

# **SHELTON BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT AND TAXATION BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**

SHELTON BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT AND TAXATION – April 7, 2022  
7:00 PM CITY HALL – Auditorium – 54 HILL STREET. SHELTON. CONNECTICUT

## **Call to Order**

The Budget Workshop Meeting of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation was called to order at 7 p.m. by John J. Francino-Quinn with the Pledge of Allegiance

## **Pledge of Allegiance:**

All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

## **Roll Call:**

### ***A&T Members***

John Boyko	Via phone
John A. Belden	Present
John J. Francino-Quinn	Via phone
Wayne Bragg	Present
Joseph Knapik	Via Phone
Jarrett Frazier	Via Phone

### ***Board of Aldermen Members***

John Anglace	Present
Eric McPherson	Present
Anthony Simonetti	Present
Porter McKinnon	Present
Lorenzo Durante	Present
Cris Balamaci	Via Phone
Michelle Bialek	Via Phone

Paul Hiller	Via Phone
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Present in the auditorium – Joan Stokes, Shelton Library Systems Director  
Marcia Austin, Branch Director  
Bing Carbone, Chairman, Economic Development Commission  
Paul Grimmer, President, Economic Development  
Tom Harbison, Chairperson, Conservation Commission

John J. Francino-Quinn: We have several departments here tonight. Let us start with the Library Board. When speaking, please say your name.

## **4400 Library**

Joan Stokes, Library Director.  
Marcia Austin, Branch Director

John J. Francino-Quinn: Library Board, so you have anything to present this evening, or any questions for the Board? Are you happy with the budget as presented by Mayor Lauretti?

Joan Stokes: We are happy with the budget as presented.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Wayne Bragg: I have a question. Quick comment here, an observation. In the year ending 2021 you spent \$880,000 roughly, \$640,000 of it was regular and part time employees. The budget requested this year is \$1.2 million, employees and part timers, up to almost a million dollars. Can you give me a calibration of what is different between those.

Joan Stokes: Yes. The difference is when we presented this budget, we put in the figures that we were making as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. The budgets prior to this did not put in accurate figures for us.

Wayne Bragg: I don't understand, can you explain.

Joan Stokes: Certainly. When we were sent the budget, the figure that was sent to us was not reflecting our yearly increase from the prior year. So when we started this budget, we started with an accurate number which showed what we were currently making with the cost of living increase.

Wayne Bragg: So the under-runs they had in 2021 is not representative of where you really are. Is that what you are saying.

Joan Stokes: Right. That was not an accurate figure.

Wayne Bragg: So you are going to end this year closer to \$1.2 million.

Joan Stokes: No. We are still filling positions for people that we lost during Covid. This does reflect what we did do during Covid. We had started with 44 employees; we are now down to 22 because we did take some of the positions and combined them, eliminating positions.

Wayne Bragg: So what is the difference in your head count as of right now.

Joan Stokes: Right now we have 21 employees total, some part time, some full time.

Wayne Bragg: How many open positions?

Joan Stokes: We have two open positions and they have already had interviews set up for next Wednesday and the following Tuesday. Those are two full time positions.

Wayne Bragg: You will have those before the end of the year?

Joan Stokes: Right.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Anglace: There actually is no change to the budget submitted to the Mayor. You are receiving \$38,000 more next year than you did last year.

Joan Stokes: We did increase a few things. One thing we did notice that we needed more of due to Covid were data bases. We have several streaming services where people can download E-Books, Audio Books, Movies, TV Shows. So we did increase that. We tried to keep it as close to the best as we could. This budget does not have a lot of fat.

Alderman Anglace: I realize that you may have made changes in different accounts within your budget, but my comment was that the total budget that you submitted to the Mayor, you made no changes. As a result of that you are receiving \$38,000 in total more than you received last year.

Joan Stokes: Right. That is the increase in salaries since everybody gets a yearly increase. Quite honestly, this is a transition year as the world opens up again. Next year when we are back up to having programs going on, it may go up again.

Alderman Anglace: If the State Legislature decides in its infinite wisdom to once again give the Governor super powers to run the State, we are going to go back into lockdown and you are going to save a lot of money.

Joan Stokes: I hope not! Please no.

#### **4800 Municipal Property Maintenance**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

#### **100 Administrative Office**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

#### **200 Employee Resources**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

#### **300 Legislative**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**400 Board of Ethics**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**500 Elections**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**600 Inland/Wetlands**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**700 Economic Development Commission**

Bing Carbone, Chairperson, Economic Development Commission

Paul Grimmer, President, Economic Development

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are you happy with the Mayor's budget as presented?

Bing Carbone: As presented, yes.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Joseph Knapik: Yes, I have a question. The department request was for \$88,900 and the year-to-date expenditures were \$11,632 this is as we approach the end of the fiscal year. Perhaps this gap could be explained.

Bing Carbone: I am about a month and a half into this, so I am kind of new. Paul Grimmer, can you help to comment on some of this?

Paul Grimmer: This is Paul Grimmer. I am President of Shelton Economics Development Corporation. We have been assisting the Economic Development Commission through their transition period while they are waiting for a new Chairman, which Bing was just appointed to in the last month or so. A couple of

things that we will just call light is part-time employees. That is individuals that serve as clerks. The Economic Development Commission by virtue of not having a Chairman missed about four meetings, so that is light. With Bing Carbone on board now, those meetings are going to pick up in earnest as they should. Mileage is a rarely used account. There aren't a lot of opportunities for the Chairperson to venture out of the City, especially now in the waning days of Covid. I can't say that that won't be used, but we tend not to dip into that very much. The same things with meetings and travel. A lot of times the Chairman might visit Hartford on a particular day or two, but with the last year or two, just haven't. The last one was printing and advertising, \$11,299. That was related to the latest edition of *Shelton Life* and we have one more *Shelton Life* planned to come out before the end of June. So we anticipate that most of that line item will be completely expended. Flag Day, of course, isn't until June, so we wouldn't spend that money until June.

Wayne Bragg: Where do you think you will be for the end of the year on that line item?

Paul Grimmer: I think we will be over \$25,000 at that point.

Wayne Bragg: You have budgeted \$45,000 next year for that item.

Paul Grimmer: The Mayor met with Mr. Carbone and we had been producing two *Shelton Life's* a year. The Mayor asked him to increase that to three times per year, so that is why the difference. Also, we really held the printers feet to the fire at this last issue, but the cost for printing has gone up significantly.

Wayne Bragg: Anything unusual in 2021 that happened, because you only spent \$9,000 on that line item in 2021.

Paul Grimmer: I think it really was just that we did one *Shelton Life* magazine at that point and also this – we will call it – we try to print three issues a year, *Shelton Life* three times. The following year when we do the annual report, we will do two *Shelton Life's* and the annual report. So each year we are trying to get at least three publications out every year. That is why that was only \$9,000. I believe if you go back you will actually see \$28,000-30,000 spent on the annual report for that particular year.

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Simonetti: I want to tell Paul and the new Chairperson that you guys do a fantastic job. Thank you very much. The presentations you do are great to us. The work you are doing, especially downtown, is fantastic with cleaning up, getting those grants is such a big win for the City all the time. I know it is a team effort, don't get me wrong, I know a lot of it is channeled through your office and it takes a lot. It is tedious work. Thank you very much.

Bing Carbone: That is very kind of you. I know Paul has been on the Board a long time, great work. Thank you for your patience with me, I am new to it. It is an absolute pleasure to meet all of you and I thank you for your service to this great City, you guys are doing a great job, and ladies.

Alderman Anglace: I think the question that was originally raised by Mr. Knapik compared the \$88,000 requested for next year with the current year's budget. I don't think that was equitable. When you are talking about the current year, you talk about the \$37,000 that was allocated for this year and you spent \$11,000 of that. That explanation would have been appropriate, not to compare it with what you requested for next year. Next year stands on its own. If you are going to put out three publications, you

are going to put out an annual report, that didn't come out this year, so there is a big gap and a big cost factor in this. Getting it out, it sounds like printing, but it is also the mailing. I just think that our questioning could be a little more focused and not misleading. That was misleading, comparing apples and peaches instead of apples and apples. I just wanted to point that out.

### **800 Economic Development**

Paul Grimmer, President, Economic Development

We presented a budget to Mayor Lauretti and the Boards at \$128,000. Last year we requested \$120,000, so it's about an \$8000 increase. Mayor Lauretti seemed fit to recommend that to these Boards. We don't have any issues, we don't have any concerns, but I am here in case anybody has any questions.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **900 Planning & Zoning**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **1000 Recreation**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **1300 Conservation Commission**

Tom Harbison, Chairperson, Conservation Commission

Tom Harbison: Making myself available if you had any questions. The only big change was the change in our staffing, being regular payroll rather than part-time.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Simonetti: I would like to say thank you to the people in the Conservation Commission. They do an excellent job around the City, especially the trails. Everybody loves them. Their meetings have more detail than any other meeting I have every seen. Thank you, Tom.

Tom Harbison: The Trails Committee is a great group of volunteers.

[Note from Alderman Anglace: If you notice on the schedule it jumps around. I am trying to figure out the logic behind it. We went from account 1800 to account 3100. Why didn't we take them in order number as opposed to jumping all over the place here. Paul, did you make this up?

Paul Hiller: I did not. There is some history of this John as to what had been done in prior years. I get your point as far as going in sequence. One of the things we had, for example, is we solicited information from various departments as to who might be available at certain times, either tonight or two weeks from tonight on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Joan Stokes, for example was place #1 because she said I can be there tonight. The Mayor has left it up to other Department Heads as to their own option as to whether they show up or not show up.

Alderman Anglace: That's reasonable. If they want to come on a different night, they would put them on the different night. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: A technical question here. Can you assure me, Paul, that all these people were notified?

Paul Hiller: Yes, all the Department Heads were notified.]

### **1800 Zoning Appeals Board**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Wayne Bragg: I have a quick question. I just want to note that the year-to-date expenditures for the Zoning Appeals is \$6400 which is less than \$1000 a month run rate with a \$25,000 budget. I'm not quite sure why the spending is lagging. That should be pointed out.

Paul Hiller: I think part of it is, this is a budget that can be subject to great variance, depending upon the applications that are submitted for the budget. The one thing that you are seeing, I will tell you this, that on the printing and advertising, there has been, in the last 30 days or less than 30 days, they were delinquent in paying for some notices to the *Connecticut Post*. So when you get another report, which we will provide to you prior to the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> you will see a significant increase in printing and advertising there because frankly they were delinquent in posting notices as is legally required in a local newspaper, in our case the *Connecticut Post*.

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **3100 Building Department**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **3200 Highways & Bridges**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Joseph Knapik: I think it should be noted that this is a major department and at least for the eight years that I have been on the Board of A&T no one has ever appeared to say anything with regards to Highways & Bridges and its various aspects. That, I would say, given the amount of time that has lapsed, is a deficiency.

John J. Francino-Quinn: They have been given the opportunity I am sure to show but they certainly don't so they may be happy with what they have.

Alderman Simonetti: I disagree with Joe and I will tell you why. I remember succinctly when we had Paul DeMauro on the line and we went through his budget almost line by line with him one year. We were actually sitting in Room 104 at the time. I know that we have had them here. Ernie also came. They have been represented and they have always answered questions at the meetings and after the meetings and before the meetings. So I disagree with you completely, Joe.

Joseph Knapik: That's one out of eight years.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Bialek: I have a question. I am just curious that the building maintenance, does anybody know why they requested \$91,000 for building maintenance and the allotted amount was \$10,000. Was there a big project that they were hoping to get taken care of and was not allowed to?

Paul Hiller: You would have to go into the greater detail other than just the one line item. I think you all received the statements. I don't have that in front of me right now, but I can check on that.

Alderman Simonetti: Sometimes even when we have people here, they can't answer the question. You can ask the department to give us details, send it in for the next meeting and address it either in a notice or email or something to everyone. Michele's question obviously is very relevant to what is going on. If we can't find it in the book, then it might be good to have them address it.

Paul Hiller: And require them to attend the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Wayne Bragg: I have it brought up here and can tell you what is in it. There is a total of \$90,000, \$50,000 is for salt storage shed, \$22,000 is roof for existing steel racks, \$9000 for new floor in rear maintenance bay, \$10,000 for miscellaneous expense, plumbing, heating and electrical maintenance, routine repair services. It is identified in the budget detail.

Alderman Anglace: What Wayne just read is also contained in the hard copy book. We leave the hard copy book with all the backup details right in here all the time. If you don't have your computer with you, you can look at the hard copy as well. The back up for each account is there.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Alderman Bialek are you satisfied with the answer?

Alderman Bialek: I think I would like a little more information as far as why they came up with such a large amount and why the Mayor's recommendation was such a small amount. I'd like to see if these are necessities that they are really wanting. It just seems like a big disparity to me for having that kind of a request and having that kind of allocation. I think I would like a little more backup. I would like to have a representative from Highways & Bridges to discuss that.

Paul Hiller: We will get that for the meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>. I think the other thing is that many of the things that might be considered under building maintenance would come up during the course of the year and might be considered under aldermanic bonding because they are specific projects or specific equipment that needs to be put in place.

Alderman Bialek: If it can be easily budgeted for and scheduled then I don't know why it would be a one-off.

Paul Hiller: We will have an answer for the 21<sup>st</sup>.

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are you satisfied Alderman Bialek?

Alderman Bialek: Yes, thank you.

### **3300 Road Repairs**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Joseph Knapik: The Mayor's recommendations was much lower than the request. I think there are situations where that recommendation probably could be more to facilitate a good road situation for the City. Hopefully that will be altered by the Board of Aldermen and some suitable adjustment will be made.

Paul Hiller: If I could just respond to that, Joe, I think part of this is, the Board of Aldermen earlier this fiscal year allocated half a million dollars for road maintenance out of the American Rescue Plan Funds which the City has received. Obviously there are significant funds still available in that account which have been unspent, unallocated. So the City, as does every Town and City in the Nation, has much, much greater flexibility right now, for a short period of time. We have to allocate that money by 2024, but that's a few days off. I think that is really the Mayor's rationale on that, that we have flexibility within the American Rescue Plan Funds that are available and have not been allocated.

Joseph Knapik: Okay, then hopefully that situation will be resolved.

Alderman Anglace: The Aldermen had in an email sent to them the agenda for next week. One item on that agenda is an allocation for road funding.

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No.

### **3500 Public Works Director**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Anglace: Just a comment on Public Works. This is a \$52,000 per year budget. It is primarily all payroll. What is there to make a federal case out of Public Works? It's not practical to engage in a lot of discussion about a \$52,000 all payroll budget.

### **3600 Engineering**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members?

Wayne Bragg: I'd like to share an observation. This is one where the Mayor suggested a little over \$50,000 than the department requested for regular payroll. It is two positions difference. The department has asked for four; it looks like the Mayor is just staying with the two that are currently on staff. Is it possible that we ask Engineering what the consequences are if they don't hire these two positions?

Alderman McPherson: They hired one position.

Alderman Simonetti: If I may, I believe that they did hire a young lady about three months ago, just started in January. You can ask that question from your Chairman to Rimas. I'm sure he would be glad to answer.

Wayne Bragg: I think we should just confirm the disparity in headcount.

Alderman Anglace: You can look up payroll in that department in the book and find out.

Wayne Bragg: In the position schedule there is – the budget request is for one City Engineer, one Assistant City Engineer, and two Civil Engineering Technicians. The current actual at the time that this was done was there was just one City Engineer and one Assistant City Engineer. No head count for Civil Engineering Technicians. Those are the positions that we are missing. All I am asking is if we are going to be filling those.

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

### **3700 Tree Warden**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**3800 Recycling Program**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**3900 Sanitation**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**4600 Utilities**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**5300 Assessor**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Anglace: The big thing in the Assessor's Office is that the roughly \$300,000 for reevaluation is not present. So there is a big drop.

Wayne Bragg: That is a one-time expense.

Paul Hiller: It is a five-year expense. We have to, under State Statute, do a reevaluation every five years. I just approved yesterday the balance on that account. So the \$385,000 will be expended in full by a week from today. The company that we have does have some responsibility which is within their contract for appeals which may be taken to the Superior Court. There is a limited number of appeals before the assessment of appeals is met. We are in pretty good shape on the reevaluation.

Alderman Anglace: This is not directly finance related, but it is related to the reevaluation. Just want to throw this comment out so you can look into it, Paul. I received an email from a constituent who said that he sent an email response into the City about his reevaluation. He did not get any answer. I wrote him back and I told him that is not the procedure. You have the procedure when you received the reevaluation

and you must follow it, and follow it to the letter of the law. If you don't do that and you wait until after you know what your taxes are going to be, then you have no recourse. It is unfortunate that it is a time schedule and I felt sorry for him, but had he wrote me that email, I would have advised him to do that earlier at the time. I don't know if they received email from him or who he sent it to, I have no idea. The proper people who were doing the reeval maybe didn't even see that email. Those glitches will happen. Everything is communicated appropriately.

**5400 Tax Collector**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**5500 Purchasing**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Anglace: I just want you all to know that the Purchasing Agent, who has been out for a considerable amount of time, coming up on pretty close to a year, is making excellent progress these days and is expected, pending continuing that good progress, to be coming back shortly. He has been out with an unfortunate illness.

**5800 Community Development**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members? No

**4200 Bus Transportation**

No one was present from the above department

John J. Francino-Quinn: Are there any comments, questions or concerns from The Apportion and Taxation Board Members? No

Are there any comments, questions or concerns from Board of Aldermen Members?

Alderman Simonetti: I would like to say, they have done an excellent job. They have upped their game by putting new electronic equipment into the busses so that they could be more efficient in picking up and returning students back to their bus stops with the help of the Board of Education which has done a

good job of flushing out some of the lists of students that they thought still were in school or shouldn't be there. They have done an excellent job. They have never had a problem. If the school day was on, they were on. There have never had to close the schools because the busses weren't running. The busses have been 100%.

Alderman Bialek: I have to interject, they have not been 100%. There is consistently busses not there. That is my comment.

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John J. Francino-Quinn: Is there anything I am missing. I think there were a lot of very good questions and concerns that were raised. Certainly, it seems that people from the departments that were not present, I would assume that they were pretty happy with the Mayor's budget as presented. I think we live in an absolute fantastic City, that what I call Connecticut's best kept secret. Regardless of anything, we all tend to come together and get the job done. That is very important as that helps bring people into the City.

### **Adjournment**

John Belden Moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wayne Bragg.

A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

*Donna R. Fonda*

Donna R Fonda  
Acting Clerk