



# CITY OF ANSONIA BOARD OF ALDERMEN Public Hearing – June 11, 2013

---

## *Call to Order*

The Public Hearing of the Ansonia Board of Aldermen was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Aldermanic President Gene Sharkey. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

## *Roll Call*

The secretary called the roll:

Edward Adamowski, D1- present  
Peter Marcinko, D1 - present  
Charles Stowe, R2 - present  
Philip Tripp, R2 - present  
Kevin Mott, D3- present  
Joseph Jeanette, D3 - present  
Jerome Fainer, D4 - present

Anthony DeLucia, D4 - present  
Howard Madigosky, D5 - present  
Joan Radin, R5 - absent  
Scott Nihill, D6- present  
John Marini, R7 - present  
David Knapp, D7 - present  
Gene Sharkey, D6 - present

Town and City Clerk Madeline Bottone read aloud the Notice of Public Hearing as follows:

The City of Ansonia Board of Aldermen will meet in the City of Ansonia, Aldermanic Chambers, 253 Main Street, City of Ansonia, Connecticut on June 11, 2013 at 6:30 o'clock p.m. for the purpose of holding the following public hearings:

Item 1. On the proposed project consisting of the \$4,926,815 City of Ansonia Capital Improvements 2013-2014 The project is more particularly described in a Resolution entitled 'RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$4,926,815 FOR CITY OF ANSONIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 2013-2014 AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF \$4,926,815 BONDS OF THE CITY TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION AND PENDING THE ISSUANCE THEREOF THE MAKING OF TEMPORARY BORROWINGS THEREFOR.'

Per City of Ansonia Charter, Section 112, said improvements include but are not limited to road improvements to Woodbridge Avenue Extension, Beech Street and Hilltop Hose driveway; Land purchase for River Walk expansion; acquisition of properties (including 66 Platt and 70 Platt) for the expansion of the Ansonia Police Station; and the potential purchase of land located on Olson Drive.

The public hearing will commence at the time indicated and proceed until concluded. Following the public hearing, the Aldermen are expected to consider and act on the proposal. Copies of said resolution are on file open to public inspection at the office of the Town and City Clerk.

Dated this 28<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2013  
James T. Della Volpe, Mayor  
City of Ansonia

Alderman Adamowski MOVED to accept the Notice of Public Hearing; SECONDED by Alderman Mott. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Alderman Adamowski MOVED to postpone the public hearing; SECONDED by Alderman Marcinko.

Alderman Adamowski explained, this is a very important item for the City of Ansonia that we're addressing and over the past week or two we have lost the bipartisanship of this whole Board. I strongly urge that this entire Board find a way to make this work and proceed with it at a later date.

President Sharkey recommended that instead of postponing it, that it be canceled and brought back. He stated, when we bring it back we might want to change some things. We should cancel the public hearing.

Alderman Adamowski MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION to CANCEL the public hearing; SECONDED by Alderman Marcinko. A voice vote was taken and the AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Alderman Stowe stated, I don't think that bipartisanship has anything to do with it. What is going on here is there has been a lack of communication from the very beginning of this process. I was trying to advise the Board of Aldermen the best I could about a lot of the bonding issues that we have because I believe that the public was going to ask questions about these bonds. When the Board of A&T voted the tax increase which the Board of Aldermen did not vote for, it changed the whole climate of this City. Then we even had further communication problems here. I don't really believe it's a lack of bipartisanship, or not working together, I believe it's been going on because we haven't had a good communication system and you're trying to push this through in a very short period of time and it's not fair to the departments, it's not fair to the citizens and it's not fair to a lot of members of this Board that we're not allowed to participate in this. I would hope that we can all work together from this point on and not mention things like that again. Thank you.

Alderman Marini stated, I support the idea of canceling the referendum tonight. I think there are a lot of valuable bonding projects. I think the very idea of bonding is a very important idea, but I guess I would echo Alderman Stowe's

point - the process was rushed. It's essentially a communication breakdown, and I think it's between the leadership of this City and this Board, but more importantly than that, I'm concerned about the communication between the City and the residents, the taxpayers, and the people that we work for. I don't think there has been the proper communication to a lot of residents to make an informed decision. This is something I stressed at the very beginning - we need to bend over backward to make sure the residents know what is going on. I would also like to hear their opinion about what projects they would like to go on in the City. We are scheduled to have our first Ward meetings and we're going to basically tell the residents we are going to spend \$4.9 million. I would like to do some due diligence and hear their opinions before we recommended on a project like that. Some of the projects, like school security, the infrastructure repairs, are absolutely vital and that is why many of us have been recommending bonding for a very long time. It is the prudent thing and I do wish the communication was better.

President Sharkey thanked the members of the Board of Aldermen and the citizens that came here tonight for this scheduled public hearing. This Board has truly tried to work in a bipartisan manner on all things that have come before us. Probably one of the most important to the citizens for their near future is the referendum on the bonding package. Much time and effort was expended by many people to bring this to fruition, however, a recent opinion piece by a colleague has taken away the bipartisan approach. Other people may express their opinions that they don't think that has happened; that has truly happened. Yes, the present process could have continued tonight. Legally this could have gone on. I don't want to see it turn into political fodder for this election year, and it already has turned into political fodder. It has when you start putting names of Aldermen in the paper and say that they tried to hide things, that they've had closed-door meetings. That has not been the case. Every single thing has been brought before this Board. This bond was discussed many, many times. It was also voted by the people that are taking the opposite opinion tonight; it was voted unanimously by them. We discussed it before we did it. There was a reason it was scheduled to be done in June - we were worried we could not complete the Police Department project, the heating system, before the heating season started. That is a definite priority. We also wanted all of our school security in place before September. That is why it was taken to a vote now. Yes, we thought about doing it in November. Yes, we're going to revisit that. Because we have now found from our bond counsel that we can do the Police Department project with our own money and look for the bond to reinvest the money in the City. That is a legal process; we did not know that at the time we set this public hearing, Yes, we were backing off, we are taking more time. But to say this was done behind closed doors is completely untruthful. Every department was sought out to find out what their priorities were. They gave us their priorities. The list that you see tonight is a very shortened list. There are 20 separate projects. I did not come up with this list of projects. The City leaders, the department heads came up with this list. That is what we're working off of. Also, it's been told that I as the president of the Board have changed and done something in secret. We tried to put this forth as

one question. We found out after we had voted on it that we cannot put it out under one question I have the legal opinion here of our bond counsel. I will make sure the bond counsel is here in person to discuss in person with every Alderman, with every member of the Board of A&T at open meetings and the citizens can be here, to explain why he grouped it into the six or seven questions that he did. I personally did not do that. There is a legal precedent. You cannot put everything on one question, That is what this Board of Aldermen unanimously voted to do. We found out we could not do that; legally it's a term called "logrolling." We put something that we, the citizens may not really want, we put in there with several things that you do want under one question, you vote for it and you get something you don't want and you don't want to pay for. We can't legally do that. He grouped it by infrastructure. He grouped it according to roofs. He grouped it according to roadway things. I did not do that. I did not know that is what had to be done. However, backing off now, taking our time, tonight at our regular Board of Aldermen meeting we will discuss setting a date when the Board of Aldermen, Board of A&T, and the citizens can come hear the bond counsel and explain to us what we have going forward. Yes, it's a time we may add or take out projects; not because they're not any good, not because we've changed our mind. It seems that people have changed their minds and made this a partisan effort. When you use names in a thing that goes to the newspaper, you're making it a partisan effort. The important issues such as school security, public safety, energy savings and improvement to our infrastructure should not be a republican or democratic choice. We are all elected here to serve all the citizens in the best way we can. I would ask you good citizens to be patient with us. Therefore we will revisit the bond proposal during our regular meeting that follows.

President Sharkey called for a roll call vote. Alderman Marini asked to speak and he and President Sharkey disagreed about continuing the discussion.

Mayor Della Volpe interjected, I would just like to say that I agree that the process should be slowed down. As City officials, I don't care if we're democrats or republicans - we have to start working together as Ansonians. That is the reason we are here. We are here for the people of the City of Ansonia. These projects are extremely important for the future of this City. This is long term planning. We're looking to save money. We're looking to help our children out, our neighborhoods, and public safety. There should be some debate but let's be cordial about it. Let's act like gentlemen. Let's start being Ansonians and let's not care about whether it's republicans or democrats. Let's just stop it. Let start doing what we're supposed to do - what we were elected to do. We don't have to go back and forth at each other. Let's get our points across. You know me - I come across, I'm very brief in what I say, I like to get my point, I like results, I don't care who gets the credit for what happens in this City as long as we move forward, and that's the most important thing. And we better start doing it. We've got to start doing it here, okay? This is the elected officials for the City of Ansonia so having said that, I agree that the process should be slowed down. I'll make sure bond counsel is here to answer all questions. We should revisit all the department heads. There are good

intentions; there were good intentions to get this project done. There were reasons behind it because school was starting in September and we wanted to get the security in. There are issues at the Police Department that we wanted to take care of. There was nothing going on behind closed doors; everything was out in the open. I want bipartisanship for this bonding referendum. And we're going to have to. We're going to work at it, I'm going to work at it to make sure it does happen. Having said that I'll leave it up to the president to finish.

Alderman Marini interjected, Mr. President again I will say, permission to have one minute or less.

President Sharkey stated, I will allow it and I will say one thing, These people are getting a totally wrong impression. John, I asked you when you were finished if that was your statement, and you were done. Now it's going to go again. And this is how you deteriorate these meetings that it just comes to John and me and John and me, and I didn't want to do that. I let you speak; I have your say. Anybody on this Board by Robert's Rules of Order can call for the vote to be taken. It's not called when someone else says something and you get to answer. You didn't even go - and this is how it deteriorates.

Alderman Marini stated, I simply want to stress what "closed door" is. A closed door meeting is a meeting that the public is not aware of and cannot attend. So unfortunately yes, the process has been mostly behind closed doors. You, yourself said bond counsel made those decisions. He made them behind closed doors. That is the end of it. We need a transparent process. Bipartisanship is important but I'm concerned more so about competency; making sure we are doing right by the citizens of Ansonia, that the proper thought is going into spending \$4.9 million and it's being done in a competent manner. Let's take the time, let's do it right, let's do it right together. Mr. President, that's all we've ever asked.

President Sharkey stated, I agree the bond counsel did this. I wasn't even there when he did, and it was presented to me. If you want to say that's "closed door" that's fine. You are now talking about the competency of putting together those numbers and those items. John, it was done at open meetings here and you voted for it. Now you are alluding that there is something wrong with it and we should look at the competency of doing it again. That's all I'm saying. It's always an allusion that there is something wrong. There was nothing wrong done here. This was discussed more times at every single Board of A&T meeting that they had every single week. Every Board of Aldermen member was invited to be there, and John, as a Finance Committee member you should have been there too. End of discussion.

Mayor Della Volpe stated, I called in bond counsel because that is the person in charge of doing our bonds. I did that because I wanted to make sure it was done correctly. We had it under one scope. He categorized it into seven different questions. Now, he is the legal counsel and I rely on legal counsel. That's why we did it and that's why the change was made. If I didn't

communicate to each and every one of you I apologize. But there will be opening in the coming future - bond counsel will answer any and all questions that you all do have.

Alderman Marini stated, I read about it first in the newspaper. I am not questioning the competency of bond counsel; I'm questioning the competency of getting this group to work together in an open and transparent process. Again, I read about it first in The Valley Independent Sentinel.

Mayor Della Volpe stated, John, I wanted to make sure it was done correctly and in the appropriate way. That is why I called bond counsel in. There was nothing behind anybody's back or anything else. It was to be done correctly That is why I asked bond counsel to come in. I understand what was said there and I understand what was said here. Let's move forward for the citizens of Ansonia.

A roll call vote was taken as follows, and PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

NAME	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Adamowski	X		
Marcinko	X		
Stowe	X		
Tripp	X		
Mott	X		
Jeanette	X		
Fainer	X		
DeLucia	X		
Madigosky	X		
Radin			
Nihill	X		
Marini	X		
Knapp	X		
Sharkey	X		
TOTALS:	13	0	

### *Adjournment*

**Alderman Adamowski MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Marcinko. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Secretary  
Ansonia Board of Aldermen