

# SHELTON BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT AND TAXATION MINUTES

SHELTON BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT AND TAXATION – April 28, 2022  
7:00 PM CITY HALL AUDITORIUM – 54 HILL STREET. SHELTON. CONNECTICUT

The Board of Apportionment and Taxation was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman John J. Francino-Quinn with the Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL:

***Apportionment and Taxation Members:***

John Boyko	Via phone
John A. Belden	Via phone
John J. Francino-Quinn	Via phone
Wayne Bragg	Present
Joseph Knapik	Present
Jarrett Frazier	Present

***Present in Auditorium or Via Phone***

Paul Hiller	Present
Alderman Balamaci	Via phone
Alderman McPherson	Present
Dean Cawthra, Tree Warden	Present

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a) Special Meeting of March 30, 2022**

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any questions about the minutes?

Wayne Bragg: Jay, I think in the minutes I was referred to as Alderman. I thank everyone for the promotion, but that is not correct.

Joseph Knapik: I was referred to as an Alderman in those minutes also.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Certainly, we will amend the position to what it should be.

Wayne Bragg MOVED to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting of March 30, 2022 with the above corrections. Seconded by Joseph Knapik.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Wayne Bragg: While we are on minutes, can we talk about two other sessions in which 1) the minutes have not been posted and 2) the minutes have not been corrected. The January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was supposed to have been corrected, eliminating the discussion prior to the meeting starting. I have not seen anything posted online for that. Nor have I seen posting of the minutes for the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Paul, do you know anything about that?

Paul Hiller: I am not certain about that.

John J. Francino-Quinn: I do recall hearing it but did not realize it has not yet been changed.

Wayne Bragg: I am hearing that it has been corrected, but it has not been posted.

Paul Hiller: I will check into that tomorrow morning or early next week.

## **REPORTS**

### **a) Contingency Account Report**

John J. Francino-Quinn: What do we have for the contingency account report?

Wayne Bragg: Both the accounting schedules are included. They look to be okay from my perspective.

### **b) Transfer Report**

Wayne Bragg: They are included with the package and they look okay from my perspective.

Just to follow up with a discussion that we had at the last meeting, we had suggested to the Aldermen in their use of bonding of expenses, we had recommended a report similar to that that we have for the contingency report to be used for that bonding so that we have an accounting trail of those transactions. I just want to remind everyone that that was a discussion we had and these two reports would be a good example of what we would be looking for.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a) Request from Tree Warden to transfer \$6,000 from Trees & Shrubs to Tree Maintenance**

Wayne Bragg: I have a quick question for Dean. Thank you again for coming. You are going to transfer \$6000 out of Trees & Shrubs into the Tree Maintenance Account. That basically says we are not going to do any planting of extra trees and shrubs this year then.

Dean Cawthra: In the Fall in the new budget.

Wayne Bragg: Under the next budget? Do you have a plan?

Dean Cawthra: A lot of people will come in and volunteering. We are going to try to go with that.

Wayne Bragg: This will be accomplished in November. In the Tree Maintenance, that will put it up to \$106,000. Do you think that is going to cover you for the year?

Dean Cawthra: If we get some good hurricanes, it won't. We are hoping.

Wayne Bragg: I see next year you have \$120,000 in the budget. That is probably closer to the right number.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Any other questions or concerns?

Joseph Knapik: Yes, I have a comment. Certainly, I think more money should be earmarked for the Tree Warden and the Tree Department. That money I think is necessary. As I recall during the winter some streets being half closed off because of fallen branches. Hemlock, for example. Maybe with more money, that \$6000 would help to solve that problem. It wasn't only Hemlock, there were a few other streets that had branches hanging to block off at least half the street. It is definitely a hazard. I would be in favor of doing this \$6000 transfer.

Joseph Knapik MOVED to approve the transfer. Jarrett Frazier seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

**b) Request from Accounting & Control to transfer \$40,000 from Regular Payroll to Part-Time Employees**

Paul Hiller: Basically, what this is, we had a retirement in our department last July, a woman who had been with the city for probably 15 years, retired. We had replaced that position on a temporary basis during that period of time. The job had been posted, we have gone through the interview process and I anticipate that a permanent person will be hired or retained by the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. However, what that has done is we have three people who are on a part-time basis and there is an excess in the regular payroll account and we estimate, and it is an estimation, \$40,000 transfer out of regular payroll into the part-time payroll. As I said, it is primarily the result of the retirement of a full-time person and what was considered a temporary employee who was working on a full-time basis, but on a provisional basis obviously, for the last ten months. That should be changed not later than June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Wayne Bragg: Just a couple of follow up questions. Right now you are going to take \$40,000 out of the 10-01 account and transfer to the 10-02. That will basically increase your budget to \$139,000, but I see that next year you only have \$92,000 in there.

Paul Hiller: We had requested that, but I think it was the Mayor's recommendation for \$75,000. We should be back to just two personnel on a part-time basis, on a limited basis.

Wayne Bragg: So, this is just for this budget year?

Paul Hiller: Just for this year to get us to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Wayne Bragg: Then it would revert back to the previous staffing levels.

Paul Hiller: The one individual who has been working, particularly since we went back on January 1<sup>st</sup> to full-time hours has been working a 35 hour week, but is being charged to part time. That individual might be selected, but that decision has not been finalized but it should within the next two weeks be finalized.

Wayne Bragg: It shouldn't cause you a perturbation for 2023 then?

Paul Hiller: I do not anticipate it. One never knows. We knew this other individual was retiring, we just didn't know when. We wanted to get someone in for training purposes and get the right people. It has worked out.

Wayne Bragg: I am all about doing this. I think this is really important to be done during the year because what you are doing is setting the baseline for the next year. You have to correct it so we understand how things change from year to year and this is the way we understand that. Great explanation.

Joseph Knapik: Just a comment and observation. I believe that Mr. Hiller intends for this part-time situation to go on for a limited time and then there will be a return to full-time. Not necessarily with the Accounting Department, but with other departments I have noticed a trend of going from full-time to part-time and hopefully this won't be that and this full-time person will be permanently hired and that should take care of the situation. Again, I underline the word hopefully because I have seen otherwise in the City of Shelton occur.

John Boyko MOVED to approve the transfer. Wayne Bragg seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

### **c) Vote on Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Budget**

John J. Francino-Quinn: I have to say that I think this budget certainly is reflective of how well run our City is. There really isn't any more than about a \$23,000 difference between the last budget and this one. Yet, we still keep on moving on with a City that is certainly praised by not just here in the State of Connecticut, but throughout the Northeast and/or the Country for that matter as it was written in many magazines. I think that a fantastic job is being done here.

John Boyko MOVED to accept the budget for fiscal year 2023 and pass it on to the Board of Aldermen. John Belden seconded the motion.

#### Discussion:

Paul Hiller: I have one comment to make – we have received, and I have spoken to the Mayor – actually in the Mayor's budget, Administrative Office, there is a line 001-0100-411-60-39, Public Communications. That is the line that basically funds the Code Red Call System for public safety purposes. We have just received, this week in fact, the bill for the renewal of that service and it is for \$16,200. We frankly don't have much wiggle room as far as that is concerned. It is not a significant addition, but it is additional \$1200. I have spoken to the Mayor about it and obviously it is something that is essential I think to the public safety area. The Board of Aldermen will save the information. I could get you a copy of the invoice from the vendor, but it only adds \$1200, which is not a lot to an essentially \$130 million budget.

Alderman McPherson: I just want to say that that can come with the recommendation and the Board of Aldermen we will get the information and that is something we can address and I am quite sure we will address because it is a very vital service and it is widely used. That is something that the Board of Aldermen will take care of once we get the budget and we go through our line items.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Any other questions or comments?

Joseph Knapik: Yes, I have a comment. This time around, I would vote for the proposed budget because it would be functional, and that is a keyword. Hopefully the Aldermen will make the modifications suggested at the last two meetings, particularly see to it that the Board of Education's responsibility for Special Education is satisfied. At this point there has been no petitioning for changes by Department Heads.

Wayne Bragg: I'd like to make a comment please. I am just following up on a conversation we had with the Board of Aldermen last week. The issue has to do with underruns and the Department Heads coming to the meetings and so on. That is very, very concerning to me. In reading the charter, under section 7.3, it says "The Board of Apportionment and Taxation shall review the proposed budget, holding at least one (1) departmental hearing in joint session with the Board of Aldermen, at which the departments may appear.." I understand that. But then it goes on to say, "...and such other departmental hearings as the board of Apportionment and Taxation shall deem appropriate."

**Section 7.3. Duties of Board of Apportionment and Taxation on the Proposed Budget.**

The Board of Apportionment and Taxation shall review the proposed budget, holding at least one (1) departmental hearing in joint session with the Board of Aldermen, at which the departments may appear and such other departmental hearings as the Board of Apportionment and Taxation shall deem appropriate.

In my opinion, I asked several questions about why there were underruns. I went back and I spent hours going through every line item of this budget. I did this for a living for 30 years. This was my life at Sikorsky Aircraft. I met with every department, every week for an entire year doing nothing but this kind of work. When the Department Heads do not come to the meetings and do not provide us with an explanation as to why they are underrun, I am flying blind. I have no idea what is in that budget, it's just not fair. I am not in a position to be able to agree to the budget or not to agree to the budget. In the email that just came out today from the Chief of Police, he talks about being under budget by eight positions and says it has been that way forever. That is why you have underruns. We need to understand why they are in that position. Why those positions aren't being filled. This is our job, this is part of the reason that we are here. I don't look at this through a political lens. I look at this through a business lens. I have done this for years, I understand how to manage budgets and we have to take a different view of this. Just because the budget is flat from year to year doesn't mean it is accurate.

John J. Francino-Quinn: I want to thank you very much for certainly all the work you have done with Sikorsky Aircraft, but certainly I am have to say that to me there is not that much of a comparison at all to what you have done at Sikorsky and here. Sikorsky you have different other people to answer to, such as the Marine Corps, the Army, etc. Again I want to thank you very much for that time that you have done that.

Wayne Bragg: I respectfully disagree with you.

John J. Francino-Quinn: I know that the Board of Aldermen will certainly take care of and deal with any underruns with respect to the Police Chief. He certainly sent everybody his comments with respect to the budget and folks have been invited if they had any concerns about their budget. Obviously they did not have any problems or concerns whatsoever so they did not attend any meetings nor did they send in

anything in writing. Again, that just speaks to how our City is run and is being run in a very efficient way. Thank you very much, Wayne, and I appreciate that.

Joseph Knapik: Wayne Bragg needs to finish his comments, please let him do so.

John J. Francino-Quinn: He has done so.

Wayne Bragg: I'm finished, that's fine.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Just as a reminder, I assume we have not voted to approve the budget. Do I hear a motion to approve the budget for 2023?

John Boyko: We already have a motion and a second, we need to just take a vote.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Thank you, my apologies again, I lost my track there.

A voice vote was taken:

All those in favor:

John Boyko	Aye
John Belden	Aye
Joseph Knapik	Aye
John J. Francino-Quinn	Aye

Any opposed?

Jarrett Frazier opposed

Wayne Bragg opposed

John J. Francino-Quinn: The Aye's have it and the Motion carries. We will pass the budget on to the Board of Aldermen.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

John Boyko MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by John Belden.

A voice vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

*Donna R Fonda*

Donna R Fonda  
Acting Clerk