

Finance and Government Operations Commission Meeting Minutes  
Middletown, Connecticut  
January 28, 2015  
Municipal Building Room 208  
7:00 P.M.

**REGULAR MEETING:**

**Present:** Councilman Thomas Serra, Councilwoman Hope Kasper, Councilwoman Deb Kleckowski, Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta, George Dunn, Michiel Wackers, Attorney Brigham Smith, Attorney Michael Dowley, Jeff Pierce, Eldon Bailey, Faith Jackson, Quentin Phipps, Joe Kask, Linda Bowers, Krithna Winba, Eric Hammerling, John Moore, John Hall, Cathie Olinski, Sebastian Giuliano, Shaun Beals, Carl Erlacher

**Absent:** Councilman David Bauer

1. Councilman Serra called the meeting to order and requested a motion to approve the minutes from the December 29, 2014 Finance and Government meeting. Councilwoman Kasper made the motion to approve, Councilwoman Kleckowski seconded, approved unanimously.

Councilman Serra requested a change to have the Executive Session: to discuss open space acquisition of Pierce Property and MHS wall be moved to the bottom of the agenda. Councilwoman Kasper made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Kleckowski seconded, approved unanimously.

2. Public Comments from items on the agenda.

Eric Hammerling, Executive Director of CT Forest & Parks Association expressed his support for the acquisition of the Pierce Property.

Linda Bowers spoke in favor of the purchase of the Pierce Property.

Kate Miller, Chair of the Conservation Commission expressed that the Conservation commission unanimously supported the purchase of the Pierce Property.

John Hall, Executive Director of the Jonah Center expressed his support for the acquisition of the Pierce Property.

Attorney Michael Dowley read a portion from a letter written by William Warner to Michiel Wackers, dated 12/8/2014 on the acquisition of the Pierce Property. "Most significant piece of open space in Middletown and has been planned as open space for over 50 years". As well as, "with this purchase Middletown will own 99% of the mountain."

### 3. Conferences and Training:

Faith Jackson requested approval of \$450.00 from the designated training line item in Finance to cover the cost for nine employees to attend the Sexual Harassment Prevention Training, held at Middlesex County Chamber on January 13, 2015. Councilwoman Kasper made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Bartolotta seconded, approved unanimously.

Public Works Department has two requests: the first one is requesting an approval of \$80.00 to attend a seminar on 2/17/15 for the 2015 Continuing Education Course, Electrical Training Services. Councilwoman Bartolotta made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Kasper seconded, approved unanimously. The second request is for the approval of \$60.00 for the cost of membership dues to the Tree Wardens' Association of CT. Councilwoman Kleckowski made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Kasper seconded, approved unanimously.

### 4. The following Departments have submitted items to be discussed:

- **Annual Audit** – representative from Blum Shapiro to answer audit questions from committee

Joe Kask once again commended the staff in the Finance Department for their cooperation during the annual audit. Joe stated that the audit was completed on 12/23/14 and it was given a clean opinion on the financial statements. Joe suggested that he meet with this commission before 6/30/15 audit begins to address any concerns.

- Councilman Serra stated that there would be no action on the Pierce Property at tonight's meeting.
- Councilman Serra called for a recess
- **Planning & Zoning** – Appropriation Request totaling \$70,000 for Remington Rand Building ID Mail (tenant) Expansion Loan; Appropriation Request totaling \$50,600 for local match of Wesleyan Hills Multi-use Trail; Resolution authorizing Mayor Drew to sign agreement between State and City for Wesleyan Hills/Wesleyan University Multi-use Trail

Discussion regarding the \$70,000 appropriation request for the purpose of turning 4,000 square feet of raw space into usable work space. Michiel stated that the current tenant would repay the city \$2,000 per month for 35 months, if the request was granted. Councilwoman Kasper asked if there were any money in the Remington Rand Fund. Michiel said roughly

\$25K. Also requested was a bid waiver for the construction of the project. Councilman Serra requested that the Finance & Government committee see the 3 quotes. He also stated that he would support a bid waiver contingent upon those quotes. Councilman Serra made the motion to approve with the caveat regarding the three quotes is provided. Councilwoman Bartolotta seconded, approved unanimously.

The Appropriation request for \$50,600 for local match of Wesleyan Hills Multi-Use Trail - Councilwoman Kasper made a motion to approve, Councilman Serra seconded, Councilwoman Kleckowski opposed and Councilwoman Bartolotta abstained. \*Note – the \$800,000 should actually be \$400,000 Federal Grant.

Resolution authorizing Mayor Drew to sign agreement between State and City for Wesleyan Hills/Wesleyan University Multiuse Trail – Michiel Wackers stated that although the council authorized the Mayor to sign the agreement in 2013 the state has rejected it in its' present form and requested the resolution be phrased according to the states new format. Councilman Serra made a note that the \$229,000 Appropriation be increased to \$247,000 and the Resolution from \$202,400 to \$400,000. Councilwoman Kleckowski made the motion to forward to the Council Floor with said changes and information. Councilwoman Bartolotta seconded, approved unanimously to send to the Council Floor.

Councilwoman Bartolotta asked if Marie Norwood could find the actual dates in the minutes.

- **Eckersley Hall** – Resolution to extend contract with (CT) Department of Economic and Community Development for a Historic Preservation grant for the Eckersley Hall Building Project

Councilwoman Kasper made the motion to approve and Councilwoman Kleckowski seconded, approved unanimously.

-Send to Council Floor-

- **Police** – Grant Confirmation totaling \$43,444.85 for CT Drug Investigation Fund – Confiscated Funds; Grant Confirmation totaling \$5187.19 for Animal Control Donations

Police grants are off the agenda; approved at last Common Council meeting.

- **Emergency Management** – update on MHS generator; Resolution requesting a bid waiver for Powers Generator to perform necessary maintenance to MHS generator –

George Dunn gave an update on the MHS generator and the resolution requesting a bid waiver for Powers Generator. He explained that the company needs a commitment by February 16, 2015. George also reminded this commission that the appropriation was approved last month. Councilman Serra made a motion to move to the Council Floor predicated by the Standardization Committees approval. Councilwoman Kleckowski seconded, approved unanimously.

- **IT** – Resolution authorizing Mayor Drew to sign necessary agreements for an OPM grant to connect to the Nutmeg Network and Regional Performance Incentive Program (RPIP) grant projects

Councilwoman Kleckowski made the motion to bring forward the resolution to apply for the Nutmeg grant. Councilwoman Kasper requested that the financial impact pending grant approval be added to the bottom of the Resolution. Councilwoman Kasper seconded, approved unanimously.

- **Finance** – Miscellaneous CNR purchases

Carl Erlacher updated the commission on two CNR purchases:  
 -\$450.00 chair (Purchasing Department)  
 -\$1026.48 office file cabinet (Legal Department)

- **Review of Personnel Rules for Non-Bargaining, Exempt positions**

Councilman Serra stated that it has been for four years since the discussion of the non-bargaining employees. Per Carl there are 10 exempt employees. Councilman Serra asked to have six people on the committee, himself, Councilwoman Kleckowski, Councilwoman Kasper, Carl Erlacher, one person from Public Safety and one other exempt employee.

- **Review of Ordinance 74-9 Filling vacancies in funded positions**

Councilwoman Bartolotta requested that the Department Director will confirm with the Finance Department to certify that funding for a specific position is available in writing. Councilman Serra asked to include, “must sign off on Personnel Requisition form”. Councilwoman Kasper seconded, approved unanimously to send to Council Floor.

- **Legal** – Office of the General Counsel-

- Discussion of Middle Oak property – beginning from purchase by City, abatement, fees for allocated City spaces in garage
- Discussion of Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy LLC invoices
- Discussion of Robinson and Cole invoices for Pension Board
- Discussion of cost of Workers Comp Attorney attendance at Pension Board meetings
- Discussion of Prescription Drug Survey as proposed at Insurance & Claims Commission
- Review of Ordinance 78-10 Contracts for Professional Services
- Executive Session: to discuss strategy and negotiations with respect to pending litigation regarding MHS wall, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. 1-200(6)(B)

Attorney Brigham Smith discussed the Middle Oak property and confirmed that a tax abatement never occurred for the third phase. As far as the parking, Brig read a provision in the 1987 contract of the sale of land, section 401, where it says, and “the redeveloper set aside 374 parking spaces to be designated by the city.” Councilman Serra asked Attorney Smith who was to get the revenue, his response was the redeveloper.

Attorney Smith briefly discussed the Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy invoices and gave the commission copies of the bills themselves to show a timeline of the investigation. He wanted to set the context of what the events were and when they came to the attention of the legal department. Discussion regarding the back-up to support the summary in which they were given. Brig sent the final report to the State’s Attorneys’ office and assumes that if they require any further information they will contact Cowdery, Ecker & Murphy, they have not requested it from him at this point. Councilwoman Bartolotta asked if the State Prosecutors Office finalized what their decision is on this information. Brig stated, “No, not to my knowledge.” Councilwoman Kleckowski stated that public monies have been spent on this investigation; it’s not legal representation so anyone should be able to view this information. Councilman Serra requested Attorney Smith to contact Cowdrey, Ecker & Murphy to confirm the status of the case as well as share with this commission any information received.

Councilwoman Kasper requested a breakdown of the pension expenses on the invoice from Robinson & Cole. Defer to next months’ agenda.

Councilwoman Kasper asked Attorney Smith what the cost to have the Workers Comp Attorneys at the Pension Board meeting was, his response was, “+/- \$3,000.”

Councilwoman Kasper made a motion to send out a survey to all employees regarding: 90 day prescriptions pick-up at Pharmacy vs. mail. Councilwoman Bartolotta seconded, approved unanimously.

Attorney Smith discussed ordinance 78-10 Contracts for Professional Services. He advised this commission that he prepared a draft for Councilman Bauer. Councilman Serra requested that the wording, "three quotes" be made for all Professional Services. Attorney Smith said he could possibly add the language to Section B and will provide revised draft for next commission meeting.

**Executive Session:**

To discuss open space acquisition of Pierce Property and MHS wall.

**Regular Reports**

- Transfer of Funds/BOE Transfers
- General Fund Appropriations
- City's Investments
- Monthly Expenditure Summary Report
- Tax Collection Recap Report
- Department Overtime Reports
- Quarterly Reports – Arts & Culture and Senior Services

**5. Other**

7. The next meeting is Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 7:30 pm in Room 208.

Respectfully  
Submitted by,

Tracy Vess on behalf of Carl R. Erlacher