



# CITY OF ANSONIA BOARD OF ALDERMEN Public Hearing – September 3, 2013

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## *Call to Order*

The Public Hearing of the Ansonia Board of Aldermen was called to order at 6:40 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 - absent  
Howard Madigosky, D5 - absent  
Joan Radin, R5 - present  
Scott Nihill, D6-absent  
John Marini, R7 - absent  
David Knapp, D7 - present  
Gene Sharkey, D6 - present

President Sharkey declared a quorum of 10 present, 4 absent.

## *Notice of Public Hearing*

The City of Ansonia Board of Aldermen will meet in the City of Ansonia, Aldermanic Chambers, 253 Main Street, City of Ansonia, Connecticut on September 3, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of holding the following public hearing:

Item 1. On the proposed project consisting of the \$5,120,000 Capital Improvements 2013-2014. The project is more particularly described in a Resolution entitled "RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$5,120,000 FOR CITY OF ANSONIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 2013-2014 AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF UP TO \$5,120,000 BONDS OF THE CITY TO MEET SAID APPROPRIATION (OR SUCH LESSER AMOUNT IF LESS THAN ALL COMPONENTS ARE APPROVED) 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; River Walk expansion; acquisition of properties (including 70 Platt Street) for the expansion of the Ansonia Police

Station; Peck School Demolition and the 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 18 day of August, 2013

James T. Della Volpe, Mayor  
City of Ansonia

### ***Public Hearing***

President Sharkey asked if any member of the public would like to speak on the Bond Project as proposed.

David Casseti, 3 High Acres Road

I'm a little concerned about some of the items in the bond. The \$728,000 for the Police Station. What is that?

President Sharkey stated, please pick up a copy of the explanation I've prepared for the public to follow along with.

President Sharkey explained, the second line down says "Police Station - Energy Improvement Upgrades" which are HVAC upgrade, new generator, window installation, update fire alarm system. It is broken out going across. The first two green boxes are energy savings. That's an HVAC boiler. It is not only a boiler it is a complete HVAC system which is makeup air, air conditioning, everything that is needed to be done for the entire building. The estimate there is \$455,000. All new windows for the Police Station. The station itself has single-pane windows from the time the building was built. That is taking all the windows out and putting in thermal-pane windows. There for infrastructure repairs, there is the sprinkler and fire alarm system for the present building - \$125,000 and there's also a proposed generator to power the entire building. We had several storms, one of which was the hurricane last year and we did know the generator there is undersized, power was lost to that building for 24-30 hours and there was not enough power to run communications, computers, or anything. That is the breakdown.

Mr. Casseti asked, do you think we should pump that kind of money into that Police Station? I mean, there are other things that are wrong with that Police Station. I served on the Board of Police Commission for 10 years. Our cells are not right, we're opening ourselves up to a lawsuit. I've been in contact with the Mayor on several occasions when I sat on the Board of Police Commission and tell him that the Department of Justice has money and plans and specs for

police stations and he was for it, unless he was giving me lip service, I don't know. This is something that we should look into before we pump \$728,000 into this Police Station. Give it back to the Historical Society and look for a new place. I mean to pump this kind of money in there and have the taxpayers foot the bill on an antiquated building is ridiculous. I mean I've talked to you on several occasions.

Mayor Della Volpe asked, where would you propose to put it, Dave?

Mr. Cassetti replied, right across the street from where the Boys and Girls Club is. That field. We have a lot of fields in town here. Put it right there. I've said that several times. That is a perfect location for the new Ansonia Police Department. You were for it, unless you were just giving me lip service, I don't know, Dell.

Mayor Della Volpe stated, now you know, you shouldn't be taking shots.

Mr. Cassetti stated, we specifically talked about this, several times.

President Sharkey called for a point of order.

Mr. Cassetti stated, I specifically talked to the Mayor on several occasions about this.

Mayor Della Volpe stated, I asked you to get the facts and figures for me, and you never did.

President Sharkey stated, we know the boiler system does not work.

Mr. Cassetti stated, it's being fixed now.

President Sharkey stated, the boiler system does not work. We were told the boiler system last year, they were there constantly, you were not a Police Commissioner last year. They were there constantly; they were there weekly. Ralph Mann was there. The boiler system will not last the year. We need to put a new boiler system in. They need to put air conditioning into that building. We have all of our computer equipment, all of our communication equipment is being fed heat, not air conditioning. We can't afford to lose that. So even if we were to go and build a police station wherever it is recommended, this must be spent to get them through this winter to stay there.

Mr. Cassetti stated, that's the boiler. The boiler's not on here. I just think it's a waste of money. This City needs a new police station.

President Sharkey replied, yes, it is. It is part of the \$455,000 figure. We had an itemized breakdown on this.

President Sharkey stated, the Police Commissioners that are currently up there have accepted this recommendation. This came from them. This was not something the Board of Aldermen did. There were numerous meetings; every member of this Finance Committee here met at the Police Department, walked through it, members of the Board of A&T were asked to go there, and the recommendation of the entire Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen was to go forward and replace this entire HVAC system. The entire Board of Aldermen felt it was necessary also to replace the windows in the building and go forward.

Proposals were made to look into putting a new Police Department someplace but that is years down the road by the time they put a committee together, by the time they apply for grants, by the time they do all this. Right now presently that Police Department needs a boiler HVAC system. Our homework has been done. That is the price we were given to put in an HVAC and a boiler system.

Mr. Cassetti continued, the other think I'd like to talk about is the Peck School demolition. We don't own Peck School. Peck School went in 2005 was sold to Beacon Builders, so why do we got to spend \$400,000 and knock it down when it was his responsibility, I have the contract.

President Sharkey stated, we are going after the owner of it with blight liens, with public safety there, it is loaded with rats, vermin. The builder itself is becoming unsafe. We are going back after the builder. The builder will not complete the building. The builder has tried to give the building back to the City of Ansonia in lieu of his back taxes that are owed. So the City will end up, probably, with that building again.

Mr. Cassetti stated, Kevin, isn't that a breach of contract? What about the second bidder?

Corporation Counsel Blake replied, it was awarded to him. That was many years ago. He had asked that, he can't complete the project. We can go back after and take the property on foreclosure for non-payment of taxes and also on blight liens.

Mr. Cassetti asked, so why don't you just sell it like you did all the blight buildings in Ansonia?

Corporation Counsel Blake replied, we don't own that property.

Mr. Cassetti stated, he just said that they're going to turn it over for back taxes.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, no, he wanted to give us Peck School if we forgave him over \$100,000 on what is Lincoln-Hayes School.

Mr. Cassetti stated, he had to post a bond. Did you get the bond from him?

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, yes, but it wasn't that much it was about \$5,000. But in terms of taking the building down, we're going to have to take it by foreclosure.

Mr. Cassetti stated, I hate to see the City have to spend \$400,000 to knock that building down.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, there is also money the City can get for asbestos and some other grant money but we have to have possession of the property in order to get some state and federal funding. He's not doing anything, he's not paying us, he's not able to do anything, but we can't just go and take the property and do things without going through...

Mr. Cassetti stated, well if he's behind on his taxes you could take his property.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, we have already gone through court proceedings, and so is the bank. We have commenced actions on that.

President Sharkey stated, this amount of money was put in there because we did get a reliable estimate on this. A good portion of it is for asbestos abatement in the building and if we are able to get this portion of it approved to do it, and then were able to get any grant money to do the asbestos removal, we would not spend this money; it would go back to the bond. We have a one shot time of getting this and we're putting it on the ballot now.

Mr. Cassetti stated, I'm still not following you. You're saying that the \$400,000 is going to be on the bond, and you're going to use that to demo the building, and in essence we're paying for that, the taxpayers. I still say it's a breach of contract. You had other bidders on the project.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, and one of them was Birm 1.

Mr. Cassetti stated yes, that's correct.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, Birm 1 and Main Street Development Corporation were the other bidders.

Mr. Cassetti stated right. But I don't plan on suing. I plan on running it.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, and the other company is bankrupt.

Mr. Cassetti stated, you have a breach of contract there because you have two sets of standards. You're not letting him follow through and finish the project.

Corporation Counsel Blake stated, there was no reverted clause in the contract that we could take it if he didn't finish the program. There were no deadlines bid into the project but it seems Beacon Builders is not capable of doing the project. He has advised us that he can't do the project.

Mr. Cassetti stated, then it was a lowball on his end. Because if it costs \$400,000 to knock it down and tow it all away, he bid \$250,000. Something's not right.

Valeria Wells, 70 Platt Street

Good evening. I'm from 70 Platt Street and my questioning is the property acquisition for the future Police Department expansion. They've told us that it's going to be for a parking lot.

President Sharkey replied, yes.

Ms. Wells asked, what are they going to do with the families living in the houses, like myself, my family, the other families and our neighbors?

President Sharkey stated, we were told the house is for sale. There is a for sale sign out in front of it.

Ms. Wells stated, there is, but our neighbor's is not. The Chief of Police has come personally to our home and the neighbors and told us both we had seven months to leave.

President Sharkey stated, no, that is wrong. There is only one piece of property involved here. It is not #68 and #70; it is only #70.

Ms. Wells stated, that's not what we were told.

President Sharkey stated, but I am telling you now. There is one piece of property on here. This is going to be a legal document filed. On the one that we're going to do later, it's only #70. There is only one piece of property involved there. In the future if there is not another place found for the Police Station, then if our investigation shows that they are going to stay in that building an addition would be put on that would go out into where #70 is.

Ms. Wells stated, my second question is that there is a huge parking lot one house over. The Police Department, we have spoken with them, they are willing to share the parking lot with the Police Department. However I spoke with some of the policemen and their only excuse was, "I don't want to walk that far."

President Sharkey stated the parking lot is being used. In fact, you are parking in that parking lot, or your father and mother are parking in that parking lot.

Ms. Wells stated, no, we have one that goes right up the hill. I live on #70.

President Sharkey stated, the people that live at #68 are using the parking lot every day. All the rest of the neighborhood is using the parking lot.

Ms. Wells stated, but they're not; they're parking in front of their homes.

President Sharkey stated, I belong to the firehouse across the street.

Ms. Wells stated, I've spoken with them. They said that it was already...

President Sharkey stated, I've belonged to the firehouse across the street for 50 years. They are using the lot. Now we know that the policemen, themselves, there is not enough room. This Board has discussed many, many times the need for additional parking there.

Alderwoman Radin talked about the time she went to the Police Department and there was no place to park. It was the idea of this Board that while the property is available for sale they were going to take advantage of the sale and buy that property, use it for a parking lot, until some time in the future that the Police Department would build an addition out into that lot. I need to have you understand, it is only one piece of property - #70.

Ms. Wells stated, would you be helping all three families find new homes in Ansonia? I've lived in Ansonia my whole life.

President Sharkey stated, if the person who owns the house sells the house, where would you go?

Ms. Wells stated, honestly, she said we could still live there as long as the new owners were okay with it.

President Sharkey stated, well, if the new owner is the City of Ansonia they're not going to be okay with it. Your owner is selling the house. She has posted it for sale. It is for sale. And the City of Ansonia is contemplating buying it for future need.

Ms. Wells asked, and if she takes it off?

President Sharkey stated, that's quite up to her to do. The lot is for sale and while it is for sale the City of Ansonia is contemplating buying it. They see a need for it. That's all I can tell you.

Ms. Wells stated, going back to my previous question. Would you help all three families look for a new home?

President Sharkey stated, I can't help them; I'm not in the real estate business. I'm not trying to sound heartless but the property is for sale and the City intends to try and buy it. They are not kicking you out on the street. They are intending to purchase a house if it is for sale.

Ms. Wells stated, thank you.

Brian Moles, 47 Fifth Street

I am going to be addressing the same subject that the little girl that was previously up here. I was there when the Chief of Police told them this. I am a witness to what he said, and I have seen him go to the neighbor's house and say this to the neighbors themselves.

President Sharkey stated, I can explain that. At one time this Board considered buying both 70 and 68. It was a proposal before us, we had discussed it; we have since changed our mind and came to an agreement. We are now only going to purchase #70 if it is available. #68 was not available and we decided to back away from that.

Mr. Moles stated, also the parking lot that is across from the Firehouse, not every neighbor actually goes in there. The #68 neighbors have their own little driveway and they park in front of their house as well. I don't see anyone that does not go to the firehouse park in that parking lot. So the police can park in there. Like she said, they are willing to share the parking lot. So why is it that they are being stubborn and not wanting to share with the Fire Department?

President Sharkey stated, I don't understand your question. Every day policemen are using it, neighbors are using it.

Mr. Moles stated, I have seen no policemen ever use that parking lot because I walk to her house every day.

President Sharkey stated, if you will meet me at any time, I will give you my telephone number, we can go there and you can see the people that are parking in the parking lot.

Mr. Moles stated, I walk there every single day and I have not seen any policemen walking from that parking lot.

President Sharkey stated, okay. Thank you for your comment.

Tim White, 90 North Prospect Street Ext.

I was just talking about the house on 70 Platt Street. I called up the real estate agent. I said I'm looking for a fix-up. He said it's a two-family house; it could be a three-family house. The \$220,000 is not even on this piece of paper. You buy it, what are you going to do, tear it down and put a parking lot in there?

President Sharkey explained, we had an appraisal done and the house was appraised at \$170,000. By the way it is a two-family house and you cannot convert it into a three-family house. That's illegal. You cannot convert it into a three-family. It is a two-family house and will stay a two-family house.

\$170,000 is the legal appraisal on the building. We added \$50,000 for demolition costs to take the house down and site work to make it a parking lot.

Mr. White stated, everybody's bringing up the thing about the Police Department. You're going to have a big empty parking lot on Olson Drive. Save one of those buildings and put the Police Department down there. You'll have all the parking you want, right in the center of town. For \$100,000 you can make a helluva new police station down there.

Another thing is, Woodbridge Avenue Extension is not a City Street. It's not on the map, it's not on my GPS, and the mail doesn't even go to that address. There are three lots in the back and want to sell them. What do they want to do, put a road in there?

President Sharkey stated, this is the recommendation of the Board of Public Works and the Superintendent of Public Works. They told us it is a City street, they need to repair it, and this is their estimate of the work. Woodbridge Avenue Extension, \$28,000 to repair it.

Mr. White stated, it's nothing but a driveway. There are three houses in there.

Alderman Tripp asked, I'm not familiar with fire apparatus. I'd like the President of the Board of Aldermen who has extensive knowledge and maybe Alderman Adamowski, if a heavy piece of fire equipment had to get to one of those two back houses, could a heavy piece of Ansonia fire equipment get to those two back houses?

President Sharkey stated, we may not be able to get the ladder truck there.

Alderman Tripp stated, thank you.

Bill Schuchmann, 56 North Prospect Street [with Mr. White]

Okay, Woodbridge Avenue Extension is not a street. There are no houses on it. There is one house, that's D'Allessio's house, and we gave him the permit because he borders North Prospect Street. But there are no houses on Woodbridge Avenue Extension. There's two driveways leading up to a house and there's a house that borders North Prospect Street. That's why we gave him the permit to be there. We subdivided that. Now there are three lots up there behind there that Mr. Tarantino tried very hard, but it's a piece of land that's landlocked. The reason why it's landlocked is because the person if they want to build anything they have to build a road from Woodbridge Avenue up to these three lots. It has no requirements for a road. So if the City accepts Woodbridge Avenue Extension, you're opening a can of worms; you're going to put in a whole new road.

President Sharkey stated, we were told by the Superintendent of Public Works that it was needed, that it was a City-accepted street. If we find in the future

that it's not, and we were told that it is, then we just would not spend that money and do it.

Mr. Schuchmann stated, you run it past Bart, that's all.

President Sharkey stated, we need to leave it here in case it is. We were told it is.

Mr. White continued, what's the extension on the Eagles Hose Ladder Truck?

President Sharkey replied, 100 feet.

Mr. White stated, if they park on the street and had a fire at one of those houses they could put it right over the top of a house and squirt the water right in, no problem. Put a road in there, people walk out their front door, they won't have a place to park their car.

The Ansonia Nature Center - parking lot \$245,000 redesigned. There ain't nothing wrong with it. The only thing wrong up there, I go up there all the time, all you have to do is paint lines. Oh you've got to park this way and that way, nobody knows where to park.

As far as the pond, you're going to make it deeper? Kids get in there, wander off from their parents, where are they going to be? Four or five year old kid can't swim.

The roof on the Ansonia Rescue. How old is that building? It's not a flat roof. What happened to the guy that designed it? To the guy that put it up?

President Sharkey explained, I don't know the exact date on it but we have some major problems with the structure of the roof itself. The way it was built. We have an insurance settlement coming to us for \$85,000 for one side of the roof. We need to do both sides of the roof. It needs to be structurally repaired. Originally the estimate was \$230,000. We have whittled it down to \$115,000. To do it, it would now be a brand new guaranteed 25-year roof on the building. There are problems with the structural design and it has failed. We have to do it over. There are major problems inside the building.

Mr. White stated, Oil tank removal. Where's that oil tank?

President Sharkey replied, there are three oil tanks; one at the Police Department, one at the Library, one at the Armory.

Mr. White stated, Armory - \$300,000 for an elevator. Do they use the downstairs rooms there at all?

President Sharkey replied, the downstairs is not handicap accessible, which is why the elevator has to be put in. We can only use the main upper floor. We

intend to use the Armory as a Civic Center. We have office space, we have many groups in Ansonia that want to use the other two floors but they can't have offices there or anything else because it is not handicap accessible.

Mr. White asked, are you putting it on the outside of the building?

President Sharkey replied, our plan is to put it inside the building to keep the integrity of the building; to keep the historical aspect.

Mr. White stated, at the Armory, those garages up there, that needs a new roof on it. There's a blue tarp on top of it.

President Sharkey replied, this is part of that.

Randolph Carroll, 40 Fourth Street

I'm the Chairman of the Historical Commission and I'd like to comment about the Armory building. I'm all for it. That building, I don't know if you guys know but in 1932 a bunch of veterans got together from Derby and Ansonia and reenacted the Purple Heart. I plan to have that building listed on the National Register. Now without an elevator it's a wasted building. We've got floors that we can't use. I've been through that building, I've asked for an Archive Room in that building. It's one of the best buildings in this town that we can utilize for other purposes. All we can use right now is the first floor. As Chairman of Historic Commission and as well as a taxpayer, I'm all for the elevator so the total building can be utilized. For whatever purpose for the City of Ansonia.

President Sharkey asked three times if any other member of the public wished to discuss the bond proposal.

Ms. Wells stood up on the third call requesting to speak on the Peck School demolition.

Alderman Jeanette MOVED to allow Ms. Wells to address the Board a second time; SECONDED by Alderman Knapp. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Valeria Wells, 70 Platt Street

My other concern is the Peck School demolition, \$400,000 to destroy what I consider a historical landmark. Why not, like, I'm pretty sure the \$400,000 toward the Peck School demolition could be put toward Peck School for another purpose, possibly to make it into a small museum. Where you could probably fix up the rooms of it, but instead hang up little, what's the word I'm looking for, they're not tokens or knick-knacks, but paintings and historical...

Alderman Knapp stated, artifacts.

Ms. Wells stated, artifacts. Thank you. In the building. Ansonia is where the bicycle was first created. We could have a little, it probably doesn't cost much if you find the right material, I'm an art major so if you find the right materials it wouldn't take as much to clean it up and fix it up and make it useful for something else while still deriving money from it instead of tearing it down and leaving it blank and empty. It's a possibility instead of demolishing it, and probably less expensive.

President Sharkey asked three times if any other member of the public had any other comments, questions or concerns. Being none, he declared the Public Hearing closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder  
Secretary, Board of Aldermen