

AMENDED - Minutes of the February 14, 2022 City Council Meeting – Harriett North CourtRoom

The Regular Meeting of the West Haven City Council was held on Monday, February 14, 2022 at 7:35 p.m. in the Harriett North Court Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call Members Present were Council members Ronald Quagliani, Gary Donovan, Colleen O'Connor, Bridgette Hoskie, Meli Garthwait, Sarah Ackbarali, Mitchell Gallignano, Robbin Hamilton, Trenee McGee, Victor Borrás, Robert Bruneau, Steven Johnstone and Peter Massaro. Also present were Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan, Director of Finance Frank Cieplinski & Chris Soto, Commissioner of Planning & Development.

6:45 PM – PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE – PUBLIC HEARING – Discussion of the sale, lease, or transfer of 20 Helm St.

One speaker – Jeffery Laydon– President of Laydon Industries- owner of 239 Front Ave came forward to ask to be considered as a bidder on this property.

This Public Hearing closed at 6:47 PM

6:50 PM – PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE – PUBLIC HEARING – Discussion of the sale of 66 Tetlow St., former Blake Building

No speakers came forward

This Public Hearing closed at 6:51

** Chairman Massaro took a moment of silence for the passing of Toni (Marie) Paine

** Councilwoman-at-Large O'Connor took a moment of silence for the passing of John (Jonny Z) Ziada.

7:02 PM – PUBLIC SESSION

There were 7 speakers that came forward to make comments. Please refer to the Live Stream video on the City of West Haven's You Tube channel.

The Public Session closed at 7:34 PM

Councilwoman Hoskie made a **MOTION** to add **EXECUTIVE SESSION** to the end of the Agenda after New Business to Discuss Communication A & Communication E, & to Move the Public Lands Committee Meeting & Committee Reports after Executive Session, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Donovan and **APPROVED** unanimously.

Chairman Massaro called the **Regular Meeting** to order at 7:35 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Hoskie presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2022, which were amended by Councilman Johnstone on pg. 3 to add Steven Johnstone to the members present at the Tax Deferral Committee, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Hamilton and **APPROVED** unanimously.

Councilman Bruneau presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor and **APPROVED** by majority with Councilwoman McGee abstaining.

Councilman Bruneau presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Special Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Ackbarali and **APPROVED** by a majority with Councilwomen McGee & O'Connor abstaining.

II. COMMUNICATIONS

Communication A: from Councilman Gary Donovan regarding discussion concerning the parking on Cellini Place.

Communication B: from Joseph Perno, Chief of Police of the West Haven Police Department in regards to the Animal Shelter Donations.

Communication C: from Commissioner Tom McCarthy of the Public Work Department regarding street light on 215 Jeffrey St. So that the UI can install an addition of a four foot bracket with shield to prevent light pollution at 215 Jaffrey St.

Communication D: from Abdul Quadir, City Engineer, regarding Clean water Fund Loan for the Dawson Ave area contract 2 design and construction.

Communication E: from the office of the Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale, lease or transfer of 20 Helm St. For discussion

Communication F: from the Tax Collector in regards to Overpayment Refunds for February 2022.

III. COMMITTEE MEETINGS

THE Council entered into Committee Meetings at 7:40 p.m.

Finance Committee – Councilwoman Bridgette Hoskie, Chairwoman – present were committee members Colleen O’Conner, Ronald Quagliani, Sarah Ackbarali, Robbin Watt Hamilton.

Chairwoman Hoskie opened the Finance Committee at 7:40 p.m.

FINANCE UPDATES

1. Police Pension Study updates – No update at this time.
2. ARPA update – Councilwoman Hoskie discussed that the Council has put \$15,000 in an account to start safer housing initiative. She wants to begin with Chris Soto, Director of Planning & Zoning & Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan to start looking for an attorney to go over our ordinances and come up with a better livable city initiative. Director Soto spoke about blight, police, public/open space, no heat, rodents, etc... Corporation Counsel Tiernan spoke about the need to prioritize and wanting to target the generation of revenue. (Refer to Live Stream on City’s You Tube Channel for remaining comments).
3. MARB update – Wilma Petro, Purchasing Consultant, was present to give update from the MARB meeting she was at last week. She gave overview that she is in process of re-writing the language on the back of the purchase orders, modifying ordinances & RFPs, contracts, procedures and best practices. Best Practices calls for an RFP Committee. She explained the process of how departments will have to submit their requisitions. She also spoke about Department Head training. Frank Cieplinski, Director of Finance, was also present and noted that the Mayor’s Chief of Staff is reviewing all purchases over \$5,000. Councilwoman Hoskie stated that she is struggling with accountability concerning email received about city employees abusing the City’s credit card. Councilwoman Hoskie stated that she would like a letter sent to the Mayor asking her to start progressive/radical discipline concerning the abuse of the city’s credit card. Frank Cieplinski replied that only way to put a stop to it now, would be to get a new credit card with a new number on it. Councilman Quagliani suggested a P card system, wherein each person allowed would be allowed to use credit card with controls in place which would be reconciled every 30 days. Wilma Petro noted that there is not enough controls within the City to run an effective P card system. (Refer to Live Stream on City’s You Tube Channel for remaining comments).
4. Discussion regarding compensatory time for elected/appointed officials – Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan indicated that he has a memo that he will provide at the next Council meeting.

Communication B: from Joseph Perno, Chef of Police of the West Haven Police Department in regards to Animal Shelter Donations. Councilman Quagliani made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O’Conner. All were in favor. Motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication D: from Abdul Quadir, City Engineer, regarding Clean Water Fund Loan for the Dawson Ave area contract 2 design and construction. Councilwoman Hamilton made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Ackbarali. Discussion took place with Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan giving an overview of the 2% loan being part of the Capital Plan, payments are factored in, and will be paid for by the proceeds of the water/sewer revenues. He also explained that this will come back as a contract in the form of a resolution. All were in favor. Motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

COMMUNICATION F from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from the Finance Dept. regarding an unbudgeted staffing request for two immediate additions to the Finance Staff. Councilwoman Hamilton made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor. Discussion took place with Councilman Quagliani asking where the money is coming from realizing that the salary has been prorated for next few months. Director of Finance Cieplinski stated that there is excess PILOT funds that we have received already. Interviewing is being conducted and Personnel is in process of doing background checks. Councilwoman Hoskie noted that she spoke with Doug Coulter about auditing some accounts and that they found \$160,000. Cieplinski noted that revenues were not applied previously to property accounts and that the grants writer is to provide an update of standard reimbursements that we have not been reimbursed on. All were in favor. Motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication C from the December 13, 2021 Agenda from Mayor Rossi regarding an emergency expenditure request for the Police Department's mechanical and electrical systems and fire alarm system. Councilwoman Hamilton made a **MOTION** to bring this communication out for discussion purposes, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor. Discussion took place with Hoskie & Quagliani about how we are paying for it. Director of Finance Cieplinski stated that HVAC & A/C is 100% approved w/ARPA. He is expecting this to be on the ARPA plan, however, if it is not, it will have to be put on next year's Capital Budget. He also explained that there is no office funding source yet. He believes it was charged against Public Works Dept. when they ad money in their budget, however, now they are over budget. There is no line item in the Police Dept. budget. Commissioner of Public Works McCarthy & Cieplinski both signed off on the purchase, however, he does not know where the equipment is.

*Councilman Quagliani asked for a majority caucus at 9:24 PM.

*Council recessed and came back in session at 9:47 PM

Chairman Massaro stated that he would like to have Director of Finance Frank Cieplinski, Mayor Rossi, Chief of Staff Lou Esposito and Commissioner of Public Works Tom McCarthy present at the next meeting to explain and discuss this further. Both Councilwoman Hamilton and Councilwoman O'Connor withdrew their Motion and Second and this Communication was **HELD**.

COMMUNICATION G from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from the Finance Department regarding a bid waiver for the purchasing consultant. Councilwoman Ackbarali made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Hamilton. Discussion took place with Councilman Bruneau asking if there was an end date. Councilwoman Hoskie asked for an Amendment to the Motion to state that it expires on June 30, 2022. All were in favor. Motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

COMMUNICATION J from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from Mayor Rossi regarding an advance bond expenditure request, electric vehicle purchases, bid waiver on charging infrastructure contractor. Councilwoman Hamilton made a **MOTION** to bring this out for discussion which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Ackbarali. Discussion took place with Councilman Quagliani asking again where the money was coming from. Director of Finance Cieplinski stated that it would come from Fiscal 2023

bonding. He stated that they are asking for the money now and then bond for it next year, which will show as a deficit until we bond for it in 2023. Noted that the bid waiver portion of this communication was already approved at the last Council meeting.

As for the remainder of Communication J, both Councilwoman Hamilton & Ackbarali withdrew their Motion and Second and this Communication was **HELD**.

The Finance Committee was closed at 9:55 p.m.

STREETS & SQUARES COMMITTEE – Councilman Gary Donovan, Chairman – present were committee members Steven Johnstone, Sarah Ackbarali, Victor Borrás, Mitchell Gallignano

Chairman Donovan opened the Streets & Squares Committee at 9:55 p.m.

Communication A from Councilman Gary Donovan concerning discussion of the parking on Cellini Place. Councilman Gallignano made a **MOTION** to bring this out for discussion, wherein Councilman Donovan opened it up to the whole Council, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Ackbarali. Discussion took place concerning the understanding that the north side of the street would be for drop off only and the left side would be open to the public. Councilman Bruneau asked about the rumble strips. Councilwoman Hamilton had questions concerning signage. Councilman Donovan asked that a letter be sent asking the Police Chief and the Police Commissioner to come before the Council at the next meeting to give the Council a better understanding of the situation. Both Councilman Gallignano & Councilwoman Ackbarali withdrew their Motion and Second, and the Communication was **HELD**.

Communication C from Commissioner of Public Works Tom McCarthy regarding streetlight on 215 Jaffrey St. so that the UI can install an addition of a four foot bracket with shield to prevent light pollution at 215 Jaffrey St. Councilman Gallignano made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Borrás. All were in favor. Motion was passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

The Streets & Squares Committee was closed at 10:12 p.m.

Redevelopment Committee – Councilwoman Colleen O’Connor – present were Committee members Gary Donovan, Ronald Quagliani, Trenee McGee, Mitchell Gallignano.

Councilwoman O’Connor opened the Redevelopment Committee at 10:15 p.m.

Project Updates – Chris Soto, Commissioner of Planning & Zoning gave an update on the following:

1. **Thompson School** – They are working on trying to do some zoning amendments to increase the density in the neighborhood & cap the # of parking requirements by amending the zoning map & zoning regulations. Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan stated there would be a contract for sale and that he would be asking at the request of the Mayor that the Council hold a Public Hearing at the next meeting for the sale of this building. The beginning of the remediation has been approved.
2. **Blake Building** – item is on the Agenda in Executive Session.

3. **Stiles School** – TOD area. Some interest from Hydroponics people. They have done Zone Regulation changes. Corp. Counsel Tiernan stated that he would be asking that the Council hold an Executive Session to discuss the sale of this building and would be asking for a Public Hearing at the next meeting for the sale of this building.
4. **Cumberland Farms** – was stalled, there was an appeal. They changed the regulations which was resolved at the last Planning and Zoning meeting.
5. **Chicks** – spoke with them and the raising of Beach Street is holding them off for now. They have done some mapping and engineering.
6. **Debonair** – Spoke with the attorney – there are no updates yet from them.
7. **Beach St. Road Raising** – This was recently before the Harbor Commission. They agreed to allow project to go forward. Permits/DEP have been submitted. Hopefully the contract will be awarded by the end of the year.
8. **Solar Panels – Dump** – Corporation Counsel Tiernan stated that they are still working on acquiring some land. They will be foreclosing on all solid waste property.
9. **Bus Shelter Project** – monies have been received through SCROD and improvements have been done. They will come & finalize what we need and Diane Dietman will be brought in for oversight.
10. **Campbell Ave. Mixed Use** – 140 dwelling units with retail at the bottom. Project was approved but then was appealed through Court. It might take a while in the Court system.
11. **The Havens** – The approval process from zoning is set. They have completed Zone I and are continuing to remove rubble from the demo. Corporation Counsel Tiernan has sent a draft of the Interlocal Agreement to the folks at The Havens. The City could use as leverage issues with blight, liens could be placed on the properties and the City could also consider condemning the buildings.

Update was also given on the **Brewery**. The Open Space Zone designation was removed which was over 75% of that building, which would have delayed the project. They also approved breweries, wineries and distilleries throughout the city in case the opportunity arises.

Councilman Quagliani asked about the cannabis dispensaries. Soto stated that they are treated the same as liquor stores. It has been brought up about a moratorium. The Commission is developing rules/language at their next meeting. State law allows the Commission to designate areas.

Councilman Bruneau would like a letter sent to the people from the Havens and Chris Soto to come before the Council next meeting. Soto asked for a list of what the Council would be looking for so that the Havens can be prepared to answer the questions.

Councilwoman Garthwait asked for clarification of the Beach St. road raising timeline.

Councilwoman Hoskie asked if the Armstrong Building being sold. Soto stated that they have not approached the City yet.

Councilwoman O'Connor closed the Redevelopment Committee at 10:42 p.m.

Councilwoman Hoskie reopened the **Finance Committee at 10:45 p.m.

Councilwoman Hoskie made a **MOTION** to allow the Mayor/ARPA Committee to put out an RFQ to hire a Fund Manager, an Architect & Engineer Company and hire a lawyer and be allowed to spend up to \$300,000 prior to the plan coming out, so that they can begin the process, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor. Discussion from Councilman Quagliani asking that they continue to follow along with updates on this regularly. All were in favor. Motion passed **UNANIMOUSLY**.

Councilwoman Hoskie closed the Finance Committee at 10:47 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – 10:50 p.m.

The Clerk read **Communication F** into the record

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Bridgette Hoskie, Chairwoman

Councilwoman Hoskie, Chairwoman of the Finance Committee reported the following:

Communication B from Joseph Perno, Chief of Police of the West Haven Police Department in regards to Animal Shelter Donations. **MOTION TO APPROVE** made by Councilwoman Hoskie, **SECONDED** by Councilman Donovan. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication D from Abdul Quadir, City Engineer, regarding Clean Water Fund Loan for the Dawson Ave area contract 2 design and construction. **MOTION TO APPROVE** made by Councilwoman Hoskie, **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication F from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from the Finance Dept. regarding an unbudgeted staffing request for two immediate additions to the Finance staff. Councilwoman Hoskie made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Bruneau. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication C from the December 13, 2021 Agenda from Mayor Rossi regarding an emergency expenditure request for the Police Department's mechanical and electrical systems and fire alarm system was **HELD**.

Communication G from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from the Finance Department regarding bid waiver for the purchasing consultant. Councilwoman Hoskie made a **MOTION TO APPROVE** with the amendment of adding and end date of June 30, 2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Communication J from the January 10, 2022 Agenda from Mayor Rossi regarding an advance bond expenditure request, electric vehicle purchases, bid waiver on charging infrastructure contractor was **HELD**.

ARPA – Councilwoman Hoskie made a **MOTION** to allow the Mayor/ARPA Committee to put out an RFQ to hire a Fund Manager, an Architect & Engineer Company and hire a lawyer and be allowed to spend up to \$300,000 on these items only prior to the plan coming out, so that they can begin the process, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Gallignano. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

STREETS & SQUARES – Councilman Gary Donovan

Councilman Donovan, Chairman of the Streets & Squares Committee reported the following:

Communication A regarding discussion concerning the parking at Cellini Place – Councilman Donovan asked that a letter be sent asking the Polce Chief and the Police Commissioner to come before the Council at the next meeting to give the Council a better understanding of the situation. Communication was **HELD**.

Communication C from Commissioner of Public Works Tom McCarthy, regarding streetlighting on 215 Jaffrey St. so that the UI can install an addition of a four foot bracket with shield to prevent light pollution at 215 Jaffrey St. Councilman Donovan made a **MOTION TO APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Bruneau. All were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED: None.

COUNCIL LIASON REPORTS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Corporation Counsel Tiernan asked that the Council schedule a Public Hearing to sell 447 1st Avenue before the next Regular Meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Councilman Hoskie requested that a formal request be sent to Mayor Rossi that the Council receive the suggestions that the residents sent in on line on the ARPA Plan.

Councilwoman Hoskie stated that she had sent a request via email to find out what the cost of the Live Stream of the meetings is and what happens after the governor's order is over. Are we going to continue or are we going to be doing it on our own? She would like another letter/email sent requesting a response.

Councilwoman Hoskie requested on January 24, 2022, asking the Finance Director and/or Mayor provide a report of department employees (names redacted) total hours and overtime paid for FY 2021-2022 and the total hours for employees that do not sign out for lunch but work a full day as she is trying to obtain an understanding of how often we have been allowing this and what the cost is to the City, as some departments allow this and they are over their budgeted overtime allotment. She would like another letter/email sent requesting a response.

Councilwoman O'Connor made a **MOTION** to re-name the corner of Campbell Avenue & Court Street where Z's is in John Ziada's honor/memory & that a letter be sent to Mayor Rossi recommending that we re-name that corner, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman McGee. All were in favor. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Councilwoman Hoskie requested a letter/email be sent requesting the information on the filming of the ARPA Committee meetings. She would like a breakdown of the costs & how it is being paid for, what account? As no ARPA money was supposed to be spent without the Council's approval. She also would like a letter/email sent requesting the information on how the Security Guard at the front door is being paid.

Chairman Massaro appointed himself as the liaison to the ARPA Committee.

Chairman Massaro appointed the following Council members to the Redistricting Committee:

Sarah Ackbarali, Meli Garthwait, Bridgette Hoskie, Robert Bruneau & Robbin Hamilton, as the Chairwoman.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Bruneau to enter into Executive Session to discuss:

Communication A from January 24, 2022 Agenda from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale of 66 Tetlow St (Former Blake Building) and

Communication E from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale, lease, or transfer of 20 Helm St.

inviting Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan to join the Executive Session, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Galignano. All were in favor. **MOTION** was **APPROVED** unanimously.

The City Council entered into Executive Session at 11:10 p.m.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Galignano to come out of Executive Session, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Donovan. All were in favor. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The City Council came out of Executive Session and resumed their Regular Meeting at 11:37 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS (continuation)

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE, Councilman Gary Donovan, Chairman - Committee Members Present were Councilmembers O'Connor, Quagliani, Bruneau, Hamilton & Donovan.

Chairman Donovan opened the Public Lands Committee at 11:38 p.m.

Communication A from January 24, 2022 Agenda from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale of 66 Tetlow St (Former Blake Building) - **HELD**

Communication E from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale, lease, or transfer of 20 Helm St. - **HELD**

Chairman Donovan closed the Public Lands Committee at 11:38 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (continuation) – 11:38 p.m.

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE, Councilman Donovan, Chairman reported the following:

Communication A from January 24, 2022 Agenda from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale of 66 Tetlow St (Former Blake Building) - **HELD**

Communication E from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale, lease, or transfer of 20 Helm St. - **HELD**

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Quagliani made a **MOTION to ADJOURN**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Hamilton. All were in favor. MOTION passed unanimously.

The City Council meeting was **ADJOURNED at 11:40 p.m.**

ATTEST:

Stacy Riccio, Clerk

City Council

These minutes are subject to the City Council Approval.