

Monica Peterson 10 Brook Pine Drive

I would like to say that I agree with the previous speaker. Lud Spinelli made some very important points. The Technology Commission, I think can probably be done on an as needed basis. I don't think it needs to be a permanent situation because I think that the Board of Ed, their needs are different than the needs of the City. There are certain privacy needs that come up with the Board of Ed. Student privacy is very important whereas for the City openness is a more important aspect. I think if you do it on an as needed basis when things come up, you can still pull together Commissions then, but I think that things need to be separated. As far as the Board of Education composition, I think that the current status with minority representation in the amount of 5:4, I think that has served the City very well and I don't think we should be changing that. Thank you very much.

Mark Holden 275 Soundview Avenue

Good evening. The Charter Revision process this year has been hopelessly flawed because the City hasn't lived up to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Charter Revisions meetings weren't consistently noted upon the City website. The second Public Hearing was posted with the wrong start time. While the agenda posted for tonight said this meeting would start at 5:30 pm, the home page for the City showed this meeting would start at 5 am this morning and end at 5:30 pm tonight. None of the agendas or minutes for the Charter Revision Commission have been posted online. It appears City Hall intentionally suppressed information about the Charter revision process to reduce public scrutiny. One of the revision proposals would allow for replacing public notices in newspapers with notices on the City website when it is legal. On the whole I would greatly approve of that concept except at the moment, considering the failure to comply with the requirements for complete and accurate information, this seems to be setting the City up to fail. When you appointed the Commission on your January 12th meeting of this year, you ordered completion of the draft report no later than May 8, 2023. It was three months late. Can you even put this Charter revision on the ballot this year.

The proposed Technology Committee is flawed. The City has two-thirds of the votes. I understand you want to control the money and that is your right. Yet the Board of Education needs to have the authority to stop the City from wasting money on equipment for them that isn't suited to their needs. As an

example, several years ago the Mayor had the City buy wand metal detectors for school security after he was told the Board of Education didn't want them and didn't have the staff to use them effectively. After the Newtown tragedy, the City and Board of Education worked cooperatively to develop security enhancements that were cost effective based on suggestions made at the State Security Summit. Those experts spent considerable time telling us metal detectors were an ineffective use of funds and they explained why. After we already had strong measures in place, some taxpayer funds were wasted on something we knew wasn't going to help. I know the Mayor was present at the Security Summit, I saw him there and I spoke to him briefly. The equipment needed for education is pretty much standardized nationwide. The Board of Education IT department needs to be able to say NO to equipment that isn't suited to their needs. The change to increase the majority on the Board of Education would be less of a concern for me if my party, the Republicans, nominated more people who care about academic achievement. In the eight years I served on the Board of Education, I found party only mattered when people let politics get in the way of what was doing best for students. Having a more evenly matched team reduces the likelihood of political games. The previous Charter revision was decidedly voted down by the Shelton taxpayers. This proposal appears to have been purposely obscured to keep it out of the public eye. It deserves to be defeated. Thank you.

Carl Rizzo 70 Plaskon Drive

I just wanted to share my thoughts. I am a member of the Board of Education and head of the Technology Committee and also Vice-Chair of Finance and I work very closely with Glenn Newman who is our IT Director. I only wanted to speak about two aspects of the Charter that I think are far and away more important than any other thing listed in the Charter. One of them is the increase in capital spending. I see every month we go through our Buildings and Grounds Committee Meeting where we need improvements to our school systems. There is a long list of projects every month and we only have so much money to work with and that is limited by the Charter, 2%. Just increasing it to 2.5% would have a dramatic and positive impact on what we can do for our children. I find it hard to believe that anyone who wants to spend more money on education would be against that. I just don't understand it. It gives us more money to use.

The second aspect of the Charter I would like to support and explain why is the Technology Committee. It is tied into the capital spending because right now technology competes with all those other needs of our district, roads, windows, parking lots, lights, they compete with all those very important things and what happens is it gets pushed down to the bottom of the list and things don't get done. The pandemic gave us an opportunity to improve our network backbone, our infrastructure quite a bit. It also got us free Chromebook in a sense. Nothing is free, but our taxpayers, our State taxpayers or federal tax dollars paid for all that. There is no such thing as a free lunch. All those Chromebook have to be replaced. All that infrastructure that we added and improved has to be maintained. That puts more burden on our Board of Education budget. Creating this Technology Committee is by far and away the most positive thing in the Charter to me because it allows us to provide better technology on a permanent basis for our children. That is all I really care about – how much we can get for our kids. Right now we improved the infrastructure quite a bit. We put wireless access points throughout the entire school. Glenn Newman did a fantastic job of managing it and implementing it. He is fantastic. He also improved our security. I can't tell you in detail how important that the security improvements were or how bad or how needed they were before we implemented that in the last year. You have heard in the news of big cities getting cyber attacks and the devastating effects that could have. The Technology Committee could be on top of that. They can help the schools. They could work with the IT Director. It gives us more money to work with. I just think those two things are far and away more important than anything else listed in the Charter. Thank you very much.

Frank Donato 15 Beech Tree Hill Road

I want to give a quote from the preamble to the Charter which says, "our rights are based firmly in our shared values of liberty, equality before the law, and representative government, we hereby adopt this Charter of the City of Shelton". A key phrase in the Charter is representative government. It does not mean a supermajority. Our republic was built on the will of the majority, its protection of minority rights. The argument for giving one party a supermajority on the Board of Education, which happens to be the

largest part of the City’s budget, is that the R’s often get more votes than the Dem’s who are sitting on the Board of Ed. Under the present system, one party can only have a 5:4 majority. The revision would give the current majority of Republicans a 6:3 supermajority on the Board of Education. With the extremist war on a woman’s access to healthcare, with the extremist war on LGBTQ communities, with the extremist views on closing libraries and banning books in our schools, we cannot risk giving the supermajority to one party. Sadly, only 45% of eligible voters voted in the last mayoralty election, giving the present administration a majority of a minority vote. The answer is for us to encourage more people to get out and vote. The more people that vote, the better government we will have.

I just wanted to finish on a personal note. Sitting around the dinner table the other night, my oldest grandson, a recent graduate of Shelton High School was discussing with his parents what he needed to take with him to college. When it came to a medical card, my daughter assured him he was covered under her plan until age 26, part of Obamacare. I want to thank the great American hero, Senator John McCain who took his wracked cancered body up to the US Senate in the middle of the night when his party was attempting to overthrow Obamacare. Senator McCain stood up, looked at his colleagues and as the deciding vote, gave a thumbs down to the repeal of Obamacare. I encourage the citizens of Shelton to go to the polls and vote a thumbs down for this Charter revision. Thank you.

Win Oppel 34 Soundview Avenue

As I addressed this board last week – I am sorry I am not there in person, but on Tuesday night I tested positive for Covid, so I felt at the very best I should stay away and got John out of buying me a birthday cake. As I said in our meeting last week, our commission has met and we made one revision which is not currently in the document you are holding a hearing on tonight, but will be in our final recommendation. We had some issues raised about whether or not we could publish public notices only on the website, with the exception of elections. There appears to be some other challenges to that, so to avoid any conflict we are reverting back to the original wording that is in the current charter regarding the posting of Public Notices in newspapers, but we added a paragraph at the end which reads in part that should the State of Connecticut allow for the posting of those public notices solely on websites, that we would do that in Shelton as well. To the folks who are addressing whether or not the change in the Board of Education composition is good or bad, the only point I would like to raise with them is that we are attempting to make sure that people’s votes are counted. When you look back over the past 12 years, it is fairly evident that people’s votes are not being counted in an effective way. It is not an R and D issue because I have been at this game long enough to remember when the other team controlled the Board of Aldermen, the Mayor’s office and the Board of Education. It is a matter of counting votes. People in this town have overwhelmingly voted in the last 12 years for people who are unable to serve simply because we have a statistical number that is placed on us, and yet the State of Connecticut’s election division allows for a 6:3 split on a nine-member board which is elected at a single time and that is what our Board of Education is. I don’t know if there are any questions, Mr. President, that you want to have answered tonight, but I will meet with you guys on Monday in a joint meeting and we will go over whatever items you would like to see. Thank you.

Tom Harbison 15 Soundcrest Drive

I have 12 items. I will be brief. I have a few comments. (Document listed below was emailed in and read by Mr. Harbison)

1. Preamble
 - a. While I find a preamble unnecessary, I suggested modifications to Chairman Debicella regarding such an addition in 2020’s version which were ultimately incorporated in their final draft. Although this preamble is different from 2020’s, I similarly have a suggested modification to the presented proposed portion that says, “...have always strived to provide a community where families can find prosperity and happiness that offers a high quality of life for all our residents”. I am a life-long resident, but I am a single person rather than a family. Also, I believe we try and provide a community where additionally business can also find a home and thrive, as well as a

community which is attractive to draw others for a visit of tourism or business purposes, not just to reside within. For such reasons, I suggest the following:

- i. "...have always strived to provide a community **of opportunity for** ~~where families can find prosperity and happiness that offers a high quality of life for all. our residents.~~" It simplifies that.

2. Section 2.2 Polling Places and Hours

a. The Charter revision drafted in 2020 had proposed changes to this Section which were not included in this 2023 proposal, but I think they should be. These prior recommendations can be found on the City’s website, but I will repeat them here.

- i. "The Registrars of Voters shall designate the polling place or places for the City **for** each ward of the City for each general City election and for any other voting by the electors. All elections and other voting shall be conducted as provided in this Charter and the laws of the City and State and United States. If not otherwise provided, the polls shall remain open from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. If not otherwise provided, the Registrars of Voters shall publish a notice of the election or other voting **as required by Connecticut General Statutes and displayed on the City’s website.** ~~in a newspaper having a substantial circulation in the City at least seven (7) days prior to the election or other voting."~~

This would eliminate the issue that was brought up by Mr. Opiel.

3. Section 2.3 Regulation

a. Although this is the first mention of the term "Aldermen", I believe a concept should apply throughout the Charter. There are no longer just men serving Shelton, but also women. To avoid a cumbersome recount of all the changes I would suggest throughout the document, I believe that all references of "Aldermen" should be changed to "Alders" and from "Board of Aldermen" to a "Board of Alders". In doing some research, there are other Connecticut cities that have made such a change from the patriarchal term. The title exists in Old English (ealdorman), Swedish (ålderman), Danish (oldermand), German (Ältermann) and Finish (oltermanni). All these words mean "elder man" or "wise man". I believe we have wise women to serve in this role as well. Rather than distinguish gender, having a change to the world "Alder" or "Board of Alder" would simply give meaning of "the wise" or "board of the wise", and seems appropriate.

4. Section 2.4 Elected Municipal Officials and Voting

a. Section 2.4.1 (b) the word "elected" is redundant as the entire subsection is regarding the characteristics of being elected. Also in regard to a subsequent suggestion I will make regarding expanding the number of Wards with an increasing population, I suggest the following:

- i. A Board of Aldermen consisting of **no less than** eight (8) members ~~elected~~ as follows: Two (2) members to the Board from each ward to serve for a term of two (2) years;

5. Section 2.9 Wards

a. The City has experienced periods of rapid population growth, and some consideration should be given to preparing to divide the City into more than simply four (4) wards. I don’t know if this is the proper juncture to insert that concept. Perhaps modification with the following to give the flexibility for future consideration before the next Charter revision:

- i. The City shall be divided into **no less than** four (4) wards, the boundaries of which shall be established pursuant to Connecticut General Statute Section 9-169 (f) as may be amended from time to time and such reapportionment plan shall be filed with the City/Town Clerk’s office.

6. Section 4.3.1 Meetings

a. I feel it important to recognize not only a standard day of the month, but a standard time that the Board of Alderman should hold their Regular monthly meetings. Not every citizen can get to a

meeting in the middle of a workday. Also, the 2020 Charter Revision proposal noted that the Regular meetings be set by a resolution, not in an ordinance. Also, the words regular and special for meetings are distinct terms under Freedom of Information regulations and should be capitalized. Completing those thoughts, I recommend the following:

- i. The Board of Aldermen shall hold **Regular** ~~regular~~ monthly meetings, open to the public, on a day **and time** specified by **resolution** ~~ordinance~~. The Mayor or any two (2) members of the Board of Aldermen may convene a **Special** ~~special~~ meeting of the Board at any time by giving each member and the Mayor at least twenty-four (24) hours notice.

7. Section 4.3.2 Quorum and Actions

- a. I continue to have an issue with the language regarding what a majority vote is (being a set in stone quantity of five by the current Charter) for the Board of Aldermen. Imagine if an emergency or health issues kept some from participating to the point where there were only 5 able to attend meetings. Every single vote would require all 5 in attendance to be affirmative - and that is not right. This came to my attention when Alderman Chaffee continually chose to "abstain" from voting on purchasing the Klapik property as City Open Space (until he got his way with some separate fire department issue), and it jeopardized the deal for months as they couldn't get 5 full affirmative votes (some Alderman were on vacation or couldn't make meetings, so they had a quorum of 5 Aldermen to call a meeting, but then only 4 voting affirmative with Chaffee's abstention). I've repeatedly spoken about this at previous Charter Revision Commissions going back to 2002 May. I hope this time is the charm. My recommendations to the 2020 Commission were incorporated into their proposal, and though that entire Charter revision was not voted in favor of by the voters in its entirety, I suggest that their 2020 recommended changes for this Section 4.3.2 be repeated for this revision attempt:

- i. Five (5) members of the Board, exclusive of the Mayor, shall constitute a quorum for any meeting, ~~and the Board shall take no action, except on a vote to adjourn or to fix the time and place of the next meeting, unless the action is adopted by a~~ **At least five (5) affirmative votes shall be necessary to pass budgetary matters and ordinances. All other actions shall require a majority of those present and voting.**

8. Section 5.2.2 Board of Zoning Appeals

- a. There is no mention of a term of service for those appointed to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Technically, as I read the current Charter, currently you are appointed for life. I suggest that the recommended changes from the 2020 Commission regarding the term of service be incorporated:
 - i. The City shall have a Board of Zoning Appeals, consisting of five (5) regular members and three (3) alternate members, no more than three (3) of which regular members and no more than two (2) of which alternate members shall be from the same political party, appointed **to serve for staggered terms of four (4) years.** The Board of Zoning Appeals shall have all of the powers and duties granted to and imposed upon them under the appropriate provisions of the Connecticut General Statutes.

9. Section 5.3.1 Board of Assessment Appeals

- a. The entire section 5.3 is titled “Appointed by the Board of Aldermen” with the starting paragraph “The Board of Aldermen shall make appropriate notifications to the Mayor and the City/Town Clerk as to those appointments under Section 5.3” Any then further mention that appointment is made by the Board of Aldermen is redundant and can be removed without impact on the intent of the Charter Section.
 - i. The City shall have a Board of Assessment Appeals, consisting of three (3) members, no more than two (2) of which shall be from the same political party, appointed ~~by the Board of Aldermen~~ to serve for staggered terms of three (3) years as prescribed by Connecticut General Statutes.
- b. This same concept of redundancy to state that a particular board, committee, or Authority is appointed by the Board of Alderman, when everything in the section is already stated to be an appointment by the Board of Alderman, occurs in the following:
 - i. Public Building Committees
 - ii. Public Employee Appeals Board
 - iii. Water Pollution Control Authority
 - iv. Board of Ethics

10. Section 5.4 Appointed by the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and Board of Education, Technology Committee

- a. I believe this entire section seems convoluted to achieve a strategy of cross-agency communication on needs and savings from eliminating duplicitous purchases. The investment into a technology for competing interests and goals for education in the classroom for students, vs maintaining digital records in the town clerk’s office are vastly different. Student/Parent portals for records require privacy aspects, while public documents require open records aspects. I appreciate the goals, but I do not think this is the manner in which the benefits can best be achieved.
- b. The differing needs of a Police Department, an education environment, and City operations from the Town Clerk to the public facing website – might not be able to co-mingle parts or services to achieve savings. This is not as easy as passing down a slightly used police vehicle to the Parks & Recreation Department.
- c. The timelines of a year and a half to do an initial study would not be acceptable in the public sector as it is far too long. As example, the changes in the technology available in a physical phone device, or services via online platforms change rapidly. If this concept is approved or pursued, I would suggest an initial report in 6 months rather than 18, and a regular report occur thereafter on a quarterly basis rather than annually.
- d. The proposal for this new section seems to create a conflict with the existing Section 6.4.5 Information Technology.

11. Section 7.16 Borrowing

- a. I do not see the need to increase the borrowing capacity via bonds or notes to 2.5% from the current 2%. As the annual budget grows with inflation over the years, the annual borrowing capacity for that single fiscal year also grows to keep pace with needs.
- b. City Budget for 23/24 is \$131.6 million. The current borrowing capacity in a single fiscal year without need for voter approval is 2% of that, or \$2,632,000. At the proposed 2.5% it would be \$3,290,000 for an increase of \$658,000. This is 25% more borrowing than what is currently allowed. I feel uncomfortable with granting such an increase in annual borrowing that doesn’t have the check and balance of the voter’s approval.
- c. I note that the Charter Revision Committee in 2020 had proposed increasing the cap to 3%, and that was defeated.
- d. If this is pursued, where expressed, the singular borrowing option of “bonds” should be expanded to state “bonds and notes” in accord with the Section’s opening sentence.

12. Section 9.6.2 Vacancies Appointed Office

- a. Re-appointments have not been keeping a regular pace with the schedule of expiring terms in this City. I have brought this to the attention of the Administration several times over my quarter century of appointed service where reappointments have occurred sporadically, and I'm told that you continue to serve until a replacement has been appointed.
- b. As example, as of this point in time, every single member of the Conservation Commission has served past their term's expiration. By its very nature, some of these terms expired years ago. In addition, we have vacancies. The Conservation Commission is appointed by the Mayor. The Mayor being the appointing authority, has not filled the vacancies as required by Charter within 60 days. The Board of Alderman "shall" within 30 days then make appointments not made by the appointing authority. This also has not occurred.
- c. The result of required action not taking place to fill vacancies, and action not taking place for re-appointments to maintain active terms for serving commissioners, is that a complete agency/body/commission can be replaced in one fell swoop due to everyone having an appointed term that has expired. That is not the intent of the Charter to have a potential disruption to the continuity of governance.
- d. I would suggest adding the following:
 - i. 9.5.2 (c) Any individual serving a designated term who is not re-appointed by the appointing authority within sixty (60) days of that term's expiration, and subsequently not re-appointed by the subordinate appointing authority within thirty (30) days of the appointing authority's ability to re-appoint, shall be removed from the appointment and the position termed a vacancy. Such vacancies shall be filled in accord with Section 9.6.2 (b). In all aspects, the date for an appointment from any appointing authority or subordinate appointing authority, shall be determined by the time-stamp filing of such documentation at the City Clerk's office.
- e. This would force the issue, and require the authorities, be it the Mayor or Board of Aldermen, both in their respective primary and subordinate roles for various appointments, to take action by turning expired terms into vacancies that would need to be filled, which can be done by re-appointing the same individual if that is the wishes of the appointing authority.
- f. Another option is to document that an appointed term has been renewed automatically by default if a declarative appointment has not been made by the appointing authority (Mayor or Alderman) and has not been made by the subordinate appointing authority (Alderman or Mayor). If that would be an option you would want to consider, I offer the following:
 - i. 9.5.2 (c) Any individual serving a designated term who is not re-appointed by the appointing authority within sixty (60) days of that term's expiration, and subsequently not re-appointed by the subordinate appointing authority within thirty (30) days of the appointing authority's ability to re-appoint, shall be declared "appointed by default" to serve for another term in the office currently serving. In all aspects, the date for an appointment from any appointing authority or subordinate appointing authority, shall be determined by the time-stamp filing of such documentation at the City Clerk's office.

Thank you in advance for giving consideration to these concepts and for their incorporation into a final version of changes being recommended to the voters. I have emailed this entire statement to the Board of Aldermen Clerk and the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen. Thank you.

Alderman McPherson: There being no more, anyone wishing to speak? Hearing none, the public hearing is now concluded. Thank you everyone for coming out to speak.

ADJOURNMENT:

Alderman Simons MOVED to adjourn; Alderman Simonetti seconded. A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously (8-0). The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Fonda

Donna Fonda
Acting Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED _____ BY: _____
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti