

Minutes of the January 24, 2022 City Council Meeting – West Haven High School Cafeteria

The Regular Meeting of the West Haven City Council was held on Monday, January 24, 2022 at 7:03 p.m. in the West Haven High School Cafeteria.

Plledge 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, Robert Bruneau, Steven Johnstone and Peter Massaro. Also present were Mayor Nancy R. Rossi and Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan.

Absent were Council members Trenee McGee & Victor Borrás.

Councilman Bruneau made a **MOTION** to add **EXECUTIVE SESSION** to the end of the Agenda to Discuss Communication A, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Hoskie and **APPROVED** unanimously.

7:08 **Public Session** – (See Tape for Public Comments)

Chairman Massaro called the **Regular Meeting** to order at 7:18 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Councilwoman Hoskie presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the City Council Rules 2021-2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Gallignano and **APPROVED** unanimously.

Councilwoman Hamilton presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2021, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Quagliani and **APPROVED** unanimously.

Councilwoman O'Connor presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Bruneau. Discussion took place by Councilman Quagliani indicating that page 2 first half of page was in need of corrections, suggesting that it be held so that they can be corrected. Both Councilwoman O'Connor and Councilman Bruneau withdrew their Motion and Second and the Approval of the Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2021 was **HELD**.

Councilman Bruneau presented a **MOTION to APPROVE** the Special Meeting Minutes of January 19, 2022, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Quagliani and **APPROVED** by a majority with Councilman Gallignano abstaining.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication A. From the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale of 66 Tetlow Street (Former Blake Building)

Communication B. From the Tax Collector in regards to Overpayment refunds for January 2022 which are to be filed with these meeting minutes.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

THE Council entered into Committee Meetings at 7:21 p.m.

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OF WEST HAVEN

Finance Committee – Councilwoman Bridgette Hoskie, Chairwoman

Chairwoman Hoskie opened the Finance Committee at 7:22 p.m.

Committee Members Present were Councilmembers O'Connor, Quagliani, Ackbarali, Hamilton & Hoskie.

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. Councilman Quagliani made a MOTION to bring this communication out for discussion purposes, which was SECONDED by Councilwoman O'Connor. Discussion took place by Hoskie stating her concerns that there was no permanent funding source. Councilwoman Hoskie stated that she would like to know where the money is coming from as she is struggling with using LOCIP money that the City has not received yet. Also, she was troubled that the Finance Director Frank Cieplinski was not there to answer questions from the Council. Councilman Quagliani also agreed stating that it is difficult to make financial decisions without financial representation there to answer the Council's questions. He specifically wants to know 1. Where is the money coming from, what is the funding source? And 2. Are there any monies already expended for this item as of yet? \$100,000 already given to the contractor from the contingency account? Councilwoman Hamilton also had a question. 1. Are we in possession of this equipment already or when is it to be delivered? Mayor Rossi answered stating that she believed that they are in route and the City is not in possession as of yet and she will get these questions to the Finance Director. Councilman Donovan echoed others concerns and questions. Both Councilman Quagliani and Councilwoman O'Connor withdrew their Motion and Second and this Communication was **HELD**.

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 bring this out for discussion purposes, which was SECONDED by Councilwoman O'Connor. Discussion took place with Chairman Hoskie asking if the positions have been filled and if the purchasing consultant will be a full time position. Mayor Rossi responded stating that they are interviewing, however, no one has been hired as of yet. Mayor Rossi also indicated that there was additional PILOT funding so there is money to pay for these positions. Councilwoman Ackbarali and O'Connor both asked about whether the positions would be full time, salary & benefits. Mayor Rossi stated that both positions would be full time with full benefits and that the salary is prorated as they have not been hired as of yet. Councilman Quagliani would like the following questions answered by the Director of Finance Frank Cieplinski. 1. What was the original revenue figure for the PILOT that was plugged into the budget and what is the amount that we are actually receiving so we know the difference? 2. Would like to have by next meeting, a discussion of the halfway point for the existing budget. Chairwoman Hoskie stated that she will ask Chairman Massaro to add to the next meeting agenda which will be the first meeting in February. Chairman Hoskie asked for clarification of the salary and Mayor Rossi clarified that it could be closer to a 4 month figure depending on when the person is hired. Chairman Massaro asked about who would be training. Mayor stated that there would be 3 people in that department which is necessary. Councilman Gallignano also asked about the PILOT funding and the following year's salary coming from where? Mayor Rossi replied that we should get an increased amount each year, however we cannot ever guarantee any amount. We have a lot of exempted property and that's why we get that money. 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 bring this out for discussion, which was SECONDED by Councilwoman Hamilton. Discussion took place with Councilman Quagliani wanting the following questions answered by the Finance Director Frank Cieplinski, 1. What is the salary? 2. Are they hourly – how much are we paying them per hour? 3. Any benefits? 4. End date? Mayor Rossi stated that she does not know about the end date as person has not been hired as of yet. Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan stated that when the draft contract is ready he will send it over as they are working on the terms now. Both Councilwoman Ackbarali and Councilwoman Hamilton withdrew their Motion and Second and this Communication was **HELD**.

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 Ackbarali made a MOTION to bring this out for discussion which was SECONDED by Councilwoman Hamilton. Discussion took place with Councilman Quagliani adding to the list of things to ask of the Finance Director Frank Cieplinski as to where the funding is coming from? The \$193,668. Chairman Massaro asked about whether we were retiring old police cars. Councilwoman O'Connor asked who would be using the vehicles. Mayor Rossi replied that these would be questions for Doug Coulter. Mayor Rossi was not sure of the plan but she indicated that they are being held for us but they are not purchased yet. Commission Tom McCarthy and Doug Coulter should be able to answer those questions.

An Amendment to the Motion was presented by Councilman Quagliani and **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor - all were in favor. Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously as follows

MOTION TO APPROVE bid waiver for the installation of electric vehicle chargers at City Hall parking Lot which does not include purchasing the vehicles.

More discussion took place with Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan explained that the city has a good relationship with Titan Energy in an effort to get the best deal which could be a funding source for the City. Councilwoman O'Connor was concerned that if we put these in and we don't buy the vehicles would anyone use them in West Haven or would they just sit there not being used. Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan stated that he does believe there will be a demand. Councilman Quagliani stated that he appreciates the communication and is pleased that there is little to no cost to the City and feels this would be a good addition to the City. Chairman Massaro also stated he feels this is a good idea to move forward into the future.

Further discussion took place with Councilman Quagliani making a MOTION to AMEND the Amended Motion above, which was SECONDED by Councilwoman Hoskie.

Motion was **APPROVED** unanimously with the following language added.

Bid Waiver to be reviewed by the Purchasing Agent before it can be implemented.

As for the original Communication J, both Councilwoman Ackbarali and Councilwoman Hamilton withdrew their Motion and Second.

The new Approved Motion now reads as follows:

MOTION TO APPROVE bid waiver for the installation of electric vehicle chargers at City Hall parking Lot which does not include purchasing the vehicles. Bid Waiver to be reviewed by the Purchasing Agent before it can be implemented.

FINANCE UPDATES

1. **Police Pension Study Update** – The Mayor stated still in negotiations – no update yet.
2. **ARPA update** - Mayor stated she is still working on the plan. She has been working on it with Doug Coulter and others. There will be a meeting with the State delegation later this week. The Mayor stated that she is doing what she needs to do as the Executive Branch. The plan is in draft form. MARB has also requested a copy. When it is given to MARB, it will be given to the City Council. There will be an organizational meeting of the ARPA Committee which is made up of all volunteers. She stated that they are doing their due diligence. Councilwoman Hoskie stated that the Finance Committee held their meeting to get ideas from the community. She noted that there will be a Special Meeting next Saturday, January 29th at 9:00 a.m. at the West Haven Police Department Community Room for a workshop discussion on potential projects and programs. Councilman Quagliani asked the Mayor and Lee Tiernan is that Committee more project based? How do they envision City programs to be implemented? If the plan is brought forward and part of it is programmatic such as physical or mental health, homelessness, drug addiction, domestic violence, underserved – would it be this committee or a separate committee? Mayor Rossi indicated that we are going to have to hire one or two people and will be a coordination of many efforts. Councilman Quagliani indicated that there will probably have to be a sub-committees. He also asked if there would be an opportunity to add anyone to the current ARPA Committee that the Mayor appointed? The Mayor said No as the Council will be the ones voting on it. There may be a liaison down the road but not a voting member. Councilman Quagliani noted his concern that the current committee is tasked with brick & mortar projects and believes that we need to coordinate services among the City and we need to deal with what the community's needs are. Councilwoman Hoskie echoed Councilman Quagliani. While she appreciates the volunteers on the Committee, she doesn't feel it's a true reflection of the needs of our community. Hoskie stated that she thinks that there should be citizens added to the Committee. Councilwoman Hamilton asked if the Council can have a citizen advisory committee? And come up with a mixed plan. Councilwoman Garthwait echoed Hamilton's idea. Councilman Massaro stated that his hope is that whatever or whoever has the plans, that we get the best for our tax payers. He suggested that they all sit together and when it comes to the Council, they can change it if they so desire. Councilwoman O'Connor stated that with proper communication we can all come up with the best ways to spend the mon eys. Council people Donovan, Bruneau and Johnstone all gave input stating that they would like to see citizen and Council input and more communication. Councilwoman Hoskie was asking for what citizen's suggestions were that were sent in. Councilman Johnstone stated that he is getting calls from his constituents with worry about a tunnel vision agenda. He also stated that he doesn't want to lose the public's trust.

3. **MARB Meeting Update** – Councilwoman Hoskie would like to make a request from the Director of Finance to receive copies of everything that MARB gets at the 10:00 meeting on 1/25/2022.
4. **Discussion regarding compensatory time for elected/appointed officials.** Councilwoman Hoskie stated that she would like something that states that elected officials do not get comp time. Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan stated that appointed officials have been getting comp time for years but elected officials do not. He will add this information to the draft legal memorandum and get it to the City Council.

The Finance Committee was closed at 8:41 p.m.

Tax Deferral Committee – Councilman Robert Bruneau, Acting Chairman

Chairman Bruneau opened the Tax Deferral Committee at 8:41 p.m.

Committee Members Present were Councilmembers Johnstone, Galignano, Ackbarali & Bruneau.
Absent: Councilwoman McGee.

Communication D from the January 10, 2022 Agenda request for tax abatement from taxpayer Quiana Carmon. Councilman Galignano brought forward a **MOTION to APPROVE**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Johnstone, all were in favor. **MOTION APPROVED** unanimously.

The Tax Deferral Committee was closed at 8:44 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – 8:43 p.m.

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Councilwoman Bridgette Hoskie, Chairwoman

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

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 was **HELD**.

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 was **HELD**.

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. And the following **AMENDED MOTION** was reported by Councilwoman Hoskie, Chairwoman Hoskie and **SECONDED** by Councilwoman Hamilton, and **APPROVED** unanimously as follows:

*****MOTION TO APPROVE bid waiver for the installation of electric vehicle chargers at City Hall parking Lot which does not include purchasing the vehicles. Bid Waiver to be reviewed by the Purchasing Agent before it can be implemented.**

TAX DEFERRAL COMMITTEE – Councilman Robert Bruneau, Acting Chairman

Councilman Bruneau, Acting Chairman of the Tax Deferral Committee reported the following:

Communication D from the January 10, 2022 Agenda request for tax abatement from tax payer Quiana Carmon – **MOTION** made by Councilman Bruneau, **SECONDED** by Councilman Donovan, all were in favor – **MOTION APPROVED** unanimously

RESOLVED: That the request for an abatement of interest and fees, currently de as of January 24, 2022 the date of this Council meeting on the 2016, 2017, and 2018 Grand List from Quiana Carmon of 69 Sanford St., West Haven, be approved based on the following:

Tax Balance must be paid within 24 weeks from the date of this meeting.

All tax bills issued from this date forward must be paid when due.

A good faith effort to pay a minimum of \$25.00 a week must be established.

ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED: None.

COUNCIL LIASON REPORTS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Quagliani to enter into Executive Session to discuss **Communication A** from the Office of Corporation Counsel in regards to the sale of 66 Tetlow St (Former Blake Building), inviting Corporation Counsel Lee Tiernan to join the Executive Session, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Johnstone, all were in favor. **MOTION** was **APPROVED** unanimously.

The City Council entered into Executive Session at 8:49 p.m.

The City Council came out of Executive Session and resumed their Regular Meeting at 9:20 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS (continuation)

PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE, Councilman Gary Donovan, Chairman

Chairman Donovan opened the Public Lands Committee at 9:20 p.m.

Committee Members Present were Councilmembers O'Connor, Quagliani, Bruneau, Hamilton & Donovan.

A **MOTION** was made by Councilman Donovan to Hold a Public Hearing & Sale of 66 Tetlow Street, the former Blake Building, which was **SECONDED** by Councilwoman O'Connor, all were in favor. **MOTION** was **APPROVED** unanimously.

Chairman Donovan closed the Public Lands Committee at 9:22 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (continuation) – 9:22 p.m.

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

That the City Council will post and hold a Public Hearing for the Sale of 66 Tetlow Street, the former Blake Building to be held at 6:50 p.m. at the next Regular City Council meeting to be held on Monday, February 14, 2022, which was SECONDED by Councilman Quagliani, and all were in favor. The MOTION was APPROVED unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Johnstone made a **MOTION** to **ADJOURN**, which was **SECONDED** by Councilman Bruneau, all were in favor. **MOTION** passed unanimously.

The City Council meeting was **ADJOURNED** at **9:24 p.m.**

ATTEST:

Stacy Riccio, Clerk

City Council

These minutes are subject to the City Council Approval.