

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 6, 2023 - 7:30 P.M.

Vinny DiGilio, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

NOTICE:

Vinny DiGilio, Council President, noted that Mayor Esposito was hospitalized and that in his absence, he would be leading the meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & PRAYER:

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

ROLL CALL:

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Buzaid, Putnam, Eriquez, Henry, Levy, DiGilio, Rotello, Visconti, Esposito, Coelho, Esposito III, Masi, Palma, McGetrick, Britton, Perkins, Chianese, Cammisa and Tomchik.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Fox and Merchan.

PRESENT: 19, ABSENT: 2

ALSO PRESENT: Bob Yamin, Corporation Counsel; Les Pinter, Deputy 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 #9.

Kate Kenneta, Resident, 4 Topfield Road, spoke on item #9.

Ken Gucker, Resident, 89 Padanaram Road, spoke on items #2, 6, 11, 14, 17, and Department Reports.

Andrea Gartner, Resident, 112 Deer Hill Avenue, spoke on items #7, and 9.

MINUTES - Minutes of the Council Meeting held August 1, 2023.

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, and was seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes, as all Members have copies available to them in the Legislative Assistant's Office of the City of Danbury, and available to the public. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT CALENDAR

3. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Zoning Commission - Bruce Bennett

Receive the communication and approve the appointment of Bruce Bennett to serve on the Zoning Commission as presented.

4. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Zoning Commission - Robert Botelho

Receive the communication and approve the appointment of Robert Botelho to serve on the Zoning Commission as presented.

5. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Library Board of Directors

Receive the communication and approve the appointment of Kerry Johnston to serve on the Library Board of Directors as presented.

6. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals

Receive the communication and approve the appointment of Brandon Botelho to serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals as presented.

11. COMMUNICATION - Candlewood Lake Authority MOU - Boat Dock Access - Office of Emergency Management

Receive the communication and approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Danbury and the Candlewood Lake Authority as presented.

12. COMMUNICATION - Danbury Ice Rink MOU - Emergency Shelter, Food Prep and Distribution - Office of Emergency Management

Receive the communication and approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Danbury and the Danbury Ice Rink as presented.

15. RESOLUTION - Ambulance Bundle Billing Agreement - Office of Emergency Management

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing the Director of Finance, Daniel Garrick, to execute the documents related to the bundle billing agreements between the City of Danbury and the area ambulance companies as presented.

16. RESOLUTION - Accept Funding - 2023 JAG Byrne Grant - Police Department

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Patrick Ridenhour, Chief of Police, as his designee to apply for and accept grant funding available under the 2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program in an amount not to exceed \$19,762 with no local match required as presented.

20. RESOLUTION - ARPA Lead Reimbursement Grant - Health & Human Services

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Kara Prunty, Director of Health and Human Services, as his designee, to submit reimbursement requests, accept said funds, and to execute the documents related to the State of CT Department of Public Health funding opportunity through the American Rescue Plan Act in an amount not to exceed \$251,680 with no local match required as presented.

21. RESOLUTION - Pathways to Success Library Cohort Grant - Library

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Katie Pearson, Library Director, as his designee, to apply for and accept grant funding related to the Howard County Library System Pathways to Success Program in the form of a \$2,000 stipend with no local match required as presented.

22. RESOLUTION - Thinking Money For Kids ALA Grant - Library

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Katie Pearson, Library Director, as his designee, to apply for and accept grant funding related to the American Library Association Thinking Money for Kids program kits with an estimated value of \$2,000 with no local match required as presented.

24. REPORTS - Engineering & Planning Reports - Sidewalk Easement - 32 Germantown Road

Receive the Reports from the Director of Public Works/City Engineer and the Planning Commission, and adopt their positive recommendations for the acceptance of a sidewalk easement at 32 Germantown Road as presented.

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

AGENDA

1. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Josefson to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, seconded by Councilman Tomchik, to receive this communication and confirm the appointment and promotion of Police Officer David Josefson to the position of Police Sergeant within the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

2. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion - Weaver to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman Esposito III, seconded by Councilman Perkins, at this time I move to receive this communication and approve the promotion of Police Officer Michael Weaver to the position of Police Sergeant within the Danbury Police Department. The motion carried unanimously.

3. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Zoning Commission - Bruce Bennett

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

4. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Zoning Commission - Robert Botelho

**CONSENTED* - as received.

5. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to Library Board of Directors

**CONSENTED* - as received.

6. COMMUNICATION - Appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals

**CONSENTED* - as received.

7. COMMUNICATION - Request for Review of Security Policies - Corporation/Outside Counsel

A motion was made by Councilman Esposito, to refer this to an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Corporation Counsel, a member from the Mayor's Office, and the Security and Access Manager. So Ordered.

The Council President appointed Ad Hoc Members; Councilman DiGilio in the chair, along with Councilmen Levy, Henry, Rotello, and Visconti.

8. COMMUNICATION - Donation from O&G Industries for Fencing & Netting

A motion was made by Councilman Masi, seconded by Councilman Palma, to receive this communication authorizing Mayor Dean Esposito to accept the donation from O&G Industries to be used for new fencing at Rogers Park. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Visconti asked Mr. Iadarola about the location of the new fencing.

9. COMMUNICATION - Allocation of Contingency Funds - Finance

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to approve the request for up to \$100,000, to retain Outside Counsel to work with both the City of Danbury Public Schools Finance Department and City of Danbury Finance Department, to complete the 2022-2023 audit in a timely manner in compliance with State Statutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Rotello spoke on school funding challenges and asked for clarification from the Public Schools' CFO and the City's Finance Director

Mr. Garrick explained the audit and bid solicitation process. Furthermore, confirmed multiple factors contributed to the audit delay.

Mr. Spang explained the remote audit challenges and process with Councilmen Britton and Chianese

Mr. Garrick and Mr. Spang provided a brief overview of each Finance Department operations and staffing challenges.

Councilwoman Cammisa and Councilman Coelho clarified that the Public Schools Administration is responsible for the audit delay, and that they are separate from the Board of Education.

Councilman Tomchik asked about the estimated costs of the audit and noted his concern for preventing this from happening again.

Councilman Perkins spoke on protecting the interests of the City and the need for hiring the Consultant

Councilman Levy spoke on the importance of saving taxpayer monies by funding the Consultant for the completion of an efficient and accurate audit.

10. COMMUNICATION - Donation from CityCenter Danbury of Cameras and Devices - Office of Emergency Management

A motion was made by Councilman Buzaid, seconded by Councilman Esposito, to receive the communication and grant approval to the Office of Emergency Management to accept, from City Center Danbury the donation of visual monitoring devices to the City of Danbury, I also request the City Counsel send a letter of appreciation to the City Center Danbury for this valuable donation. Motion disposed due to committee referral.

Councilman Perkins asked to send this to an Ad Hoc. So Ordered.

The Council President appointed the Ad Hoc members; Councilman Levy in the Chair, along with Councilmen Coelho, and Perkins.

11. COMMUNICATION - Candlewood Lake Authority MOU - Boat Dock Access - Office of Emergency Management

**CONSENTED* - as received.

12. COMMUNICATION - Danbury Ice Rink MOU - Emergency Shelter, Food Prep and Distribution - Office of Emergency Management

**CONSENTED* - as received.

13. COMMUNICATION - Request to name Roger's Park Press Box - Parks & Recreation

A motion was made by Councilman Putnam, to refer this to an Ad Hoc Committee with Corporation Counsel and a representative from the Recreation Department. So Ordered.

The Council President appointed the Ad Hoc members; Councilman Henry in the chair, along with Councilmen Putnam, and Visconti.

14. RESOLUTION - ARPA Reallocation of Funds - Finance

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Visonti, to receive the communication and adopt the resolutions, Exhibits: 1e1 1e2, 1e3, 1e4, for a total for \$1,917,000. The motion was amended.

**A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Visonti, to amend the motion to include exhibit 1e5.* The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Cassavechia clarified the Mobile Operations Command vehicle upgrade expense for Councilman Rotello

Mr. Garrick spoke on the homeless shelter funding challenges with Councilman Chianese

Ms. Prunty clarified the grant funding opportunities for Councilman Chianese.

15. RESOLUTION - Ambulance Bundle Billing Agreement - Office of Emergency Management

***CONSENTED** - as received.

16. RESOLUTION - Accept Funding - 2023 JAG Byrne Grant - Police Department

***CONSENTED** - as received.

17. RESOLUTION - LOTCIP Funds for Traffic Signal Improvement Projects - Public Works

A motion was made by Councilman Coelho, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the communication and adopt the resolution related to the LOTCIP Funds, for the traffic signal improvement projects for public works, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Iadarola spoke on planned projects and traffic controls with Councilmen Perkins and Rotello

AMENDMENT

*A clarification was noted by Council President DiGilio for item #14. See Item 14 for motion & vote.

18. RESOLUTION - WestCOG Grant for Fiber Optic Trunk Cable Project - Public Works

A motion was made by Councilwoman Cammisa, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to receive the communication and approve the resolution that the State of Connecticut through Western Connecticut Council of Government, in the form of a grant to the City Department of Engineering, in an amount not to exceed \$6.9 million, to support City wide fiber optic truck cable project as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

19. RESOLUTION - CT DOH Homeless Shelter Grant - Health & Human Services

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, seconded by Councilman Palma, to receive the communication and adopt the resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor, or Kara Prunty, Director of Health and Human Services, as his designee, to apply for a grant of \$540,000, to support homeless services as outlined in the communication. 15 Yes, 4 No (Rotello, Britton, Perkins, Chianese). Motion Carried.

Councilman Rotello asked about the change of language and funding restrictions in the grant.

Ms. Prunty spoke on the grant process and shelter safety concerns.

Councilman Chianese also expressed concern regarding public safety.

Ms. Prunty identified language in the grant application that discussed the councilman's concerns.

20. RESOLUTION - ARPA Lead Reimbursement Grant - Health & Human Services

**CONSENTED* - as received.

21. RESOLUTION - Pathways to Success Library Cohort Grant - Library

**CONSENTED* - as received.

22. RESOLUTION - Thinking Money For Kids ALA Grant - Library

**CONSENTED* - as received.

23. REPORTS - Ad Hoc Report - Renewal of Sewer & Water Extension - 100 Saw Mill Road

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the report. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Buzaid, to approve the request to renew the sewer and water extension permit at 100 Saw Mill Road for 18-months, this request has received a positive recommendation from all City departments. 16 Yes, 3 No (Rotello, Perkins, Tomchik). Motion carried.

Councilman Rotello spoke on the resident's power plant concerns.

Point of Order: Councilman Levy asked to stay on the topic of the renewal of the sewer & water extension. Mr. Pinter (Deputy Corporation Counsel) clarified that topic of discussion is acceptable.

Councilman Buzaid spoke on his initial concerns regarding the high residential use of the area, and the misinformation regarding a power plant. He noted that he has since found the answers he was looking for, and is now in favor of renewing the application.

Councilmen Chianese and Rotello asked for clarification of the extension request.

Mr. Pinter clarified the process, and the requirements for denying an extension request.

24. REPORTS - Engineering & Planning Reports - Sidewalk Easement - 32 Germantown Road

**CONSENTED* - as received.

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

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to accept the reports and waive the reading. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Perkins requested Mr. Iadarola follow-up on a building complaint.

Furthermore, he requested that Mr. Garrick fund Elmwood Park upgrades.

Council President Extended All Committees.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 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