



**CITY OF ANSONIA**  
**BOARD OF ALDERMEN**  
**Minutes of the Special Meeting – November 10, 2014**

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**Call to Order**

The Regular Meeting of the Ansonia Board of Aldermen was called to order at 7 p.m. by Aldermanic President Philip Tripp. 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  
Charles Stowe, R1 – absent  
Philip Tripp, R2 – present  
Lorie Vaccaro, R2 – present  
Denice Hunt, D3 – absent  
Joseph Jeanette, D3 – present  
Anthony DeLucia, D4 – present

Jerome Fainer, D4 – absent  
Anthony Casseti, R5 – present  
Joan Radin, R5 – present  
Matthew Edo, R6 – present  
Patrick Henri, R6 – present  
David Blackwell, Jr., R7 – present  
Daniel Evans, R7 – absent

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

**Consideration of Previous Minutes**

**Alderman Edo MOVED to accept the minutes of the October 14, 2014 Regular Board Meeting; SECONDED by Alderman Radin. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

**Public Session**

President Tripp asked if any member of the public wished to speak.

Millie Rios, 121 Great Hill Road

The Planning & Zoning Commission will be holding a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. November 24<sup>th</sup>. I am hoping that as many of you as possible can be present. Thank you.

Lida Princevalli, 86 Cottage Avenue

I've been asked to speak on behalf of those affected by the pension fund shortage. Some have heard the sentiment, "we did not create this problem", and we understand your feelings, but we also believe that the majority of you who serve on the Board and those who sought election did so because you feel you can effect a difference. The majority of pension holders are taxpayers like you who entered and paid into the pension in good faith for our retirement years. We appreciate the time, the effort and the funds it will take to rectify this issue. We ask that you please continue to work to fix this and not continue to push the problem to the back burner any longer. Thank you.

President Tripp asked if any other member of the public wished to speak. Being none, he declared the public session closed.

**Public Official Session**

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*Mayor David Cassetti*

Good evening President Tripp, residents of Ansonia, members of the Board of Aldermen. As you know, I have pledged to the taxpayers of the City of Ansonia that I will do everything in my power to help reduce the enormous tax burden that we face as Ansonia residents. We took an important step toward that goal this past Tuesday. As you know, our voters resoundingly voted in favor of Charter Revision proposals that will help us streamline government and run City Hall more efficiently. Even more significantly, the revisions will hold elected officials accountable for setting the tax rate and budget for the first time in Ansonia's history. I wish to thank the voters of Ansonia for their continued support and the Board of Aldermen and Charter Revision Commission for their work in setting the proposals before the voters.

On your agenda tonight you'll be voting on a Resolution to begin addressing the unfunded retirement plan obligation with a solid down payment of \$550,000. We have an obligation to be responsible to our taxpayers by funding our liabilities. After all, unfunded liabilities result in higher taxes in the future. Although this problem has been ignored for many years and we can't resolve the entire problem in one year, we are making a good faith effort to address it now.

The temperature has dropped outside but we are turning up the heat in City Hall. We have already begun the budget process. The department heads should have already received their budget forms. I am once again asking for a decrease this year of 2 percent from my department heads. I have asked them to trim all unnecessary expenditures to ensure that I can once again pass those savings on to the taxpayers of the City of Ansonia.

I want to also mention a few items of interest. The Workplace will be announcing its Grand Opening November 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 on 4 Fourth Street. I am pleased to welcome

The Workplace to Ansonia and am proud of the partnership the City of Ansonia has created with the non-profit. The Workplace is a welcome addition to Ansonia. They provide job placement, employment advocacy, career counseling and other valuable resources to Valley residents.

This Tuesday we honor our brave men and women on the Armed Forces on Veterans' Day. I have negotiated an agreement with The Workplace to ensure that our first new Office of Veterans' Affairs will be located in the same building in order to help our Veterans in Ansonia.

I also want to mention that our one and only Joe Jackson has once again put himself in harm's way to provide help to a citizen who was struggling in the river. Last week Joe received an honorary award from the Military Order of Purple Heart.

I also want to recognize 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Mark Nimons and 3<sup>rd</sup> Lieutenant Mark Gregorio of the Eagle Hose Hook and Ladder Company #6. Last week they entered a gas-filled home and rescued the occupant, where he was transported by EMS to our local hospital. We wish to thank them for their bravery. [Applause rang throughout the forum]

I also want to congratulate Webster Hose for winning their First Place in the North Haven Columbus Day Parade last month. Way to go Webster Hose and Alderman Jeanette. [Applause rang throughout the forum]

Finally, I want all of us to remember how special tomorrow is, and recognize our brave veterans who fought for our individual liberties.

I also would like to welcome back Jimmy Var (Vartelas), our custodian, back to work.

Thank you and have a good evening.

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*Corporation Counsel John Marini*

I want to give an update on an issue we talked about last month - 245 North State Street. We had an absentee landlord and a situation with a very serious drainage problem and water pipe problem. It resulted in 11 residents, tenants, being displaced from the homes and put up in hotels. Since that time, the absentee landlord, a gentleman from New York, has paid to the City approximately \$6,455 in cash for the costs associated to the City - the expense for putting them up in hotels, the legal fees, and the Marshals' fees. He's going to owe about \$2,000 to \$3,000 more before it's all said and done. Our displaced residents are just finishing up in hotels this week; they're going to be going to new homes after this week. There is still quite a bit of work still to be done at 245 North State Street to make the apartments reasonable for residents again. When it's all said and done we're going to send the landlord not only the final bills but also violation letters for the code

problems he's had at the apartment and also other legal violations, for example, not keeping his address on file with the City and also his failure to obtain a CO under our new laws.

I want to say that our Blight department is still doing a fantastic job. They've cleaned up at this point over 90 properties. The enforcement has all been residential in nature, and we've had a lot of homeowners step up to the plate and really, before fines even set in, complying with his orders and getting their properties cleaned. We've even had some banks in the area that have been good neighbors and good citizens - Wells Fargo Bank submitted an entire list of their properties and allowed the Clerk's Office to scrub it to identify if there are liens on the properties – and Wells Fargo has graciously embraced a willingness to pay those liens off, if they do exist.

We're now going to move on to some industrial problems and commercial problems we have on our Main Street in the coming weeks. We're going to issue violations letters to probably two of the biggest commercial blight problems that we have in our downtown – the former Farrell process lab and the old SHW building.

In terms of absentee landlords – we're examining a list of two- to three-family homes. We hope to send them an informational packet allowing them to catch up on our new blight laws and also our new Certificate of Occupancy laws and our new Landlord ID laws so there's an understanding with enforcement.

I'd like to also say that Police negotiations are ongoing, we'll look to have an update in the next several months.

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*Chief of Staff Christopher Tymniak*

You guys should have a copy of my monthly personnel report.

Last week the hours changed; it's getting dark earlier now. I want to share with everybody that the Ansonia Public Library has new LED lights in there – the place is lit up with comfortable reading lighting throughout the entire building. Do go by and at night you can go and read any book you want.

A little reminder for everybody at Thanksgiving time - food donation drives – City Hall will be a food donation center. It's a time to give thanks. I encourage everybody to consider picking up a little extra food at Big Y or Stop n' Shop and dropping it off in one of the bins.

Alderman Radin stated, on the City of Ansonia website you have something about outsourcing the payroll department in the Finance Department. Why do you need to do that?

Mr. Tymniak replied, we looked into outsourcing – we sent out an RFQ asking companies. There are two options. One we're looking at perhaps bringing in an HR Director. There is also the idea of having an outsource company which would be considerably cheaper to handle an awful lot of the paperwork that comes in. We're also looking to move our payroll time sheets to an online system instead of a ditto check-off sheet to keep track of hours, so it's all on a computer.

Alderman Radin asked, will it affect the people working there now? There are people there that I don't think are ready to retire yet, and I don't think we should be laying off people that are citizens, Ansonia people. I just don't understand why it would be cheaper going outsourcing when if they do get laid off or they do retire they're going to have to be paid anyway.

Mr. Tymniak stated, I'm not talking about layoffs or retirements. I'm talking about modernizing and updating our systems. We currently use a company called Paychex to do our stuff. It would be much easier to have an online system where employees enter in their time sheets digitally via computer versus filling out the sheets and then having a data entry person collect all that information. All we've done is submitted an RFQ, which is a Request for Qualifications, where we will bring in three, maybe four companies to hear what they can do and whether it's worth the City of Ansonia...

Alderman Radin interjected, but this will not be laying off any of our people that are working in the departments.

Mr. Tymniak replied, no.

Alderman Radin stated, that's all I want to know because I have heard other rumors.

Mr. Tymniak stated, those rumors are absolutely untrue.

Alderman Radin stated, I hope so. Thank you.

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*Director of Economic Development Sheila O'Malley*

A few items. Eagle Hose and City Hall roofs – I'm working with Doug Novak and the Public Works Department. Those should be commencing shortly.

You will see demolition on the Ansonia Copper and Brass site shortly as well – once permits are in place - some time before December 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Mayor hopefully will have an announcement on a couple of infrastructure grants that we're waiting to hear about. Those are large grants. We are keeping our fingers crossed for them.

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*Lt. Andrew Cota*

We just took delivery of one of our brand new Police vehicles; it's at the local garage getting some last bits installed. That will be on the road soon.

December will be the start of the winter parking – you'll see that in the newspapers shortly. That will run from December 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> and it will be even side parking because it's an even year. That will all be in the article that's being published to make sure everybody's aware.

We have a couple of traffic studies going on throughout the town. One is at Grove Street and Mary Street and a couple of other locations. We also have our speed trailer that we've been moving around the town at the request of the Mayor's office and neighbors as well.

We're working on closing out a few burglary cases – they were commercial burglaries – we had a little rash there. We have identified some suspects and are waiting for some evidence to come back from the lab – DNA and such. Hopefully we can put those away and make some arrests.

Public Works has been installing the new windows at the Police Department. If you drive by you'll see some old and some new. They're moving quite quickly. They're doing a very good job. The windows look good. The generator, the windows, the new heating system – we're doing okay now and it should be a little more efficient in the building. Before, we just couldn't regulate any of it.

Alderman Radin stated, I called two weeks ago. I had a couple phone calls on Mary Street – they've been speeding on there, they hit the side of one car and they took the rear view mirror off another one. They said they were going to put some kind of a speed trap there. Did they?

Lieutenant Cota replied, yes, if you look on the road the tubes are out in that general area. We put the tubes out first because that's a better indicator of what's really happening. The speed trailer, they see it and they jam on their brakes, and it doesn't give you a good reading. We will analyze what we get and then will try to assign people to those areas at the times that we see the highest speeds.

*Bill Nimons, Comptroller*

I'm here in support of restructuring the pension plan we're working on. I urge you all to vote for it. There is a plan in place and as it's been explained to all the Aldermen throughout this last couple of weeks, I think this is something we should do. We do have an obligation to the people that we've promised them, and that obligation is not going away; it just gets bigger. Thank you.

Doug Novak, Public Works

To build on what Shiela and the Lieutenant said, projects are ongoing – we finished the roof at ARMS and we're now working on the HVAC system at ARMS. The roof is going to be replaced at the Nolan Field Fieldhouse. We're working on the Police Department. All the roads have been paved and the only thing we're waiting for on the list is for the contractor to come in and do the line painting. We should be getting that done in the next week.

Alderman Radin stated, I would like to thank Doug - on the tree down at the corner of Division and Wakelee – they ended up taking it down in the last two or three days and it's coming down. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

Mr. Novak stated, we're working with UI and the Cemetery Association.

Alderman Henri stated, I'd like to thank Mr. Novak and the Public Works Department for paving Highland Avenue, putting in the new curbing, filling in between the curb, and the arts and crafts, people are liking it very much. Today they had a tract over at Prindle Avenue and people have been dumping stuff there for years, by Emmett O'Brien – grass, limbs, brush. Public Works is leveling it off, they're pushing it back. Today I handed out letters to everyone in the neighborhood saying you cannot dump here, letting them know there is a fine. I sent Chief Hale an e-mail asking him to please pay attention to this. The people really like it and are really impressed that something's being done.

Mr. Novak stated, we're working on the Emmett O'Brien trail from Prindle Avenue to the tennis courts. It's a project that the City entered into with Emmett O'Brien High School so the students can walk from the school to the sports complex without walking on Ford or Bruns Streets – they can cut through woods. We've been in there, we got all our permits from Wetlands. The crew has been there cutting out all the underbrush. We're going to get in there probably by the end of this week and will be laying down some pea stone for a 6-foot wide walking path from Prindle to the tennis courts. The sad thing is, we worked there last week very diligently to clean up the face of Prindle Avenue and over the weekend the residents just went in and dumped everything over where we cleaned up. So we have to make a double effort on what we do there. Hopefully once we put up the No Dumping signs the residents will stop dumping on the property.

Alderman Blackwell asked, are those courts accessible through the Ford Street side of the complex?

Mr. Novak replied, yes. We went up there within the last couple of weeks and we cut back all the brush to access the tennis courts.

Board of Education

Alderman Radin stated, we got a copy of the Board of Education's annual report and I sat there and read it. They're doing a marvelous job. They've got a lot of AP courses there. There are quite a few students that are going to get college credits because a couple of colleges are giving them courses. I was more impressed with the fact that Bob Lisi, our Truancy person, took down the truancy from 30% in 2011-2012 to 11% this year - a big drop in the Middle School, Mead School and Prendergast School. He is doing a great job. I understand he's on the road all the time. I just wanted to say the Board of Education is doing a great job.

**Committee Reports**Finance Committee – Alderman Lorie Vaccaro

**Alderman Vaccaro MOVED to pay all bills if found to be correct; SECONDED by Alderman Jeanette. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

Alderman Vaccaro stated, the audit has been completed and filed. Everything came out well. The auditors sent a letter with their recommendations. The surplus originally was \$2,900,000 and there is a difference now – it's \$3,018,600. We're setting up a meeting of the Finance Committee along with the Comptroller and the Mayor to work on the budget.

ARMS Committee – Alderman Blackwell

In October ARMS responded to 275 calls. 139 patients were transported to Griffin, 14 to Yale New Haven, 7 to Bridgeport Hospital, 3 to St. Vincent's, 12 to Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, 4 to Yale New Haven St. Raphael's Campus, 1 to Milford, 4 to Veterans' Administration West Haven, and 1 to St. Mary's Waterbury.

In September, ARMS volunteers covered 58 shifts equaling \$340 a coverage. This coverage equates to \$5,606.28 of salary that is being saved over traditional part-time staffing. Fiscal year to date volunteers have contributed time of 1,374 hours or \$22,135.14 worth of volunteer hours to the citizens of Ansonia. I think these volunteers, and the Fire Department volunteers, here where you put a monetary value on it – they deserve a lot of credit and they are saving the City a lot of money.

WPCA Committee – Alderman Joan Radin

I was at the meeting Wednesday night. Brian made out, and all the Aldermen may find an envelope in their reports that has a listing of all the things that are going to happen if we get the anaerobic plant; the things that we'd have to do to get it. It's very important that you read it. To me it looks like it's not a very good idea.

I'm starting a petition – I've had people request it - of people that don't want the anaerobic plant in the center of town. If they're able to read these letters they'll see that there will be a lot of problems if it does come.

President Tripp stated, I concur with what you're saying and this will not move forward without being thoroughly investigated and due process. There is a long way to go on this and a lot more knowledge needs to be shared and information put out.

Alderman Radin stated, Brian did a very good job – he's the Superintendent of WPCA. He did a very good job writing a report so all the Aldermen would get a chance to read it. It is a very thorough report.

Fire Committee – Alderman Joseph Jeanette

In October there were 6 motor vehicle assists, 3 CO investigations, 7 smoke and odor investigations, 1 trash, 1 vehicle fire, 1 structure fire, 5 gas leaks, 1 bomb threat, 14 false alarms, 1 call for mutual aid, 3 electrical fires, 3 hazmat incidents, 1 public service/good intent, totaling 48 calls.

**Alderman Jeanette MOVED accept all of the Committee Reports as presented; SECONDED by Alderman Vaccaro. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

***Municipal Reports / Annual Reports***

**Alderman Cassetti MOVED to accept all municipal and annual reports, dispense with the reading and place them on file; SECONDED by Alderman Edo. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

***Tax Collector's Report and Request for Refunds***

**Alderman Edo MOVED to accept the report of the Tax Collector and pay the refunds in the amount of \$1922.69 if found to be correct; SECONDED by Alderman Jeanette. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

***Claims***

10-14-840 Bristol Resource Recovery Facility

**Alderman Henri MOVED to refer the claim to Corporation Counsel Marini and the Claims Committee; SECONDED by Alderman Radin. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

**Communications**

**Alderman Radin MOVED to accept all of the communications, place them on file, and take them up in their order on the agenda; SECONDED by Alderman Vaccaro. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

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Communication #1

From: Mayor David S. Cassetti

Re: Charter Revision Success

President Tripp read the Communication into the record as follows:

*Dear President Tripp and Chairman Lisi,*

*I'd like to thank the Board of Aldermen and Charter Revision Commission for their efforts to revise the Ansonia City Charter this year. Your hard work provided Ansonia's residents with the opportunity to exercise the power of self-governance at the ballot.*

*Congratulations on the overwhelming approval of three Charter Revision measures this year, particularly the budget reform initiative. For the first time in Ansonia's history, elected officials will be held accountable for establishing the annual budget and setting the tax rate, and the Mayor will be given a formal role in the process. This is a clear victory for supporters of open and accountable government.*

*Please know that your efforts, and those of your membership, have helped pave the way for a more effective and efficient City government.*

*You are to be commended for your work.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mayor David S. Cassetti*

**Resolutions**

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Resolution #1

Re: Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Projects

All Aldermen of All Wards introduced the following Resolution:

MASTER MUNICIPAL AGREEMENT FOR RIGHTS OF WAY PROJECTS

Resolved,

WHEREAS, the Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Activities is entered into by and between the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (the "DOT") and the City of Ansonia;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen that David S. Cassetti, as Mayor of the City of Ansonia, is hereby authorized to sign the Agreement entitled "Master Municipal Agreement for Rights of Way Projects".

**Alderman Vaccaro MOVED to ADOPT Resolution #1; SECONDED by Alderman Blackwell. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

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Resolution #2

Re: Budget Transfer – City Retirement Plan

Aldermen Lorie Vaccaro and Philip Tripp of the Second Ward introduced the following Resolution:

Resolved,

WHEREAS, the City Retirement Plan is presently underfunded by approximately four million dollars (\$4,000,000); and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen recognizes the need for the City to reserve a sufficient level of funding to meet retirement obligations when they become due; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen recognized that chronically underfunded liabilities can result in a higher future tax rate for Ansonia's residents;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in the interest of financial responsibility, that the Board of Aldermen recommends a transfer of five hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$550,000) from the City's general reserve fund into the City Retirement Plan.

**Alderman Vaccaro MOVED to ADOPT Resolution #2; SECONDED by Alderman Radin. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

**New Business**Handicapped Parking Space at City Hall

Alderman Radin stated, a few months ago a constituent of mine came in and said they are handicapped and they can't get into City Hall because the handicapped parking was in front of City Hall and they can't climb stairs. So, I spoke to the Mayor and it was changed over to the area where it should be - by the elevator. It was fine for the first few days, and then after that, no matter what time I come to City Hall, there was a car parked there. It's the same car parked there all the time. I found out it is an employee of the City of Ansonia. I don't think the sign was put there for the employee's convenience. I really think it was put there for our taxpayers and handicapped people to be able to get into their City Hall. So whoever the person is, I don't know, and I really don't care. It was put there for our taxpayers and handicapped people, so I would appreciate it if they...

Mayor Cassetti interjected, Joan, I'm going to have a one-hour parking sign put up underneath the Handicapped signage in that spot. That should solve it.

Ward Allowance Line Items within the City Surplus

Alderman Henri stated, this is really "Old Business." I asked last month that on the agenda we put an item having to do with giving the Wards a budget in the City budget. I don't see it on the agenda. It's the second time I specifically asked for something to be on the agenda that has not been put on the agenda.

Again, under New Business, I'm going to say, we have a \$3 million surplus. I would like to see some of that money, and I suggested \$10,000 as a number to start with, go to each Ward so the Aldermen could decide what projects are most needed in talking with your constituents. "What's wrong with your Ward; what needs to be fixed; what needs to be made better?" We would have the discretion to come up with a list of what we need.

To give you an example, there are a lot of street signs that need replacement. We don't have them because it always gets kicked down the road; there's no money for it. Crosswalks. Things like that. If you need to cut down trees, install lighting, if you've got a park, a school, a firehouse in your Ward, maybe they need something. The \$10,000 per Ward probably won't go far at all, but it can be very helpful.

I'm going to give the same speech next month – the taxpayers would like to see that money given directly back to them in their neighborhoods. So again I will ask that this be put on the agenda for next month, and I expect to see it there. Thank you.

Mayor Cassetti stated, I request that all the Aldermen in all of the Wards put together a list of things you need for your Ward, and bring it forth next month.

Enhanced lighting on Main Street

President Tripp stated, I had spoken with several residents as I was on Main Street a lot over the last several months. Maybe we can find a way to enhance the lighting on Main Street.

Mayor Cassetti stated, I'm going to get brighter bulbs – like on West Main Street.

Ms. O'Malley stated, we're going to be meeting with UI this week to discuss that.

Congratulations to President Tripp

Alderman Henri stated, I would like to congratulate one of our own who stepped up this campaign season to run for State office. It was a great job and you made a lot of headway. It takes a lot of endurance and dedication to do this thing. I'm talking about our President, Mr. Phil Tripp. Thank you very much. [Applause rang throughout the forum].

President Tripp stated, I would only say, as always, I work for the people of the City of Ansonia. Thank you, sir.

***Executive Session***

At approximately 7:40 p.m., Alderman Radin MOVED to enter Executive Session to discuss the following:

1. **City of Ansonia v. Hayes**
2. **City of Ansonia v. D'Alessio**
3. **City of Ansonia v. Bestman**
4. **City of Ansonia v. Garcia**
5. **City of Ansonia v. 27 Orchard Street**
6. **Claim of Hammonasset v. City of Ansonia**

and invited Corporation Counsel Marini, Mayor Cassetti, Mr. Tymniak, and Ms. O'Malley to remain in the Aldermanic Chambers; SECONDED by Alderman Jeanette. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.

***Return to Regular Session***

At approximately 8:04 p.m. Alderman Adamowski MOVED to return to Regular Session; SECONDED by Alderman Vaccaro. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.

**Alderman Vaccaro MOVED to proceed as planned on Items 1 thru 5 as discussed in Executive Session; SECONDED by Alderman Jeanette. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

**Alderman Vaccaro MOVED to proceed as planned on Item 6 as discussed in Executive Session; SECONDED by Alderman Henri. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

***Adjournment***

**Alderman Cassetti MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Radin. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 10-0.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Secretary  
Ansonia Board of Aldermen