

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

March 9, 2023 - 7:30 P.M.

Honorable Mayor, Dean Esposito, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**NOTICE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING – There will be a Special Meeting of the City Council on Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers in City Hall to act on the items below.**

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & PRAYER**

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

**ROLL CALL:**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Buzaid, Enriquez, Knapp, Levy, DiGilio, Rotello, Henry, Britton, Perkins, Esposito, Esposito III, Fox, Chianese, Cavo, Masi, Palma, Santos and Cammisa.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Visconti, Halas and Molinaro.

**PRESENT: 18, ABSENT: 3**

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

**NOTICE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING – There will be a Special Meeting of the City Council on Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 7:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers in City Hall to act on the items below.**

**A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Perkins, to accept the call to service for this meeting, having been appropriately noticed.** The motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

Brian Waldron, Resident, 26 Ridge Road, spoke on item #7.

Larry Riefberg, Resident, 6 Ervie Drive, spoke on items 1, 15, and 4.

Jim Maloney, Resident, 15 Wooster Heights, spoke on item #13.

John Woodruff, Resident, 57 Middle River Road, spoke on item #10.

Richard Janelli, Resident, 18 Benson Drive, spoke on item #4.

Ken Gucker, Resident, 89 Padanaram Road, spoke on items 5, 7, and 13.

Eduardo (inaudible), Resident, 8 1/2 4th Street, spoke on items 1, and 4.

**MINUTES - Minutes of the Council Meeting held February 7, 2023**

**A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Perkins, being that at this time being all Members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office; I move that we waive the reading of the minutes and accept them as presented.** The motion carried unanimously.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

2. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Government Entity – Library Board of Directors

**Receive the Communication and approve the appointment of Susan Kayal to serve on the Library Board of Directors.**

6. COMMUNICATION - Donation – Hologic - Police Department

**Receive the Communication from Patrick Ridenhour, Chief of Police, and accept the generous donation from Hologic and send an appropriate letter of thanks.**

8. COMMUNICATION - Disposal of Surplus Vehicles & Equipment – Purchasing

**Receive the Communication from Charles J. Volpe, Jr, Purchasing Agent and grant permission for the disposal of surplus vehicles and equipment as presented.**

10. RESOLUTION - CT Office of the Arts Make Music Grant – Cultural Commission

**Receive the Communication from Daniel Garrick, Director of Finance, and Adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Gregory Wenzek, Coordinator of the Danbury Cultural Commission, as his designee, to apply for and accept funding from the Connecticut State Office for the Arts ‘Make Music Day 2023’ Grant Program in the amount of \$1,000 with no local match being required.**

12. RESOLUTION - CT DPH ELC II Grant – Health & Human Services

**Receive the Communication from Kara Prunty, Director of Health and Human Services and authorize Mayor Dean Esposito or Kara Prunty, Director of Health and Human Services to continue to apply for and accept funding for the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity II Grant Program as presented.**

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

1. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Appointments: Tirado to Certified Police Officer Pupczyk to Entry Level Police Officer

**A motion was made by Councilman Henry, seconded by Councilman Palma, to receive the communication and confirm the appointments of Christina Tirado and Matthew Pupczyk to the position of Police Officer in the City of Danbury.** The motion carried unanimously.

2. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Government Entity – Library Board of Directors

***\*CONSENTED*** - as received.

3. COMMUNICATION - COVID Bonus for Non-Union Employees

*A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, seconded by Councilman Esposito III, to receive the communication and approve the COVID bonus to certain non-union fulltime employees in recognition of their dedicated service during a critical time during the pandemic; the COVID bonus is to be paid from allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), with funds as follows as dictated by your correspondence.* 17 Yes, 1 Abstention (Cavo). The motion carried.

Councilman Rotello thanked City employees for serving the public during the pandemic.

4. COMMUNICATION - Request regarding 2022 Revaluation

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, to send this item to an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Corporation Counsel, Director of Finance, the Tax Assessor, and a representative from the Mayor's Office.* So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman DiGilio in the chair, along with Councilmen Levy and Perkins.

5. COMMUNICATION - Acquisition of Property for Open Space & Public Uses

*A motion was made by Councilman Knapp, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc with Corporation Counsel, Director of Planning, Director of Finance, Director of Public Works, the Tax Assessor, and the Mayor's Office.* So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman DiGilio in the chair, along with Councilmen Cavo and Perkins.

6. COMMUNICATION - Donation – Hologic - Police Department

*\*CONSENTED* - as received.

7. COMMUNICATION - Donation – My Old House LLC - Danbury Airport for the Civil Air Patrol

*A motion was made by Councilman Masi, seconded by Councilman Esposito, to receive the communication and accept the donation from My Old House LLC, with repairs to the Civil Air Patrol building and send the appropriate letters of thanks.* The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Safranek discussed the Airport's assessment and repairs process with Councilman Perkins.

8. COMMUNICATION - Disposal of Surplus Vehicles & Equipment – Purchasing

*\*CONSENTED* - as received.

9. RESOLUTION - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 – Reallocation of Funds

*A motion was made by Councilman Esposito III, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive the communication and adopt the resolution to reallocate the amounts designated for certain projects as set forth, in the attached exhibit 1-C, it is further resolved that Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or his designee, be and here by is authorized to take all actions necessary to enactuate the intent of this resolution as presented.* The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Garrick explained to Councilman Chianese that council members are encouraged to reach out to him directly with input allocating the remaining funds.

Councilman DiGilio reiterate the process of allocating ARPA funds which ultimately has to be approved by the council at regular meetings.

Mr. Ridenhour discussed the body camera project with Councilman Farley. Mr. Garrick clarified that the body camera project is part of the original ARPA fund allocation, and is not part of this reallocation request.

Mr. Ridenhour confirmed that cameras also exist in all patrol cars with Councilman Perkins

Mayor Esposito thanked the City's Department Heads for their hard work in allocating ARPA funds where it is needed the most.

10. RESOLUTION - CT Office of the Arts Make Music Grant – Cultural Commission

*\*CONSENTED* - as received.

11. RESOLUTION - PCLB Foundation Grant – Elderly Services

*A motion was made by Councilman Fox, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Susan Tomanio, Director of Elderly Services as his designee, to be authorized to apply to the Peter & Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation in an amount not to exceed \$75,000, to be used for elderly clients, providing services for outreach and resources, in conjunction with other City departments, and to execute all contracts and agreements necessary to make these purposes thereof.* The motion carried unanimously.

12. RESOLUTION - CT DPH ELC II Grant – Health & Human Services

*\*CONSENTED* - as received.

13. REPORT & RESOLUTION – Ad Hoc – State Surplus Property – 71 Main Street

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes of the report, as all Members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office.* The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the report of the February 15, 2023 Ad Hoc Committee, and given the receipt of the clarifying information, adopt a revised resolution that we were presented this evening increasing the DECD application amount and clarifying the parcels to be acquired, all in order to authorize Mayor Dean Esposito to make application and take such further actions that are required in furtherance of said application authorized by this resolution.* The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman DiGilio spoke in support of the application for the state grant.

Councilman Henry explained his support of the grant application to continue development of the south end of Main Street.

Councilman Esposito III reiterated the benefit of the grant which would mean no cost to the taxpayers.

Mr. Iadarola provided a brief overview of the scope of the project, and provided Councilman Chianese with an estimated 18-month timeline for occupancy once work begins.

Mr. Pinter explained that a future lease agreement would need approval by the council at a later date.

Councilman Rotello spoke in favor of saving the courthouse with the grant funding.

Councilman Perkins also spoke in support of the project.

Mayor Esposito thanked the CCFDC for their hard work on applying for this grant and their efforts to preserve the historic building.

14. REPORT - Ad Hoc - Request for Kenosia Park Field # 4 Naming & Dedication

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Cavo, to waive the reading of the minutes, as all members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office.* The motion carried unanimously.

*A motion was made by Councilman Knapp, seconded by Councilman Cavo, to receive the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee and adopt Kenosia Park Field #4, to be now known as Minganchos Field.* The motion carried unanimously.

15. REPORT - Ad Hoc - Lease and Purchase of Property – 98 Elm Street

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to waive the reading of the minutes of the Ad Hoc, as all Members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office.* The motion carried unanimously.

Main Motion:

*A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive the communication from the Ad Hoc Committee report and the positive Planning Commission report, and authorize Mayor Dean Esposito to execute the purchase and sale agreement of 98 Elm Street.*

Friendly Amendment 1:

*A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, to amend the main motion to include a Public Hearing.*  
The motion was withdrawn.

Friendly Amendment 2:

*A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Knapp, to amend the main motion to include the following wording: "and all supporting related documents as necessary to effectuate this agreement".*

Councilman Cavo accepted the amendment for the main motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Amendment 3:

*A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to make an amendment to send this matter to a Public Hearing.*

The motion failed on roll call vote. 9 Yes (Buzaid, Eriquez, Rotello, Fox, Palma, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese), 9 No. Mayor voted to break the tie. Final Vote: 9 Yes, 10 No.

Main Motion - Amended:

**A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive the communication and adopt the Ad Hoc Committee report and the positive Planning Commission report, authorizing Mayor Dean Esposito to execute the purchase and sale agreement of 98 Elm Street, and all related documents as necessary to effectuate this agreement.** The motion passed on roll call vote. 13 Yes, 5 No (Rotello, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese). Motion carried.

Councilman Chianese discussed the Ad Hoc meeting minutes, and stated that he believes the intent was to schedule a public hearing.

Mr. Casagrande clarified that it is up to the council to decide if a public hearing is needed despite it not being required. He also provided a brief overview of the following: right to operate a homeless shelter, zoning history, and abandonment of use.

Councilman Rotello spoke in support of scheduling a public hearing. He also suggested tabling discussion to host a public meeting.

Councilman DiGilio asked about the project timeline, expressed his concern with homeless shelter deadlines, and is hesitant to elongating the process.

Mr. Pinter addressed deadlines, project timelines, and the requirements for a public hearing.

Councilman Levy spoke in support of executing the lease and purchase agreement. He noted the City approved the use and zoning of the property along time ago.

Councilman Britton spoke in support of, and the need for, scheduling a public hearing.

Councilman DiGilio clarified that the property is owned by the Danbury Housing Authority, and Mr. Casagrande noted that it is already zoned as a homeless shelter.

Councilman Santos asked when the zoning approval took place and asked for a roll call vote.

Mr. Pinter clarified the amendment and noted that the council can discuss the need for a public hearing.

Councilman Cavo spoke in support of executing the lease and purchase agreement. He reiterated that the property is owned by the Housing Authority and requiring a public hearing will set a precedent that could change public hearings requirements on future actions.

Ms. Calitro noted the Planning Commissions meeting was publicly noticed and open for the public to attend.

Esposito III spoke in support of moving forward with executing the lease and purchase agreement due to time constraints.

**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 DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the department reports, as all members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office, as well as accept them as presented.** The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Prunty provided a brief overview of the following: homeless population data, housing data, and data collection.

**Committees:**

Changes to Ad Hoc Committees:

1. Reapportionment: Remove Visconti, Add Chianese.
2. Audit: Remove Visconti, Add Chianese.

Mayor Extended All Committees.

New Ad Hoc Appointments:

1. Education Budget: Levy, Chair; Fox, Molinaro, Chianese, Cammisa

**ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Santos addressed the public regarding his resignation as City Councilman.

Mayor Esposito presented Councilman Santos with a plaque of recognition.

Councilman Cavo asked for a moment of silence for Joan Soderstrom, former Mayor's Office employee.

**A motion was made by Councilwoman Cammisa, seconded by Councilman Cavo, to adjourn.** Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:07 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,  
Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant