

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

October 3, 2023 - 7:30 P.M.

Honorable Mayor, Dean Esposito, called the meeting to order at 7:36 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, Eriquez, Henry, Levy, DiGilio, Rotello, Visconti, Esposito, Coelho, Esposito III, Fox, Palma, McGetrick, Britton, Merchan, Perkins, Chianese, Cammisa, and Tomchik,

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Masi and Putnam.

**PRESENT: 19, ABSENT: 2**

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

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

Ernesto Rodriguez, Resident, 23 George Street, spoke on items #3 and 4.

Andrea Gartner, Resident, 112 Deer Hill Avenue, spoke on item #5.

6. MINUTES - Minutes of the Council Meeting held September 6, 2023

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

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

6. RESOLUTION - CT Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection - FY23 Emergency Management Performance Grant Application

**Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Dean Esposito, Mayor of the City of Danbury, or Matthew Cassavechia, Emergency Management Director, to apply for and accept funding related to the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection through the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program for fiscal year 2023 in the total amount of \$91,096.95 with the required City match of \$43,379.50 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.

Mayor Esposito asked that a moment of silence be taken in honor of Councilman Richard Molinaro who passed.

**ADD ON COMMUNICATION – Donation from Danbury Housing Authority to the Danbury Fire Dept.**

**A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Rotello, to add the item provided to everyone, a communication from Chief Thode regarding a donation to the Fire Department, and adding this item as #8.** The motion carried unanimously.

1. COMMUNICATION - Request for Workforce and Civil Service Review

**A motion was made by Councilman Fox, to receive this communication and refer the item to an Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Corporation Counsel, the Director of Human Resources, a representative of the Civil Services Commission, and a representative of the Mayor's Office.** So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Fox in the chair, along with Councilmen Esposito III and Perkins.

2. COMMUNICATION - Appointment of Independent Auditors

**A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman Visconti, for a second one-year extension of the existing contract awarded to RSM US LLP, so they may perform the City audit for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.** The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Garrick (Finance Director) spoke on the vendor's efforts and the audit process with Councilmen Perkins, Rotello, and Chianese. Councilman Tomchik asked about the City's plans on hiring a temp to help with audit efforts.

Councilman DiGilio noted that the City never had issues with the vendor's quality of work; only issues related to lack of deliverables from the Board of Education Administration that impeded moving forward with the auditing process.

3. COMMUNICATION - 41 New Street Lease and Operations - Health & Human Services

**A motion was made by Councilman Esposito III, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Corporation Counsel, the Director of Health & Human Services, the Director of Finance, a representative of the Mayor's Office, and a report from the Planning Commission.** So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Henry in the chair, along with Councilmen McGetrick and Chianese.

4. COMMUNICATION - 98 Elm Street Lease and Operations - Health & Human Services

**A motion was made by Councilman Buzaid, to refer this item to an Ad Hoc Committee, and followed by a public hearing, the Ad Hoc Committee should consist of the Corporation Counsel, Health Director, Director of Finance, a representative of the Mayor's Office, and a report from the Planning Commission.** So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Henry in the chair, along with Councilmen McGetrick and Chianese.

5. RESOLUTION - Public Safety Fees for Cultural Events, Activities and Festivals

**A motion was made by Councilman Esposito, to refer this to an Ad Hoc Committee, consisting of Corporation Counsel, the Chief of Police, the Chief Fire Department, Director of Emergency Management, and a person for the Mayor's Office.** So Ordered.

The Mayor appointed Councilman Esposito in the chair, along with Councilmen Masi and Tomchik.

6. RESOLUTION - CT Dept. of Emergency Services and Public Protection - FY23 Emergency Management Performance Grant Application

\**CONSENTED* - as received.

7. REPORTS - Ad Hoc: Donation (from CityCenter) of Cameras and Devices

*A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Rotello, 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.

Main Motion:

*A motion was made by Councilman Levy, seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to accept the donation from City Center Danbury to be used as outlined in the donation communication.* The motion carries on roll call vote. 16 Yes, 3 No (Rotello, Visconti, Perkins).

Ms. Granger (CityCenter representative) discussed the reasons for an integrated camera system for the Downtown District with Councilmen Perkins. She clarified the property owners' request for cameras to secure and monitor traffic and pedestrians in their special tax district

Councilman DiGilio clarified that the LOCIP grant funds would provide citywide traffic upgrades and fiber optic cable improvements, with no commitment to the downtown district. He noted that the downtown taxpayers have requested this, and that the city will benefit from monitoring the system if the donation is accepted.

Councilman Levy noted that the donation will replace an existing system that is no longer functioning.

Councilman Rotello expressed concern regarding the loss of privacy and public, and that he does not support granting a private entity access to the city's security system.

*A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, seconded by Councilman Perkins, to recommit this to an Ad Hoc.* The motion failed on roll call vote. 7 Yes (Rotello, Visconti, Britton, Merchan, Perkins, Chianese, Tomchik), 12 No.

Councilman Chianese spoke in support of recommitting the item due to questions regarding the use and access of the cameras.

Mr. Cassavechia (Emergency Management Director) was asked by Councilman DiGilio to clarify the intent of the donation, its use, and access. He explained that the system would be used by the city for traffic, and in could be used in emergency situations; he specified that CityCenter would not have access to the cameras.

Councilman Levy noted that downtown merchants want the system, and he sees no value in recommitting the item.

Councilman Perkins called upon Mr. Sturdevant (Deputy Chief of Police) who stated that crime has decreased in the City.

The Mayor called for a Roll Call Vote.

(Back to the Main Motion).

Mr. Pinter confirmed that the main motion is again open for discussion.

Councilman Chianese asked again for access clarification from Mr. Cassavechia and the CityCenter representative. Both stated No to CityCenter having access.

The Mayor called for a Roll Call Vote.

8. ADD ON - Donation from Danbury Housing Authority to Danbury Fire Department

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, seconded by Councilman Tomchik, receive the communication and move to accept and approve the generous donation of \$5,000 from the Danbury Housing Authority to the Fire Department, for the City of Danbury, and send an appropriate letter of thanks. 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 receives these reports and waive the reading of their minutes, as all Members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's Office. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Chianese congratulated Mr. Thode (Fire Chief) on his recognition award.

Councilman Tomchik thanked City staff for their hard work during the rainstorms.

Councilman Rotello spoke on the importance of maintaining the storm drain system and finding a solution for flooding on Mill Plain Road.

Mr. Nolan (Highway Superintendent) spoke on the issue of flooding on Mill Plan Road.

Mayor noted that there are new pickleball courts located at Roger's Park. Furthermore, he recognized the Public Works Department for their emergency efforts during the rainstorms and flooding.

**Mayor Extended All Other Committees.**

Mayor noted the hard work of Councilman Visconti over the last 20 years.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Buzaid seconded by Councilman Rotello, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 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