

MINUTES OF WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC HEARING

NOVEMBER 25, 2008

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER

Ordinance Amending Section 30-24 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of West Hartford Pension Plan

Present: Mayor Scott Slifka, Councilors: Steven Adler, Tim Brennan, Shari Cantor, Leon Davidoff, Carolyn Thornberry, Joseph Verrengia, and Joseph Visconti; Town Manager Ron Van Winkle, Town Clerk Essie Labrot.

President Slifka called the Hearing to order at 7:40 p.m.

President Slifka: We will now open the 7:15 Public Hearing. Mr. Brennan, could you please read the subject matter?

Councilor Brennan: Sure. Ordinance amending Section 30-24 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of West Hartford Pension Plan.

President Slifka: Thank you, Mr. Brennan. A roll call, please, Ms. Labrot.

Present were Councilors Steven Adler, Tim Brennan, Shari Cantor, Leon Davidoff, Scott Slifka, Carolyn Thornberry, Joe Verrengia, and Joe Visconti.

Councilor Coursey was absent.

President Slifka: Thank you, Ms. Labrot. Mr. Van Winkle, we have a presentation from the administration.

Mr. Van Winkle: Yes, we do. Rick Ledwith, our Director of Employee Services for both the town and the school system is here to give us an explanation of what we are doing.

President Slifka: I'm sorry. I missed one thing. I think we called Mr. Patrissi, but I don't believe he sits for this. He could stay in his chair, but he is not legally part of the group. Thank you, Mr. Van Winkle. Mr. Ledwith.

Mr. Ledwith: Good evening. Section 30-24 of the Pension Plan. That relates to changes that we have implemented with the Secretarial Union on the Board of Education side. I will briefly summarize what we did with that part of the Pension Plan. If you remember last June, the budget was voted down during the referendum, and the Board of Education ended up reducing its budget by 1.4 million dollars. As a part of that process, we eliminated 19 full-time positions from the Board of Education, 14 teaching positions, which we eliminated through attrition and then 5 secretarial positions, 4 out at our

secondary schools and then 1 internally right here in Town Hall. We looked at the best way to reduce those positions, and during our analysis, we determined that the most efficient way to do this would be to offer a retirement incentive to these 5...to 5 individuals. We looked at employees that were already eligible for retirement under normal retirement, so they were already eligible to receive a full pension plan, as well as retiree healthcare benefits, so we did not incent anyone who did not meet the definition of a normal retirement and get them into that category of a pension definition. So we offered 11 employees an additional 3 years on their years of service. Seven employees took advantage of this offer, resulting in annual savings of \$220,000 while incurring an additional cost of \$19,000 to the pension plan. So the net savings to the Board of Education was \$201,000. I would be happy to answer any questions as it relates to 30-24.

President Slifka: Are there any questions for...I'm sorry, first, Mr. Van Winkle.

Mr. Van Winkle: I just want to clarify that we have already accepted the contract change here that we are looking at. Earlier this year, you received the amendments to the contracts, and we adopted those. This now takes that contract change and puts it into our ordinances, which is the second step.

President Slifka: Thank you. Any questions? Mr. Visconti.

Councilor Visconti: Yes, is that for the life of the Pension, the \$200,000 or is it annual?

Mr. Ledwith: That is annual savings. Those are actual payroll savings. We eliminated those positions permanently, so they will not be back on the books in the future. So, in fact, that number will increase every year.

President Slifka: Anyone else? Okay, Mr. Ledwith, while you are there, could you just check the sign-up sheet on this one and see if anybody is signed up.

Mr. Ledwith: No.

President Slifka: Okay, is there anybody who did not sign up who wishes to speak to the subject matter of this Public Hearing? Okay, with that, if there are no further questions from the Council, we will close the Public Hearing.

Hearing adjourned at 7:44 p.m.



Essie S. Labrot
Town Clerk/Council Clerk