



**Ansonia Board of Aldermen
Public Hearing**

August 30, 2016

Call to Order

At 7 p.m., President Tripp announced to the assembly that upon the recommendation of Bond Counsel Joseph Fasi, the start time of tonight's public hearing is being delayed due to the venue being changed from the Aldermanic Chambers of Ansonia City Hall to the Auditorium at Ansonia High School.

The Public Hearing of the Ansonia Board of Aldermen was called to order at approximately 7:25 p.m. by Aldermanic President Philip Tripp. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Handwritten notes:
16 SEP 23 PM 12:56
Diane P. [unclear]

Attendance

Randolph Carroll, R1	Present	Ward 4	Vacancy
Charles Stowe, R1	Present	Anthony Cassetti, R5	Present
Philip Tripp, R2	Present	Joan Radin, R5	Present
Lorie Vaccaro, R2	Present	Ward 6	Vacancy
Denice Hunt, D3	Present	Patrick Henri, R6	Present
Joseph Jeanette, D3	Present	David Blackwell, Jr., R7	Present
Richard Kaslaitis, III, R4	Present	Frank DeLiberero, R7	Present

Public Hearing on the proposed projects consisting of the \$18,295,000 Capital Improvements 2016-2017. The Projects are more particularly described in a Resolution entitled "RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$18,295,000 FOR CITY OF ANSONIA CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS 2016-2017 AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF UP TO \$18,295,000 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 THEREFORE."

Town and City Clerk Janet Waugh read the Resolution aloud.

President Tripp recognized Police Chief Kevin Hale, who described the need for a new Police facility. The former Larkin School opened on Elm Street in 1894. It served as an elementary school for 83 years until 1977 and remained vacant for three years until the current Police Department moved in there. The cellblock doors were taken from the former Police facility in City Hall and brought to the current facility. They were 40 years old at the time. The entire facility is substandard. The juvenile holding facility is substandard. The locker rooms for men and women are substandard. The public is invited to come and tour the current Police facility. We as employees of the City and elected officials should teach the public and show them exactly what we're doing and why we need to do what we're doing. We are going to be holding tours of the Police Department at night and on weekends so that public officials, taxpayers, and residents can see where we are. You can also see it

just by trying to find a parking space if you ever had to come up there. This is not a wish or a want; this is a need. This facility has to be replaced; we have to move on. If not now, then when? We are looking to build a facility that will last 50 years; outlast many of us here, spreading the debt over a very long period of time – 40 years. Now is the right time to do this and I'm looking for everybody's support. Thank you.

President Tripp recognized Director of ARMS, Jared Heon, who explained that the items he has requested are needs, and not a wish list. The vehicles requested are replacing vehicles that are more than 14 years old. This is not the original version that was presented to the Board of Aldermen. We've been working on the Capital Plan, City-wide, for approximately 2.5 years before we got to this final document. This document has been vetted by all of the Aldermen, by all of the Department Heads, by all of the Finance Committee members of the Board of Aldermen. They have gone through, and we have shown, that these are needs, not wants or wishes. We need these items. If we do not do this Capital Plan and plan this out, we can be back as Department Heads, in front of your Board and in front of BOAT, every time something breaks, asking for additional monies, putting the burden on that budget year, and coming up with additional monies to replace what we have just to continue the services that we have today. On our list, we're not asking for any vehicle to be replaced that is under 14 years of age. We want the public to know that there's been a lot of thought, a lot of vetting, a lot of discussion and it's all been in meetings. Everyone has seen it, heard it. This is the final product. Thank you for your time.

President Tripp recognized Superintendent of Public Works Michael D'Alessio, who explained that his request is to replace much-needed aging equipment and repair aging buildings. Most of our equipment is starting to age. Not only our equipment but all of the buildings in Ansonia. A lot of the roofs, our firehouses, our transfer station, our own building, our furnaces, and all the buildings are starting to age. We're always working on putting money into the buildings. There are a lot of things that we do need that we can't put on the taxpayers all in one shot. I think this plan is a great thing – we're planning ahead. We're going to be paying over a lot of years so it's not going cost us much money. Some of our equipment, our pay loader is getting old – that's like \$130,000 – a big thing all at one time. Our trucks, our plow trucks, we've got to be out there, it snows out, people have to get to school and get to work. We have 8 trucks running in all snowstorms. By next year or the year after we have to upgrade a couple more of these trucks, some spreaders. Our John Deere is on the road every single day taking some sidewalks up, doing catch basins. That's getting old; there's a lot of hours on it. Another piece of equipment we have to plan for. I think this is something we really need.

President Tripp recognized Bob Evans, Operations Director for the Board of Education, who explained, as with the previous speakers, these are a necessity for the Board of Education. Our boilers at our two schools are over 50 years old and at any time they could break down and we'd have some serious issues with freezing during the winter. Also, we're looking at putting an access road here at the High School in the back here of Coe Lane. As everybody came in and out of the High School, that is the only entrance. If we have an issue at the front there, there's no way anybody's going to get in and out of here. Also we have equipment replacement – our trucks are 15 years old and we plow and sand our own lots. By having this referendum it will spread it out over years but it won't impact the taxpayers. It just rolls on the School Building 2001 project that we've been paying for the last 17-18 years. I would like everybody to support this referendum. Thank you.

President Tripp recognized Allison Rubelmann from the Ansonia Nature Center, who expressed her support for this bonding referendum not only for the Ansonia Nature Center which has many projects that need to be done, but in its entirety. She noted that Public Works maintains her building and 156 acres of grounds. She would like to push for the Public Works Department to have the equipment they need to maintain all the properties in the City including the Ansonia Nature Center.

President Tripp recognized Fire Chief Scott Tremblay who explained that his department has been working on a shoestring budget for the past 20 years, preventing their ability to do any major upgrades to their equipment. Equipment is needed to provide for safety of our volunteer firefighters. They are asking for radio equipment and personal protective gear, as well as generators for the firehouses.

Each of the department heads that spoke explained that their requests were well-vetted and are things that are badly-needed. Nearly every one stated that requesting their items through a Capital Plan will prevent the need of funding these items through their actual operating budgets, which will make it easier for the taxpayers to support the burden of these expenses.

President Tripp asked if any member of the Public wished to address the Board.

Ryan Hunt, 7 Hale Drive

I am a member of ARMS but I stand up here as a taxpaying citizen of the City of Ansonia. I have attended I think every single Finance meeting that you all have held in City Hall. I've listened to all of the dialogue regarding this plan; I've listened to all the feedback regarding the costs associated with each of the departments with an interest, obviously, in public safety to our community. My mother works here, my family lives here, my sister is a Police Officer here. I want to speak in two aspects.

Number one, the Police Department. I implore anyone sitting in this room to take a visit to the Police Department and tell me that you are comfortable with that facility. It is beaten down. It is an 1800s building. It needs upgrade. We can't drive the ambulance safely around the back of that building. The inside of the building is rotting, molding, things are falling off the walls. We're using cells from the 1800s to store prisoners and safely house youth in that building. We talk about our youth with Board of Education – let's talk about the safety of the youth inside of a building that's falling apart. I can't stress enough the safety of the officers that work so closely with us in this town, that we do something with this Police Department.

Secondly, from an ARMS perspective, I don't stand up here and talk about the condition of our vehicles because it's nice and it's enjoyable to drive a new vehicle – we have vehicles that are breaking down as we drive them to calls, breaking down as we drive them around town because they're in excess of 14 years old. Equipment that can't stand up to the taxpaying citizens of this town, including my mother, including my aunts and uncles that live here, including my sister who works here. It is despicable that we would allow something to go on so long without taking care of it. This is not the first time this has been asked for. It's year after year after year after year that we hang back and we tighten up the purse strings.

Look, I get, I work for a Fortune 500 company and am responsible for over \$400 million in an annual budget. I get it that we have to take care of the budget and make sure that we're spending responsibly. Let's spend responsibly. Let's spend where the money needs to be spent and look where we need to cut costs. Public safety is not one of those areas. We're not asking for a 2017 vehicle when we have a 2015. We're asking for resources that benefit every one of you sitting there and all of our taxpaying citizens. Forget the ARMS shirt – let's talk about what's best for our citizens in this town and do the right thing. Thank you.

Tarek Raslan, 76 Garden Street

Good evening. I'm here to speak about the proposed bond and debt issue being discussed this evening. It's something that I've been following very closely and is probably the single most important action that this government will undertake this year or indeed during the terms in which you serve.

I would first like to applaud the administration on receiving the rating upgrade from Standard & Poors on our general obligation bonds to achieve a AA rating, which now puts our bond ratings on par with cities like Shelton, Naugatuck, Derby and other cities in Connecticut. This upgrade for Ansonia represents the latest improvement in a string of bond upgrades stretching back over a decade to 2004 when our city's bond issues received an equivalent credit rating of A-minus, and then in the midst of feeling the effects of the great recession in 2011, the City received a three notch upgrade on it's bond issue from A-minus to AA-minus. So I applaud this long-term accomplishment by administrations past and present, putting the City of Ansonia in a position where you can have the kind of bold leadership that is courageous enough to take advantage of the benefits of these credit rating upgrades and propose the largest single debt issue in Ansonia's history at the currently proposed \$18.3 million budget. The City can certainly benefit from a large spending initiative such as this one. This is the biggest single debt spending issue we have ever seen in this City. To me, this is all good. Part of what has me conflicted on my feelings toward this bond proposal is that municipal bond rates across the country at long-term lows due to a number of economic factors, and these low rates present an excellent borrowing opportunity for our City. But this is where the good feeling stop for me and here's why. The only thing better than low-interest loans are no-interest loans and the significant percentage of this budget could have been paid for with what this administration has described as the excess money in the rainy day fund. Even at the low interest rates that John Marini has quoted at 2 percent over the 20-year maturity of the bond, will end up costing the taxpayers of Ansonia \$8 million in interest. Using the rainy day funds for some of these items could have literally saved the City millions. But even this I could overlook because as a businessman I've always been taught that leveraging growth with debt is good, as long as your rate of return on your investment is greater than the interest you're paying out. This is where the major problem lies with this bonding plan. This is the biggest single issue of debt that Ansonia has ever proposed in its history, and I can't see a single penny in here allocated to economic or downtown development initiatives. The City of Ansonia and it's residents are counting on a debit issue of this size to work hard for them for many years and to carry the City forward in line with a long-term strategic master plan for Economic Development. Which of the line items here are going to attract the next generation of homebuyers and next generation of businesses? There isn't even a category for Economic Development. Of the \$6 million of non-police-station-related budget items, 92 percent of it is going to paving, operating equipment, and vehicles. These are not long-term strategic economic growth items. These

are standard operating budget items that should be covered under the operating budget of the City without borrowing. If for some reason there was a significant amount of delayed investment or deferred maintenance in these items, this is exactly the sort of thing that the City's rainy day fund should be used for. Why are we paying \$8 million in interest for roads, vehicles and standard operating equipment? Where is the Economic Development? Where is the master plan for our City's growth?

Several weeks ago I made a suggestion that we look at 75 Liberty Street as a potential site for the new police station and provided a detailed analysis to the Board of Finance members on this. This police station will represent the single biggest real estate development in our City's recent history and is being built with public money. Is it not open for discussion and ideas? It is for this reason that I can't support this bond proposal as it is written now. If it passes tonight in its current form, I openly intend to campaign against the referendum in November. In the past, bond issues for the City were in the \$5 to \$7 million range but this debt issue of \$18.3 million is going to put us right up to the max healthy debt levels with no room for future borrowing for real economic development initiatives. I ask this Board to please work together with the Mayor and his Administration to rework this proposal to include some Economic Development and downtown investment and present the residents of this City with a bond proposal that we can all feel comfortable championing. We just had a great thing happen with the bond credit rating upgrade, but the fastest way to lose the financial benefits of that upgrade is for investors to see the kind of unproductive spending that's included in this proposal. Let's not let this happen. Thank you.

David Knapp, 3 Glen Drive

First of all, good job with the bond rating upgrade – that's a good sign that we're moving in the right direction. Regarding the \$18 million Capital Plan, as I was looking through the Capital Plan, I see a little over \$1 million for vehicles. I just am amazed that we're going to be bonding over \$1 million for vehicles. I'm not saying we don't need a new ambulance; I'm not saying we don't need Police cruisers. I did have one question regarding an administration vehicle. Can somebody tell me what the administration vehicle is, and whose car is that going to be?

President Tripp explained that the Board cannot afford a question/answer period. Perhaps one of the Aldermen will bring that up in discussion later. Your concerns have been noted.

Mr. Knapp continued, \$500,000 to renovate/relocate the Senior Center – has there been any concerns by the seniors to move? As far as renovating the building, as far as I know, we don't own that building. Are we still in negotiations with that building? Why would we renovate – spend half a million dollars - a building we don't own? As far as relocation, what sites have we looked at? Has anybody asked any of the Seniors what they want or where they want to go? Do they want a bocce court? Do they want a swimming pool? I don't think anybody's asked the seniors. I think the administration is taking it upon themselves that we're going to move the Senior Center.

Regarding the Police station – I'm not saying we don't need a police station. I questioned that years ago that we probably should be looking to put in a new police station. I just don't

know if the Olson Drive is the site for is. Tarek had presented what I thought was a very good proposal for 75 Liberty Street, but I don't think anybody in this administration took that seriously. I can remember being up here in the cafeteria, over a year or almost two years ago when they rolled out the idea of putting in a new Police station, Fire, ARMS, Public Safety building. It seems like that has been the only site that this administration has looked at. I don't think they've done their due diligence. Again, I'm not opposed to a new police station, I just don't know if we've done our due diligence. Thank you.

Jim Hubbard, 10 Harris Road

I want to tell you as Chairman of the Elderly Commission, that the Mayor attended more than one of our meetings to explain to the Commission about the Senior Center move. He said that we could have a walk-through at the ATP building on the corner of East Main Street and Kingston Drive, which never took place. He also told us that we may move into a closed bar and grill on East Main Street and use the church parking lot across the street, and that never happened. Then we were told that a new Senior Center could be built where the new Police Department building will be on Olson Drive, but that is still in the works. Now in the bond proposal, it states that \$500,000 is being allotted for the relocation and renovation of the Senior Center, which means it won't be a new building, but a relocation.

Ladies and gentlemen, please hold off on this bond issue and do not put it on the ballot during this national election. I think this bond issue should be held off until next year when our local elections are held, which gives the people of Ansonia time to think about it. Thank you.

Elizabeth Lynch, 15 Macintosh Lane

I did have some questions regarding the Senior Center, but I think they've been addressed by the previous speakers. My question or my comment is, why the public isn't here. I don't think the meeting was duly advertised. We get robo-calls to come to the Memorial Day parade, to come to Rock the Valley, there are lawn signs all over the City for those events. Tonight you have an event that is going to change the lives of everybody in this City, and no one is here other than the people that are being affected by the Resolution. I am sorry for that, because I think the public needs to know what's going on, and in order to get their support, they have to be educated. I think the longer you wait, the less successful your efforts are going to be. Thank you.

Tara Kolakowski, 14 Farrel Drive

There are things on here that the City needs. We need a new Police Department, we've needed it for 10 years. We talked about it when I was with the last Administration. I don't think \$12 million is enough for it, quite honestly. I think it's going to go over budget. So if you're going to plan for it, plan so it doesn't go over budget and everything is included. With that being said, if the site is going to be on Olson Drive or Riverside Drive, that's owned by the federal government. Do you, does this administration, have permission – did you get permission from the federal government – to actually build on that site? The worst thing that could happen is, this goes out to bond, this goes out for a vote, the residents say yes, we need these things, then this chunk of \$18 million is set aside, and oh by the way we don't have permission. What happens to the money? As you all know, via the last

bonding, the money goes out, it says yes, and then this administration has the power to move the money wherever they want. It's been done. There are projects that haven't been fully funded. They've taken the money and moved it to other things. That would be worst-case scenario, that we build a \$12 or \$14 or \$18 million Police Station and oh, those funds aren't there for it. Are we putting the cart before the horse? Do we have the federal government's permission to build on that site? That is my question and my concern. Thank you.

Julienne Dudzis, 65 North Spring Street

I'm very disappointed in you guys. I voted for the Mayor because I thought that our Administration was going to change and he said that he was going to lower our taxes, which my taxes are lowered by, I don't know, \$15, \$30 bucks. My cousins in Oxford, taxes were lowered by \$180. But the thing that I'm most upset about is, I only found out about this by accident. Only because I went to City Hall to pay a bill. Now, you started out, you were going to get a referendum for \$6 million. Well that didn't go through because that was a surprise. Two hours before the meeting, you were handing out paper to the Board of Aldermen that you're getting it down to \$35 million. Now, all of a sudden it went from \$6 million to \$35 million and you were able to cut in like a half an hour. Now all of a sudden out of the woodwork you're giving us a bill for \$18 million? And yeah, we do need a Police station. I don't know whose brilliant idea it was to put a Police station there. We do need things. But why do we have to do everything all at the same time? Then, everything everybody said, we did robo, we do fireworks with the robo-phone, we do everything with the robo-phone, but nobody knew about the meeting. And it's not right. I have a whole list that I'm going to send to the Valley Independent Sentinel because I mean there are so many complicated issues here. First of all, do we have approval from HUD? I work at Southwest Community Health Center, they got the exact same letter that everybody got on Olson Drive about having to relocate, and then they got vouchers and where did they move? They moved to the Valley, and then they moved to Bridgeport, too. Okay? So I talked to someone who's on the City Council there and you have to get approval from HUD, but you also have to get approval from the contractor that's going to work with HUD. But obviously you already have a contractor. Now do we have somebody, I know that we used to use DeCarlo & Doll as architects. Do we have an architect set up for this already? Because that costs us money too. Now we spent all this money paying DeCarlo & Doll and I don't know whose cousin it was, but it was somebody's cousin. We paid DeCarlo & Doll a lot of money to fix up the Palmer Building because one of our politicians told me, "Don't worry Dr. Dudzis, we're going to move you downstairs to the yellow part of the building." Well, they hired DeCarlo & Doll and they paid them, I don't know how much, \$30,000 to come with this architect plans. They bring them down to the Senior Center, but I'm the one who has to follow all the HIPA rules and the privacy rules, and nobody showed me any plans, so we wasted money right there. So who do we have for an architect lined up? Who did we pay already, does anybody know?

President Tripp explained that the Board cannot afford a question and answer period at this time. Perhaps it will be brought up by one of the Aldermen at a later time.

Dr. Dudzis continued, that's one thing. The Senior Center, the \$500,000, that's a whole other issue. The Palmer and the ATP building is another whole big issue, okay? Now for \$500,000 we're, I can't stand it I'm so mad, we're dishing out \$500,000 and we're paying somebody who already is going to buy the buildings for nothing, because our Mayor decided that he is going to give it to them for a nominal fee. So we're going to give him another \$500,000 so we could fix up and remodel the whole bottom floor of that, and by the way it needs a new heating system so I don't know how much money that costs. Now we need more parking across the street, so what's the issue with the parking lot across the street? Because from what I read, we were going to put in 160 more parking spaces. Now the people that live at the top of the hill, they own all of that dirt, all of that property all the way down to the sidewalk. That means that we were going to give these people a tax break in order to buy, to use their property to rent their property. If I own a piece of that property, I'd charge you \$1 million for my slot. Now you're going to cut all that property down, there's all springs under there. That has to be blasted. And then who's going to build a big retaining wall to hold up all of those big, fancy houses that are up there? It's got to be a very expensive proposition. So how many spaces is it? Is it 160 more parking spaces, or is it like Sheila told me, 40 more parking spaces? And who are we doing this for? I wonder. I know who we're doing it for. But I'm not sure that we got approval from HUD. It would be very interesting to find out if we got approval from HUD and from the contractor. I mean, another thing is, because politics is so crooked these days, I'm afraid that this money is going to go into some kind of a general fund. I don't trust that you're going to use the money for what you say that you're going to use it for.

President Tripp stated, we have Bond Counsel right here and the job of Bond Counsel is to ensure that the money is used appropriately.

Dr. Dudzis interjected, that's what my government promised too. That's what happened with our Social Security money too.

President Tripp stated, that's a federal issue, we're not here to solve that.

Dr. Dudzis stated, I know. Just one more thing, you were going to move the Senior Center to St. Anthony's basement, which you were selling, which somebody is selling. You were going to put them there which is like the worst section in town to put them. That's what I heard.

President Tripp stated, I don't foresee that.

Dr. Dudzis continued, not now, because we're going to help somebody else pay for a building that they're going to buy, but we're going to pay for it. We're going to pay a half-a-million dollars to fix up a building that somebody else is supposed to buy. I mean, it's just... There's a lot. It's all a little, you know, you didn't tell us, enough people, that the meeting was even going on. I went down to City Hall and I'm like, how come nobody is here? And there's a sign on the door.

President Tripp stated, I understand what you're saying and you are correct. Your comments are on the public record.

Sal Hanif, 44 Buswell Street

I'm here to just remind everyone, we were in the same place two months ago where we spoke about saving the Board of Education and saving 20 teachers. Everyone came in, filled up 500 people here. You guys never listened to us. We lost 20 teachers, we lost Assistant Principal of the Year, Teacher of the Year, my kids got all brand-new teachers and nothing against our teachers, but we lost the best of the best. You guys dropped the ball on one of our biggest investments. Now you want to take another investment, which is the prime location in Ansonia which we worked so hard to get, and you want to put a \$16 million Police station on Olson Drive, and we have no return of investment. I don't know who does your Economic part over here, but if I'm going to invest \$16 million or \$14 million, I want to get something in return. I want to get something in return. It's simple math. We are up to 16 percent of where we have public housing, assistance. So if we have a problem with HUD, I'm sure, try to roll up your sleeves and speak to them. Because if you're going to build Olson Drive and make it public housing again we're going to go up to 25 percent again. That's outrageous. Every town is allowed 10 percent. How come we get to abide by the rules, why can't they abide by our rules? But you guys are so afraid of them. We're going to lose the town. You guys are, you already mortgaged our kids and we already lost the future of kids because the fact that we lost all these wonderful teachers and the principals and all these guys, our kids are going to suffer for the next five years or 10 years. Now you want us to suffer more by taking more loans and we're going to pay for it in the long run. When is this going to stop? When are you guys going to calculate every step before you took it. Stop throwing stuff against the wall and hopefully it's going to stick. Start calculating your stuff. But I got also a message for the people here. They already made up their mind. They already made up their mind just like the other hearing. It's going to be a written statement that's written at 4 o'clock in the afternoon to them and they're going to read it, and they're going to abide by it, because last time everyone spoke against it, right? And they would say all, this, this, this, this, this, this, this, this. It's the same thing. The only way we're going to get this is on Election Day we all vote no to the referendum. And show them, and deliver the message that we are serious about this. We already mortgaged our kids, we cannot mortgage our town. Enough is enough. Start calculating. Excuse me. I got two more minutes. I timed my speech. You don't like the way I'm talking to you? Get out.

President Tripp stated, Mr. Hanif...

Mr. Hanif stated, he has no right to tap like that because he's, he knows what I'm speaking is the truth.

President Tripp stated, Mr. Hanif, just to your point, please.

Mr. Hanif continued, okay. Don't interrupt me again. And another thing, you guys formed an Economic Commission. You guys have not met for the past four months, five months. How are you guys doing this without the Economic Commission involvement. So, I'm telling the Board of Aldermen today, before you vote on anything, do your calculations, because when you say yes to this, you are held accountable. You are really held accountable. Don't think that we're not going to send the message out there. We will send the message. Stop mortgaging our town because of short-term gains. It's not going to work. Short-term gains never [inaudible]. Think about the future, design everything the right way, calculate everything before you do it. Thank you so much.

Daniel King, 15 Williams Street

I am Chairman of the Board of Apportionment & Taxation. I do have information, because I've been following this from the beginning. I know apparently a lot of people have not. They haven't tracked the progress that we've made. They didn't look at what we're proposing here for the investment and the future of the City.

First of all, when it comes to the Police Department, other people have said and I agree, it is a no-brainer – we absolutely need a new Police Department. We have a top-notch, professional Police Department and they deserve the facility to work out of. Our Fire Department – they are well-trained and among the best - they deserve to have the equipment that they need to do their job – protective gear, operating air tanks, trucks that start and make it to their call. Our ambulance – we're not looking, this isn't a wish list, this isn't toys that they're getting - these are things that have been ignored for many, many years – we're talking about life-saving equipment, vehicles. You want to have your family member call for an ambulance and have the ambulance not make it there? We're working with 14-15 year old pieces of equipment. These aren't wishes. This isn't extravagant spending. Doing the budget for these departments, we don't have the money yearly to do that. We'd be looking at deficit spending at that point to be able to make these ends meet. With the schools – included in this is investment in the schools. Boilers so the kids stay warm in the winter. We can't wait until these things break; we have to do these things now. It's a lot less expensive to be proactive in these matters when it comes to building maintenance, equipment and things because where we are now is a result of years and years of neglect. Things weren't replaced. Then things break and you have to go out and rent equipment, you have to go out and borrow things. It costs you a lot more money. With these issues, we're looking at the investment toward the town, making things better.

Besides the Police Department, we're also looking at the Senior Center. We want to have a Senior Center for our people to go to. So they can join, meet, have a little fun. The site where they are now is a very large building that should be on the tax rolls. Talk about mismanagement, how did the City end up owning that? Why do we own property? Why are we landlords? We shouldn't be. That building should be paying taxes. It should be bringing people in. There are better suited places for our senior center. I'm sure any thoughts or recommendations from the Seniors would come into play when we are actually able to build one. In the meantime, we have to have the money available to move them. I want to see that property developed; I want to see taxes being paid.

Police Department, it's been proposed that we put it on Liberty Street. I may be mistaken, but I believe the last administration did look at that property and it was deemed unfit. The cost of remediation is astronomical. You can't just go in there and put whatever you want. You're dealing with a building that was an industrial site for many years. We just don't have the money. The location isn't the best either. That is property that's future development. We have 40 acres sitting back there that needs to be cleared and cleaned so that we can have new opportunities come into town. Putting a police station in the middle of it isn't going to do it. It's been said that, where's our investment on a Police Department. Investment? A Police Department in a new building isn't a financial investment, it's an investment in the community. Those are things that are going to bring people in that want to buy a home here. A professional Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Service, buildings that

aren't falling apart, opportunities downtown. We've done a lot with Economic Development. Go down Main Street on a weekend night and see the activity. Two years ago it was a ghost town; you wouldn't walk from one end of Main Street to the other out of fear, you wouldn't know what was going to happen. It was dark, desolate, there were literally people sleeping in alleyways. Buildings were falling apart. We've made changes; changes you can see. With this bonding it continues to do that. We can move forward. We cannot afford all these items in a yearly budget year-to-year. Doing it this way it spreads out the cost. We've had that drop off of our yearly budget and increasing it by small amounts over a longer period it allows us to purchase – it gives us more purchasing power. This is better for everybody involved. I don't see any downside to this. We're not going to be increasing the yearly spending due to this bond. That is not going to happen. We're looking at even spending where we'll get more bang for the buck. In the future, as far as the Police Department being put on Olson Drive, if anybody had been at the last meetings over the last couple of years they would know that there were talks with HUD. The former Director of HUD Troy White spoke about it himself, about putting that building there. My questions regarding that property is in the past, and not that we can do anything about it now, but why did we pay with City money to tear down property on federal land? That's what I'd like to know. Don't interrupt me now. That was \$3 million that was spent of taxpayer money, and then it was told on a lie that we would have it. "Oh, it's going to be a park. It's going to be free space." And that was an outright lie. That was never going to happen. Putting a Police Department there allows a central location, more visibility, and it keeps us from taking property off of the tax rolls. We're not collecting taxes on federal property; but if they let us build there that's a win-win. In order to do these things we have to make the investment; we have to put up the money. All in all, I don't see a downside. I think it's a good deal. Thank you.

Tarek Graslan

75 Liberty Street is not in the center of the potential development.

Alderman Vaccaro called for a point of order.

President Tripp explained that after everybody else has spoken, Mr. Graslan may speak again.

Edward Norman, 51 Grove Street

For the record, I am Vice-Chairman of the Ansonia Housing Authority and also on the Police Department Building Committee. My opinion tonight is, like everyone else, yes we do need a Police Department. Some of the other things on the bonding, we do have a Capital fund that is written in the Charter where we put money away. The minimum spending on any item there is \$50,000. It should be a Capital investment over \$50,000 and I think a lot of these expenses should be handled that way. Again, with the Police Department, it goes back a long way as far as my involvement with the new Police Department, not that I use the cells, but they needed a furnace a few years ago and the building is, as the Chief said, really out of date. The Police Department down on the Olson Drive property, let me explain, the Olson Drive property is owned by the Ansonia Housing Authority, not the federal government. The federal government, HUD, Housing and Urban Development, has a deed restriction on it because going back to the flood, when all of that area was demolished by

the flood, they came in, they took over all the property, they paid off all of the landowners and took that property, developed it, they brought in the Army Corps of Engineers to raise it above the flood plain, and then they gave it back to the City with the agreement that the City sell it to the Ansonia Housing Authority and they paid green dollars for it, but again, with that deed restriction, that it be used for public housing or community development. That's a big key piece here. People were wondering whether HUD gave approval for that public safety complex. Several years ago when we went up to Hartford and met with not only the Hartford office of HUD but the Connecticut Fair Housing, which also has a hand in this, also the regional offices and the land acquisition out of Chicago for the Housing and Urban Development, we proposed, and the purpose of that was that we were applying to HUD to reduce the density of the housing down there from the original 165 apartments that were in the Olson Drive or Riverside Drive complex, we were looking to come out with 48. We couldn't get to 48; we did come up with an agreement on 54 units, which we have some tentative plans on. Within that tentative plan, the two acres which was shown as that public safety complex, they were very much encouraged by using that as community development as a public safety complex at the time it was a Police and Fire Department. But with that, they were encouraged. There's no official documentation because again we would have to apply for it, but they recommended that if it was used for public safety, community development, that the Housing Authority could enter into the City with a long-term lease at like \$1 or \$100 a year for 99 years for the use of that property. Any other property in the City would have to be purchased outright at fair market value or whatever. They talked about the property on Liberty Street. When we were looking for replacement housing, because of the reduced density of Olson Drive, we did look at that property. Again, the remediation and remodeling needed there would probably be almost as much as the \$12 million they're looking for for the current Police Station. As far as the engineering questions, part of the Building Committee, we were given a feasibility study by the Police Department engineers on what they needed - a needs assessment - what they needed for space in a modern, technologically-advanced Police Station. The engineering company from what their references say is that they build numerous Police stations across the state and in the region. They came up with a very good needs analysis. We have our own architectural and engineering firms that we contract for the building project. Those two engineering firms got together and they went over the tentative feasibility, because with the needs assessment, it doesn't give you a building footprint, it doesn't give you a building - just a layout - because now what they have to do is go and design the building, design the parking, design the open space and everything like that. They did have conversations and they're still going on whether that two acres of property which is understood by HUD may be developed for Ansonia community development for some type of public safety complex, which they agree with, be used for the Police Department. So when folks come to me and say, "well, we don't really have any money to buy the property" because again, other locations throughout the City were brought up, mainly the Maple Street market, but that's commercial property - that would come off the tax rolls. The Olson Drive, the Housing Authority property is not on the tax rolls. We pay a PILOT on that. There is no loss in taxes in using that property. Again, a sale price, you know, assessments would have to be done for any other commercial, residential or open land that the City would have to buy for the Police Department. I don't want to keep going on, but as I said my original public statement is, yes, there are things that are needed in this bonding offer, and then there are other things that should be financed another way. Another point that came up was, we haven't done bonding in 50 years like this. We did the 2001 School Building project which was I think \$58 million. So, it was a very large piece of that. One other thing was, why did the City pay?

The City, I guess, they're going to go to bonding to finally pay for the demolition of Riverside Drive but again, that's not federal property; that belongs to the Housing Authority of the City of Ansonia, hence, the City of Ansonia. Thank you.

President Tripp asked if any other member of the public that has not spoken yet would like to speak. Being none, he allowed any other speakers.

Tarek Graslin, 76 Garden Street

The gentleman's comments about the location of 75 Liberty Street not being suitable because of the location being potentially a bad neighborhood in his terms, that is precisely why that site should be evaluated properly and be considered. Drive by that site; I encourage all of the Board of Aldermen and the Administration to go and drive by that site; it's full of graffiti and broken windows. That's not high potential value development space there. I do believe in development of Ansonia Copper and Brass and that industrial space. That was not an industrial building; it was the corporate offices for Ansonia Copper & Brass and was used for similar purposes. The remediation there, I would like to see a thorough evaluation to see what would the cost be, are we doing a thumb in the air type of thing or is it worth taking a look at, because if you remediate a blighted building at the same time as providing a brand-new, state-of-the-art, fully renovated and historically significant building down there, it's going to provide a pretty efficient spending for the City and give the Police Department the space that they need. I am in total agreement with that. We've heard the Chief come back time and time again and say that he's not within the guidelines of the state and federal rules. They need a space. I'm saying let's look at it efficiently. Thank you.

Ryan Hunt

Number one, I want to commend all of you up there for your strong work, also the Board of Finance for their strong work and really diligently looking at these numbers and weeding through. We didn't just take a bond referendum and say, okay, this looks good, thank you everyone, and stand up here tonight and present it. This thing, I've sat like I said, in all of these meetings, and have seen all the things be pulled away and been called to the carpet personally in one of those meetings asking what we, as ARMS, can do to reduce that. So this is not a broad-brush acceptance as it's been referenced. Again, I stand up here for myself, not as representation of ARMS. A lot of the comments made here tonight are that these are clandestine meetings that no one's been made aware of. These meetings are published. Every Finance meeting, every Board of Aldermen meeting, is published in the City. I have taken the time because I have interest in there being a citizen here to make sure I have the time and diligence to be there and pay attention. The misrepresentation of the numbers here tonight, \$18 million for a Police Department is straight not true. That is \$6 million more than what we're talking about here tonight. Two percent interest rate is not true. So let's talk facts about the numbers we're talking about and attend these meetings and pay attention to what's really going on instead of standing up here tonight bashing the hard work that's really been done to try to get these things approved to make our City better. Thank you.

Dr. Dudzis

I don't think you're making Ansonia a better place to be. I don't think that you're bringing in... you may be bringing in some better restaurants, and you're maybe cutting down people's trees and bushes and calling it blight. But you have to remember who's paying the taxes in this City and you have to remember who's inside of these houses. But from what I've seen, I don't think that the Board of Education with all the extra money that they've gotten, there was a report in the paper, we went from 34 to 35 percent or something out of 100 percent. Other cities are up to 65 percent. So something's wrong. One of the teachers came in a couple years ago and you know what she got from the City? She got three yellow magic markers, that's what she got. That's what she got from the City of Ansonia. But I don't think by what you're doing, you're not looking at the whole picture. You're not making Ansonia a better place to be. Something's missing. You know by what you're doing, by all these, by everything that you're doing, you're going to need more ambulances, you're going to need more policemen, you're going to need more roads, you're going to need more schools, you're going to need more special education. So yeah, you're going to need the money. You're welcome.

Sal Hanaif

I just want to clarify something. I totally agree with this gentleman. And I have the utmost respect for our Police Department and our volunteer Firefighters, because I can't do his job – there's no way. I can't even pick up a gun. So thank you so much. But what my whole plan is about is, you have to, Ansonia is a small place and we have to, whenever we have a location we have to strategically think about it and what we can do to benefit our town. I commend all the people that put on the uniforms and all the teachers. I was a teacher myself. Before we make this pass, we have to think about it really carefully and strategize. Strategize is the most important because when you make the plan and it sets in stone we're going to pay for it in the long run. So think about, listen to the public, bring it back to your table, discuss it and say you know what, this was a great idea, why can't we do it. Instead of just sticking with one idea, this is how we're going to do it. We can't do that without that. Thank you.

Adjournment

President Tripp asked three times if any other member of the Public wished to speak. Being none, he declared the Public Hearing closed at approximately 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder, Secretary
Ansonia Board of Aldermen