



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SHELTON, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL VIRTUAL
BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2020

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Mark Lauretti called the Special Virtual Meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 11:45 a.m. in the Auditorium of 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 David Gidwani - Present via phone
Alderman Stanley Kudej - Present
Alderman Noreen McGorty - Present via phone
Alderman Anthony Simonetti - Present
Alderman Bernie Simons - Present via phone

Administration

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti - Present
Thomas Cotter, Assistant Corporation Counsel – Present
Paul Hiller, Finance Director - Present
Jack Bashar, Administrative Assistant - Present

Stephanie A. Raymond
2020 JUN -8 A 9:41
CITY OF SHELTON
TOWN CLERK

1. FUNDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF A PICKUP TRUCK FOR THE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

Alderman Anglace MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$42,852 for the purchase of a pickup truck for the Maintenance Department with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Lauretti: This was a bid item. This is the first time we have bought a new vehicle for the Building Maintenance Department in my memory. We have beefed up our staff a little bit with some pretty good tradesmen.

Alderman McGorty entered the meeting via phone at 11:48 a.m. stating that her call had dropped at the start of the meeting.

Alderman Anglace: I have a question on the pickup truck.

Alderman Balamaci: So, do I.

Alderman Anglace. The amount shown on the bid shows \$54,189.55 but the amount you are asking us to appropriate is \$42,852.00. What happened, did Santa Claus arrive?

Mayor Lauretti: That is correct. I was going to get to that. Is that your question too Alderman Balamaci?

Alderman Balamaci: Yes, it was.

Mayor Lauretti: Okay, so the truck was bid with a new plow and we don't need to have a new plow. We have a plow already that can fit on that truck. I think that we probably have a spare plow or two that exists for the Parks Department and Public Works. Plows we buy as we need them, if we can't repair them or they are just worn out. I just didn't feel that it needed to be part of this bid price.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 8-0.

2. FUNDING FOR ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS ON CITY-OWNED PROPERTY - 27 AND 35 OLD TOWN ROAD

Alderman Anglace MOVED to appropriate an amount of \$20,000 for additional improvements to city-owned property at 27 and 35 Old Town Road with funding to come from aldermanic bonding pursuant to Section 7.16 of the City Charter.

SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Lauretti: For the record, I did attach several pictures that show the work being performed. Some of you may recall, this is the purchase of the Dikovsky Property which is, and Jack correct me if I am wrong, I want to say, is a 14-acre parcel in total.

Jack Bashar: I think that is correct.

Mayor Lauretti: We bought it in two stages and with that purchase of land also came a house that was in badly need of updating and renovating. I don't even want to begin to tell you what was inside of it, but it looks very different today. There is a couple of other structures on the property that are in disrepair. They were old chicken barns that existed because once upon a time it was a farm, and we will deal with those at a later date but I thought it was important to get this house rehabilitated and probably either subdivide and/or sell that house or, lease it, like we are doing with other properties that we own. This is not uncommon, 279 Soundview Avenue is another example of a 14-acre piece that we bought that adjoins a couple hundred acres of open space but it did have a house on it, and we had to do a rehab to that too. You will recall recently we just rehabbed the Perry Hill property that I think came out fabulous, largely due to architect Mayor Mark Lauretti, but more importantly the significant tradespeople that we now employ. They are a very talented group and we are doing a lot of this in-house, as we are with the Dikovsky property. I want to take before and afters, so that people will see exactly what we have done and why we spent this money. You should also know that one of the apartments on Perry Hill is rented now and I am in the process of renting the other one. So, it will be a pretty significant income-producing property. And Paul, I trust that those numbers are in the budget. Does anybody have any more questions on the type of work that we're doing and to the extent we are doing?

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 8-0.

3. ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

Alderman Anglace MOVED to approve the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the Board of Aldermen of the City of Shelton, in accordance with Section 7.6 of the Charter, that the budget documents submitted by the Mayor on April 21st, 2020 be adopted as the official budget and mill rate for the City of Shelton for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Resulting in a total budget of \$128,182,039 for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020. The mill rate shall be established at 22.42 mills with a collection date for fiscal year 2020-2021 to be July 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021 for real estate; July 1, 2020 for personal property taxes less than \$5,000 and July 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021 for personal property taxes equal to or greater than \$5,000 and July 1, 2020 for the motor vehicle tax with the exception of those that carry their own collection date as determined by statute under motor vehicle supplement. Any tax under \$5 will be waived. Also, be it resolved that the Board of Aldermen accepts in principle the Capital Improvements Program as submitted.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

DISCUSSION

Alderman Anglace: While the pandemic conditions appear to be improving, we are still operating under emergency orders with uncertain fiscal expectations. As such, this is not a 'Business as Usual' budget year. As the fiscal authority, we want to do what is right for everyone in our community and we must proceed with caution making financial decisions based on the best available economic information as it unfolds. At this point, revenues are grossly uncertain and the BOE Back-to-School plan/needs are unknown. The Mayor has recommended to start at last year's levels and build the budget as more is known. Finalizing and funding an uncertain plan would be a disservice to our entire community and adversely impact our major service providers, especially education. Given the City's precarious financial position created largely by prior BOE spending decisions, we can ill afford to make a mistake going forward. Consequently, we will adopt the mayor's recommendations and go forward prepared to work closely with the BOE as requested by many education advocates who contacted us. Thank you.

Mayor Laretti: Anybody else before I weigh in? You know it never ceases to amaze me the commentary that comes with the budget process. I guess even in a time of a pandemic that has created not only financial uncertainty, but financial hardship does not move anybody. It does not allow them to consider other sectors of the community in terms of how money is being spent and where it should come from. There's been a couple of themes this year with this budget. One theme was they want transparency in the budget process. So, I thought about that theme for a while, and I am trying to understand what it is that they don't understand about transparency? When you have essentially the same document going forward for two years in a row and yet you have people who are in the budget process making claims for transparency, I have to question their ability to be able to decipher that information. Transparency? You know this Board had allowed public comment for over a month to be submitted to City Hall to the Board of Aldermen and to myself via email, where people have had a long opportunity to collectively put their thoughts and express them to us. Look it, I got to tell you that after 29 years, it is no secret or surprise to me that there are always education advocates out there that think that they should have more money and that they don't get enough and that we have a lousy school system but that only exists at budget time and then after that we have a great system. Then I look back over these 29 years about how people who are making comments about educational spending want to tell us how successful they are as Shelton High School graduates and Shelton school system graduates and yet went through the same thing year after year but yet have attained a level of success. It causes me some pause about the response that I should give them. And then the parents will say, 'our kids deserve better'. Really? I think that our kids deserve role models who are respectful on how they communicate with other people and our kids have gotten more today than the generation before them and that it's been said several times by myself and the president of our board, Aldermen Anglace, I know it's even been said by some members of the Board of Education that this budget process will not end with the adoption of this budget, that things are going to change. We know this. We just don't know how much and when. When those things change, as an example, when the state sends more money to localities for educational funding, and when the Cares Act kicks in and sends more federal money to local municipalities around the country, that money will be infused into the Board of Education budget. So, things will change and people have to be patient and if they can't be patient then they are on their own but for someone to say to me, 'our kids deserve better', I say to them, 'everybody has to be considered here, not just our kids.' What about seniors who are on fixed incomes living in their homes, don't they count? Should we not consider them? You know the increases to education are largely driven by salary increases and I must call attention to this, very specifically our teachers are the 10th highest paid teachers in the State of Connecticut. The 10th highest paid teachers. How'd that happen? Have we ignored

them? Our buildings and our facilities are as fine as any other municipality in the State of Connecticut. Just go look at them and then we can also share with everyone the kind of money that we spent in the last decade on our facilities. We all agree those are the things we should be doing, and we have, but it never seems to be enough for some people. When you want to make these rude and derogatory comments, I am not moved by that. I am not moved at all by that and I am not threatened by anyone's vote. When I take an action on behalf of this City, it's with the consideration of every sector that lives and works here and we've always done that and if you don't think that our track record is pretty good, I would say to all these young parents that they need to take a closer look at what goes on in the rest of the world, if they think they are being so deprived here. We do what we say we do. We don't make false promises but even in a time of pandemic, everybody has to do their share. Everybody has to contribute. It can't be 'it's for the kids' all the time. I heard this when my kids were in the school system. I've also heard people say, 'well if you don't invest in education people are not going to move here, your city is not going to prosper'. Really? Take a closer look at the facts and tell me how we haven't prospered and tell me we haven't made investments in our educational system that have yielded dividends, but everyone has to do their part. Everyone. It's a pandemic, there are executive orders that prohibit us from doing certain things and allowing us to do them in different ways. So, to all these naysayers, I say, 'take a deep breath and be fair with the facts'. Is there anyone else who would like to comment? Is there any discussion on the budget? I hope that I haven't misrepresented our board members feelings when I say that this budget will change as time goes on. Modifications will be made. I hope you would agree with me.

Mayor Lauretti: With that, all in favor and any opposed? David Gidwani, are you opposed or are you in favor? David Gidwani, are you still on the line? I will have to assume that there is one abstention, seven in favor and one abstention. If anyone would like me to do a roll call, I am happy to do that.

Alderman Gidwani did not respond or give confirmation of his vote at this time.

A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Anglace MOVED to adjourn the Special Virtual Board of Aldermen meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman Balmaci.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Theresa Adcox

Theresa Adcox
Board of Aldermen Clerk

_____ BY: _____
Date Approved Mayor Mark A. Laretti