

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING ON AN ORDINANCE INCREASING FEES
FOR STORAGE AND TOWING OF MOTOR VEHICLES

July 13, 1993

Council Chambers

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President Sandy F. Klebanoff called the hearing to order at 8:09 p.m.

Present were Councilors Owen Eagan, Linda I. French, Tom Johnson, Sandy F. Klebanoff, Madeline S. McKernan, Carole Mulready, Larry Price and Andy Schatz.

Patrick Alair, Assistant Corporation Counsel: Madam Mayor by comparison to the last two this one is a breeze. All we are doing here is increasing the fees which the Police Department is authorized to charge for storage and towing of motor vehicles. The existing ordinance is in line with statutes long since amended. You will see that the rate that we are currently charging is a maximum of \$17.00 when we tow a motor vehicle. Anybody who has had a vehicle towed from the City of Hartford knows it is far in excess of that at this point. What we have done is we've keyed into the statutory provision that licenses, motor vehicle towing operators and their rates. The State approves the towing rates for motor vehicle towing contractors and what we are going to do is authorize the Police Department to charge that rate, whatever it may be and as it is amended.

In addition we are currently charging \$2.00 a day for storage of a towed motor vehicle which is cheaper than parking in the municipal parking lot all day I believe. It is certainly cheaper than parking in the parking garage across the street. We propose to increase that from \$2.00 a day to \$10.00 a day to bring it in line a little more with reality considering the fact that we now have a gated, lit, fenced impound area that provides high quality parking at a reasonable price.

President Klebanoff: Thank you. Any questions? Is there a sign up sheet for this ordinance?

Mr. Alair: It is also blank.

President Klebanoff: Is there anyone who wishes to address the Council? Mr. Genduso.

Mr. Genduso: Domenico Genduso, 80 Blue Ridge Lane, West Hartford. Madam Mayor, members of the Town Council. Where it says not to exceed the sum of \$17.00 and in parenthesis seventeen dollar, rate approved by the State of Connecticut pursuant to General Statutes § 14-66(a) as the section may be amended from time to time plus the cost of storage and not to exceed. There is parenthesis two graph, then it says

\$10.00 and the graph parenthesis \$2.00, close parenthesis graph and then again parenthesis \$10.00 parenthesis for each day. I don't understand anything what that means all those stuff because, \$10.00 for each day.

Mr. Alair: The language in the square brackets is being deleted from the existing ordinance and replaced with the underlined language. So we are deleting \$17.00 and adding the rate that is authorized by statute and we delete \$2.00 and change it to \$10.00. That's what that does. It is \$10.00 per day for storage.

President Klebanoff: Are you opposed to this ordinance also, Mr. Genduso?

Mr. Genduso: No, I just wanted a clarification.

President Klebanoff: Thank you. Mr. Schatz.

Vice President Schatz: Actually it is a question to Mr. Alair, the ordinance says not to exceed x amount but it says it is to cover the cost of removal and the cost of storage. Are these external costs or are these vehicles sometimes kept by our own police department and stored in our own lot and if that is the case haven't we set up an ordinance that creates a problem because we really have a cost of removal and cost of storage?

Mr. Alair: Madam Mayor, I believe there is a cost. The cost of removal is covered by the towing charge. The cost of storage of keeping the vehicle there. We have a gated, lit, impound area. We do have costs associated with that. I'm sure the Chief can attest to the costs that are involved.

Vice President Schatz: I understand that but it is easy when you pay a towing company there is a cost that is fixed by an outside party and it is pretty easy to figure it can't be more than whatever the maximum is. When you are keeping something in your own lot again wouldn't it be easier to simply set an amount plus x number of dollars per day as opposed to saying plus the cost of storage not to exceed \$10.00 a day. You are going to create a problem in terms of what really is the cost of storage.

President Klebanoff: Chief Strillacci would you care to respond?

Chief Strillacci: Certainly. For most of our tows, accidents, unregistered cars, abandoned cars, those vehicles are towed by the wrecker company assigned to that district. We have three different wrecker companies that can serve three sections of town. Generally, any storage is going to be at the wrecker's facility. The impound lot that we have

at the Police Department is reserved for special cases such as asset forfeiture proceedings in which we have an specific action against a vehicle itself or we are going to seize it under the federal drug asset forfeiture proceedings or cases of serious felony in which we hold the vehicle pending processing for evidence. In these cases we wish to recover our storage costs and all others the wrecker company will be handling it.

President Klebanoff: Are there further questions? Is there anybody else in the public who would wish to speak on this ordinance? If not, thank you very much Mr. Alair and I will close this public hearing.

The hearing adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Norma W. Cronin
Recording Secretary