



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
CITY OF SHELTON, CT  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021  
Shelton City Hall, 54 Hill Street  
*Live-Streamed at [www.cityofshelton.org](http://www.cityofshelton.org)*

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**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Lauretti called the Special Meeting of the Board of Aldermen to order at 4:07 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 via phone  
Alderman David Gidwani- Present via phone  
Alderman Noreen McGorty- Not Present  
Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present  
Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

**Administration**

Fran Teodosio, Corporation Counsel - Present  
Jack Bashar, Administrative Assistant – Present via phone  
Ken Nappi, Shelton Transportation Director - Present

Mayor Lauretti: There is one item on the agenda listed as Executive Session. I don't see the need to go into Executive Session. The item on the agenda is the School Bus Worker's contract. The contract has been agreed on by the union, they took a vote last week and they ratified the agreement that has been worked on the last several months. I am going to ask Corporation Counsel Fran Teodosio to come to the podium and give an overview of what the contract looks like and then we will open it up for discussion and questions.

Fran Teodosio: Thank you Mayor. With your hand out you all got the most salient points of this contract but before I start, I just want to explain that this is the first time that we have a contract in place with the bus employees. Bus employees are both the drivers and the monitors and that's because we took over the responsibility for the bus operation. The bus operation was taken over from Durham and some of the employees, not all of them, that are covered by this contract had originally worked with Durham. There was no transition of a contract between Durham and us, so the union that we negotiated with needed to be recognized in January of 2020. Then we negotiated the contract that you have in front of you.

Mayor Lauretti: Fran, can you explain briefly what is involved with our employees petitioning the state for bargaining union status?

Fran Teodosio: The group can't just walk in to us and tell us they want to negotiate with us. They have to be certified by the State of Connecticut, there has to be a vote and then we get to review the vote and the union is recognized. That happened in January of 2020.

Mayor Lauretti: And the city did not object.

Fran Teodosio: Correct. The city just wanted to make sure that they were negotiating with a recognized representative of the group. There is a little bit of competition out there among unions. That's something we don't get into; we essentially accept the vote of the union as certified by the State of Connecticut. Then we start discussion with the union. January 2020, as you know, was the start of COVID-19. The contract reflects the dynamics and history of that negotiation period as you will see that the raises that we provide are retroactive to April of 2021, even though the contract duration starts in January 2020. The benefits we are providing are somewhat consistent with other benefits that are provided through your collective bargaining agreements within the city. You have to understand that the union is primarily, if not all, part time workers. The benefits reflect that but the benefits are eight paid holidays and showing you a life insurance benefit for each employee. The reason it says 20/10 is that many of the bus drivers are retirees and some of them are getting to the age of 65. There is a protocol within the insurance industry to decrease life insurance by half at the time an individual reaches 65 years of age. So that's why the insurance is essentially provided in a step down and the union agreed to this. It's reflected in the premium also. We have also provided an alternative savings plan for them, an alternative social security plan, again it's a benefit that retirees prefer and it was accepted by the union. I believe you are familiar with that because it's offered to other unions within the city. We get to the wages and I alluded earlier to the circumstance of the contract starting in January 2020 but wages being retroactive at 5 percent from the signing to April of 2021. Then there is a 2 percent increase in September 2021 and a 2 percent increase in September of 2022.

Mayor Lauretti: Fran, I want to clarify just one point. When you say retroactivity, it is only for employees who were employed at that time?

Fran Teodosio: That is correct. The group that we have right now. In your contracts that were distributed, if you go to Article 23 you can see the specific rates that the various drivers and monitors are being paid or will be paid. You do not have attached to the contract a seniority

list. You do not have attached to the contract the drug and alcohol policy or the alternative savings plan but those are all your standard documents that you have seen before that the city provides to its various unions. There is one more provision of this contract and that's on the last page of the contract, it's actually titled an "Addendum" and it's purposely kept out of the contract. We offered a signing bonus to the group in order to get the group to accept and that's \$400 per union employee (monitors and drivers). It's not in the contract because it's a one time offer from the city to get the process initiated and the union accepted. Once ratified all the employees will get that. There were things on this contract that included other individuals, the Mayor, Ken Nappi and Jack Bashar, who were all very involved throughout the process. I recommend that it be accepted.

Mayor Lauretti: Before we take questions, I would just like the record to reflect that the administrative assistant, Jack Bashar, is also on the line. Any questions?

Alderman Anglace: On page 14, Article 17, at the bottom of the page there is a reference here to the "company", is the company and the city the same?

Fran Teodosio: The company and the city are one in the same. We did as many searches for the word "company" in the document to replace it with the word "city" but you got us, John.

Alderman Anglace: On Section 6 and throughout, there is reference to the nonrevenue rate and that poked my interest throughout reading the contract because it wasn't until the very end that it was explained what the nonrevenue rate was. Can you explain how that nonrevenue rate is paid, to whom, how and under what circumstances?

Ken Nappi: That's the rate that's paid for our safety meetings. They are obligated to go to our monthly safety meetings and that rate of pay is paid to them during that time. It's also utilized some time in the winter, because the buses need to be prepared to drive so they do snow removal and come in at that rate to provide that function.

Mayor Lauretti: So, it's a separate rate that encompasses anything that we ask them to do outside of driving the bus.

Alderman Anglace: Okay. Article 20 references Connecticut General Statutes 31-57 Sick Leave, I am not familiar with that and I don't need it explained because I imagine if you referenced the statute in the contract that it's pertinent to the issue, so maybe you can make sure I get a copy of Statute 31-57?

Fran Teodosio: Okay.

Mayor Lauretti: I think it's fair to say that it's a benefit that applies to part time employees across the board no matter who they work for. They have to work "x" amount of time and then they are eligible for "x" amount of days of sick pay.

Alderman Anglace: Article 20, Section 6 reads: "Any additional leave may also be granted if serious conditions warrant, so long as the Company and the Union agree." Agree on what? On the serious condition and/or how that bus route is to be covered?

Fran Teodosio: No. We do have circumstances that arise with employees who have some sort of extraordinary event in their life whether it be an illness or some serious personal issue and it means that the city and the union could agree to extend that absent period longer but there is no guarantee that we would come to an agreement.

Alderman Anglace: So, the city and union agree that serious conditions existed and we are giving some sort of relief to the individual?

Fran Teodosio: It doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be paid, it just means there could be an agreement.

Mayor Lauretti: A lot of that is really up to our discretion and over the years, long before this contract, there has been many situations where I have granted liberty to employees and department heads that had extenuating circumstances associated with health and family. I will give you two quick examples: we had a police officer who was newly hired about fifteen years ago, and he was called to serve in Iraq, and I allowed that individual to be paid his base pay rate for the time that he was in Iraq because I felt that anyone serving our country deserved that consideration. Most recently we had our payroll coordinator who was out on maternity leave and needed some extra time to secure accommodations for her newborn and we allowed that to happen. There are many examples I can site over the years but I just want to give an overview for the benefit of the public on how employees are treated here and there is a consistency associated with that.

Cris Balamaci: I just have a question with regard to Article 22 and I am sure it's covered in the employee drug and alcohol policy so for preplacement the drug testing is done, is it randomly done or only if they have an accident?

Ken Nappi: As a condition of employment, the drug and alcohol test is administered. Then they go into a random pool that is done by a third vendor.

Cris Balamaci: Is that stipulated in their handbook?

Fran Teodosio: It's in the policy.

Mayor Lauretti: That is consistent with all our city union employees.

Alderman Anglace: Article 21, Section 5 reads, "Employees will be reimbursed for payment of fines levied against them as a result of defective equipment or on a city vehicle being operated by them, provided that the fines do not arise from items that should have been noticed on a pre-trip inspection." I am questioning the word "notice" versus use of the word "reported." They could say, "I noticed it but I didn't report it."

Fran Teodosio: They have a responsibility before they drive the bus to check the bus, if they notice something they have to report it.

Ken Nappi: For instance, they are given a pre-trip form when they have to go out and inspect their bus prior to leaving the yard. It's a check list and that form is sent to us daily with either repairs are needed or they found everything to be okay.

Mayor Lauretti: Again, this is consistent with other unions within the city that drive our vehicles. They are required to file a vehicle repair report, if something goes wrong with the vehicle before the end of the workday, there is a form they need to fill out and submit to the department head.

Alderman Anglace: The concludes my questions. The observations that I will make is that the summary that the Administrative Assistant submitted to us, he cautioned us that the cost figures that he used are estimates. He explained in that summary why they were estimates. I think it's an important observation.

Alderman Simonetti: The drug testing is paid for by the city and not through their medical?

Ken Nappi: It's paid for by the city.

Mayor Lauretti: I just want to make some general comments because this school bus issue in Shelton has become the focus of disgruntled people in my view and the record needs to be cleared on a lot of this stuff. That includes Melissa in the Morning on WICC who can't stop talking about the school buses in Shelton. It should be clear to everyone now that there is a national shortage of bus drivers and that there has been for a period of time. This is not a new topic. Covid has exacerbated the situation greatly. I have said to people that the City of Shelton and its service of School Transportation, I think has been outstanding. If people want to pass judgement on us then they should compare us to everyone else. The governor was on WICC about a week ago and he referenced the fact that the school bus problem is increasing in Connecticut and they are trying to work through the state agencies. Some of you may know that before a bus driver is certified to drive a bus the State of Connecticut has to sign off on it. If state employees aren't coming to work, it's an extended period of time before you can get them to sign off. That in itself extends the time that people are out of work. We started looking at this whole school bus and transportation within our city about a year ago and I know there is a lot of attention given to the fact that we are doing a lot of automated upgrades with new technology that is going to greatly enhance our performance and quite honestly people around the state and the country should look into this. We looked at the routing. Two years ago, we had a footprint of 60 routes. Today we are at 53. The reason we are at 53 is because we have 1500 less students in the Shelton school system then we did back in 2009 and that footprint has not changed until now. For 53 routes, we have 58 certified school bus drivers that are under our employment right now. One is out on medical leave and another is on vacation. With that said, I am not sure there are many other municipalities in the State of Connecticut that are in the kind of shape that we are in. It needs to be talked about and noted so that the negative connotation that elected officials and people in the media are trying to cast on is just wrong. The only place they talk about is Shelton. They don't talk about any other municipality, just

Shelton. Again, it's a red flag for me and I am keenly aware of these things and I am going to continue to respond to anybody and everybody who will listen. I asked our school bus manager today how many runs have we had since the beginning of school and how many runs have we missed? His response to me via text message and I will share this with you, "Since the first day of school we did 2,105 runs. We missed maybe two or three." These statistics are coming right from the Board of Education, they are not made up by our employee or is it out of City Hall. This is what is coming out of the Board of Education. The other thing that people should understand is that some times our runs have been longer than they should have been. Longer than they normally would have been. The fact is that we are still out there and we are still picking up kids. This tells me that our performance compared to most everyone else is pretty damn good. Given the fact that you have superintendents of schools all over the state, and I will name just a few of them because they are the ones in our area, just weeks ago, the superintendent of Newtown public schools, Westport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Oxford, Seymour, Derby, all sent email notices home to their parents telling them that they are greatly reduced in numbers for school bus drivers and in some situations, they can expect that their children will not be picked up. So, parents would have to drive their children to schools. Our superintendent has never had to do that. That tells me that our performance is pretty good compared to everyone else. Before the critics want to demean and publicly criticize for whatever purpose, and I know it's an election year, we need to look at all the facts. I am going to continue to drive this issue because I think we have done an outstanding job taking over this service. Our school bus drivers have been very dedicated and they are the ones who are not complaining. They aren't the ones out there publicly saying disparaging things about elected officials. In fact, they worked two years without a contract. What we did is we mirrored the benefits package and the pay package, for the most part, in comparison to what they were receiving from their other employer which was Landmark Transportation or Durham Transportation. Once the union was recognized and we started to negotiate, the pandemic happened, so that delayed it a bit but by and large our bus drivers have been very dedicated. We had some days, about a year ago when we had as many as 17 drivers out and yes, that did affect routing and our ability to pick up students. Even that number was far better than most other municipalities around the state. There is another provision in this contract that I don't know if you mentioned it Fran but the term of this contract is three years. As you know we have one year left on the agreement with the Board of Education to do the transportation. That means that there are two years that are still in the balance and we negotiated with the union that if the Board of Education re-ups the contract with the city to provide the transportation that these are the guidelines that we will be following for the next two years. That's in the contract that you have before you. At some point in time the Board of Education has to make a decision what they are going to do and it's their choice. I will tell you that, what drove me to this point, four or five years ago to challenge the school bus operation was the reason why I bought these buses. The reason why I felt the city purchasing the buses was important was so that we can control our own destiny, so that we didn't become hostage to the marketplace. We are not the only ones in the State of Connecticut who own our own buses and do our own transportation. There are probably about 15 or 16 other municipalities that do it and some of them are comparable to us in size. It begs the question, why are they doing it and why can't we do it? A lot of this for me was driven by a monetary factor to be able to create a consistency in our expenditures just like we have done with all city expenses. People say, "the mayor needs to give education more money," you can say that about every single department in this city, and you can say it for over 25 years,

because we do spend less than everyone else. There is a reason we spend less. There is a reason we are able to keep taxes stable and consistent so seniors who are on fixed incomes can stay in their homes and don't have to do reverse mortgages and young families who are paying mortgage payments and college tuitions, can do that and stay in their house. The reason why our grand list grew five-fold for the tenure of this administration. When I took office, the grand list was just under \$1 billion, today it's over \$5 billion. It's going to continue to grow. When you grow the grand list, you generate more revenues. People want to know how we are able to do it, we control spending, that's how we are able to do it. We take a stand on things and I would say to those people who feel that education doesn't get enough money, they should question the management and the expenditures of the Board of Education. They are in control of their own destiny. If they want to spend their money on things outside the student-parent relationship, I find that unfortunate. The last comment I am going to make about the budgetary aspect of this, because I know some people on social media have tried to skew the numbers, because I have said before publicly and I will say it again, and I brought the document with me, and I am going to incorporate this as part of the record, this is from the Board of Education Budget Workshop Presentation and this goes back to years 17/18, 18/19 and 19/20. If you look under Transportation – Daily Student because that's what we were tasked to do, in 2018-2019 the expenditure for the BOE, their contract agreement with Landmark or Durham, whoever it was at the time, was \$4,305,783. Then we went to court and got a court stipulated agreement to take over the school transportation system, we agreed to do it for \$3,150,000. Basic math will tell you that's about \$1.2 million dollars less than what they were paying the year before. We agreed to freeze that number for three consecutive years of which this is the third year. I want to say that because of COVID we have had a significant savings in our school transportation department. The year before last we saved close to \$800,000 and this past year it was close to \$1.5 million. If anybody doesn't think that is significant and that is reason enough for us to control our own destiny, and manage our money properly, and still provide a pretty good service, then there is nothing else I can say to them. I think it's important for our board here, all of who come under public scrutiny, and are elected officials, to understand the real facts are behind all of this. I am going to stop there but I want you to know that I am going to continue to talk about this. Anybody have any questions about anything that I have said?

Alderman Anglace: I have no questions about what you said but I want to direct my attention to the contract and the bus drivers themselves and the good judgement that they used in ratifying this contract. I believe that they believe by them ratifying it, that this contract is fair to all, to the drivers, to the union, to the city, to the schools, to the parents, and everybody involved with the school bus transportation. It's a step in the right direction and it's going to bring a lot of unity and a lot of cohesion to the process. We can go forward with an agreement that we can live with and prosper with. Especially the bus drivers for all the good things they have done. Someone needs to recognize them because they are out there working hard. The other thing that's going to help them is the new system that they are putting in. There are so many positive things that have been done to enhance the bus system with the Board of Education hiring a coordinator, which they didn't have and that person has made a big difference. This contract reflects all those good things. I want to thank the drivers and those people from the city who worked so hard to bring this together.

Mayor Lauretti: John to your point, our drivers are being paid, at the higher end of the scale in the State of Connecticut. Not only does that apply to our school bus drivers but also our teachers. Our teachers are the eleventh highest paid teachers in the State of Connecticut. I have no regrets to that.

**AGENDA**

**1.1 SCHOOL BUS WORKERS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**

Alderman Anglace MOVED to approve the initial collective bargaining agreement between the City of Shelton and CSEA, SEIU, Local 2001 covering School Bus Workers effective April 1, 2021. Further authorize Mayor Mark A. Lauretti to execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the same.

A voice vote was taken, the motion PASSED unanimously (7-0).

**ADJOURNMENT**

Alderman Anglace MOVED to adjourn the Board of Aldermen Special Meeting.

SECONDED by Alderman Simonetti.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*Theresa Adcox*

Theresa Adcox  
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

DATE APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Mark A. Lauretti

**BUDGET SUMMARY WORKSHEET – BY OBJECT CODE - PAGE 2**

| OBJECT | DESCRIPTION  | 2017-18 Actual   | 2018-19 Approved | YTD as of 1/31/19 | 2019-20 Proposed |
|--------|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 5614   | Instructional Software                                   | 268,365          | 163,258          | 176,497           | 338,830          |
| 5640   | Instructional Supplies                                   | 141,683          | 241,390          | 97,484            | 331,142          |
| 5641   | Texbooks/Workbooks                                       | 0                | 0                | 0                 | 338,632          |
| 5642   | Library Books  | 27,703           | 28,600           | 13,286            | 39,281           |
| 5649   | Periodicals  | 5,116            | 8,000            | 885               | 10,830           |
| 5690   | Other Supplies/Testing Materials                         | 32,527           | 36,000           | 21,428            | 49,630           |
|        | <b>Total Instructional Supplies</b>                      | <b>475,394</b>   | <b>477,248</b>   | <b>309,580</b>    | <b>1,108,345</b> |
| 5322   | Program Improvement & Staff Development                  | 154,177          | 111,068          | 100,057           | 98,500           |
| 5581   | Conferences & Travel                                     | 23,746           | 23,880           | 12,736            | 24,750           |
|        | <b>Total Program Improvement &amp; Staff Development</b> | <b>177,923</b>   | <b>134,948</b>   | <b>112,793</b>    | <b>123,250</b>   |
| 5561   | Tuition - Public Schools (Regular Education)             | 432,894          | 512,800          | 36,984            | 459,613          |
| 5566   | Tuition - Private Schools (Special Education)            | 2,265,662        | 2,347,838        | 2,208,051         | 2,870,677        |
| 5569   | Adult Education  | 192,714          | 168,000          | 192,714           | 168,000          |
|        | <b>Total Tuition &amp; Adult Education</b>               | <b>2,891,270</b> | <b>3,028,638</b> | <b>2,437,749</b>  | <b>3,498,290</b> |
| 5511   | Transportation - Daily Student                           | 2,576,541        | 4,305,783        | 1,072,036         | 3,150,000        |
| 5512   | Transportation - Special Education                       | 1,423,739        | 653,910          | 727,330           | 1,595,629        |
| 5515   | Transportation - Student Field Trips                     | 24,329           | 11,146           | 7,195             | 11,146           |
| 5516   | Transportation - Athletics                               | 102,559          | 106,860          | 40,372            | 120,000          |
| 5627   | Transportation - Fuel                                    | 120,000          | 289,738          | 120,000           | 289,738          |
|        | <b>Total Student Transportation</b>                      | <b>4,247,168</b> | <b>5,367,437</b> | <b>1,966,933</b>  | <b>5,166,513</b> |
| 5531   | Telephone  | 77,568           | 85,000           | 43,122            | 85,000           |
| 5532   | Postage  | 28,463           | 29,000           | 15,648            | 20,560           |
| 5533   | Internet   | 106,424          | 108,000          | 60,767            | 69,300           |
| 5540   | Advertising  | 0                | 0                | 0                 | 0                |
| 5550   | Printing   | 24,445           | 28,000           | 14,923            | 27,662           |
| 5598   | Other  | 36,554           | 16,592           | 3,125             | 33,200           |
| 5613   | Supplies - Non-Instructional                             | 139,531          | 118,000          | 86,072            | 100,070          |
| 5810   | Dues & Memberships                                       | 67,479           | 60,500           | 57,854            | 69,250           |
|        | <b>Total Administrative Costs</b>                        | <b>480,464</b>   | <b>445,092</b>   | <b>281,511</b>    | <b>405,042</b>   |