

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

May 3, 2022 - 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, Cavo, Eriquez, Knapp, Levy, DiGilio, Rotello, Visconti, Esposito, Halas, Esposito III, Fox, Masi, Palma, Henry, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese, Cammisa and Molinaro.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

PRESENT: 21, ABSENT: 0

ALSO PRESENT: Robert J. Yamin, Corporation Counsel; Les Pinter, Deputy Corporation Counsel; David St. Hilaire, Finance Director; and Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant.

PUBLIC INPUT

Charles O'Boyle, Resident, 16 Lower Lake Road, spoke against raising taxes and expressed concern regarding the future costs of the Danbury Career Academy.

Juanita Harris, Resident, 68 Virginia Avenue, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Elvis Novas, Resident, 4 Stetson Place, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Sean Council, Resident, 53 Belmont Circle, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Juan Zappa, Resident, 55 Mill Plain Road, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Pat Holisca, Resident, 27 East Gate Road, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Charlie Setaro, Resident, 27 Deer Hill Avenue, spoke in favor of the promotion of Mark Sturdevant to Deputy Police Chief; and gave well wishes to retiring Deputy Police Chief McColgan.

Richard Jannelli, Resident, 18 Benson Drive, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Anne Riddle, Resident, 30 Washington Avenue, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Meghan Guidotti, Resident, 27 Topfield Road, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Carolyn O'Boyle, Resident, 16 Lower Lake Road, spoke against adding funds to the education budget.

Trisha Robinson, Resident, 39 Saddle Rock Road, requested Council fully fund the education budget.

Gladys Cooper, Resident, 1 Southern Blvd., requested Council fully fund the education budget.

MINUTES - Minutes of the Council Meeting held April 5, 2022

A motion was made by Councilman Digilio, and was seconded by Councilman Perkins, 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.

CONSENT CALENDAR

7. **COMMUNICATION - Appointment – Fair Rent Commission**

Receive the communication and confirm the re-appointment of Ms. Margaret Williams to serve on the Fair Rent Commission with a term to expire on 5/5/2025.

9. **COMMUNICATION - MOA with Student Transportation of America – Office of Emergency Management**

Receive the communication and approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Danbury and Student Transportation of America as presented.

10. **COMMUNICATION - MOA with HARTransit – Office of Emergency Management**

Receive the communication and approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Danbury and HARTransit as presented.

11. **COMMUNICATION - Donation of Stickers – Registrars of Voters**

Receive the communication and accept the generous donation of rolls of election day stickers valued at \$6,000 from Todd Holze and Hot Color Products with a letter of thanks to be sent.

21. **RESOLUTION - Danbury Career Academy School Building Committee - Appointments**

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution re-establishing the School Building Committee related to the Danbury Career Academy project as presented.

22. **RESOLUTION - Elderly and Demand Response Transit Service Grant**

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Mayor Dean Esposito to execute all necessary agreements or other documents related to the State of CT Department of Transportation grants for the enhanced regional municipal ‘Elderly and Demand Responsive Transportation’ program coordinated through Western Connecticut Council of Governments as presented.

23. **RESOLUTION - Taxiway Charlie FAA Grant – Danbury Airport**

Receive the communication and adopt the Resolution authorizing Mayor Dean Esposito or his designated representative Airport Administrator Michael Safrenek to execute the documentation and necessary funding related to the grant application for the Taxiway Charlie Project and to ratify all previous action taken in the furtherance thereof as presented.

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

1. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion – Michael Sturdevant to Deputy Police Chief

A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, seconded by Councilman Perkins, about a year ago I interviewed Lieutenant Sturdevant for the job of Captain in the Danbury Police Department. I thought at that time that we had a great individual serving the City of Danbury; and was happy to promote him to Captain. It gives me great pleasure tonight to receive the communication and approve the appointment of Police Captain Michael Sturdevant to the position of Deputy Police Chief, within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

2. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion – Joseph LeRose to Police Captain

A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, seconded by Councilman Knapp, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Police Lieutenant Joseph LeRose to Police Captain within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

3. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion – Mark Wocek to Police Lieutenant

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, seconded by Councilman Visconti, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment and promotion of Police Sergeant Mark Wocek to the position of Police Lieutenant within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion – Michael Russotti to Sergeant

A motion was made by Councilman M. Esposito, seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the correspondence and confirm the appointment and promotion of Detective Michael Russotti to the position of Sergeant within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Promotion – Jonathan Grande to Detective

A motion was made by Councilman Masi, seconded by Councilman Buzaid, to receive the communication and approve the appointment for Jonathan Grande to the position of Police Detective within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

6. COMMUNICATION - Police Department Appointment – Dragan Stojkovic to Officer

A motion was made by Councilman Eriquez, seconded by Councilman Palma, to receive the communication and confirm the appointment of Mr. Stojkovic as an Officer within the Danbury Police Department. Motion carried unanimously.

7. COMMUNICATION - Appointment – Fair Rent Commission

**CONSENTED* - as received.

8. COMMUNICATION - License Agreement for use of City property – Old Sherman Turnpike

A motion was made by Councilman Knapp, to refer this to an Ad Hoc that includes Corporation Counsel, the Director of Planning, Director of Public Works & City Engineer, the Economic Development Director and Petitioner. The Mayor appointed Councilman Knapp in the chair, Councilman Masi and Councilman Santos. Motion carried unanimously.

9. COMMUNICATION - MOA with Student Transportation of America – Office of Emergency Management

**CONSENTED* - as received.

10. COMMUNICATION - MOA with HARTransit – Office of Emergency Management

**CONSENTED* - as received.

11. COMMUNICATION - Donation of Stickers – Registrars of Voters

**CONSENTED* - as received.

12. COMMUNICATION - Application for Extension of Water Main – Michaud Road

A motion was made by Councilman Fox, to receive the communication and refer this item to the Planning Commission and the City Engineer for reports. Motion carried unanimously.

13. ORDINANCE, RESOLUTION & REPORTS - An Ordinance Making Appropriations for the Fiscal year Beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023 and a Resolution Levying Property Tax for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, including Budgets for General Government I, General Government II, Education, Public Works, Health and Human Services and Public Safety

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Levy, to waive the reading of the Minutes of each individual section of the budget, the Ad Hoc Committee reports, 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, and was seconded by Councilman Esposito III, to recommend the adoption of the Mayor's budget of the General Government I; that includes a biannual increase in the salaries of the Registrar of Voters by 2.5%, for fiscal year 2022-2023, effective January 1, 2023; and 2.5% for fiscal year 2023-2024, effective July 1, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

St. Hilaire explained how the Mayor's Office is working with city departments to address staffing gaps to Councilman Chianese.

A motion was made by Councilman Fox, and was seconded by Councilman M. Esposito, to receive the report from the Ad Hoc Committee for Government II and adopt the Mayor's Budget as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, and was seconded by Councilman Cavo, to receive the Committee report and approve the educational budget of \$141,214,000 and \$208,575, for health & welfare; for a total of \$141,422,575. The motion carried on roll call vote. 14 YES, 6 NO (Rotello, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese, Molinaro), 1 Abstention (Fox).

St. Hilaire explained the current funding source (\$9.3 million increase for the current year) to Councilman Chianese. He responded to Mr. Perkins regarding the lump sum funding method.

Councilman Perkins expressed concern regarding budget gaps and the effect it will have on taxpayers. He also discussed the need for more mental health & wellness resources in schools.

Councilman Fox expressed concern regarding budget gaps and the affect it will have on taxpayers in the future.

John Spang, BOE Chief Financial Officer, clarified the operating budget funding amounts with Councilman Santos.

Councilman Santos expressed concern regarding the lack of funding for public education. St. Hilaire clarified the \$15.5 million budget difference with Councilman Santos and explained the additional funding from Alliance Funds and Surplus funds that bring the number down.

Councilman DiGilio explained how the City will fund 97% of the Board of Education's budget request and there is an increase to the budget every year, he explained that the City Council supports public education for the students of Danbury.

Councilman Levy expressed concern regarding budget inconsistencies. He discussed how the City consistently supports the Board of Education budget every year.

Councilman Visconti concurs with Councilman Levy regarding budget inconsistencies. He discussed how the City Council supports schools and education.

A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, and was seconded by Councilman M. Esposito, to receive the budget Ad Hoc Committee report for Public Works and approve the Mayor's budget as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Iadarola explained the evaluation process and paving budget to Councilman Chianese. Mayor Esposito commented that his office will provide a list of State Roads. Mr. Iadarola explained the need for state roads to be maintained.

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the report and approve the Mayor's budget regarding the Health & Human Services & Public Safety sections as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Cavo, to receive the communication and adopt the ordinance and resolutions. An ordinance making appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, ending June 30, 2023; aggregating to \$277,500,000 and the resolution levying the property tax rate at 28.22 mills for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, as presented. The motion carried on roll call vote. 15 YES, 6 NO (Rotello, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese, Molinaro).

Councilman Molinaro expressed his concern for adopting the education budget as it was presented by the BOE.

Councilman Rotello discussed the rapid growth of the City and believes that more future revenue will come from non-residential sources.

Councilman Britton expressed his reasonings for voting no on the proposed City budget. The budget does not support the elderly community or public education.

Councilman DiGilio expressed his support for the proposed City budget and the nominal increase to taxes.

A motion to amend the main motion was made by Councilman Chianese, and was seconded by Councilman Molinaro, to apply \$4 million of the American Rescue Fund and apply to the budget line item 4300.620, to increase it from \$22,900,000 to \$26,900,00; and increase line item 5852.2900, from \$41 million to \$45 million; so, will be a net budget of zero. The motion failed on roll call vote. 15 NO, 6 YES (Rotello, Britton, Santos, Perkins, Chianese, Molinaro).

Councilman Santos expressed support for the amendment.

St. Hilaire clarified the use of American Rescue funds with Councilmen Perkins and Fox. He clarified the motion and explained that it would increase revenue for \$4million and then increase expenditures for \$4 million, that would be the net-net effect of zero dollars.

14. ORDINANCE - An Ordinance Appropriating \$3,000,000 for Public Improvements in the 2022-2023 Capital Budget and Authorizing the Issuance of \$3,000,000 Bonds of the City to Meet said Appropriations and Pending the Issuance Thereof the Making of Temporary Borrowings for Such Purpose

A motion was made by Councilman J. Esposito III, and was seconded by Councilman Palma, to adopt the ordinance appropriating \$3 million for the public improvement projects in the 2022-2023 capital budget and authorizing the issuance of \$3 million bonds of the City to meet said appropriations and pending issuance thereof making of temporary borrowings for such purposes. Sum of \$3 million appropriated for the public improvement's projects listed; airport improvements \$300,000, Elevator Replacement Program \$200,000, parking deck garage improvements \$300,000, Public Works, paving, drainage, and road improvements, \$1,120,000, Public Works vehicles and equipment replacement \$1,080,000. The motion carried unanimously.

15. ORDINANCES - Sewer Rates as of July 1, 2022

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, and was seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the communication and adopt the ordinance amended section 48-234, establishing sewer use changes, charges as presented. The motion carried. 20 Yes, 1 No (Perkins)

Councilman Perkins suggested a more detailed plan for sewer rate increases.

16. ORDINANCES - Water Rates as of July 1, 2022

A motion was made by Councilman Henry, and was seconded by Councilman Visconti, to receive the communication and adopt the ordinance amended section 48-70, establishing water use rates, as presented. The motion carried. 20 Yes, 1 No (Perkins)

Mr. Iadarola clarified where the subscriber rate increases are going including operating and electricity costs, and discussed how a major capital improvement project would be handled with Councilman Rotello.

Councilman Perkins explained why he was voting no.

A motion was made to amend the main motion by Councilman Fox, and was seconded by Councilman Palma, to include amendments to sections 48-74, 48-75, 48-76, 48-77, as presented. The motion carried. 20 Yes, 1 No (Perkins)

17. RESOLUTION - Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) Program

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Levy, to table the item until the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

18. RESOLUTION - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021

A motion was made by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Levy, to table the item until the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Deputy Corporation Counsel confirmed a motion, a second and vote is needed to table items 17 and 18.

19. RESOLUTION - BOE Administrative Assistants/ IT Employees UPSEU Agreement – Pension Funding

A motion was made by Councilman Levy, and was seconded by Councilman DiGilio, to adopt the resolution agenda item 19-4 and approve the funding and ratify the collective bargaining between the Danbury Board of Education, United Public Service Employees Union representing the Administrative Assistants, IT employees, Local 424 Unit 94 Union, from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024. The motion carried. 20 Yes, 1 Abstention (Santos)

St. Hilaire explained the agreement costs and contributions to Councilman Chianese

20. RESOLUTION - Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee – Establishment and Appointments

A motion was made by Councilman M. Esposito, and was seconded by Councilman Rotello, to receive the correspondents and confirm the establishment of the Margerie Reservoir Trail Advisory Committee and the appointments of the following individuals as new members, members include Antonio Iadarola, Director of Public Works & City Engineer; Vinny DiGilio, City Council President; David Day, Public Utilities Superintendent; along with two members from New Fairfield. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Santos discussed how the trail is a great recreational investment for the community, and thanked the state for it's support of the project.

21. RESOLUTION - Danbury Career Academy School Building Committee - Appointments

**CONSENTED* - as received.

22. RESOLUTION - Elderly and Demand Response Transit Service Grant

**CONSENTED* - as received.

23. RESOLUTION - Taxiway Charlie FAA Grant – Danbury Airport

**CONSENTED* - as received.

24. RESOLUTION - Downtown Special Services District

A motion was made by Councilman Cavo, and was seconded by Councilwoman Cammisa, to receive the communication and adopt the resolution levying the property tax for the Downtown Special Services District for fiscal year beginning July 1, 022, ending June 30, 2023; setting the mill rate for the Downtown District at 2.34 mills as approved by their body at their annual March 8, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made to amend the main motion by Councilman DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Cavo to remove this item from the table from the April City Council Meeting.

St. Hilaire clarified that the Kennedy Flats deferral does not apply to the Downtown district with Councilman Chianese.

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 DiGilio, and was seconded by Councilman Perkins, to waive the reading of the minutes as all Members have copies and copies are on file with the Legislative Assistant's Office, as well as accept the department reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor Extended all Committees.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilman Rotello, and was seconded by Councilman Visconti to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Copies of Agenda Items are available in the Legislative Assistant's Office

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Martinez
Recording Secretary

Attest,
Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant