



REVISED
SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
CITY OF SHELTON, CT
THURSDAY, MAY 27, 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 6:00 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
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President- Present
Alderman Cris Balamaci- Present
Alderman Joanna Carloni –Present
Alderman David Gidwani- Present via Zoom
Alderman Noreen McGorty- Present via Zoom
Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present
Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

Administration

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti - Present
Fran Teodosio, Corporation Counsel – Present

AGENDA ITEMS

1. ADOPTION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022

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 1st, 2021 be amended and such budget as amended be adopted as the official budget and mill rate for the City of Shelton for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Expenditures		Mayor's Recommendation	Board of Aldermen Final Budget	Increase (Decrease)
Fire Dept 001-2400-512-11-09	Pension/Incentive	90,000	74,000	(16,000)
Board of Education 001-4100-811-80-34	BOE	72,900,000	73,509,538	609,538
Outside Agencies 001-6500-414-79-09	Shelton Day	19,000	15,000	(4,000)
001-6500-414-81-38	Shelton Farmer's Market	0	750	750
Transfer to Other Funds 001-6900-991-60-17	Capital Project Funds	2,000,000	2,196,250	196,250
		75,009,000	75,795,538	786,538
REVENUES				
001-0000-311-10-00	Current Levy	107,371,238	107,532,238	161,000
001-0000-321-11-00	Education Cost Sharing	6,641,832	6,851,370	209,538
001-0000-381-44-00	Sale of City Assets	0	400,000	400,000
001-0000-381-49-00	27 Old Town Road	0	16,000	16,000
		114,013,070	114,799,608	786,538

Resulting in a total budget of \$129,012,305 for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021. The mill rate shall be established at 22.03 mills, with a collection date for fiscal year 2021-2022 to be July 1, 2021 and January 1, 2022 for real estate; July 1, 2021 for personal property taxes less than \$5,000 and July 1, 2021 and January 1, 2022 for personal property taxes equal to or greater than \$5,000 and July 1, 2021 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 shall be waived. Also, be it resolved that the Board of Aldermen accepts in principle the Capital Improvements Program as submitted.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

Alderman Anglace: The Board of Aldermen wishes to thank all City department heads, the Mayor, the Board of Apportionment & Taxation, the Finance Director, and his staff, the Public and many others for their input into and participation with the 2021-2022 budget.

This spending and taxation plan will manage our City well and give Shelton citizens one of the most affordable tax rates in Connecticut.

This budget helps our families deal with their household budgets. It provides stability for our business community, helping them to compete, grow and create much needed jobs.

This budget was not without its challenges. Again, this year, we are setting our budget without knowing what laws/taxes the State of Connecticut will enact to further burden Shelton's taxpayers. The state will not enact their budget until some time in June and they have numerous laws under consideration that will impact the finances of Shelton's taxpayers. Knowing this, we have tried our best to sustain adequate funding for each of our departments while providing our taxpayers with a mil rate that provides a measure of economic stability. We are acutely aware that all these federal stimulus monies (or whatever you wish to call them) must be paid for and that burden will be passed on via federal taxation to Shelton's taxpayers.

Under consideration this year by the State are new increased sales taxes, higher income tax rates, an increase in the gas tax and enactment of State dictated zoning changes which could impact Shelton's annual Grand List growth which helps fund many of our local services and keeps the mill rate stable.

Without the full State tax picture, we are required to exercise frugal budgeting practices. We have no crystal ball and cannot adopt a spending plan only to find later that the State is shifting another expense onto the backs of our taxpayers.

This BOA is committed to working closely with the Board of Education and during this budget season we have witnessed encouraging developments.

At our budget workshop on May 18th, we learned of positive BOE actions to audit their technology needs, allocate federal stimulus monies to the purchase of a 5-year technology build out needs which included an overview of City funding requirements over that period. We also learned that there are significant other stimulus monies available that are dependent upon submission and approval of a district plan. This creates some uncertainty as it affects BOE fiscal year 2021-2022 budgeting.

Consequently, we have proposed in this budget the addition of \$609,538 to the BOE budget over the Mayor's allocated budget. To this we added:

- the net savings from the Teacher's Retirement Incentive offer, which amount, at this point, is uncertain.
- And the joint City/BOE negotiated reduced payment of \$75,000 to the Bridgeport BOE

Also, there are possible savings from the use of the \$4 million stimulus package which could also generate additional savings in the BOE proposed 2021-22 budget.

Once all these unknown factors come into focus, the BOA is prepared to revisit, if necessary, the BOE contractual needs for appropriate adjustment.

We are hopeful and optimistic that the BOE will want to continue use of the City run bus service which is currently capped at \$3.15 million per year. In fact, some of us have wondered why the BOE has not asked the City to extend that contract.

We will also be addressing with the BOE the question of reduced enrollment and the need to look at a redistricting plan to ensure optimum efficiency.

The BOA wishes to acknowledge and thank the current BOE, the Superintendent and especially Financial Director Rick Belden for their efforts to obtain City reimbursement for past School Capital project investments.

Once again, the Board of Aldermen is proud, privileged and pleased to adopt a budget that reduces everyone's taxes, invests in our future, and fully funds all department's current needs. We could not have done this without every department's full cooperation and participation from the Mayor on down. Thank you.

Mayor Lauretti: Any further comments?

Alderman Gidwani: Yes, I have a comment to the Alderman Anglace. As we all know last year with Covid, we were not running the buses because the kids were not going to school. How about we take some of that funds and put it towards pay to play, for parents who have been affected with Covid and pay for "pay to play" from the City Budget.

Mayor Lauretti: Is there anything else?

Alderman Gidwani: No, that's a question for the President.

Mayor Lauretti: He's not required to answer questions, if you want to make a comment then keep going.

Alderman Gidwani: I would rather see the money that the City of Shelton saves, to put it against pay to play, for kids who want to play the sport but parents don't have the money to put up for the kids and the City of Shelton can help out.

Alderman Anglace: It's obvious, Mr. Gidwani, Alderman Gidwani, that after all the time that you have spent on the Board of Alderman so far, you still don't understand parliamentary procedure. If you wish to make a motion, go ahead. If you don't, your comment is taken, it's on the record, and thank you.

Alderman Gidwani: I would like to be on the record because if I make a motion, no one is going to second it, because everyone is linked up with the Mayor and basically does what the Mayor wants him to do so.

Alderman Balamaci: So I'd like to comment, may I?

Mayor Lauretti: Sure.

Alderman Balamaci: David, I appreciate your feedback on this and I did some research on this and as much as we would love to assist with funding with something for sports. The State of Connecticut requires that all schools have policies with waivers for people that cannot afford pay for play, in fact public record shows that the Town of Trumbull has it online. I suggest you read that policy because it is very informative. Also, 44 municipalities, as of 2013, do pay for play in

the State of Connecticut, and I know that's not an accurate number, it's actually higher but it's not been updated on the web for reasons such as this, that people don't want to bring it to attention. The key reason that pay for play has been implemented is that the Board of Eds throughout the State and country that emphasize education, academics and people, there's other constituents in the cities and we have balance and make sensible choices. That's the first thing on the chopping block unfortunately. But it's there, 39 states have pay for play, we're not someone who likes it, but we have to cut corners somewhere and unfortunately that does happen. The waiver that I mentioned, low-income families can complete that. It's the Board of Education's responsibility to address that, it's not the City's responsibility. Research reflects that in most states. So, Connecticut being one them, I just want that on the record as well. Thanks.

Alderman Gidwani: Thank you Chris. And I want to put something on the record. When I reached out to you last year about pay to play or about the kids, your answer was I don't have kids in Shelton Public Schools, I don't care.

Alderman Balamaci: I didn't say that David and you always misquote everyone and you're not a very credible individual and this is not a forum for that. I never said that. I said I didn't want to talk to you because you called me while I was on my way to the meeting and that's it. It's done, but thank you.

Alderman Gidwani: You're welcome.

Mayor Lauretti: Anyone else? Any other comment. Other than this is election year. I must say this isn't anything we haven't heard in the past by other candidates, other people running for office. The only thing they can do is demonize you. And tell everybody what a bad person you are. But they have no facts. They have no experience and no track record. And if they do have a track record it's generally not very good. So. And it was also said recently in the media that Shelton had low taxes before Mark Lauretti. I want to remind people that when Mark Lauretti took office, the mill rate was 38 and I'm going to post my mil rates for the last 30 years. And some people outside our borders and some people inside our borders appreciate the consistency and stability of a tax rate that is affordable that allows senior citizens on fixed incomes to stay in their homes, and allows young families, who are trying to make mortgage payments and college tuition payments the ability to do that and allows business to come from all over Fairfield County, Connecticut, New York and Massachusetts into Shelton because we are consistently the most stable and affordable community around. Period. Do you have a question Mr. Simonetti?

Aldermen Simonetti: I agree with everything you just said and thank you very much for being our Mayor for the last 30 years. I hope you will continue. The Board of Education from the documents I looked at never requested money for the pay to play neither, so we are not in a position to grant money.

Mayor Lauretti: I guess that's an invitation for them and you can say no to them.

Aldermen Simonetti: I didn't say I would say no.

Mayor Lauretti: I'll weigh in on it. I'm not a fan of pay to play. I don't think we should have pay to play. I think historically Board of Education has been bad at managing money. And there's all kinds of evidence all over the place. So if they want to make that choice, the ball is in their court. I'm not going down that road.

Alderman Gidwani: So Mr. Mayor, you don't want to pay for the kids to play?

Mayor Lauretti: No, I know you want to speak for me and you want to demonize me but I'm not going down that road with you.

Alderman Gidwani: You're the one that goes down the road. You don't want to pay for the kids to play in Shelton?

Mayor Lauretti: David Gidwani, I have a 30 year history I have a 30 year history of supporting all kinds of kids and adults in this community with great success. You do not. All you can do is talk and spew rhetoric.

Alderman Gidwani: You know what, I don't get paid for what I do, you get paid for what you do.

Alderman Anglace: Move the questions.

A voice vote was taken, the motion to adopt the budget for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 passed, 7-1 (Alderman Gidwani, opposed).

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed 7-1 (Alderman Gidwani, opposed).

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Terry Burden

Terry Burden
Acting Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED _____ BY: _____
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti