



BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING ON THE
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021 AT 6:30 P.M.

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Alderman Anglace called the Board of Aldermen Special Virtual Public Hearing on the Budget to order in the Auditorium at Shelton City Hall at 6:30 p.m. 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 via phone
Alderman David Gidwani- Present via phone at 6:36 p.m.
Alderman Noreen McGorty- Present via phone
Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present
Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

Administration

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti (present via phone at 6:40 p.m.)

CITY OF SHELTON

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

PURSUANT TO SECTION 7.6 OF THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF SHELTON, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 **ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2021 AT 6:30 PM IN THE AUDITORIUM** AT SHELTON CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON, CT 06484.

ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST THEREIN MAY APPEAR AND BE HEARD IN RELATION THERETO. COPIES OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & WWW.CITYOFSHELTON.ORG.

WRITTEN COMMENTS MAY ALSO BE SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE PUBLIC HEARING. PLEASE EMAIL COMMENTS TO BOACLERK@CITYOFSHELTON.ORG TO BE SUBMITTED INTO THE WRITTEN RECORD.

ANTICIPATED REVENUES

Government Grants	9,646,535
Local Taxes	108,767,238
Other Local Revenue	8,211,994
General Fund Surplus	1,600,000

TOTAL ANTICIPATED REVENUES **128,225,767**

PROPOSED EXPENDITURES

Administrative Office	633,142
Employees Resources	7,242,290
Legislative	162,140
Board of Ethics	600
Elections	163,979
Inland/Wetlands	96,208
Economic Development Commission	37,501
Economic Development - SEDC	120,000
Planning & Zoning	437,975
Recreation	1,717,329
Probate Court	14,700
Elected/Appointed Officials	18,450
Conservation Commission	66,556
City/Town Clerk	453,541
Public Employees Appeals Board	200
Senior Center	369,061
Drug & Alcohol Commission	0
Zoning Appeals Board	24,545
Corporation Counsel	200,971
Public Safety	126,076
EMS Commission	102,081
Fire Marshal	322,210
Animal Control	290,486
Fire Department	1,057,412
Police Department	7,786,434
Youth Service	223,011
Public Health	295,024
Building Department	374,900
Highways & Bridges	3,686,959
Road Repairs	65,000

Public Works Director	51,811
Engineering	331,251
Tree Warden	120,058
Recycling Program	42,291
Sanitation	3,081,361
Bus Transportation	3,382,000
Library	1,196,212
Debt Service	7,480,845
Utilities	2,716,943
Building Maintenance	1,653,983
Management Information Services	500,782
Assessor	993,612
Tax Collector	337,967
Purchasing	371,986
Public Risk Management	2,345,006
Accounting	637,500
Community Development	82,025
Miscellaneous	1,400,806
Capital Spending	0
Outside Agency Contributions	390,547
Transfer to Other Funds Capital Projects	2,000,000
Contingency	120,000
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES - CITY DEPARTMENTS</u>	<u>55,325,767</u>

TOTAL EXPENDITURES - BOARD OF EDUCATION **72,900,000**

TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENDITURES **128,225,767**

1. BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022
 Kate Kutash, 275 Beardsley Road

As many of you already know, I am a member of the Board of Education, have been for over ten years and hope to continue to serve. Here I am again tonight at budget time, roughly 20 years after the first time I addressed these boards as a parent. My hair is grayer, my kids are out of the school system BUT I still care about Shelton Public Schools.

In the mayor’s budget address, he stated that his proposed budget met all “contractual obligations”, however, as you’ve been told, that was only on the city side. The Board of Education needs an additional \$1.2 million over his recommendation to meet OUR contractual obligations. Without that funding we will be forced to cut jobs. Again. Over the last three years Shelton Public Schools has cut 55 certified positions. That means teachers. We have also cut paraprofessionals, secretaries, and custodial staff as well. We used to run our

schools with 22 administrators, now we have only 19. We would LOVE to be fully funded to meet other financial obligations and not be playing catch up and make do again all of next year. We would like to be able to look at a large class size and add the needed teachers to meet our student's needs. But please, at least, find a way to come to an agreement to grant us the \$1.2 million needed to meet OUR contractual obligations. I think the parents of Shelton would look more favorably on granting the needs of the schools, over the nominal tax cut that has been proposed.

Mark Holden, 275 Soundview Avenue

It's encouraging that you're talking about funding the contractual obligations for the Board of Education. It's time to stop the war on education. I'm here to quickly address the lack of transparency regarding the transportation line. Lack of transparency appears to have been a core value for SSTS since day one. That's a big part of the reason why people don't trust you. The reason you had to sue to get the transportation contract was nobody working on transportation for the City was willing to share any information to establish they knew what they were doing, and would be capable of providing an acceptable level of service. When they finally did provide something, it was just a copy of what Superintendent Clouet had told them, there was nothing to indicate they had thought about or understood what they were saying. In the budget interviews this year, Ken Nappi and at least one alderman pointed out that the BOE never required Durham, Landmark, or other outside vendors to release their actual expenses for various components of their contracts. The difference is if Durham, or Landmark underbid and lost money, the taxpayers of the City wouldn't be on the hook for the loss. If Shelton Student Transportation Services doesn't have enough income to cover their expenses, the budget will be out of balance, and taxpayers will have to make up the difference. The taxpayers deserve to know this department is being held to the same scrutiny as others. In one of your budget workshops, Alderman Anglace expressed his belief actual costs are proprietary information, and he doesn't want that information to be available to people who might be competing with the City for the transportation contract next year. Is he afraid an outside company with more knowledge and experience than SSTS might bid less than the City? Or is he afraid showing actual expenses will show the Mayor's decision to start SSTS was fueled more by bravado than common sense? Shelton Government must be more transparent.

Matt McGee, 312 Huntington Street

I would like to offer my support for the BOE budget proposal, which is a very modest 2.99% increase from the prior year, when compared to our neighboring towns and their current BOE budget requests. For example, the Trumbull BOE is currently proposing a 4.33% increase after years of underfunded budgets. Meanwhile, the Stratford BOE is requesting a 3.99% increase. Please keep in mind that this budget proposal for Education in town put in front of you tonight does nothing to increase the value of the services our school system currently offers, but instead just protects against further cuts to staff and services our education system already provides. We have lost almost 40 positions in our school system in just the past 2 years alone. As a result, we have seen rising class sizes, aging curriculum, "Pay to Participate" system, which is still frustratingly in place today. To further illustrate my point, I would like to bring your attention to a quote from the former interim Superintendent who served in that capacity all of last year. As someone who was in our schools almost every day not too long ago, I can confirm that she was disturbingly correct when she said, "Every year, we cut, cut, cut, cut, cut, cut. Other districts don't have to cut every year. They get money added every year. We don't. We're already at bare bones. Now we're taking the skin off the bones and breaking the bones." I think that quote speaks for itself about the state of Shelton's Education system, and the lack of support it has received from this board in the past few years. However, this year is a new budget. The City has benefitted from saving money on transportation due to COVID-19 layoffs and overestimated health insurance costs, while enjoying a comfortable year of grand list growth. Because of these factors, the Mayor's proposed budget reduces the mill rate by about \$1.9 million dollars. Are we really saying that, even when raising taxes isn't anywhere near being on the table, we're still not willing to invest in our kids? There is no good justifiable reason to cut teachers and curriculum yet again this year, while also making students and parents continue to pay to participate in certain extracurricular activities. None. I hope the proposed budget on the table is revised to reflect that reality.

Michelle Bialek, 10 Weybosset Street

Tonight, I would like to speak as a parent and also as a former Board of Education employee. I used to work in the Shelton schools as a part time. I was just about ready to get a permanent position at Perry Hill School. The very same week I was supposed to get a permanent position, the budget came down and superintendent was forced to cut positions and I was not able to get a full-time position. I had to go elsewhere and now I work outside the city. I was very good at my job. It's very frustrating to have my kids have to pay to participate. That limits us. It's very

frustrating. Please reconsider the proposed tax cut, it amounts to about \$12 and please have that money go to the Board of Education. (*Portions of these comments were inaudible*).

Joclyn Kirwan, 47 Tuxedo Avenue

I come to speak tonight on the budget as a student. Throughout all my years in the Shelton school system, I have definitely watched the budget decrease. We aren't getting the resources we need. Teachers are getting their positions cut. Students can't get the help they need. I've watched paraprofessionals get fired because the school can't pay them anymore. Kids can't participate in activities. As Michelle said earlier, with a mere tax increase of just \$12, we would be able to have a lot more adequate funding for the schools. The way it is now isn't working and we can't keep going on like this. It's not going to help us in the long run and we are the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to adjourn the Special Virtual Public Hearing on the Budget Meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman McPherson.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Theresa Adcox

Theresa Adcox
Board of Aldermen, Clerk

_____ BY: _____

Date Approved

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti