

Robert J. Bell

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

2020 MAY 11 A 9:08

MICROSOFT "TEAMS"

TOWN CLERK
EAST HARTFORD

MAY 5, 2020

ATTENDING Chair Richard F. Kehoe, Vice Chair Donald Bell, Jr., Majority Leader Sebrina
VIA TEAMS Wilson, Minority Leader Esther B. Clarke, Councillors Connor Martin, Angela
Parkinson, Awet Tsegai, Patricia Harmon and John Morrison

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He explained that the latest technology (Microsoft Teams) is being utilized this evening in order to comply with Governor Lamont's ongoing executive order for social distancing. The Chair stated that, since Town Hall is closed due to the pandemic, residents may call in and be a virtual part of this meeting. He announced the phone number and the access code for the listening public. Chair Kehoe then led the Council in the pledge of allegiance.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Leclerc suggested waiting until the end of the meeting for her update to the Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 21, 2020 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
seconded by Don Bell
to **approve** the minutes of the April 21, 2020 Regular Meeting.
Motion carried 9/0.

NEW BUSINESS

Referral to the Ordinance Committee re: Establishment of Process for Naming Town Facilities

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
seconded by Esther Clarke
to **refer** to the Ordinance Committee the creation of an ordinance that would establish standards and guidelines for naming town facilities after individuals, with instructions to investigate the issue and report back to the Town Council with its recommendations, if any.
Motion carried 9/0.

Refund of Taxes

MOTION By Connor Martin
 seconded by Awet Tsegai
 to **refund** taxes in the amount of \$69,957.67
 pursuant to Section 12-129 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
 Motion carried 9/0.

Bill	Name	Prop Loc/Vehicle Info.	Int Paid	Over Paid
2018-03-0050194	ACAR LEASING LTD	2016/1GKKVNEDXGJ269859	0	-525.82
2018-01-0008575	CORELOGIC CENTALIZED REFUNDS	934 SILVER LN	0	-16,276.53
2018-01-0008577	CORELOGIC CENTALIZED REFUNDS	950 SILVER LN	0	-20,786.47
2018-01-0014884	CORELOGIC CENTALIZED REFUNDS	140 DAVIS RD	0	-2,743.29
2018-04-0082626	EGUEZ-EGUEZ AKEMI	2007/5NPEU46F57H184071	0	-74.52
2017-01-0005754	HOMELoAN SERV	43 STEVENS ST	0	-2,077.50
2018-01-0007859	HOMELoAN SERV	11 DOROTHY RD	0	-2,399.03
2018-01-0007925	HOMELoAN SERV	38 WESTVIEW DR	0	-2,554.46
2018-01-0009227	HOMELoAN SERV	85 HILTON DR	0	-3,025.67
2018-01-0010147	HOMELoAN SERV	100 FOREST ST	0	-3,037.95
2018-01-0014843	HOMELoAN SERV	143 WALNUT ST		-2,103.63
2018-01-0015569	HOMELoAN SERV	53 PENDELTON DR	0	-3,020.51
2018-03-0067141	HYUNDAI LEASE TITLING	2017/KMHD84LF4HU189088	0	-254.47
2018-03-0068674	KEANE JONATHAN C	2017/1C6RR7MT1HS631924	33.55	-559.13
2018-03-0068675	KEANE JONATHAN C	2016/3C63R3AL0GG116681	32.75	-545.85
2018-03-0068728	KEHOE JEAN C	2016/WVGBV7AX9GW557524	0	-9
2018-01-0011513	LEONE,THROWE,TELLER,& NAGLE	621 MAIN ST		-116.81
2018-01-0010314	MURPHY EDWARD C	24 VILLAGE ST	0	-2,290.98
2017-03-0076852	OREILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORES INC	2015/1N6BD0CT0FN763003	0	-127.8
2018-02-0043656	OREILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORES INC	265 ELLINGTON RD	0	-343.28
2018-03-0076619	OTTONE PETER	2017/1G1BF5SM1H7263999	0	-268.65
2018-03-0080905	RODRIGUEZ-TORRES MIGUEL J	2007/JKAZX4J127A069417		-42.39
2018-03-0081907	SANCHEZ ISMAEL T	2009/5NPET46C39H479472	4.19	-139.5
2012-01-0008278	TORRES DELIA	23 FLORADALE DR	0	-2,447.87

2018-03-0087617	VW CREDIT INC	2018/WAUDNAF46JN002999	0	-859.9
2018-03-0087624	VW CREDIT INC	2018/WA1LHAF77JD041715	0	-1,118.80
2018-03-0087629	VW CREDIT INC	2018/WAUENCF53JA109492	0	-1,018.57
2018-03-0087634	VW CREDIT INC	2018/WA1LHAF77JD041620	0	-1,118.80
SUBTOTAL			70.49	-69887.18
TOTAL				\$(69,957.67)

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

This topic is combined with "Opportunity for Residents to Speak" (see below) following the Mayor's remarks.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

Mayor Leclerc: (1) explained that, while social distancing will continue, a recovery committee has been formed to deal with the relaxation of some of the restrictions of Covid-19; (2) said the town is tracking its cost of the pandemic to submit to FEMA for reimbursement; (3) stated that the town is working with CBIA for the distribution of PPE's because it will be necessary for those local businesses – both large and small – to have the appropriate PPE's to get their employees back to work; (4) announced that the Renters' Rebate program will be handled remotely through phone interviews and applications; (5) told the Council that there is still interest in the Showcase Cinema property and, to that end, the town is hiring an on-call real estate consultant Thursday and also on Thursday, the RFQ for the Showcase property will be issued; (6) asked the Council if they had questions on the 3rd quarter financials that were distributed last week; (7) told the Council that the town-wide freeze implemented last month will need to be eased up a bit to allow for replacing key employees who are retiring this year; (8) explained that she will be working closely with the Tax office to see if there is a better way to encourage on-line participation from the public; (9) reported that Corporation Counsel is working with SiFi Networks to extend their Development Agreement to the end of the year; (10) said the road program is underway in the Cambridge/Jefferson Drive area. Additionally, the Mayor reported that there is funding to include the Westerly Terrace area in this year's road program; (11) said that there is going to be a parade on Wednesday May 6th at 1PM to honor all the workers at Riverside Health and Rehabilitation Center, which has been recently named a step-down Covid-19 positive facility; (12) acknowledged the efforts of Linda Trzetzak, who has done a yeoman's job since she assumed the position of Finance Director; (13) announced that this is Teacher Appreciation Week and recognized Councillor Parkinson – a teacher at Bacon Academy – and all teachers for their dedication to this noble profession; (14) noted that May 3rd through May 9th is Public Service Recognition Week and recognized the efforts of all government employees during this difficult time; (15) reported that "East Hartford Eats" contest has been extended through May 15th. She thanked the Amadasun family for purchasing additional gift cards for the contest; (16) made the Council aware that since January there has been a significant increase in the town's municipal solid waste being delivered to MIRA, which translates into additional costs for the town; (17) added that there has been a decline in

tax collection, but is hopeful that once the pandemic has run its course, there will be a return to normal; and (18) Cabela's will be donating 4,000 face masks to the town.

Linda Trzetzziak, Finance Director reported that through April 30th the town and Board of Education combined has recorded \$250,000 in expenses related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Ms. Trzetzziak estimated that through the end of June that number could rise to \$750,000. Costs would be submitted to FEMA for 75% reimbursement from the federal government, but that will take about a year to receive. She indicated that all state and federal aid, grant and programs to help mitigate the costs of this virus are being actively pursued.

Ms. Trzetzziak indicated that while the revenues were good through March, April will show a different picture. Since Town Hall – along with all town buildings – were closed to the public mid-March, user fees have declined, tax collection is down, and tipping fees have increased. However, the Tax Collector is expected to file intent to lien notices this week and that may result in an increase in revenues. Additionally, Ms. Trzetzziak noted that there are a large number of firefighters that plan to retire this year which would put a strain on the town's benefits account.

For the benefit of the general public, Mayor Leclerc announced that due to the diligent efforts of State Representative Jason Rojas, an additional \$1.6M in PILOT funding has been made available to the town. She thanked Representative Rojas and the rest of the legislative delegation for always having East Hartford's best interests at heart.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

Esther Clarke had the following questions: (1) The 3rd Quarter financial report indicated that "...outside legal and consultant fees have impacted the budgets in HR, Corporation Counsel and the Finance Department." *The Mayor could not recall the exact amount of the over-budget figure, but did explain what the overage was spent on. There were legal challenges to the testing process for positions in both the Fire and Police Departments and the final legal bills related to the UTC lawsuit came due.* (2) asked for an explanation on the \$400,000 expense for Fleet vehicle maintenance costs in the Public Works Department. *Mayor Leclerc indicated that a new refuse truck had caught fire and had to be restored. There were other vehicles that needed significant repairs, as well.* (3) inquired on what entity is digging in town roads, specifically Forbes Street, and installing cables. *Mayor Leclerc indicated that it was Verizon which is installing its 5g network and that East Hartford cannot stop Verizon from tearing up the road as long as they repair it.*

Councillor Clarke requested from the Mayor and the Chair agreed that the Finance Director should provide the Council with a monthly update of the town's financial situation during the pandemic so that the town's financial progress is more easily tracked by the Councillors.

Don Bell (1) asked what liens the Tax Collector is prepared to file. *Linda Trzetzziak indicated that the lien is for the Grand List of 2018 – which was half due July 2019 and the balance due in full in January 2020.* (2) thanked the Mayor for her hard work during the pandemic and asked if the Police would be monitoring social distancing as the town slowly recovers. *Mayor Leclerc stated that the Police will not be monitoring social*

distancing in a "hands on" capacity. Part-time Parks & Recreation Department employees will be observing how people are practicing social distancing in the town's parks. She also indicated that there are no plans for civil fines. (3) inquired on what guidance from Governor Lamont the Mayor has followed to re-open the town. The Mayor said that at this time, there is no guidance coming out of the Governor's office. (4) asked if there was any possibility that the town would not be reimbursed by FEMA for expenses related to the pandemic. Mayor Leclerc explained that normally FEMA reimburses municipalities for weather-related events. This pandemic is a totally new category and reimbursement may hinge on how the town writes the description of the expense. (5) asked if the recovery and/or the logistics committee meetings are opened to the public. The Mayor believed they would be since the "community" would be a participant in the committee. She suggested Vice Chair Bell call the Development Director and sign up to be a member if he is interested.

Rich Kehoe asked (1) how the town is handling the renewal of the permits for the transfer station which are due July 1st. Mayor Leclerc said presently the way to handle the renewal is: fill out the application on-line, drop it off at Ecology Drive with your check in the marked mailbox and a clerk will retrieve it after you have left, process it and either put the permit back in that marked mailbox or mail it to your house. What the town is working on is: to go through View Permit – a platform used for on-line permitting which has been expanded, you can run your payment through this system, get an immediate response which would print the permit and mail the book to your house. (2) if the new real estate consultant had a chance to review the RFQ for the Showcase property. Mayor Leclerc explained that the RFQ was ready before the consultant was hired but Mike Goman, from Goman & York Property Advisors, reviewed and approved the wording. (3) since FEMA reimbursement for expenses in the current fiscal year will most likely not happen until next fiscal year, the Chair asked Finance Director Trzetzak to explain how the town accounts for that. Ms. Trzetzak stated that she will probably move the expenses into a "Grant – Special Revenue account", but not until late June. She also reminded the Council that while the FEMA reimbursement was 75%, the town had to provide a match. The Mayor indicated that the town was notified that use of the additional CDBG money could be the match for the FEMA dollars.

Angie Parkinson asked for an update on the Senior Center renovations and the new building for Goodwin University on the corner of Main and Ensign Streets. Mayor Leclerc indicated that both projects are progressing nicely. She noted that both are practicing social distancing and doing an exceptional job. The Mayor also said the Clayton Motors project and the Solaris Building project at 1450 Main Street – formerly Tastebuds – are coming along nicely.

Awet Tsegai inquired on (1) the possibility of renovating "Walk/Don't Walk" lights from push button to no-contact. The Mayor indicated that traffic lights are the property of the State of Connecticut and that it would be cost prohibitive. (2) the establishment of a recovery committee as per the Governor's April 29th press release. Mayor Leclerc stated that a recovery committee was formed about 3 weeks ago. It is comprised of the individuals from various departments, including Social Services, Health, Parks & Recreation and it will work closely with businesses in town. (3) Thanked the Mayor and her staff for their leadership at this difficult time.

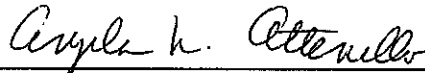
Chair Kehoe stated that, while the numbers related to Covid-19 hospitalizations are declining and the town is making progress, the process of reopening the town should be a very slow event so as to prevent going backward rather than forward. He also joined the Council in supporting Mayor Leclerc and the Administration for their tireless efforts during this time.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION By Esther Clarke
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **adjourn** (8:45 p.m.) this very unusual type of meeting.
 Motion carried 9/0.

The Chair announced that the next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for May 19th and will probably be in the same Microsoft Teams format.

Attest



Angela M. Attenello
TOWN COUNCIL CLERK