

EAST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

May 17, 2022

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

ABSENT Travis Simpson

ALSO Mayor Michael Walsh
PRESENT John Lawlor, Director of Public Works
Marilyn Cruz-Aponte, Assistant Director of Public Works
Melissa McCaw, Finance Director
Kevin Munson, Fire Chief (via Teams)
Stephen Alsup, Assistant Fire Chief
Connor Martin, Chief of Staff
Paul O'Sullivan, Grants Administrator
Rebecca Sielman, Principal and Consulting Actuary; Milliman
John Murphy, Chair of Pension and Retiree Benefits Board

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kehoe called the meeting to order at 7:34 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.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
seconded by Harry Amadsun
to **amend** the agenda as follows:

to **add** under Recognition and Awards, item 3A: Award Presentation from St. Patrick's Day Commission.

Motion carried 8/0.

RECOGNITIONS AND AWARDS

Award Presentation from St. Patrick's Day Commission

Sana Hart, Chair of the East Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee and member of the Central Connecticut Celtic Cultural Committee, presented Mayor Mike Walsh with an award to recognize East Hartford as the "Best Town Contingent" for the Greater Hartford St. Patrick's Day Parade, 2022.

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Walsh shared (1) wished all a good evening; 2.) East Hartford Senior Services invites local seniors to attend the first ever “Coffee with the Mayor” event on Monday, June 6 at 2:30 pm in the East Hartford Senior Center dining room located at 15 Milbrook Drive; 3.) Route 2 sound barrier work with the CT Department of Transportation is in progress. Screening and smaller plantings will occur in 2023-24 as construction continues. 4.) thanked all who participated in the Mayor’s Kickball game this past weekend; 5.) East Hartford Senior Services invites local seniors to a Memorial Day Picnic at the Senior Center on May 25th from Noon-2 p.m. Cost is \$5.00 and registration is required; 6.) The Town has launched a COVID-19 Small Business Assistance Program to help businesses recover from the pandemic. The Program is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and administered by the Chamber of Commerce. An application form with eligibility requirements is available on the Chamber’s website; 7.) Saturday May 21 is Town Shred Day from 8 a.m.-Noon at 22 Prestige Park Circle. There is a limit of three boxes/bag per person; 8.) The town and East Hartford Veterans Commission invite all to attend the East Hartford Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 30 at 10 am. There will be a parade followed by a program at the Fallen Star Memorial at Goodwin University. Route 2 at Exit 5 will be blocked off from 8 am-Noon for the event. 9.) The Main Street Flood Control Closure Structure Replacement project has begun on May 16th. Traffic will be limited to one lane in each direction during the project. Work should be completed in mid-August. 10.) An increase in cases of COVID-19 has hit East Hartford and most of Connecticut. Residents are encouraged to wear masks but not required; 11.) The East Hartford Golf Course presentation will be postponed until the June 21st Council meeting as both presenters from Indigo Golf planning to attend tonight’s meeting came down with Covid.

The Chair took a moment to express thanks on behalf of the Council to Sana Hart and the St. Patrick’s Day Committee for their efforts in coordinating the parade.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 3, 2022 Executive Session Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by John Morrison
 to **approve** the minutes of the May 3, 2022 Executive Session regarding
 Real Estate Acquisition and Disposition

Motion carried 8/0.

May 3, 2022 Executive Session Litigation

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Tom Rup
 to **approve** the minutes of the May 3, 2022 Executive Session regarding
 Litigation

Motion carried 8/0.

May 3, 2022 Public Hearing

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **approve** the minutes of the May 3, 2022 Public Hearing

Motion carried 8/0.

May 3, 2022 Regular Meeting

MOTION By Sebrina Wilson
 seconded by Don Bell
 to **approve** the minutes of the May 3, 2022 Regular Meeting

Motion carried 8/0.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PETITIONS

Presentation Re: Pension Obligation Bonds Overview

The Chair introduced Rebecca Sielman, Principal and Consulting Actuary at Milliman and John Murphy, Chair of Pension and Retiree Benefits Board. The Chair shared that the town has a pension that was provided to most town employees through 2005 when it was replaced with an option for employees to participate in a 401k plan. Pensions are still provided to employees of the Police and Fire Departments and those other town employees hired before 2005. Every year the town makes contributions to the pension fund which currently carries a level of unfunded liability. The Council has had discussions with administration and the retirement board to review a Pension Obligation Bond as a way to more easily manage the liability.

John Murphy stated that last year the board began to review the option of issuing pension obligation bonds. At that time, the board decided not to move forward. In December, the board reconsidered the option and requested a second review.

Rebecca Sielman then provided a presentation to help educate the Council and the public on pension obligation bonds and their purpose. Pension Obligation Bonds are taxable municipal bonds that may partially or fully fund the current pension plan. Bond proceeds are deposited into the pension trust. This type of bonding has recently gained traction as pension trusts typically earn higher long-term returns than bond interest rates. Bonds were at historically low interest rates in 2021 but have trended upwards recently due to extenuating factors such as the war in Ukraine. Debt service on bonds replace past service cost of annual contributions. Ideally, the pension trust's investment rate of return should be higher than the interest rate on the pension obligation bond. Ms. Sielman provided projections and analysis to the council along with recommendations based on the potential benefits and risks of the investments.

The Chair acknowledged that current market conditions are not favorable to the issuance of pension obligation bonds but that could change over time. The town should be ready to consider such an option in the future. As such, the Town Council, the Mayor and the Pension and Retiree Benefits Board will continue discussion on whether to pursue a referendum question in November authorizing the town under strict financial conditions to issue such bonds.

Presentation Re: East Hartford Golf Course Operations

This presentation will be rescheduled to a future Council meeting.

Presentation Re: Changes to Waste Services Operations

John Lawlor, Director of Public Works, and Marilyn Cruz-Aponte, Assistant Director of Public Works provided information on potential changes in waste collection programs based on a proposed relationship with All American, LLC, the vendor chosen to take over the town's waste services. Director Lawlor reviewed the costs of services that would be provided by All American; the transfer of town vehicles to All American; and changes to the current bulky waste collection program and its fees. Director Lawlor feels that the value of the contract will come from a heightened level of service to residents particularly with regards to bulky waste collection as well as allow the Department of Public Works to focus on new initiatives including enforcement of waste ordinances, public education and neighborhood cleanliness.

Melissa McCaw, Finance Director, provided a brief cost analysis of the services provided by the vendor. The contract cost is an increase over current expenditures but will provide for enhanced service.

The Council requested a comparison of the annualized cost of the contract to the department's current projected expenditures for review.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Transfer of Ownership re: Waste Vehicles from Department of Public Works to All American, LLC

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
 seconded by John Morrison
 to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of East Hartford (the "Town") has issued a bid (the "Bid") seeking proposals for the provision of Residential Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) services, including management, collection, transportation, and proper disposal of all acceptable MSW Refuse, Recycling and Bulky Waste from eligible properties in Town ("MSW Services"); and

WHEREAS, All American Waste, LLC ("American Waste") has been selected as the successful bidder to provide MSW Services and, accordingly, the Town will no longer need to maintain ownership of the Waste Disposal Vehicles described below; and

WHEREAS, as part of the Bid the Town asked bidders to provide an offer to acquire the Waste Disposal Vehicles; and

WHEREAS, American Waste's bid for the Waste Disposal Vehicles was consistent with the terms of the Bid; and

WHEREAS, American Waste's ownership of the Waste Disposal Vehicles is critical to its provision of MSW Services beginning on or around July 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 10, Section 10-3 (a) governs the disposition of property as set forth above;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the disposition of the below property to American Waste, as follows:

1. VIN # 3BPDLHOX7MF110006 Truck # 1060 Natural Gas

Make/Model:

- 2021 Peterbilt Model 520 Right Hand Drive Refuse and Recycling Collection Trucks
\$250,000 lump sum payment

2. VIN # 3BPDLHOX9MF110007 Truck # 1063 Natural Gas

Make/Model:

- 2021 Peterbilt Model 520 Right Hand Drive Refuse and Recycling Collection Trucks
\$250,000 lump sum payment

3. VIN # 1FVHG3DV6HHJCO209 Truck # 1059 Diesel Fuel

Make Model:

- 2017 Freightliner 114SD Right Hand Drive Refuse & Recycling Collection Truck \$50,000 lump sum payment

MOTION By Tom Rup
 Second by Awet Tsegai

to **postpone action** on the transfer of ownership of waste vehicles pending resolution of the proposed contract between the Town of East Hartford and All American, LLC.

Motion carried 8/0.

Referral to Fees Committee re: Outsourcing of Waste Services

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
 seconded by Awet Tsegai

to **refer** to the Fees Committee the recommended changes to the Public Works bulky permit and transfer station fees as provided by Mayor Michael P. Walsh in a memo to Town Council Chair Richard Kehoe on May 5, 2022 and report back to the full Council with its recommendations, if any.

Motion carried 8/0.

LoCIP Grant: Parks Improvements

MOTION By Don Bell
 seconded by Awet Tsegai
 to adopt the following resolution:

That Michael P. Walsh, Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, is authorized to make application to, and execute and approve on behalf of this corporation, any and all documents as may be required by the State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management to secure Local Capital Improvement Program funds (LoCIP) in the amount of \$520,183.99 for the following project:

Parks Improvements

\$520,183.99

On Call of the Vote, the motion carried 8/0.

Community Development Block Grant: 48th Program Year Action Plan

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by
 to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The Town of East Hartford is entitled to Forty-eighth Program Year funding under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, in the estimated amount of \$593,858; and

WHEREAS, upon notification of the Town's allocation for the 48th Program Year (2022-2023), the amount of each proposed activity's budget will be proportionally increased or decreased from the estimated funding levels to match the allocation amounts; and

WHEREAS, receipt of this entitlement grant is contingent upon the submission of a 48th Program Year Action Plan, and Certifications of Compliance; and

WHEREAS, citizen input was obtained, in accordance with the Grants Administration Office's Citizen Participation Plan, at one Public Hearing held on November 8, 2021 and two Public Hearings held on March 21, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of East Hartford recognizes the need for funding the objectives contained in the Forty-eighth Program Year Action Plan and endorses this Plan as reflecting the Town's Community Development needs.

AND, FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council does support and authorize the submission of the Forty-eighth Program Year Action Plan, and Grantee Certifications to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and authorizes its Mayor, Michael P. Walsh, to act as representative of the Town and to enter into contract and any amendments thereof with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

On Call of the Vote, the motion carried 8/0.

Recommendation from Tax Policy Committee: Tax Lien Sales

MOTION By Angie Parkinson
 seconded by Don Bell

1. The Collector of Revenue shall notify the record owner of each property subject to a lien that is to be included in the tax lien sale, by certified mail, that the lien is being included in the request for proposal and invitation to bid, and that the owner should contact the Town immediately to pay the taxes or seek a payment plan if they wish to keep the Town's tax liens on their property from being sold;
2. In order to qualify for a payment plan, the property owner must meet the following three criteria:
 - They must remit 25% of the outstanding amount due
 - They cannot have defaulted on a prior payment arrangement
 - Their property must not have active property code violations;
3. The letters from the Collector of Revenue to each property owner shall notify the property owner that the purchaser of the tax lien on their property shall have the right to foreclose on that property; and
4. The Administration shall return to the Town Council with the results of the request for proposal and that the proposal for each tax lien must be approved by the Town Council before it is sold.

Purchase of Training Doors

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by John Morrison

that in accordance with Section 10-7(c) of the Town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **waive** the bidding procedures required by Section 10-7(b) and allow the town to purchase two forcible entry door simulators at a price of \$10,778 from Fire Rescue Training Source in Worcester, MA.

Motion carried 8/0.

Public Safety Radio System Maintenance Agreement

MOTION By Awet Tsegai
seconded by Don Bell

that in accordance with Section 10-7(c) of the Town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **waive** the bidding procedures required

by Section 10-7(b) and allow the town to engage in an annual service agreement with Goosetown Communications for the purpose of maintenance and repair of the Town's Public Safety Radio Communications System with an expected price of \$19,776.

Motion carried 8/0.

Recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission Re: Changes in Charter Revision Commission Draft Report

MOTION By Don Bell
seconded by Tom Rup

to **send** the Charter Revision Commission draft report dated April 26, 2022 back to the Commission to consider the proposed changes contained in a document entitled Town Council Recommendations to the East Hartford Charter Revision Commission dated May 16, 2022.

Motion Carried 8/0

16th Abelon Memorial Walk– Rescission of Previous Motion

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
seconded by Awet Tsegai
to **rescind** the following motion presented and approved at the May 3, 2022 Town Council meeting:

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “16th Abelon Memorial Walk” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, scheduled for Saturday, May 21, 2022 on the grounds of Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street proceeding to Sunset Ridge School (450 Forbes Street) and back, 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.

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

16th Abelon Memorial Walk– revised application

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
seconded by Tom Rup

to **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “16th Abelon Memorial Walk” as submitted by Scott Sansom, Chief of Police, scheduled for Saturday, May 21, 2022 on the grounds of Connecticut IB Academy, 857 Forbes Street proceeding to Sunset Ridge School (450 Forbes Street) and back, 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 and to **waive** the

associated permit fee under the provisions of Section 5-6(a) in the Town of East Hartford Code of Ordinances, as this is a not-for-profit event.

Motion carried 8/0.

45th Anniversary of Imperio- Holy Ghost Festival

MOTION By Harry Amadasun
 seconded by Tom Rup

that pursuant to Section 5-2 (a) of the East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **waive** the 30-day filing requirement and **approve** the outdoor amusement permit application entitled “45th Anniversary of Imperio- Holy Ghost Festival” submitted by Arthur Matos, President of the Holy Ghost Portuguese Society, to host the religious celebration on Saturday May 28, 2022 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and Sunday May 29, 2022 from 2:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on their premises located at 341 Forest Street – with food and liquor served, music played by a DJ and a small procession on the premises; 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; and that pursuant to Section 5-6(a) of the East Hartford Code of Ordinances, the Town Council **waive** the associated permit fee due to the inability to hold the event in recent years due to COVID-19 and to lift the spirits of their members.

Motion carried 8/0.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCILLORS TO DIRECT QUESTIONS TO THE ADMINISTRATION

Councillor Morrison requested that information on planned events scheduled to occur at Rentschler Field be shared with the public more prudently. *Mayor Walsh stated that he will revisit the issue with the Capital Region Development Authority and report back with any updates. In the past, Pratt and Whitney have raised concerns with a sign at the corner of Roberts Street and Silver Lane. The Chair suggested consideration of a sign at the intersection of Simmons Road and Silver Lane near the East Gate.*

Councillor Amadasun provided an update on the Small Business initiative funded through ARPA. A number of businesses have reached out to the Chamber of Commerce with applications.

Councillor Tsegai requested an update on the sale of the former Rogo Distributors property on 65 Old Roberts Street. *The Mayor confirmed that the property has sold and would return to the Council on who the purchaser was.*

COUNCIL ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION MATTERS

OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO SPEAK

The Mayor shared that Director of Public Works John Lawlor will be leaving the department to explore other opportunities. The Mayor feels that the department has capable resources on staff

