

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 4, 2024 - 7:30 PM

Honorable Mayor, Roberto Alves, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & PRAYER

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sean Hatch. Councilman Salvatore led all in prayer.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Hawley, Rickert, Simone, Gartner, Salvatore, Peter Buzaid, Emile Buzaid, Coelho, LaPine, Ratchford, Dennis Perkins, VACANT, Robinson, Britton, Duane Perkins, Chianese, Rotello, Giordano.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Palma, McAllister (arrived late), and Tomchik.

PRESENT: 17, ABSENT: 3, VACANCY: 1

ALSO PRESENT: Les Pinter, Deputy Corporation Counsel; and Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Richard Janelli, Resident, 18 Benson Drive, spoke on items #1, and #13.

Rick Rogers, Resident, 20 Bragdon Avenue, spoke on item #1.

Rachel Chaleski, Resident, 15 Centennial Drive, spoke on item #1.

Joe Ward, Resident, 17 Kilian Drive, spoke on item #1.

John Laughinghouse, Resident, 5 Hayestown Heights, spoke on item #13.

Ken Gucker, Resident, 89 Padanaram Road, spoke on items #9, #12, and #20.

Al Robinson, Resident, 7 Melrose Avenue, spoke on items #1, #5, and #9.

Greg Williams, Resident, 9 College Park Drive, spoke on item #9.

MINUTES - Minutes for the Special City Council Meetings held December 4 and 14, 2023 & the Regular City Council Meeting held December 5, 2023.

A motion was made by Councilman P. Buzaid, and was seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to receive the minutes and waive the reading of the minutes, as all Members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office, and approve the minutes as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

10. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Police Pension Board

Receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Council President Peter Buzaid to fill the vacancy on the Police Pension Board.

11. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Fire Pension Board

Receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Councilwoman Holly Robinson to fill the vacancy on the Fire Pension Board.

13. COMMUNICATION - Appointments to Margerie Trail Advisory Committee

Receive the communication and confirm the appointments of Kenneth Gucker and Councilwoman Holly Robinson to the Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee.

16. COMMUNICATION - Donation of Funds for Ballistic Vests - Police Department

Receive the communication and generous donation from Patricia Ireland in the amount of \$2,500 and send the appropriate letter of thanks for her commitment to our community.

21. RESOLUTION - ARPA Reallocation of Funds - Finance

Receive the communication and adopt the resolution to reallocate funds for the American Rescue Plan Act in the amount of \$120,000 to the public safety items listed in Exhibit 1-G as presented.

22. RESOLUTION - 2022 OPM JAG Violent Crime Prevention Grant Extension of Funding - Police Department

Receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Mayor Roberto L. Alves or Patrick Ridenhour, Chief of Police, as his designee to apply for and accept additional funding in the amount of \$7,500 from the 2022 JAG Violent Crime Prevention Grant Program, no local match is required.

23. RESOLUTION - Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants - Library

Receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Mayor Roberto L. Alves or Katie Pearson, Library Director, as his designee to sign any documents necessary to effectuate the purposes of the Will Eisner Graphic Novel grant application at an approximate value of \$7,000 and execute on behalf of the City of Danbury all contracts, agreements or amendments and take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this funding, no local match is required.

24. RESOLUTION - Libraries Transform Engagement Grant - Library

Receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Mayor Roberto L. Alves or Katie Pearson, Library Director, as his designee to sign any documents necessary to effectuate the purposes of the Libraries Transform Engagement grant application in the amount of \$2,000 and execute on behalf of the City of Danbury all contracts, agreements or amendments and take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this funding, no local match is required.

25. RESOLUTION - Peggy Barber Tribute Grant - Library

Receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Mayor Roberto L. Alves or Katie Pearson, Library Director, as his designee to sign any documents necessary to effectuate the purposes of the Peggy Barber Tribute grant application in the amount of \$2,500 and execute on behalf of the City of Danbury all contracts, agreements or amendments and take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this funding, no local match is required.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gartner, and was seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to accept the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA

1. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to the City Council

A motion was made by Councilman Emile Buzaid, seconded by Councilman Coelho, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Irving Fox to the First Ward City Council seat. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Rotello expressed his support for the appointment of Mr. Fox.

8:01pm – Councilman McAllister arrived late. Irving Fox was sworn in as City Councilman.

UPDATED ATTENDANCE: 19 PRESENT, 2 ABSENT

2. COMMUNICATION - Fire Department Appointment: Deputy Fire Marshal - Elizabeth Schiller and Robert Natale

A motion was made by Councilman Rickert, seconded by Councilman Salvatore, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Elizabeth Schiller and Robert Natale as Danbury Fire Department Deputy Fire Marshals. The motion carried unanimously.

3. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Stephen Hilderbrand to Lieutenant

A motion was made by Councilman Simone, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Stephen Hilderbrand as Lieutenant of the Danbury Police Department with pleasure. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Matthew Malone to Lieutenant

A motion was made by Councilman Giordano, seconded by Councilman Salvatore, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Matthew Malone as Lieutenant of the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Christopher Belair to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman McAllister, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Christopher Belair as Sergeant of the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor expressed his support of the appointment of Office Belair to Sergeant.

6. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Stephen Gruse to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman Dennis Perkins, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Stephen Gruse as Sergeant of the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

7. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Michael Iaquinto to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman Chianese, seconded by Councilman Coelho, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Michael Iaquinto as Sergeant of the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

8. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Appointments - Charlie Hernandez, Yimelfi Mercado De Mateo as Certified Police Officers

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Charlie Hernandez and Yimelfi Mercado De Mateo as Certified Police Officers of the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Rickert expressed his support for these appointments and thanked the new officers.

9. COMMUNICATION & RESOLUTION - Charter Revision Commission

A motion was made by Councilman Britton, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, along with Corporation Counsel and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Britton in the chair, along with Councilwoman Gartner and Councilman Palma.

The Mayor discussed the need a Charter Revision.

10. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Police Pension Board

**CONSENTED* - as received.

11. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Fire Pension Board

**CONSENTED* - as received.

12. COMMUNICATION - Appointments to Government Entities Review Committee (GERC)

A motion was made by Councilman Salvatore, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to receive the communication and confirm the appointments of Council Members Paul Rotello, Diane LaPine, Elmer Palma, and reappointment the citizen Members Al Boyce, and Mark Chory to the Government Entities Review Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

13. COMMUNICATION - Appointments to Margerie Trail Advisory Committee

**CONSENTED* - as received.

14. COMMUNICATION - Request to Review Civil Service & Workforce Process

A motion was made by Councilman Duane Perkins, to refer this to an Ad Hoc Committee along with Corporation Counsel, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, and other Department Heads as requested by the Committee, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman P. Buzaid in the chair, along with Councilwomen Gartner and Councilman E. Buzaid.

15. COMMUNICATION - 2022 Year End Re-Appropriations, Transfers and Fund Balances - Finance

A motion was made by Councilman Salvatore, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the communication and approve the following June 30, 2022 year-end appropriations and budget transfers necessary to close out the 2021-2022 fiscal year. General Fund \$162,594.17, Water Fund \$86,588.73, Sewer Fund \$481,607.01, Internal Service Fund Risk Management \$68,372.35, in addition, approve the assignments of fund balance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, as follows, Assigned Fund Balance capital projects \$3.5 million, assigned fund balance debt service \$500,000, assigned fund balance litigation \$475,000, assigned fund balance tax appeals \$2 million, assigned fund balance pension \$1 million. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Garrick (Finance Director) clarified for Councilman Perkins that the City cannot start the 2023 audit, until the 2022 audit is finalized and published.

16. COMMUNICATION - Donation of Funds for Ballistic Vests - Police Department

**CONSENTED* - as received.

17. COMMUNICATION - Storm Drainage Extension - White St. to Ives St. (Savings Bank of Danbury)

A motion was made by Councilwoman Robinson, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, with Corporation Counsel, Public Works Director, City Engineer, Planning Department, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Britton in the chair, along with Councilwoman LaPine and Councilman Fox.

18. COMMUNICATION - Release of City Easements to Savings Bank of Danbury

A motion was made by Councilman Ratchford, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, with Corporation Counsel, Public Works Director, City Engineer, Planning Department, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Britton in the chair, along with Councilwoman LaPine and Councilman Fox.

19. COMMUNICATION - BRT Brookview Commons LLC Application for Deferral of Assessment Increases

A motion was made by Councilwoman LaPine, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, with Corporation Counsel, Director of Finance, Tax Assessor, Public Works Director, City Engineer, Planning Department, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Salvatore in the chair, along with Councilwoman Gartner and Councilman E. Buzaid.

20. RESOLUTION - Process to Apply for Grant Funds

A motion was made by Councilman Hawley, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, with Corporation Counsel, Director of Finance, Assistant Director of Finance: Budgets & Grants, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilwoman Gartner in the chair, along with Councilmen Hawley and Fox.

21. RESOLUTION - ARPA Reallocation of Funds - Finance

**CONSENTED* - as received.

22. RESOLUTION - 2022 OPM JAG Violent Crime Prevention Grant Extension of Funding - Police Department

**CONSENTED* - as received.

23. RESOLUTION - Will Eisner Graphic Novel Grants - Library

**CONSENTED* - as received.

24. RESOLUTION - Libraries Transform Engagement Grant - Library

**CONSENTED* - as received.

25. RESOLUTION - Peggy Barber Tribute Grant - Library

**CONSENTED* - as received.

26. REPORTS - Ad Hoc: Chow House (Farrington Park) - Residential License

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes, as all Members have copies, and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office; and it should be noted there are two minor Scribner errors in the minutes, in two separate areas, Councilman Fox and Perkins were inadvertently identified as Chairman. The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilwoman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee and approve the license agreement between the City of Danbury and *****, for the Chow House at Farrington Park property, for a period of three years, ending December 31, 2026.* The motion carried unanimously.

27. REPORTS - Ad Hoc: Main House (Farrington Park) - Residential License

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes, as all Members have copies, and copies are on file in the Legislative Clerk's Office, and note two minor Scribner errors in the minutes, in two separate areas, where Councilman Fox and Perkins are listed as Chairman. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilwoman LaPine, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee. The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilwoman LaPine, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee and approve the license agreement between the City of Danbury and *****, for the Main House at Farrington Park property, for a period of three years, ending December 31, 2026.* The motion carried unanimously.

28. REPORTS - Ad Hoc: Bear Mountain (Reservation) Cottage - Residential License

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes, as all Members have copies, and copies are on file in the Legislative Clerk's Office, and note two minor Scribner errors in the minutes, in two separate areas, where Councilman Fox and Perkins are listed as Chairman. The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilwoman Gartner, seconded by Councilman Salvatore, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee and approve the license agreement between the City of Danbury and *****, for the Cottage at Bear Mountain property, for a period of three years, ending December 31, 2026.* The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Alves called for a Point of Order regarding Item #27. Attorney Pinter agreed that the motion should be made to include the licensee.

27. RECONSIDERATION - REPORTS - Ad Hoc: Main House (Farrington Park) - Residential License

A motion was made by Councilman Chianese, seconded by Councilwoman Gartner, to reconsider item number 27. The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilwoman LaPine, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee and approve the license agreement between the City of Danbury and *****, for the Main House at Farrington Park property, for a period of three years, ending December 31, 2026.* The motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS - Police, Fire, Health & Human Services, Public Works, Permit Center, U.N.I.T., Elderly Services, Public Library, Tax Assessor

A motion was made by Councilman Rickert, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to accept the reports and waive the reading of the reports. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Day (Superintendent of Public Utilities) debriefed Councilman Rickert on the status of fire hydrants.

Mr. Ridenhour (Police Chief) provided Councilman Rotello with a brief overview of the department's crime and enforcement progress.

Mr. Iadarola (Director of Public Works & City Engineer) updated Councilman Duane Perkins about the water main installation project.

Committee Updates:

The Following Committees are Sunsetting -
Interlocal Water Treatment Agreement with Putnam County Committee
Review of Security Policies Committee
BRT Brookview Commons Tax Deferral (333 Main Street)

Mayor Extended All Other Committees

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Copies of Agenda Items are available in the Legislative Assistant's Office and on the City's website.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Martinez
Recording Secretary

Attest,
Peter Buzaid, City Council President and Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant