



**SHELTON BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL BUDGET WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021 AT 6 P.M.**

Aldermanic President John Anglace called the budget workshop to order at 6 p.m. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call:

Alderman John Anglace, President - present
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President – present
Alderman Cris Balamaci – present
Alderman Joanna Carloni - present
Alderman David Gidwani – not present
Alderman Noreen McGorty – not present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti - present
Alderman Bernie Simons – not present

Alderman Anglace began the meeting with a few organizational comments:

PRESIDENT ALDERMAN ANGLACE'S ORGANIZATIONAL COMMENTS

I have scheduled the following BOA meetings on the 2021-22 budget:

May 4, 2021	BOA workshop
May 12, 2021	Public Hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget
May 18, 2021	BOA workshop with BOE
May 20, 2021	BOA workshop
May 27, 2021	BOA ADOPTION OF BUDGET & MILL RATE

Additional meetings can be scheduled if necessary.

With the Mayor only recommending a \$43,728 total spending increase (.00034%) and the current budget trending toward another potential surplus, City departmental budgets may not need to change.

The BOE is the area where we need to concentrate our efforts. They are asking us to cover \$1.1 million in contractual costs and the Mayor, in his budget address, has acknowledged that the BOA must put more money into the BOE budget, so everyone is starting on the same page.

I am pleased to report that I met with Superintendent Saranich and BOE member Carl Rizzo for an update on their Technology Audit and a summary of how they

are utilizing the state ESSR-II Grant (Covid) allocation. I will ask the Superintendent to review it with us in detail at our May 18th workshop with them. They have made some very responsible spending decisions that help avoid City Capital spending with only the software licensing costs in need of future budgeting. This is positive and a win-win for our students and teachers.

SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM FINANCIAL DETAILS

A great deal of time at the A&T/BOA Joint Budget Workshop last week was devoted to an examination and understanding of why the City budget does not contain voluminous detail regarding the City run School Bus program.

Some argued that all other City Departments provide their expenses by line item and since the bus program was a City service, it also should list line-item detail with supporting back up information.

Some pointed out that as a BOE bid service the bottom-line cost had been all that the BOE had received for years. No one ever knew specific costs associated with the program especially the amount of profit included in the bid nor did they know any other details of this service. No one ever questioned that the bus program bid contract contained a provision for BOE payment to purchase the busses over the five-year contract life with ownership of the busses reverting to the private bus company at that time. No one ever questioned the disposition of the five-year-old busses and why they were taken out of service when they had a minimum useful life of ten (10) years.

Student Bus Service is a highly competitive service overwhelmingly provided by the private sector. As such, each company guards its data and its procedures to maintain a competitive bidding edge. Transporting our most valuable commodity, this service receives exceptional oversight from the DMV. Inspections are rampant, driver regulations abound, and unannounced visits are commonplace...all designed to ensure a safe service.

As with its private competitors, the City must guard its proprietary information, lest it be vulnerable when and if the BOE decides to again bid this service. That is one reason why the City budget contains limited data. The City has a three (3) year contract with the BOE to provide Student Transportation services at a fixed cost of \$3.15 million. At the time this court mediated agreement was reached one bus service bid was received at an annual cost of \$4.4 million in the first year with provisions for subsequent annual increases. Consequently, it is obvious that this arrangement is saving Shelton Taxpayers considerable dollars. And, given the possibility of a future need for the City to enter competitive bidding for this service, it is important that the complete cost details of this service not be divulged to our competitors thereby creating a competitive disadvantage for the City.

As Mr. Nappi pointed out last week, the City Student Transportation Service has established a cooperative and collaborative working relationship with the BOE and is working to establish technology changes that will improve the student bus service. As he also pointed out, the service issues reported are not unique to Shelton and a great deal of this inconvenience has been Covid-19 caused and experienced by private and commercial bus service companies as well.

While this may be an appropriate budget question; City provided school bus service has a limited contract life with much uncertainty as to whether it will be continued. Consequently, the utmost budgetary flexibility has been provided by the Board of Aldermen to allow the administration to organize and operate this program within the contractual financial parameters.

Such budgetary recommendations to provide line-item details can be considered when and if the bus program becomes a permanent addition to departmental services provided to the BOE by the City.

AGENDA ITEM

Discussion of Fiscal Year Budget 2021-2022

The Aldermen reviewed and discussed the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget. Entire discussion can be viewed on the city website: www.cityofshelton.org.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Anglace closed the workshop at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Adcox

Theresa Adcox
Clerk, Board of Aldermen