

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

April 19, 2022

PRESENT Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Majority Leader Sebrina Wilson, Minority Leader John Morrison, Councillors Angela Parkinson, Awet Tsegai (via Teams), Thomas Rup, Travis Simpson and Harry Amadasun, Jr.

ALSO Mayor Michael Walsh
PRESENT Melissa McCaw, Finance Director
Scott Sansom, Chief of Police
Laurence Burnsed, Director of Health and Social Services (via Teams)
Connor Martin, Chief of Staff

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. The Chair stated that this meeting was also available to the public through the “Teams” platform.

The Chair announced the exit locations in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §29-381, after which the Council joined him in the pledge of allegiance.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Walsh shared: (1) wished all a good evening; (2) East Hartford Police announce their “Safe Streets Traffic Initiative” a commitment to enhance traffic safety focused on locations that have seen a marked increase in accidents as well as areas identified most by the community. This effort will be coupled with extensive public communication, education, and outreach to keep our community informed. The Mayor implored all to obey traffic laws; (3) Administration has been asked by our federal delegation to submit certain improvement projects for Congressionally Directed Funding consideration; (4) changes have been made in the Inspections and Permits Department in response to questions raised by the Council. Bruce Cohen is serving as Interim Acting Director for Inspections and Permits. Joe Cortez is serving as Blight Inspector under direction of the Mayor. Interviews are taking place for two open Property Maintenance Inspector positions and a secretarial position. A Social Media campaign highlighting the department began last week; (5) visited Providence, RI to speak at the Regional Fiber Connect Conference, discussing the SiFi project which should begin on April 27th; (6) reminded all that April 22 is Earth Day. The Town is focusing on boosting recycling efforts through education and inspection. The Town has appointed its first Solid Waste Official, Cesar Zapata. Mr. Zapata has launched the town’s recycling program with the goals of increasing residential participation and collection of acceptable materials in blue recycling bins and reducing contamination caused by unacceptable materials placed in the blue bins; (7) spoke at a recent meeting of local clergy members discussing efforts for a more engaging community; (8) East Hartford Parks and Recreation have opened their Zumba and Yopalates Spring Sessions. Registration is available online at www.ehparks.org; (9) The Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection today are issuing a consumption advisory for fish caught in the Hockanum River. This consumption advisory is based on elevated levels of per- and

polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) in fish tissue samples collected from the Hockanum River in Vernon; (10) The East Hartford Police Department would like to invite the public to the department's regular "Sandwich With a Cop" event, which will take place from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Wednesday, April 20th at Subway Restaurant, located at 1210 Main Street, East Hartford, Connecticut; (11) The Town of East Hartford in collaboration with East Hartford Parks and Recreation, the Committee on Culture and Fine Arts and the East Hartford Black Caucus invite the public to attend the town's first Juneteenth Celebration. The event will take place on Saturday, June 18th from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm, at the East Hartford Town Green, 1047 Main Street. Admission is free; (12) Town Clerk, Robert J. Pasek, will sponsor a Low-Cost/No-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinic in partnership with Dr. Linda Kane, Veterinarian of the East Hartford Animal Clinic, and in cooperation with the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association. The Low-Cost/No-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinic will be held on Saturday, May 21, 2022, from 10:00am to 12:00pm at the rear of Firehouse Number 1, located at 726 Main Street, East Hartford, CT (next to Town Hall). Dogs must be on leashes and cats must be in carriers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 5, 2022 Public Hearing

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Harry Amadasun
 to **approve** the minutes of the April 5, 2022 Public Hearing.

Motion carried 9/0.

April 5, 2022 Executive Session

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **approve** the minutes of the April 5, 2022 Executive Session.

Motion carried 9/0.

April 5, 2022 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Travis Simpson
 to **approve** the minutes of the April 5, 2022 Regular Meeting.

Motion carried 9/0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Presentation: 2022 Proposed Bond Referendum on Town Road Improvement and Fire Vehicles and Equipment and Financial Impact

The Chair explained that traditionally in April or May, the Council will hear from Administration an overview of any potential bond questions that would go on the upcoming November ballot. By state law, the town must provide any proposed questions

Mayor Walsh and Melissa McCaw, Finance Director, briefed the Council the possible financial impact that the two proposed bond referenda would have on taxes. The proposed referenda are \$15,000,000 for town roads and \$3,000,000 for Fire Department vehicles and equipment. A full presentation will be prepared in advance of the Council's June 7th meeting.

None

Recommendation from Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition Committee Re: Sale of 6 North Meadow Road, 21 North Meadow Road and 1919 Main Street

to (1) waive the appraisal requirement of Town Ordinances Section 10-19(c), given value of 6 North Meadow Road, 21 North Meadow Road and 1919 Main Street's is below \$10,000 as shown on the Town's Assessor's records; and (2) **approve** the sale of said properties to the East Hartford Sportsmen Association for the sum of \$2,000.

Amusement Permit Application—Memorial Day Parade

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “Memorial Day Parade” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, scheduled for May 30, 2022 from 10:00 am- 3:00 pm starting at Riverside Drive to the Fallen Star Memorial at Goodwin University, subject to compliance with adopted codes and regulations of the State of Connecticut, the Town of East Hartford, and any other stipulations required by the Town of East Hartford or its agencies.

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Affiliation Agreement between East Hartford Health and Social Services and the University of Connecticut

Memorandum of Understanding: METRO Traffic Services re: Traffic Accident Investigations

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Application for Emergency Ordinance on Amendment of Tax Credit Programs

MOTION by Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by John Morrison

That pursuant to Section 3.6 of the Town Charter to adopt the following emergency ordinance: to amend the town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances by revising Sections 10-27 entitled "Exemption from Property Tax for the Blind"; 10-28 entitled "Exemption from Property Tax for Veterans"; 10-29 entitled "Exemption from Property Tax for Disabled Persons"; 10-30 entitled "Additional Exemptions From Property Tax for Totally Disabled Persons"; and 10-30a "Additional Property Tax Exemptions" with language that is consistent with the draft dated March 22, 2022 which was approved at the March 22, 2022 Ordinance Committee meeting provided the last word in subsection (a) of section 10-30 shall be deleted and "section" shall be inserted in lieu thereof.

Motion carried 9/0.

The Chair informed those in attendance that the Town Charter provides authority to the Town Council to temporarily enact emergency ordinances that are in effect provided the Council enacts a similar ordinance pursuant to the usual process, providing notice of a hearing and time after final adoption for the ordinance to be printed in a newspaper of circulation in the town of East Hartford.

If the Council followed the normal adoption of ordinance process, the tax relief changes would not be effective until late May or early June. This is simply too late for the town administration to process the tax credits in a timely manner for those seniors, veterans and people with disabilities who qualify under the proposed expansion of the tax credits and assessment exemptions.

Revaluation has caused some homeowners' taxes to increase substantially while others have decreased or only increased modestly. As a result, it is imperative especially for those homeowners that are seeing significant tax increases that the tax credit and assessment exemption enhancements are approved and effective immediately.

This is why the Town Council needs to adopt this ordinance through the emergency ordinance charter provision and why the Town Council concurrently will send for public hearing the same ordinance so it may be adopted through the normal ordinance process on May 3rd.

Recommendations from Ordinance Committee re: Section 9: Voting District Boundaries Realignment

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Harry Amadasun

to **amend** the town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances by repealing Section 9-1 entitled "Voting District Boundaries" and substituting in lieu

Motion carried 9/0.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By John Morrison
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **adjourn** (8:54 p.m.)
 Motion carried 9/0.

The Chair wished all a good evening and announced that the next regular meeting of the Town Council would be May 3, 2022.

Attest _____
 Jason Marshall
 TOWN COUNCIL CLERK