

Minutes of the May 27, 2025, Regular Meeting of the West Haven City Council in the Council Chambers 3rd floor, West Haven City Hall

The Regular Meeting of the West Haven City Council was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 7:00p.m. in the City Council Chambers 3rd floor. Chairman Pascale called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Council Members Present: Meli Garthwait, Edward McMillian, Sarah Ackbarali Gary Donovan, Christopher Vargo, Jr., Katherine Tucker, and Steven Johnstone, Nicholas Pascale and Anne Heffernan. Absent: Brian Laucks, Ruby Melton, Dawn Callahan and Kathleen Mueller. Also present: Mayor Dorinda Borer, Paul Dorsi, Corporation Counsel, Phil Sissick, Commissioner of Public Works, Steve Fontana, Director of Economic Development, George Syondi and Louis Anninio, Jr. both of UNH.

7:02-7:03 p.m.- PUBLIC HEARING-Public Lands Committee-Communication F, from the April 14, 2025 agenda, from Mayor Dorinda Borer regarding a proposal to sell North End Field, a 3.2-acre City owned former playground (comprised of a 0.58-acre property located at 1101 Campbell Avenue and the 2.60-acre former Baggot Street playground), to the University of New Haven ("UNH") for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00). **No one spoke.**

7:03-7:09 p.m. PUBLIC SESSION

See City's website for remarks.

Chairman Pascale called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of May 12, 2025. **HELD.**

II. COMMUNICATIONS:

Communication A: from the Tax Collector regarding Overpayment of refunds for May 2025.

Communication B: from the Tax Manager Rachel A-Massih regarding the Tax Suspense List for Grand List 2021.

Communication C: from the Finance Director Gormany and Public Works Commissioner Sissick, requesting an authorization to add LOCIP project name "Public Facilities" in the amount of \$76,109.04 to the Capital Improvement Plan within the FY 2024-2025 Capital Budget.

Councilman Vargo made a **MOTION to ADD** Introduction of Phil Sissick, Commissioner of Public Works, to Council-as-a-Whole and **REMOVE** Communication C from the Public Lands Committee, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Donovan. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Council-as-a-Whole called to order at 7:12 p.m.

1. Introduction of Phil Sissick, Commissioner of Public Works.

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WEST HAVEN

Council-as-a-Whole closed at 7:19 p.m.

Finance Committee called to order at 7:19 p.m.

FINANCE COMMITTEE, Councilwoman Ackbarali, Chairman- Committee members; Councilman Vargo, Councilwoman Tucker, Councilman Laucks (absent), and Councilman Johnstone

FINANCE UPDATES

1. Finance updates from Michael Gormany, Finance Director-**See City's website for remarks.**
2. MARB Meeting update-The Mayor gave an update, reporting that there will be no more MARB meetings because the MARB Board voted to release the City of West Haven from MARB oversight.

Councilwoman Ackbarali made a **MOTION to REMOVE** MARB Meeting updates from the agenda, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Vargo and Councilwoman Tucker. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY.**

Councilman Vargo presented a **MOTION** to recommend the acceptance to the entire Council regarding **Communication B:** from the Tax Manager Rachel A-Massih regarding the Tax Suspense List for Grand List 2021, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Johnstone. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY viva voce.**

Councilman Vargo presented a **MOTION** to recommend the acceptance to the entire Council regarding **Communication C:** from the Finance Director Gormany and Public Works Commissioner Sissick, requesting an authorization to add LOCIP project name "Public Facilities" in the amount of \$76,109.04 to the Capital Improvement Plan within the FY 2024-2025 Capital Budget, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Johnstone. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY viva voce.**

Finance Committee closed at 7:43 p.m.

Legislative Matters Committee called to order at 7:43 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE, Councilman Vargo, Chairman -Committee members: Councilman Laucks (absent), Councilwoman Tucker, Councilwoman Melton (absent) and Councilman Johnstone

Communication C, from the April 28, 2025 agenda, from Mayor Dorinda Borer regarding an ordinance amending Chapter 178 of the Code of the City of West Haven: Posting of Bills. **HELD**

Legislative Matters Committee closed at 7:43 p.m.

Public Lands Committee called to order at 7:43 p.m.

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE, Councilman Donovan, Chairman -Committee members: Councilman Laucks (absent), Councilwoman Callahan (absent), Councilman Vargo and Councilman Johnstone

Councilman Johnstone presented a **MOTION** to recommend the acceptance to the entire Council regarding **Communication F, from the April 14, 2025 agenda,** from Mayor Dorinda Borer regarding a proposal to sell North End Field, a 3.2-acre City owned former playground (comprising a 0.58-acre property located at 1101 Campbell Avenue and the 2.60-acre former Baggot Street playground), to the

University of New Haven ("UNH") for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00). which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Vargo. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY viva voce.**

Public Lands Committee closed at 7:51 p.m.

IV: UNFINISHED BUSINESS: -None.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS-7:52 p.m.

Clerk to read Communication A into record

FINANCE COMMITTEE, Councilman Vargo, Chairman- Committee members; Councilwoman Ackbarali (absent) (absent), Councilwoman Tucker, Councilman Laucks (absent), and Councilman Johnstone

Councilwoman Ackbarali departed early for a personal matter and Councilman Vargo assumed the role of Chairperson.

Communication B: from the Tax Manager Rachel A-Massih regarding the Tax Suspense List for Grand List 2021. Vargo made a **MOTION to APPROVE** which was which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Johnstone. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY.**

WHEREAS, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Section 12-165, the Tax Collector for the City of West Haven has delivered a statement of outstanding personal property and motor vehicle taxes for the West Haven Grand List year of 2021 that he has deemed to be uncollectable and that should be transferred to the Suspense Tax Book.

RESOLVED: That the City Council for the City of West Haven hereby approves the transfer of uncollectable taxes listed on said statement to the Suspense Tax Book, and that the total amount of unpaid taxes so transferred be reflected in the minutes as \$1,026,853.41, with a breakdown as follows:

Personal Property – 322 Accounts:	\$346,287.56
Motor Vehicle – 2149 Accounts:	\$560,199.89
Supplemental Motor Vehicle – 554 Accounts:	\$120,365.96

Communication C: from the Finance Director Gormany and Public Works Commissioner Sissick, requesting an authorization to add LOCIP project name "Public Facilities" in the amount of \$76,109.04 to the Capital Improvement Plan within the FY 2024-2025 Capital Budget. Vargo made a **MOTION to APPROVE** which was which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Tucker. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY.**

BE IT RESOLVED: That the City of West Haven, by and through its Finance Director, is authorized to obligate remaining LOCIP funds in the amount of \$76,109.04 to LOCIP project name "Public Facilities;" and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City of West Haven, by and through its Finance Director, is authorized to add LOCIP project name "Public Facilities" to the FY 2024-2025 Capital Improvement Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That such funds shall be used in accordance with LOCIP entitlement guidelines for public facilities projects within the City of West Haven that are on-going or in the planning stage including, but not limited to, construction, renovation, code compliance, energy conservation, and fire safety.

LEGISLATIVE MATTERS COMMITTEE, Councilman Vargo, Chairman -Committee members: Councilman Laucks (absent), Councilwoman Tucker, Councilwoman Melton (absent) and Councilman Johnstone

Communication C, from the April 28, 2025 meeting, from Mayor Dorinda Borer regarding an ordinance amending Chapter 178 of the Code of the City of West Haven: Posting of Bills. HELD

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE, Councilman Donovan, Chairman -Committee members: Councilman Laucks (absent), Councilwoman Callahan (absent), Councilman Vargo and Councilman Johnstone

Communication F. from Mayor Dorinda Borer regarding a proposal to sell North End Field, a 3.2-acre City owned former playground (comprised of a 0.58-acre property located at 1101 Campbell Avenue and the 2.60-acre former Baggot Street playground), to the University of New Haven (“UNH”) for five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00). Councilman Donovan made a **MOTION to APPROVE** which was which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Heffernan. **MOTION passed by MAJORITY.**

Roll Call vote: 7 In Favor and 1 Opposed		5 Absent
Councilwoman Garthwait	No	
Councilman Laucks		Absent
Chairman Pascale	Yes	
Councilwoman Heffernan	Yes	
Councilwoman Melton		Absent
Councilwoman Ackbarali		Absent
Councilman Donovan	Yes	
Councilman McMillan	Yes	
Councilwoman Callahan		Absent
Councilwoman Tucker	Yes	
Councilman Vargo	Yes	
Councilwoman Mueller		Absent
Councilman Johnstone	Yes	

WHEREAS, in accordance with the offer received from the University of New Haven for the acquisition of the city owned property located at 1101 Campbell Avenue, known as North End Field and Baggott Street Playground, which offer has been reviewed and considered by the City Council;

AND WHEREAS, pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Section 8-24, the West Haven Planning and Zoning Commission has reported back to the City Council favorably on the acquisition; and

WHEREAS The City Council of the City of West Haven held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, to review and discuss the offer:

RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of West Haven, after review and due consideration, hereby accepts the offer in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand (\$500,000.00) Dollars received from the University of New

Haven for the city owned property located at 1101 Campbell Avenue known as North End Field and Baggott Street Playground.

FURTHER RESOLVED, Dorinda Borer, as Mayor of The City of West Haven, is authorized and directed to execute and deliver any and all documents related to this Resolution on behalf of the City of West Haven and to do and perform all acts and things which she deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of such documents, in substantial compliance, including, but not limited to, executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by such documents.

VI. COUNCIL LIAISON REPORTS

Councilman Johnstone gave a report on the Police Department. Councilwomen Heffernan and Garthwait said the Memorial Day parade was great.

See remarks on City's website.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Councilman Donovan asked if the re-zoning of certain properties would have any effect on the West Haven Grand List, and Attorney Paul Dorsi said it will have no effect as the properties listed for re-zoning are all tax exempt already, except for 1 & 55 Forest Road. 403 Orange Avenue is partially tax exempt due to commercial use. He is interested in ways to prevent MARB oversight in the future. Mayor Borer thanked everyone for an amazing Memorial Day parade, noting that 2 monument walls were added. She announced that Acoustic Sunday begins June 1st and the summer concert series is kicking off, as well as the Savin Rock Festival in July along with the 4th of July Fireworks celebration. A bicycle safety event will take place on Saturday at Carrigan School, where free helmets and locks will be given out. Ribbon Cutting for new tennis courts and pickle ball courts at Painter Park is scheduled for June 26th. Additional training classes for AED, CPR and Narcan for city employees are upcoming. Councilwoman Tucker reported that the Opioid Advisory Committee met last month, and an update will be provided at the next meeting.

See remarks on City's website.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilwoman Heffernan made a **MOTION to ADJOURN** which was **SECONDED** by Councilman McMillian. All in favor. **MOTION passed UNANIMOUSLY.**

The City Council meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 8:15 p.m.

Nicholas Pascale
Chairman of the Council

Stacy Riccio
Clerk of the Council

Carlotta M. Serrini
City Council Administrator

****These minutes are subject to City Council approval.**