

Robert J. Park

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

2021 FEB -8 A 10:07

MICROSOFT "TEAMS"/TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

FEBRUARY 2, 2021

PRESENT Chair Richard F. Kehoe and Councillor Awet Tsegai

PRESENT Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Minority Leader Esther B. Clarke, Councillors
Via "Teams" Connor Martin, Angela Parkinson, Patricia Harmon and John Morrison

ABSENT Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:30p.m. The Chair announced that the Council is holding this "hybrid" type meeting with two Councillors physically present in Chambers and six Councillors available virtually via Microsoft "Teams". He invited the Council to join him in the pledge of allegiance.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

January 19, 2021 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by Angie Parkinson
to **approve** the minutes of the January 19, 2021 Regular Meeting.
Motion carried 8/0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Metropolitan District Commission: Overview of 2021 Budget

Chair Kehoe explained that the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) is the regional governmental authority that provides the town of East Hartford with water, as well as supplies and maintains the sewer pipes and sewer treatment facilities. The water bills are invoiced to the individual homeowner. The assessments levied on the sewers are invoiced to the town and paid by the town directly to the MDC. Any increases in the sewer use charge will result in an increase to the town's yearly budget, which in turn, will impact the mil rate and then the residents.

Councillor Tsegai introduced the following individuals from the MDC who were present: Chris Martin, Chief Financial Officer; Scott Jellison, Chief Executive Officer; Kelly Shane, Chief Administrative Officer; Chris Stone, District Counsel; Lisa Remsen, Manager of Budget; Nick Salemi, Communications Administrator; and William DiBella, Chair.

Scott Jellison, CEO, thanked the town for inviting the MDC to the Council meeting for purposes of presenting their 2021 budget. He then introduced Chris Martin, CFO, to lead the presentation. Mr. Martin stated that East Hartford is well represented in their budget deliberations – citing his personal interactions with Commissioners Currey and Salemi. He also noted the presence of Linda Trzetzziak, the town's Finance Director, at the MDC's on-line budget meetings. Mr. Martin reported that there is a near zero increase to the 2021 budget; 0% increase in Ad Valorem and ¾ of 1% increase in water bills. He believes that people complying with the Governor's order to socially distance due to the pandemic – working remotely – directly affected the increase in residential water consumption, which offset – in large part – the loss on the business and commercial side of revenues. There is no increase to the monthly water or sewer charge or Clean Water Project charge.

Chair Kehoe explained that in 2008, the Council established the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) ordinance, which serves to address the long-term liabilities of the town by establishing a trust fund to save for future retirees' health benefit costs. Funds are provided each fiscal year in the budget. In addition, any amount in the town's Fund Balance that is over 10% of the current fiscal year's budget is automatically transferred to the trust fund. This fiscal year \$156,900 will be transferred to the OPEB Trust Fund in February 2021.

None

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant

WHEREAS The Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Capitol Region Council of Governments have offered funding under the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program; and

WHEREAS this money goes toward supporting planning, training, exercise, operations and intervention activity expenses relative to the prevention and/or mitigation of disease outbreaks and injuries resulting from epidemics, disasters and bioterrorism.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc has been empowered to make, execute and approve on behalf of this corporation any and all contracts or amendments thereof with the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health and/or the Capitol Region Council of Governments to fund the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant.

On call of the vote, motion carried 8/0.

Setting a Public Hearing Date of Tuesday, February 16th @ 7:15PM re: Revisions to Ordinances:

MOTION By Esther Clarke
seconded by Angie Parkinson
to **set** a public hearing date of Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 7:15pm to hear public comment – via Microsoft “Teams” – on the following revised ordinances:

1. Chapter 11. Fire Protection
2. Section 13-1 ATV Nuisance Ordinance.
3. Section 20-1, 20-2 through 20-4 Tree Warden Powers & Duties

Motion carried 8/0.

Recommendation from Personnel & Pensions Subcommittee re: Revised Job Description for Assistant Fire Chief

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by Don Bell
to **recommend** that the Town Council approve the revised job description of “Assistant Fire Chief”, (see below) a non-bargaining position within the East Hartford Fire Department, as presented at the Personnel & Pensions Subcommittee meeting of January 26, 2021 by Human Resources Director Theresa Buchanan and Fire Chief John Oates, with a salary range of \$112,000 to \$135,000.

Motion carried 8/0.

Title: Assistant Chief

Department: Fire Department

Grade:

Salary Range: \$112,000 - \$135,000

Adoption Date: February 2, 2021

POSITION DEFINITION:

Works under the general supervision of and receives policy directions from the Chief. Provides administrative and functional assistance to the Chief in managing the operations and services of the Fire Department. Assists in the planning and development of practices, procedures and operating policies; and independently directs activities as assigned by the Fire Chief May assume responsibility for the department in the temporary absence of the Chief; if so designated by the Chief. Responds to all greater alarm fires and major emergency incidents.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Receives oral or written direction from the Fire Chief. Formulates and prescribes work methods for the execution of the department's goals.
- Oversees, provides direction and supervision for assigned department divisions that include Fire Operations, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Apparatus Repair, Fire Marshal, Fire Alarm and Technology, Training, and Emergency Management.
- Responds to all greater alarm fires and emergency incidents.
- Participates in development of near term and long-range planning and strategies to meet fire service objectives, such as response to emergencies, community preparedness and community risk reduction.
- Plans and organizes work according to department procedures.
- Assigns staff work to Deputy Fire Chiefs, Division Heads, administrative staff, Fire Captains, and other ranks as required.
- Responsible for effective administration, utilization and assessment of assigned personnel.
- Reviews all written work products for completeness and accuracy.
- Ensure that all sensitive or confidential intelligence information is handled appropriately and directed properly.
- Performs liaison work with other fire departments to obtain or give information and disseminate relevant information.
- Assists in labor contract negotiations and grievance administration for all bargaining units within the department.
- Coordinates research and reviews procedures to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the department's operations.
- Proposes new policies to the Chief to meet department needs.
- Assists the Chief in budget development; responsible for budget administration for assigned department divisions.
- Inspects personnel, fire stations, equipment and operations to ensure compliance with department policy, Occupational Health and Safety Administration requirements and national consensus standards including the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Insurance Services Office (ISO). Develops and discharges plan of correction where needed.

ADDITIONAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

- Facilitates the exchange of information throughout the organization through oral and written correspondence.
- May be assigned as department liaison to Police Department Communications and/or Information Technology Department.
- May act as official department representative at meetings and proceedings.
- Serves on regional and state fire professional organizations to promote and enhance services to the community.
- Prepares written materials and speaks to social groups, civic organizations and private citizens on matters of fire prevention, preparedness, and public safety.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Thorough knowledge of contemporary fire ground operations, apparatus, facilities, community risk reduction, emergency medical services, emergency management, NFPA standards, OSHA regulations, and State of Connecticut EMS regulation.
- Working knowledge of the Connecticut Fire Safety Code.
- Working knowledge of the ISO Grading Schedule.
- Demonstrated ability in fire ground command and management of large scale emergencies.
- Administrative ability to initiate, organize and follow through on programs and projects.
- Working knowledge of all forms of technology as it relates to fire department operations.
- Ability to establish and maintain tactful and effective working relationship with the public, Town Officials, community members and groups, and other fire and EMS agencies, and employees.
- Ability to follow collective bargaining agreement(s) and personnel policies.
- Excellent skills in written and oral communication, research, problem solving, and budget development.
- Ability to present ideas and policies to individual, groups and the media.
- Excellent skills in multi-tasking, project management, and time management.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFORT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS:

- Works in office setting subject to continuous interruptions and background noise.
- Must be able to work under stress from demanding deadlines, changing priorities and conditions.
- Rely on senses of sight, hearing, smell and touch to help determine nature of emergency, maintain personal safety, and make critical decisions in confused, chaotic, and potentially life threatening environments.
- Make rapid transition from rest to near maximum exertion without warm-up periods.
- Work extended periods of time requiring sustained activity and intense concentration.
- Ability to work in poor weather conditions, including heat, cold, rain or snow.
- Ability to access and reach difficult places and varied terrain for inspections.
- Includes exposure to video display terminals on a daily basis.
- Must be able to work under stress from demanding deadlines and changing priorities and conditions.
- Ability to operate equipment requiring eye and hand coordination and mechanical aptitude.
- Successfully pass a medical physical consistent with the incumbent member requirements of NFPA 1582 (current version)
- Successfully complete respirator fit testing in accordance with OSHA 1910.134

JOB QUALIFICATIONS:

The skills, knowledge, experience and training required would generally be obtained with a Bachelor's Degree, preferably a Master's Degree, in Fire Administration, Public Administration, or some closely related field in addition to more than ten (10) years of increasingly responsible fire and EMS command experience in a department of similar size and scope of operations.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS:

Valid Motor Vehicle Operator's License

State of Connecticut or National Registry of EMT (NR-EMT) certification as an EMT or Paramedic
Fire Officer II certification from an agency accredited by NPQB or IFSAC.

Note: The above tasks and responsibilities are illustrative only. The description does not include every task or responsibility.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

Esther Clarke asked the Mayor to comment on the recent "sick out" by the Highway Division of the town's Public Works Department. Mayor Leclerc deferred to Public Works Director John Lawlor for his input. Mr. Lawlor first gave a brief summary of the impact Winter Storm Cooper had on East Hartford. He noted that 10" of snow fell in a 36-hour period and that 4 contractors assisted Public Works in snowplowing the streets and town buildings. The cost for snow removal for this one storm is about \$129,000. Mr. Lawlor stated that his department has a continuity of operations plan in place and was able to utilize that plan in this instance.

He offered this explanation of the "sick out": The primary division within the Public Works Department that is responsible for the core function of winter operations is the highway division. There are 23 positions in the highway division that are available for such an event. During Winter Storm Cooper, 2 employees were out on workers' compensation and 2 positions have not been filled yet and therefore are vacant. That leaves a total of 19 employees in highway, of which 7 called in sick prior to the storm and 12 worked their shift but did not participate in overtime. The union contract does not require these employees to work overtime if they were hired prior to 2017. Mr. Lawlor thanked all those employees, contractors and volunteers who did participate in Winter Storm Cooper and made the continuity of operations plan a huge success.

Awet Tsegai requested an update on the senior center and the different town projects. Mayor Leclerc updated the Council on the following projects: (1) Senior Center – moving along with minor adjustments to make; (2) Veterans Memorial Clubhouse – since this project was partially

funded through bonds that were approved by the voters in November and will be sold in April, the project is on-hold until the bonds are sold. However, when Representative Jason Rojas allocated funding of \$500,000 for the senior center generator. The cost was only about \$100,000. The Mayor is working with Representative Rojas to change the language of that grant to allow the town to reallocate the remaining \$400,000 for improvements to the VMC. One of the immediate improvements will be the strengthening and securing of the walls in the major dining room. Also, the town will be looking into making the entry and bathrooms at the VMC ADA compliant; (3) Town Hall – the new HVAC system has been discussed and what is required once those renovations begin; (4) Rentschler Field – Pratt & Whitney offered an RFP for the Logistics center; (5) SciFi Fiber – moving forward, mapping is completed; (6) the town's zoning regulations are going through a re-write to make them more contemporary and user-friendly; (7) Showcase Cinema property – the RFP is extended until February 11th, responses have been received; and (8) the town continues Covid testing in conjunction with First Choice and InterCommunity; a pop up was done on Saturday at Hockanum Park.

COUNCIL ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS

Pending Assessment Appeal Known as ONS Investments, LLC v. Town of East Hartford,
Docket No. CV-20-6061745-S, 1140-1162 Burnside Avenue

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **accept** the recommendation of Corporation Counsel to settle the
 pending assessment (tax) appeal known as ONS Investments, LLC v.
 Town of East Hartford, Docket No. HHB-CV-20-6061745-S, involving real
 property located at 1140-1162 Burnside Avenue, from the fair market value
 of \$1,856,985 to the fair market value of \$1,335,000, which shall generate
 a reduction of \$18,240.26 in property taxes, for the Grand List Year of
 2019.
 Motion carried 8/0.

Pending Assessment Appeal Known as ONS Investments, LLC v. Town of East Hartford,
Docket No. CV-20-6061744-S, 1156 Burnside Avenue

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
 seconded by Angie Parkinson
 to **accept** the recommendation of Corporation Counsel to settle the
 pending assessment (tax) appeal known as ONS Investments, LLC v.
 Town of East Hartford, Docket No. HHB-CV-20-6061744-S, involving real
 property located at 1156 Burnside Avenue, from the fair market value of
 \$241,842 to the fair market value of \$144,000, which shall generate a
 reduction of \$3,419.02 in property taxes, for the Grand List Year of 2019.
 Motion carried 8/0.

Pending Assessment Appeal Known as 51 Applegate Partners, LLC v. Town of East Hartford, Docket No. CV-20-6061048-S, 51 Applegate Lane

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by Don Bell
to **accept** the recommendation of Corporation Counsel to settle the pending assessment (tax) appeal known as 51 Applegate Partners, LLC v. Town of East Hartford, Docket No. HHB-CV-20-6061048-S, involving real property located at 51 Applegate Lane, from the fair market value of \$3,928,114 to the fair market value of \$1,200,000, which shall generate a reduction of \$95,331.22 in property taxes, for the Grand List Year of 2019.
Motion carried 8/0.

Pending Assessment Appeal Known as FGE Enterprise, LLC v. Town of East Hartford, Docket No. CV-20-6061053-S, 1227 Burnside Avenue

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by Don Bell
to **accept** the recommendation of Corporation Counsel to settle the pending assessment (tax) appeal known as FGE Enterprises, LLC v. Town of East Hartford, Docket No. HHB-CV-20-6061053-S, involving real property located at 1227 Burnside Avenue, from the fair market value of \$1,329,880 to the fair market value of \$900,000, which shall generate a reduction of \$15,021.92 in property taxes, for the Grand List Year of 2019.
Motion carried 8/0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

Councillors Don Bell, Connor Martin and Angie Parkinson thanked all Public Works employees who showed up to work during Winter Storm Cooper.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By Esther Clarke
seconded by Don Bell
to **adjourn** (9:16 p.m.).
Motion carried 8/0.

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Town Council would be February 16th.

Attest



Angela M. Attenello
TOWN COUNCIL CLERK