

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

August 1, 2023 - 7:30 P.M.

Honorable Mayor, Dean Esposito, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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, Putnam, Levy, DiGilio, Rotello, Esposito, Esposito III, Fox, Henry, Merchan, Perkins, Chianese, Cammisa, Visconti, Britton, Coelho, and Tomchik.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Eriquez, Masi, Palma.

PRESENT: 17, ABSENT: 3, VACANCY: 1

ALSO PRESENT: Bob Yamin, Corporation Counsel; Robin Edwards, Asst. Corporation Counsel; and Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant.

PUBLIC INPUT:

James Hynbacker, Resident, 2 Wood Street, spoke on Department Reports (UNIT).

Richard Janelli, Resident, 18 Benson Drive, spoke on item #7.

Juanita Harris, Resident, 68 Virginia Avenue, spoke on item #14.

Ken Gucker, Resident, 89 Padanaram Road, spoke on items #4 and #7.

Joanne Pearsall Evans, Resident, 95 Elm Street, spoke on item #14.

Al Robinson, Resident, 70 Melrose Avenue, spoke on item #7.

MINUTES - Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held July 6, 2023 & SPECIAL Council Meeting held July 17, 2023

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Levy, to waive the reading of the minutes, of the regular Council meeting from July 6th, as well the special Council meeting on July 17th, and accept the reports as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

4. COMMUNICATION - Re-appointment of Mr. Richard Jannelli and Mrs. Barbara Chianese to Fair Rent Commission

Receive the Communication and approve the re-appointment of Richard Jannelli and Barbara Chianese to serve on the Fair Rent Commission as presented.

6. COMMUNICATION - Airport Obstruction Removal EA Grant - Contract for Services with Hoyle, Tanner & Assoc. (HTA)

Receive the Communication and approve the contract for services with Hoyle, Tanner & Associates related to the Airport Obstruction Removal EA – Danbury Municipal Airport be executed as presented.

12. RESOLUTION - Historical Documents Preservation Grant Program - Town Clerk

Receive the Communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Janice Giegler, Town Clerk as his designee, to apply for and accept funding related to the Connecticut State Library Fiscal Year 2024 Historic Documents Preservation Grant program in the amount of \$11,000.00 as presented.

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, to accept the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

1. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to the City Council

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Visconti, to receive this communication and approve the nomination of Michael McGetrick to serve on the City Council in Danbury. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McGetrick was sworn into office by Corporation Counsel Yamin.

Mr. McGetrick took his seat on the dias.

ATTENDANCE UPDATE: PRESENT: 18, ABSENT: 3

POINT OF ORDER:

Councilman DeGilio noted that a second was required for the Consent Calendar motion. *Councilwoman Cammisa provided a second for the motion.*

2. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Sergeant James Antonelli to Police Lieutenant

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, seconded by Councilman Esposito III, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment and promotion of Police Sergeant James Antonelli to the position of Police Lieutenant with the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

3. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Appointments - Pena, Poplaski, Ventura Mena, Garcia to Certified Police Officers

A motion was made by Councilman Esposito, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to receive the correspondence and confirm the appointment of following individuals to the position of Police Officer, Officer Pena, Officer Poplaski, Officer Ventura Mena, Officer Garcia, as Certified Police Officers in the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMUNICATION - Re-appointment of Mr. Richard Jannelli and Mrs. Barbara Chianese to Fair Rent Commission

***CONSENTED** - as received.

5. COMMUNICATION - Tax Appeal Litigation Settlement - Danbury Mall, LLC & MS Portfolio LLC

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, to move this item to the end of the agenda. So Ordered.

6. COMMUNICATION - Airport Obstruction Removal EA Grant - Contract for Services with Hoyle, Tanner & Assoc. (HTA)

***CONSENTED** - as received.

7. COMMUNICATION - Danbury Public Schools Request for Release of Educational Reserve

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, to refer this to an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Corporation Counsel, City Director of Finance, Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education Chief Financial Officer, and a representative from the Mayor's Office. So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Levy in the chair, along with Councilmen Fox and Chianese.

8. COMMUNICATION - DMEA Bargaining Agreement

A motion was made by Councilman Fox, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive the communication and approve the funding for the collective bargaining agreement between the City of Danbury and the Danbury Municipal Employees Association for July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2026, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Visconti spoke in favor of the agreement.

Ms. Alosco-Werner (Human Resources Director) clarified the negotiated plan year for Councilman Chianese.

9. COMMUNICATION - Sidewalk Easement - 32 Germantown Road

A motion was made by Councilman Esposito III, to receive this communication and refer this item to the City Engineer and Planning Commission for departmental reports. So Ordered.

10. COMMUNICATION - Appropriation to the Ambulance Fund

A motion was made by Councilman Coelho, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the communication and approve the additional appropriation of \$584,419, for the Ambulance Fund's 2021-2022 budget as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Garrick clarified the appropriation of funding towards the Ambulance Fund for Councilman DiGilio

Mr. Cassavechia (Director of Emergency management spoke on Covid precautions that led to service calls with treatment but no transport for Councilman Chianese.

11. RESOLUTION - PFAS Litigation Outside Counsel Authorization - Ventura Law & Frazer Law, PLC

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, to move this item to the end of the agenda. So Ordered.

12. RESOLUTION - Historical Documents Preservation Grant Program - Town Clerk

**CONSENTED* - as received.

13. RESOLUTION - Community Development Block Grant Program (Year 49)

A motion was made by Councilman Putnam, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to receive this communication and adopt the resolution authoring Dean E. Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, to approve and submit the City's annual action plan for the program year 49, as well as apply for and accept funding from the US Department of Housing & Urban Development Community's Development Lot Grant Program, for August 31, 2023 to July 31, 2024, time period in the amount of \$538,833, with no match being required, as presented. 17 Yes, 1 Abstention (Chianese). Motion carried.

A (friendly) amendment was made by Councilman Rotello to correct the amount in the motion to \$583,833.

A correction was made by Councilman Fox to correct the date in the motion to August 1, 2023.

Councilman DiGilio spoke in support of the request.

Councilman Chianese recused from the vote.

Councilman Rotello asked about breaking the amount down by organization for individual votes. Corporation Counsel Yamin noted that listing the items could be considered for future requests.

14. REPORTS - Ad Hoc Report - Honorary Street Name Request: Elm Street for Rev. Bush

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Levy, to waive the reading 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 Buzaid, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to receive the Committee report and adopt the resolution that Elm Street be honorarily designated as the Reverend Ruben L. Bush Sr. Blvd. 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 DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the Department Reports, as all Members have copies and copies are on file, as well as receive them as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Chianese thanked the Public Works Department for their hard work, and Mr. Nolan for his quick response to a constituent request.

Councilman Perkins recognized the Police Department for their recruitment efforts and the diversity of candidates. Mr. Ridenhour spoke on the Police Department's continued recruitment efforts.

Ms. Murphy (Tax Assessor) spoke on the vehicle compliance program and an additional \$3,965,068 in identified revenue.

Mr. Ferguson (Tax Collector) clarified the tax collection process for the vehicle compliance program.

Mayor Esposito thanked the department heads for their hard work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #1:

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Henry, to enter into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing a pending legal matter involving property tax appeals with Danbury Mall LLC and MS Portfolio LLC, the following individuals will need to remain for the session, City Assessor, Finance Director, Corporation Counsel, Outside Legal Counsel, and Mayoral staff. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session #1 began at 8:32 pm.

City Council Meeting Reconvened at 9:31pm.

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to authorize the resolution of the pending legal matter in accordance with the Executive Session discussion authorizing the Mayor to sign any required stipulation and obtain a funding certification from the Director of Finance as necessary. The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2:

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Levy, to move into Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the retainer of special outside counsel to pursue joinder in litigation regarding PFAS forever chemical issues, the following people please remain for the session, Corporation Counsel, Outside Litigation Counsel, Director of Public Works, Superintendent of Public Utilities, Finance Director, and Mayoral staff. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session #2 began at 9:33 pm.

City Council Meeting Reconvened at 10:16 pm.

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Rotello, for the adoption of the resolution retaining outside special counsel as indicated and discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Extended All Committees with the following updates:

Sunset:

Airport Lease Agreement: Tango Yankee LLC

Licensing Agreement for use of Library Space

Establish Formal Process for Naming & Renaming City Buildings, Parks, Fields, Streets and Property

Ordinance Change: Sewer & Water Public Works Assessments Procedures

Re-Assignments:

Deferral of Assessment - 11 Boughton Street (2023)

Chair – Henry, members: Eriquez, Perkins

Property Tax Abatement for Volunteers (Firefighters, EMTs & Paramedics) (2007, 2021)

Chair – Esposito III, members: DiGilio, Perkins

Danbury Airport Sewer Line - Easement (2022)

Chair – Esposito, members: Henry, Rotello

UNIT Support for Tax Assessor Enforcement (2020)

Chair – DiGilio, members: Putnam, Visconti

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilwoman Cammisa, seconded by Councilman Buzaid, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:20 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