

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

December 14, 2023 – 7 P.M.

Honorable Mayor, Roberto Alves, called the meeting to order at 7p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & PRAYER

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sean Hatch. Council President Buzaid led all in prayer.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Hawley, Rickert, Simone, Gartner, Salvatore, Peter Buzaid, Emile Buzaid, Coelho, Lapine, Ratchford, Dennis Perkins, Palma, Robinson, Britton, McAllister, Duane Perkins, Chianese, Giordano

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Masi, Rotello, Tomchik

PRESENT: 18, ABSENT: 3

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

NOTICE OF THE SPECIAL MEETING

The Legislative Assistant read the Notice of the Special Meeting.

CALL TO SERVICE

A motion was made by Councilman Salvatore, seconded by Councilman Chianese, to accept the call to return to service for the special meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC SPEAKING - None

1. REPORT – AD HOC: CT DECD COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND GRANT

A motion was made by Councilman P. Buzaid, seconded by Councilman Duane Perkins, to waive the reading of the report since all members have copies and copies are on file in the Legislative Assistant's office. Motion Carried Unanimously.

Councilman Hawley noted a correction to his first name in the minutes.

A motion was made by Councilman Britton, seconded by Councilman Salvatore, to receive the report of the ad hoc committee of December 13, 2023, and to adopt the resolution as submitted and discussed, inclusive of the drainage study and for the roofing of the Danbury Community Center, both as identified in the amended resolution. 18 Yes. Motion Carried Unanimously

Councilman Chianese asked if the resolution could be amended to require the council to accept the funds if received. Attorney Pinter stated no, and explained that the legislature, through approval of the resolution, grants authority to the Mayor to take all actions necessary for purposes of furtherance of this project, and that the Council had already vetted and approved this application months earlier.

Councilman Duane Perkins expressed his concern with not having enough time to review the changes to the application. Attorney Pinter noted that multiple parties are involved with obligations and application deadlines, and that the changes do not for the most part alter the project.

Councilwoman Robinson asked for clarification of the co-applicant's abilities to provide input on the project. Attorney Pinter pointed out that no documents would be implemented that change the trajectory of the project.

Councilman Palma inquired about property ownership. Mr. Maloney (CCFDC representative) explained the need for a non-profit to utilize tax credits for the preservation of the courthouse. He clarified that the title for the property will be with the non-profit and they will lease the courthouse to the City for \$1 per year for a minimum of 15 years, and that the City will be able to use the courthouse as they see fit. After the 15-year lease, the City will have the right to acquire the property once conveyance costs are paid. He clarified that a non-profit must own the properties where the housing will be built in order for the housing to qualify for low-income tax credits and status. He also noted that the owner of the four parcels surrounding the courthouse will only sell the properties together and state funds are needed to make the large purchase.

Councilman E. Buzaid expressed his constituents' concerns regarding the cost of the courthouse renovation and with more housing on Main Street. Attorney Pinter reiterated that the application and project has been vetted extensively by the Council before.

Councilwoman Robinson asked for clarification regarding the lease. Mr. Maloney explained that the rent is \$1 per year, maintenance costs will be paid by the city because the city is using the courthouse, and that no maintenance costs have been estimated because a lease will be negotiated and presented back to the council for approval.

Councilwoman Gartner inquired about the parking garage at CIFC. Mr. Maloney noted that a separate housing project and the workforce housing on Park Place will require the parking garage.

Councilman Hawley pointed out the importance of the drainage study that will be funded through this application for state monies.

Councilman Chianese asked about the state's recommendations for the application which requires confirmed long-term money for the housing project. Mr. Maloney noted that the commitment to the housing project is still in place but removed from this application.

Councilman Simone asked about the possibility of project overruns. Mr. Maloney said that \$4.6 million will make the courthouse habitable, and suggested that a construction manager at risk be used to guarantee for no overruns.

Councilman Coelho questioned whether the state funds could be used for education needs and future requests. Mayor Alves explained that these funds have a specific use, and that the longer this application takes to be approved, the amount of funds decreases. He also noted that other state grant funds for education will be pursued in the future.

Councilman P. Buzaid urged the council to support the request so that the deteriorating courthouse can be addressed. Councilman Duane Perkins shared his support for the application and noted the need for the work that will be done to downtown and Elmwood Park with these funds.

Councilman Britton asked for a Roll Call Vote.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gartner, seconded by Councilman Palma, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:50p.m.

Copies of Agenda Items are available in the Legislative Assistant's Office and on the City's website.

Respectfully submitted by, Elisa Etcheto, Legislative Assistant; Attested by City Council President P. Buzaid.