The Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown was held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on Thursday, April 11, 2019 at 6:00 PM.

Present: Mayor Daniel Drew  Councilman Grady Faulkner
Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta  Councilman Sebastian Giuliano
Councilman Robert Blanchard (6:03PM)  Councilman Eugene Nocera
Councilman Carl Chisem  Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilman W. Vance Cotton (6:32PM)  Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Gerald Daley  Councilman Robert Santangelo

Absent: Councilwoman Deborah Kleckowski
Also Present: Linda DeSena, Clerk of the Common Council (Substitute)
Members of the Public: 32

1. Call to Order

Mayor Daniel T. Drew calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and leads the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk reads the Call of the Meeting and Mayor Drew declares the call a legal call and meeting a legal meeting. He states for the benefit of the public there is strange set up tonight; there is this special meeting at 6:00 PM within which there is an executive session. In addition, there is call for another meeting at 7:00 PM, which is the Council’s quarterly community meeting, allowing the public to speak on any matter that may come before the Council. He is not sure if this special meeting will run the full hour, noting that at 7:00 PM, he will ask for a Motion to Suspend the meeting to allow for the community meeting. If that is not done, the Council would go thru this meeting and a potentially long executive session, leaving members of the public, who want to be heard at the community meeting, waiting in the lobby. He reiterates that, if this special meeting has not concluded by 7:00 PM, he will request a Motion to Suspend in the public interest. He asks if this is acceptable to everyone.

2. Public Hearing on Agenda Items – Opens

The chair invites anyone wishing to speak on items on this 6:00PM agenda are invited to come to the podium. He asks that they state their name and address for the record and that comments are limited to five (5) minutes. He reiterates that, if someone wishes to speak on any other item that is not on this agenda, that meeting will begin at 7:00PM.

Unidentified Speaker: he is speaking in support of the Harry Ruffin Post 206 America Legion in their quest to secure a building to continue their work for programming for events that benefit veterans, especially those in need. American has fallen short in caring for veterans. The Post works to provide a support system for veterans and theory families as well as families with someone going off to serve in peacetime and wartime. There are many issues upon return to communities. They pay a high price, including those individual and families who have a mental and/or physical challenges loved one. Other family members cope with seeing their loved one suffer from rare and terrifying experiences the work that the Post in already engaged in and that they have on the drawing board will be enhanced by a building where they can provide a multi-faceted facility to enhance a veteran’s life in Middlesex County. He asks the Council to support this effort.

Steve Devoto (Country Clun Road): He states that he is on the Planning & Zoning Commission, but is speaking as an individual. He will not repeat the comments already made. It seems to be a no brainer from an economic development perspective since this would bring $2.6M into the community for development of this facility. He surges the Council to support.

The other item regarding tolls, he raises the philosophical issue and asks that they vote no. One good thing about local government, we have so much in common, noting that we care about similar issues such as schools, trees, and neighborhoods. We can work together better on these issues if we leave alone the more divisive national and State issue, such as abortion or the President or the Attorney General or the Governor.

We should not let those issues separate us. We should keep our combined focus on these local issues and work together. He asks the Council to vote no.
Todd Bogli (Sherman Way Drive): He requested to have a no tolls resolution. He believes the State legislatures are not listening so but pouring a resolution together, by adding force in communication with legislatures, they will hear. This will cause everyone a lot of money with tolls and taxes. What he fears most, get them in now and nothing to say they will not expand. The original proposal include Route 9, but it was removed. There is nothing to say that in five (5) years Route 9 could be back on that list. He feels strongly and urges the Council to vote yes.

Steve Forberg (Stamford): He is a member of the City of Stamford’s Board of Representatives. He was asked to attend this evening to share Stamford’s experience when they had a similar resolution. By a bipartisan vote, they approved a similar resolution in March 2019. There were 19 Democrats and seven (7) Republicans in favor. Opposition was bipartisan too; no republican voted against. He offers a letter signed by 14 of the 19 “yes” Democrat votes, adding all would likely have signed had there been more time to gather signatures. He reads the letter into the record, which describes the tolls as a regressive tax and endorses raising taxes on the width. He adds that people have suggested that local governments should not speak on State issues. He suggests that municipal government is closest to the people; they talk to neighbors and the community. If The Council doesn’t speak for the community, he asks who will.

David Roane (Newfield Street): He speaks on behalf of Post 206, Inc. and harry Ruffin Post 206. The requested $260,000 in funds from the City in combination with the $2.6M in State funds will allow them to purchase 38,000 sq. ft. building on 5+ acres to develop a veterans’ conference facility and Post 206 home. It will be a one stop, holistic center for veterans and their families. It will allow expansion of programs and provide room to expand new life changing services. It will increase impact on Middletown and the surrounding communities. They are currently housed in a space on State hospital grounds which limits when, when, and how they can do work. They appreciate having that space, but it’s time to move into the City and do more to provide all veterans help. It’s an opportunity to show the public that along with other veterans’ organization, they have been working hard. They are there for veterans whenever asked. The opportunity came to them and they are looking to do more. It will increase the positive impact on Middletown, enhancing the image of veterans we impuicses and support. It will be a circle of hope for all veterans. He will address concerns. It has been said they do not have veteran’ support. In fact, they have support from District 7 American Legion and the Middleton Council of Vertans, both State and local support.

Lynette Peterson (Lincoln Street): She is a program developer and has worked with harry Ruffin Post for about 2 years. Her job was to help expand the program in the community, what benefits the community. They spoke with other groups and develop a “best practice” framework. She explains some of the program, including a main program would be the incubator program to start a business, things that they cannot afford on their own. There would be funding – grants and loans for new businesses and business expansion. It would support veteran’s families, such as helping their children when the veterans are deployed.

Edward McKeon (Pearl Street): He speaks on Post 206. He is not a veteran and acknowledges the sacrifice of so many other. It especially amazing for people of color, who after service and upon return, may not be treated with the dignity and respect that is deserved. For that reason alone, and given David Roane’s comments, it is incumbent upon the City to say thank you and make this modest investment, they deserve this respect. Relative to the toll ordinance, he invokes Earl Roberts: It is a feel good vote.

Melissa McCaw (Dora Drive): She is resident of some 20 years, having joined as a Wesleyan student. She is a homeowner, a parent of 3, and wife of Rev. McCaw. She is here as a vested member of the community. She is also the State Budget Director & Secretary of Connecticut’s Office of Policy and Management for Governor Lamont. She speaks to the toll resolution. She brings the facts that she inherited. The States’ transportation fund is in desperate condition. There is deficit of $600M over the next 10 years if we continue the current state of affairs. She explains that the fund will become insolvent so that the State will not be able to issue bonds, which is not acceptable. There are 2 options. “Prioritize Progress” asks Connecticut taxpayers to pay $7K rather than the subsidized 40%. She reminds the Council that the proposed budget, issued in February, held municipal aid flat; ECS was increased; and the proposal to consider the alternative puts these items at risk which will impact the mill rate. She urges the Council to abstain or vote no on this resolution.

Barbara White (Higganum): She has resided in Higganum for 30 years but her heart is in Middletown. Her father was WWII veteran and her husband is a Vietnam War Veteran. She urges the council to vote yes on the proposal for Post 206 to have this building.

William White (Higganum): He and his family (his wife just spoke) lived for years in Middletown. He has been a Post 206 member for four (4) years. He speaks in support, noting that they want to help people, to help veterans. He is personally committed to helping. He reads a letter from Bill Wilson of the Republican Town
Committee, stating, that while he may not be able to attend this meeting, offer his support and urges the Conic to vote yes.

Neshena Bell (Silver Street): They just purchased their home in Middleton. She speaks in support of the Post 206 request and urges the Council to vote yes.

Jerome Turner (Silver Birch lane, Clinton): He grew up in Middletown. Several generations of his family live in Middletown. He was career military, having served 22 years. When he was discharged, he came back to Middletown, looking for programs and veterans, organization to assist him with his post-service issues. There were no programs. He then found Post 206. There was no place to go to contact or meet face-to-face since they don’t have a real home. He has been with Post 206 for seven (7) years and serves as their historian. One of his goals is to be involved in an organization in Middletown that encourages people to help the city and community grow, to help veterans and their families, noting that there are not a lot of organizations that do this work: for youth and the community. They need a home base for Post 206 where everyone is welcome for assistance. He encourages the Council to vote yes.

3. Public Hearing on Agenda Items – Closes

Seeing no additional members of the public wishing to speak, the Chair closes the public hearing at 6:32PM.

4. Chair requests Clerk of the Common Council to read appropriation request and Certificate of Director of Finance.

The Clerk of the Common Council reads the legal notice.

Notice is hereby given that a special meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown will be held in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building on THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2019 AT 6:00 P.M. to consider and act upon the following:

Common Council: $260,000 -- Acct. No.1000-12000-533650170; appropriation for a grant to 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr. American Legion Post 206 toward to cost of establishing a veterans’ conference facility for programming, small business incubator, and community center, subject to these grantees meeting all conditions and requirements requested by State funding source.

Any and all persons interested may appear and be heard.

MEMORANDUM

TO: His Honor Mayor Daniel T. Drew and Members of the Common Council
FROM: Finance Department
DATE: April 10, 2019
RE: Certification of Funds

This is to certify that funds sufficient to meet the appropriations requested at your meeting on April 11, 2019 are available as follows:

General Fund $ 260,000

Respectfully submitted,
Carl Friehl, Director of Finance and Revenue Services

[Stamp: RECEIVED]
A. Common Council $260,000 – Acct. No.1000-12000-533650170; appropriation for a grant to 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr. American Legion Post 206 toward to cost of establishing a veterans’ conference facility for programming, small business incubator, and community center, subject to these grantees meeting all conditions and requirements requested by State funding source. APPROVED

CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT 06457

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>4/2/2019</td>
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<td>Fund:</td>
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<td>Code:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget Item:</td>
<td>Veterans Conference Facility</td>
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<td>Common Council</td>
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<td>Date Advertised before Meeting:</td>
<td>4/5/2019</td>
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<td>Date Advertised after Meeting:</td>
<td>4/17/2019</td>
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<td>Reason for Request:</td>
<td>Grant to 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr. Post 206 towards the cost of establishing a veterans’ conference facility, for programming, small business incubator, and community center, subject to these grantees meeting all conditions and requirements requested by the State funding source</td>
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Signature: Requested by: Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta
Status: Passed
Date: 4/11/2019

Councilman Eugene Nocera reads the appropriation request and moves for approval. Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta seconds the motion.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera states that he enthusiastically supports this appropriation. He will not repeat the comments from the community, which describe this long overdue initiative. He states that the only constant in life is change. We need to be ahead of the curve to support veterans’ needs and this facility will support both veterans and the community at large. He urges his colleagues to support.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta.

Councilwoman Bartolotta offers some information about the veterans and the veterans’ community. Combat-related illness, knowns as PTSD, and other mental health issues can lead to many activities that are not healthy. Veterans are more likely to experience situations including poverty, homelessness, lack of transportation, poor education, underemployment, alcoholism, drug addiction – noting than 1 in 6 veterans of color suffers from substance abuse – and family crises. Post 206 will help address these issues with programs for veterans and their families. Their will be a unique education center, veterans & family counseling and support systems, business incubators with office and management assistance and possible funding to help them be self-supporting. Councilwoman Bartolotta shares that she attends a forum at the Capitol where many veterans spoke, relaying the need for more services on the municipal level and to make sure that these services are readily available. There needs to be more outreach to engage as many veterans as possible and provide much needed and deserved services. This project will help the City do just that. Councilwoman Bartolotta recounts her own experience with her brother, a veteran, wounded Marine, she has witnessed many of the tragedies that veterans experience, including the impact on the veterans and the family. Many veterans do not received the services they need, which is devastating to the veteran and their families. She wonders how local services could have helped her brother, had they existed, adding that he lost his battle a few years ago. The Post 206 plan will benefit veterans, their families, and the whole community. She urges the Council to support all veterans and help tem be successful and respected.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that, hearing discussion on this appropriation, he recalls that over 50 years ago, when he left military service, he was told that when he got home wear civilian clothes. It was a
disgraceful time in this country. He quotes a national statement that is key today: “It is a paramount objective to provide these services to all veterans.” It is wonderful statement for veterans for a Post to come forward now. The American Legion needs to provide these services. On the local level, despite race, creed, whatever, a veteran is a veteran. He points to the back wall mural in the Chamber, showing the veterans. The Council has the opportunity to take a long overdue step now. He will wholeheartedly support this, not only for what they will offer, but look at that mural, before the Post existed in Middletown, there were many Councilmembers who vested into this community. He urges his colleagues to take the step and do what is right and support this item for Middleton and our veterans, making it known that we love our veterans who do so much for us.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano moves to postpone this matter to the regular meeting of June 2019. If there is a second, he will speak to it. Councilman Gerald Daley seconds the motion to postpone.

Councilman Giuliano states that they have just received a proposed budget with a gap between revenue and expenditures that represents a four (4) mill tax increase in Middletown. There will be some State funding that may lower that, but it is still a significant tax increase. He recalls that at the August 2018 Finance & Government Operations meeting, Councilwoman Bartolotta raised the issue about the impact on taxpayers, of taxing and additional obligations. The discussion was over an hour and, if we were concerned them we should be concerned now. He does not know how the Council can consider taking $260,000 of taxpayer money from the General Fund and use it to take a piece of property that is commercially zone and paying taxes and take it off the tax list while, in the next breathe, hand the public a tax increase. Until the Council knows how I will close that gap – if it can close that gap and by how much – until that is answered; we should not take this on. These budget considerations come first. He urges his colleagues to vote to postpone to June, after there is an adopted budget, after taxpayers know what is being asked of them. The Council will know its commitments. It is premature and comes at the worst time.

The Chair notes that Councilmembers Daley, Chisem, and Faulkner all have their lights on. He asks if they want to be heard on the Motion to Postpone or ion the underlying appropriations. (Inaudible.) The Chair asks, ‘All three of you?’ The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley states that, while he understands Councilman Giuliano’s concerns, he does not recommend postponing to the June 2019 meeting. He notes that Councilman Giuliano makes a valid point that budget deliberations are just beginning. He also notes that Corporation Counsel, Atty. Dan Ryan is not present tonight. He does not believe that the Council can postpone an advertised appropriation request, adding he believes that it needs to be voted on. An appropriation adopted tonight or in June would be ineffective as it related to State funding under Senate Bill 949, for bonding, the effective date of that bill is July 1st, so any appropriation made by the Council this fiscal year will lapse on June 30th; that is, even if appropriated now, the money would revert – lapse back – into the fund balance after that. They would have to make another appropriation. By adoption this appropriation, it has no force or effect wither tonight or June 1st. He suggests that, since, by Charter, the Council needs to adopt the budget by May 15th, which is the appropriate method for putting funds in place for this purpose, if it is the will of the Council. If the Council deems this a worthwhile and meaningful expenditure in the context of all other budget considerations, then they should include this funding in the budget that will be adopted for the upcoming fiscal year. He believes that this is the quickest and most appropriate way to put funds in place for Post 206. He believes that the Council should vote “no” on this appropriation because it will accomplish nothing and take it up during budget deliberations, which would be the appropriate time to consider the merits of the request.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta, asking if she wants to be heard on the proposed Motion to Postpone.

Councilwoman Bartolotta states that she will first address the Finance & Government meeting, which is being used to support proposed Motion to Postpone. She states that Councilman Giuliano is correct: they discussed money being added to the bond so-called “credit card” that cannot be taken back. That proposal was $18M, which she asked to cut in half. She notes that they did not want to cut it, including Councilman Giuliano. The Committee pushed for the $18M to go thru, making it interesting that they are now taking pause for $260,000 to support part of the community that will cause nothing but a positive ripple effect. She owns that; it is not a problem. In addition, at the Finance & Government meeting right after that, where she brought this proposal to the Committee for discussion, she was asked by Councilman Giuliano to create an appropriation. She agreed because she wanted the collective support for Post 206 and get all of the Councilmembers on boards. She agreed to create the appropriation. She subsequently reached out to Councilman Daley, who made the same comments as he has made tonight: that we don’t have to do this now because it will go away on July 1st, with the new budget. Councilwoman Bartolotta states that she spoke with the City’s Finance Director Carl Erlacher and, in that conversation, they were told that the funds could be encumbered into the Common Council line, for example, and hold onto that money to make sure that they stay where the Council wants it to stay. There is no reason to postpone and she urges the Council to move forward, as they should. She adds that she believes that Councilman Daley is correct that the Council cannot postpone an advertised appropriation. She reiterates, asking the Council to move this forward this evening.

There being no further discussion, the Chair calls for the vote on the Motion to Postpone and asks for a show of hands. The Chair states that the Motion to Postpone fails with two (2) aye votes (Councilmembers
Daley and Giuliani) and nine (9) nay votes (Councilmembers Bartolotta, Blanchard, Chisem, Cotten, Faulkner, Nocera, Pessina, Salafia, and Santangelo). The Motion to Postpone is defeated by a vote of 2 to 9.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. to speak to the underlying appropriation.

Councilman Faulkner states that he supports this appropriation. They have been talking to Post 206 for a number of years. He recalls that, during Black History Month some two or three years ago, the Council recognized Post 206 in the framework of their potential and what unique work they can bring to the City. He recounts that the City is looking for role models, especially for youth of color, particularly African-American, noting that Post 206 can do that. The Amical Legion system has baseball and athletics, but also has boys and girls programming which is encompassed in this proposal. He offers kudos to Post 206 because they listened and have made strides towards that. It is great to have support for veterans but what remains to be done is that they can also reach out to others who they less appreciate that work and reiterates that he supports this appropriation. Post 206 has stepped up their game. He has attended some of their banquets and they were awesome, including people from all over. The State’s Veterans Commission could not have said it better as they honored Black History and the last year’s theme of African-Americans in Times of War. He will support this appropriations and urges his colleagues to do the same.

The Chair states that there are three (3) more Councilmembers who want to speak to this item. What he would like to do is to hear these speaker, have a vote on this item, and then have a Motion to Suspend the balance of this meeting so that this wishing to speak at the Community Meeting may do so. When that Community Meeting is completed, the Council will resume this meeting.

The Chair calls on Councilman Carl Chisem.

Councilman Chisem states that many of his colleagues have already mentioned some of the concerns that he wanted to address. He states that he is supporting this appropriation, noting that post 206 has been working very hard and, as Councilman Faulkner has just said, the Council has been talking with Post 206 for several years. In response, Post 206 has done what was discussed, which is great. They are great programs. He reiterates that this is long overdue for African-American veterans and he strongly supports this appropriation and urges his colleagues to do so as well.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano states that he defers to Councilman Daley’s recommendation. He urges his colleagues to vote “no” on this appropriation and to bring it forward in the budget process. The reasons that he has stated hold true: there is a large gap in the budget to be closed and he is not sure how the Council will do that. He states that $260,000 coming out of the General Fund today is $260,000 that will not be available for any other line item in the budget. It represents almost a 1/10 mill tax decrease, if the money is used to lower the mill rate. He does not think that decisions should be made in a vacuum. It should be part of a larger picture so he will vote no in keeping with Councilman Daley’s suggestion as to how best to approach this item.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley states that he still feels strongly as to what he said earlier, noting that to encumber the funds, he is not sure of the basis to encumber would be. He opines that the money might be encumbered of the bond authorization is passed. He does not see any harm in deferring to the budget process, noting the he believes that is the more appropriate way to go. He points out that, the Council has an obligation to comply with the City’s ordinances. He notes that Section 44-11 of the Code states in pertinent part: “When applying for municipal grants, the prospective grant recipients must submit copies of the organization’s budget from the prior year and the year in which the grant is sought, financial statements for the most current reporting period, and a list of funding sources for the prior year and the year in which the grant is requested.” The Council has not been given any of that information. Putting this out to the budget process would allow further work with Post 206 to get the information needed to comply with the Code. While the Council has been provided with a business plan, frankly, it raised more concerns than it answered since that plan does not address the activities and programs that are – it mentions a veterans’ conference facility for programming, small business incubator, and community center – the business plan primarily talks about a conference/event facility that would be rented out for weddings, bar mitzvahs, etc. and he is not sure that is consistent with what the appropriation request states that building will be used for. There are concerns to be addressed. For these two reasons, he recommends that the Council vote “no” on the proposed appropriation request and that they try to work with Post 206 in conjunction with the budget work over the next month or so.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. on the underlying resolution.

Councilman Faulkner states that the Council has had time to talk to Post 206. We have talked with them. We have brought them back, and now, it is suggested that we bring them back again. This is why they had to form this Post in the first place. Déjà vu. The budget is the budget. If the complaint is that the Council has to vote twice so be it. Remember why this is being done in the first place: this to let the State know that the City is behind these people. The Post has to go thru the State. Moreover, the way this appropriation is written, Post 206 has to pass a lot the State hurdles anyway. Make a list of everything the
Council needs to ask of Post 206 and make sure we get it, but vote today. If the appropriation sunsets at the close of the fiscal year, then the Council can vote again. A vote of confidence and faith should start today.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta.

Councilwoman Bartolotta agrees with Councilman Faulkner: there was plenty of time to ask these questions. What is being asked tonight, in a somewhat questionable fashion, as to why to postpone can easily be addressed. When the Council has given grant money to other veteran organizations, we have never asked for a business plan. Not once. Yet the Council voted with no problem. It is on record by Councilman Serra: don’t ask for more money; start learning how to gather funds since this is all the City can do. She urges her colleagues to move on; do everything that Councilman Faulkner just stated. Let’s step up and do the right thing.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley states the he wants to clarify so that there is no misunderstanding: he believes that Councilwoman Bartolotta is referring to the military museum, for which a significant amount of funding was authorized by bonding. He points out that it may be perceived that the money was given to veterans. Noting that the military museum was developed by a City building committee and land lease. The land lease specifically provides that the funding reverts to the City if the military museum ceases to operate, adding that the building itself is not owner rather it is part of the lease. That is his understanding. AS far as raising this issue, he asserts that he did raise the issue of the ordinance provisions previously.

The Chair interjects, stating no, no, we are not having any exchange. Everyone will have a turn. There will be no back and forth exchange. Keep it cordial and moving.

There being no further discussion, the Chair calls for the vote on the underlying matter, which has been moved and seconded. The Chair asks for a show of hands. The Chair states that the appropriation is approved by eight (8) aye votes (Councilmembers Bartolotta, Blanchard, Chisem, Cotten, Faulkner, Nocera, Pessina, and Santangelo) and three (3) nay votes (Councilmembers Daley, Giuliano, and Salafia). The appropriation is approved by a vote of 8 to 3.

**Motion to Suspend**

At this time, the Chair requests a Motion to Suspend this meeting.

Councilman Robert Blanchard moves to suspend this meeting, Councilwoman Linda Salafia seconds the motion. There being no discussion the Chair calls for a vote. The Chair states that the motion is unanimously approved with 11 aye votes. The Motion to Suspend is approved by a unanimous vote.

The meeting is suspended at 7:06PM

**Call to Order**

Mayor Daniel T. Drew reconvenes the meeting with a call to order at 7:23 PM

5. **New Business: Resolutions, Ordinances, etc.**

A. Approving that, given the need for expanded support services for veterans and their families in a centralized, accessible location, and given the commitment and experience of both 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post, 206 working with veterans and their families as well as their commitment to work in tandem to develop and operate this unique veterans facility, if the state bond funding requested by 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post, 206 is awarded and funds are received for the purpose of veterans programming, a small business a small business incubator space and a Veteran’s Community Center in the City of Middletown, then the City of Middletown commits funding of up to ten percent (10%) of the estimated total cost of $2,600,000, to a maximum City contribution of $260,000, towards the cost of establishing this proposed veterans’ conference facility as fully described in this resolution; and that City funding will occur so long as all conditions and requirements requested by the State funding source are met by 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206.

APPROVED

RESOLUTION 25-19; K: review/ resolution/CC Veterans center grant RES 25-19 – 11 April 2019

**WHEREAS,** 206 Inc. is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206, is a tax exempt non-profit veterans organization under Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code; and

**WHEREAS,** 206, Inc. is devoted to fostering an ongoing partnership Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post, 206, providing priority support for programing and events and/or functions which benefit individual veterans in need; and
WHEREAS, knowing that returning Veteran men and women need a support systems to help them deal with the many issues related to their return to the civilian community, by sharing information, resources, and support, 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post will create a Circle of Hope for all veterans at a state-of-the-art veterans’ conference facility; and

WHEREAS, working in tandem, 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin, Jr. American Legion Post 206 will create this facility with its unique mission rooted in Veterans Helping Veterans, a successful series of programs designed to help veterans and their families, including those affected by someone going into military service during times of war and/or peace; and

WHEREAS, at this proposed facility, veterans and their families will be able to obtain a host support services, including referrals, and counseling; and

WHEREAS, this proposed facility will be designed to serve as a conference center rental and event planning brand, which will become the number one choice for veterans, veteran families, individual clients, and corporate clients from throughout Middlesex County; and

WHEREAS, the preferred location for this proposed facility is the property at 25 Industrial Park Road in Middletown, Connecticut, which is centrally located in Middlesex County and easily accessible for Interstate I-91. This property will provide space for tried and true programs:

- Veteran & Community Unique Education, Research Center: integrity, service, excellence and teamwork of veterans with a focus on veterans being hired back in to workforce;
- Veteran’s business incubator and start-up business support: provide office and management assistance, funded through grants and the conference facility, supporting veteran businesses and fostering success by providing no rent to nominal rents for space;
- Boot’s to Teaching Careers: an American Legion program that inspires veterans to become teachers;
- Parents and Children Learning Together: after-school programing and education, which focuses not only focus on the child, but also gives parents a better understanding of the teaching techniques used in classroom today so that they are better able to help their children with homework;
- ROTC: on-site programing, eliminating need to use off-site school properties;
- Employment opportunities: for veterans, veteran’s families, and youth;
- Veteran and Veterans’ Family Counseling and Support Services: addressing the emotional and lifestyle issues of having a disabled, mentally challenged or terminal loved one by helping other family members cope with seeing a loved one suffer from a rare and terrifying experience;
- Veterans Helping Veterans: programs will research and identify needs that arise for the veteran and their families, including housing and homelessness;
- Warming Station;
- Provide a central facility for veterans; providing a centralized location for the 12 existing veteran organizations to meet; and
- Proximity to National Guard Unit and Army Reserve Unit: currently locate across the street.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, given the need for expanded support services for veterans and their families in a centralized, accessible location, and given the commitment and experience of both 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post, 206 working with veterans and their families as well as their commitment to work in tandem to develop and operate this unique veterans facility, if the State bond funding requested by 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post, 206 is awarded and funds are received for the purpose of veterans programming, a small business small business incubator and start-up space and a Veteran’s Community Center in the City of Middletown, then the City of Middletown commits funding of up to ten percent (10%) of the estimated total cost of $2,600,000, to a maximum City contribution of $260,000, towards the cost of establishing this proposed veterans’ conference facility as fully described in this resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: City funding will occur so long as all conditions and requirements requested by the State funding source are met by 206, Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206.

REVIEWED BY: Finance & Government on March 27, 2019; approved to forward to Common Council with appropriation

FISCAL IMPACT: up to $260,000 from the General Fund

206 Incorporation
Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206.
Proposed Veterans Conference Facility

"American Legion Post 206 Facility" The purpose of this business plan is to raise $3,500,000.00 (Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars) for the development of a Veterans’ Conference Facility & American Legion Post Home: Confidentiality Agreement The undersigned reader acknowledges that the information provided by 206 Inc., in this business plan is confidential; therefore, reader agrees not to disclose it without the express written permission of 206 Inc. It is acknowledged by reader that information to be described in this business plan is in all respects confidential in nature, other than information which is in the public domain through other means and that any disclosure or use of same by reader may cause serious harm or damage to 206 Inc. Upon request, this document is to be immediately returned to 206 Inc.

Signature
Name (typed or printed)
Date
This is a business plan. It does not imply an offering of securities.

Table of Contents
1.0 Executive Summary

206 Incorporation 501 (C) (3) non-profit and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206, Veterans helping Veterans is to establish a state of the art on-site Veterans building, with a Veterans Conference facility. Our mission is to rent a well — equipped and standard Conference facility and to provide professional and trusted event planning services that assist individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations in organizing all of their events. We are to position the business to become the leading brand in the Conference facility rental and event planning line of business in the whole of Middlesex County, Connecticut, and also to be amongst the top 10 Conference facility rental and event planning outfits in the Middlesex County within the first five (5) years of operations.

25 Industrial Park Drive property will allowed us to enhance 206 Inc. 501c3 Veteran's Corporation (Veterans Helping Veterans) and American legion Post 206 programs because:

• One in six veterans of color suffer from a substance abuse issue
• Combat—related mental illness relative to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD),
• Untreated, mental health disorders common among veterans can directly lead to involvement in the criminal justice system.

• Veterans are also most likely to experience socioeconomic conditions
   • Poverty,
   • Homelessness,
   • Lack of access to reliable transportation
   • Poor education
   • Un-/underemployment
   • Women’s Veteran issues
   • Alcoholism
   • Drug addition
• Family crisis and re-uniting.

Each of which, unless addressed may further impair their capacity to transitioning from combat to civilian society.

25 Industrial Park Drive property will allowed us to provide a multi—faceted "Veterans Helping Veterans" center for our Middletown/Middlesex Country and the community at large. This facility will provide;

• American Legion programs for Adults and children • Veteran & Community Unique Education Center
• Veterans business incubator which provides office, and management assistance. In some cases even funding assistance.
• Another facility for veteran's organizations to meet
• Employment opportunities to Veterans, Veterans Families, and youth
• Veterans and Veterans' family counseling and support services
• Allow us as Veterans to become self-supporting economically via our Conference Facility.

The Company and Management

206 Incorporation 501 (C) (3) non-profit) and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206 is headquartered in the City of Middletown, Connecticut. 206 Inc. is a state of Connecticut and federal recognized (IRS) incorporation.

Harry Ruffin Jr. American Legion Post 206 is a National approve by the National American Legion Veterans organization as a 501 (C) (19) Veterans post.

206 Incorporation will be the owner, governed by its Board of Directors. The management of 25 Industrial Park Drive property consists of the Board of Directors, who will be taking hands-on management roles in the company. In addition, we have assembled a board building committee to provide management expenses.

Veterans Conference Center & American Legion Post Facility will be a first class hall rental and event planning company that will be based in Middletown, Connecticut, Veterans Conference Center is a full service professionally designed conference facility that presents a fresh new upscale gathering environment that is family friendly and geared toward business and social gatherings. The decor is professionally designed for form and function in all areas of the facility and incorporates fresh new perspectives in conference establishments.

The Veterans Conference Facility & American Legion Post aside from running a conference hall rental business, the company will also handle all aspect of event planning such as wedding planning, children's party, sports tournaments / competitions, annual general meetings (ACM), to corporate events, trade fairs and exhibitions, end of year parties.

The Veterans Conference Facility is a client-focused and result driven hall rental and event planning outfit that provides broad-based experience at an affordable fee that won't in any way put a hole in the pocket of our clients.

Veterans Conference Facility

Our rental fees will be moderate in comparison to the traditional facilities with-in the Middlesex Country area. And have several areas that can readily accommodate private small to medium sized group meetings. The Veterans Conference Facility and American Legion Post Facility have multiple uses including:

Our rental fees will be moderate in comparison to the traditional facilities with-in the Middlesex Country area. And have several areas that can readily accommodate private small to medium sized group meetings. The Veterans Conference Facility and American Legion Post Facility have multiple uses including:
Veterans Conference Facility will offer a standard and professional event planning services to all individual clients, and corporate clients at local, State, level. We will ensure that we work hard to meet and surpass our clients' expectations whenever they contract their events to Conference Facility.

Veterans Conference Facility, our client's best interest would always come first, and everything we do is guided by our values and professional ethics. We will ensure that we hire (Veterans & Veterans Family Members) professionals who are well experienced in a wide variety of rental services and event planning et al.

Veterans Conference Facility will always demonstrate our commitment to sustainability, both individually and as a firm, by actively participating in our communities and integrating sustainable business practices wherever possible.

We will ensure that we hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards by meeting our client's needs precisely and completely. We will cultivate a working environment that provides a human, sustainable approach to earning a living, and living in our world, for our veterans, veterans' families, partners, employees and for our clients.

Our plan is to position the business to become the leading brand in conference hall rental planning line of business in the whole of Middlesex County, of Connecticut, and to be amongst the top 20 conference hall rental outfits in Middlesex County within the first 10 years of operations.

Veterans Conference Facility offers a place for special events. With one large conference hall that can be divided into four smaller halls that can be joined together.

Veterans Conference Facility can accommodate any size gathering comfortably.

The Veterans Conference Facility will offer overhead auto-video televisions to watch class reunion, book reading areas, seminar training, or birthday party facilities.

Veterans Conference Facility and & American Legion Post Facilities competitive advantage is its visibility, accessibility and location.

This might look like a dream, but we are optimistic that this will surely come to pass because we have done our research and feasibility studies and we are enthusiastic and confident that Middletown, Connecticut is the right place to launch our Veterans Conference & American Legion Post Facility.

Veterans Conference Facility is founded by 206 Incorporation a 501 (C) (3) corporation. The Conference facility will be managed by members from our board of directors. Our board members have tangible experience working at various capacities within the event planning industry in the United States,

The owner of Veterans Conference Facility and & American Legion Post Facility is 206 Inc. who's Board of Directors include members, that bring over 25 years' experience in veterans programs, services and conference facility business. The Veterans Conference Facility and American Legion Post Facility is minutes away from a major shopping center and sits off a highly traveled intersection of Interstate Ninety-One (I-91), and State Highway Three (3). The Veterans Conference American Legion Post Facility building contains 38,400, square feet of commercial space with approximately 200+ parking spaces available on site. Veterans Conference American Legion Post Facility prides itself on its customer service and "veterans helping veterans" services.

Veterans Conference Facility competitive advantage is its visibility, accessibility and location. Equally important is the unique environment.

Our Product and Services

Veterans Conference Facility is going to offer a variety of services within the scope of conference hall rental services and the event planning industry. Our intention of starting our conference hall rental and event planning company is to make profits from the industry and we will do all that is permitted by the law to achieve our vision. Our business offering is listed below;

- Wedding Planning
- Corporate Event Planning
- Outdoor Party Planning
- Annual General Meetings
- Sports Tournaments / Competitions Planning
- Children's Party and Birthdays Party Planning
- Bar Mitzvah's
- Corporate event rentals

Our Vision Statement

Veterans Conference Facility vision and goal is to hire and train/retrain veterans returning home from the military and their family members will have preference to become employee.

Veterans Conference Facility mission is to establish and rent a well-equipped and standard conference hall, and to provide professional and trusted event planning services that assist individuals, businesses and nonprofit organizations in organizing all their events, within the first 5 years of operations.

Veterans Conference Facility vision is to build a conference hall rental and event planning brand that will become the number one choice for both individual clients and corporate clients in the whole of Middlesex County — Middletown, Connecticut. Our vision reflects our values: integrity, service, excellence and teamwork.

Our Business Structure
Veterans Conference Facility is a hall rental and event planning outfit that intends to start small in Middletown, Connecticut. We are aware of the importance of building a solid business structure that can support the picture of the kind of world-class business we want to own. Therefore, we are committed to only hire the best hands within our area of operations. As a matter of fact, profit-sharing arrangements will be made available to all our senior management staff and it will be based on their performance for a period of five years or more as agreed by the board of directors of 206 Inc.

Veterans Conference Facility, we will ensure that we hire people and veterans that are qualified, hardworking, creative, customer-centered and are ready to work to help us build a prosperous business that will benefit all the stakeholders (the owners, workforce, and customers). In view of the above, we have decided to hire qualified and competent hands to occupy the following positions:

**Our Business Structure**

- Chief Executive Officer
- Conference Manager
- Event Planning Consultant
- Admin and HR Manager
- Business Developer
- Accountant
- Customer Services Executive

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Chief Executive Officer:**
- Increases management's effectiveness by recruiting, selecting, orienting, training, coaching, counseling, and disciplining managers; communicating values, strategies, and objectives; assigning accountabilities; planning, monitoring, and appraising job results; developing incentives; developing a climate for offering information and opinions; providing educational opportunities.
- Responsible for providing direction for the business
- Creates, communicates, and implements the organization's vision, mission, and overall direction — i.e. leading the development and implementation of the overall organization's strategy.
- Responsible for signing checks and documents on behalf of the company
- Evaluates the success of the organization

**Conference Manager**
- Achieves maximum profitability and overall success by controlling costs and quality of service
- Completion of forecast and actual budget function sheets, Function Summary Sheets and weekly payroll input.
- Completion of weekly schedules. Schedule staff as necessary to ensure adequate and consistent levels of service.
- Follow-up each function by completing a Function Critique and submit to the Sales & Chief Executive Officer.
- Supervision of weekly schedules. Schedule staff as necessary to ensure adequate and consistent levels of service
- Following of proper purchasing and requisitioning procedures.
- Liaise on an on-going basis to ensure all client needs and requirements will be met.
- Inspection of Meeting Room prior to guest arrival ensuring that client specifications have been met.

**Event Planning Consultant**
- Responsible for interviewing and hiring vendors, selecting and ordering materials, negotiating rates, coordinating the sequence of events, following up with guests and vendors and producing full-scale events
- Plans, designs and produces events while managing all project delivery elements within time limits
- Liaises with clients to identify their needs and to ensure customer satisfaction
- Conduct market research, gather information and negotiate contracts prior to closing any deals
- Provides feedback and periodic reports to 206 Inc. Board of Directors.
- Proposes ideas to improve provided services and event quality
- Organizes facilities and manage all event's details such as decor, catering, entertainment, transportation, location, invitee list, special guests, equipment, promotional material etc.
- Ensures compliance with insurance, legal, health and safety obligations
- Specifies staff requirements and coordinate their activities
- Cooperates with marketing and PR to promote and publicize event
- Proactively handle any arising issues and troubleshoot any emerging problems on the event day
- Conducts pre- and post—event evaluations and report on outcomes
- Researches market, identify event opportunities and generate interest

**Admin and HR Manager**
- Responsible for overseeing the smooth running of HR and administrative tasks for the organization
- Designs job descriptions with KPI to drive performance management for clients
- Ensures operation of equipment by completing preventive maintenance requirements; calling for repairs.
- Defining job positions for recruitment and managing interviewing process
- Carries out staff induction for new team members
- Responsible for training, evaluation and assessment of employees
- Responsible for arranging travel, meetings and appointments
• Updates job knowledge by participating in educational opportunities; reading professional publications; maintaining personal networks; participating in professional organizations.
• Oversees the smooth running of the daily office activities.

Marketing Executive
• Identifies, prioritizes, and reaches out to new partners, and business opportunities et al
• Identifies development opportunities; follows up on development leads and contacts; participates in the structuring and financing of projects; assures the completion of development projects.
• Writes winning proposal documents negotiate fees and rates in line with company policy
• Responsible for handling business research, marker surveys and feasibility studies for clients
• Responsible for supervising implementation, advocate for the customer's needs, and communicate with clients
• Develops, executes and evaluates new plans for expanding increase sales
• Documents all customer contact and information
• Represents the company in strategic meetings
• Helps to increase sales and growth for the company

Accountant
• Responsible for preparing financial reports, budgets, and financial statements for the organization
• Provides manage-ments with financial analyses, development budgets, and accounting reports; analyzes financial feasibility for the most complex proposed projects; conducts market research to forecast trends and business conditions.
• Responsible for financial forecasting and risks analysis.
• Performs cash management, general ledger accounting, and financial reporting for one or more properties.
• Responsible for developing and managing financial systems and policies
• Responsible for administering payrolls
• Ensures compliance with taxation legislation
• Handles all financial transactions for the company
• Serves as internal auditor for the company

Client Service Executive
• Welcomes guests and clients by greeting them in person or on the telephone; answering or directing inquiries.
• Ensures that all contacts with clients (e-mail, walk-in center, SMS or phone) provides the client with a personalized customer service experience of the highest level
• Through interaction with clients on the phone, uses every opportunity to build client's interest in the company's products and services
• Manages administrative duties assigned by the manager in an effective and timely manner
• Consistently stays abreast of any new information on the company's products, promotional campaigns etc. To ensure accurate and helpful information is supplied to clients when they make enquiries.

Veterans Conference Facility looks at a summary from the result of the SWOT analysis that was conducted on conference facility:

SWOT Analysis

Strength: Aside from the fact that our conference facility is well positioned and well — equipped to meet the 21st century demand of both high profile corporate and individual clients, we have a team that can go all the way to give our clients value for their money; a team that are trained and equipped to pay attention to details. We are well positioned, and we know we will attract loads of clients from the first day we open our doors for business.

Weakness: As a new conference hall rental and event planning outfit, it might take some time for our organization to break into the market and gain acceptance in the already saturated event planning and rental industry; that is perhaps our major weakness.

Opportunities: The opportunities in the event planning and conference rental industry is massive considering the number of corporate events, weddings, parties and other events that take places daily with-in Middlesex County and the surrounding areas. As an all — round conference hall rental and event planning outfit, we are ready to take advantage of any opportunity that comes our way.

Threat: Some of the threats that we are likely going to face as a conference rental and event planning outfit operating in Middlesex Country are unfavorable government policies, the arrival of a competitor within our location of operations and global economic downturn which usually affects purchasing power. There is hardly anything we can do about these threats other than to be optimistic that things will continue to work for our good.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Market Trends
One thing is certain; it is difficult to find a business that is strictly into just conference hall rentals. This is so because such business will find it difficult to maintain its overhead and operational cost or generate enough income needed for business expansion.

In recent time, it is common to find conference hall rental companies engage in other complimentary services such as party rentals and event planning services et al.

The event planning and party rental industry is in a continuous state of evolution and as such, ground breaking strategies and ideas that are once highly successful are no longer as productive as they were in
time past. Close observation of the trend in the industry reveals that the past few years have seen the rise and proliferation of social media and new tech tools.

The trend, also extends to increased attention paid to engagement and new market segments adopting eco-friendly measures and sustainability when planning events, and of course increase in demands from event sponsors.

As a matter of fact, social media has now become one of the most important tools event planners leverage on to disseminate information about their events, interact with attendees, solicit feedback, and create year-round engagement with their target audience.

Furthermore, new software apps and emerging technology have made it easier for event and wedding planners to gather all the needed data and information that will help them plan and prepare for the future. In recent time, mobile event apps are becoming more popular; event planner can now successfully host events via social media platforms / online platforms. In the United States for example, there several vendors providing mobile apps with more event planners patronizing the apps.

Over and above, with the invention of event apps, it is now compulsory for event planners and venue owners (conference halls) to offer Wi-Fi throughout the event, in all meeting rooms. The truth is that it will no longer be acceptable to not have Wi-Fi accessible at events; people will hardly rent halls without Wi-Fi facility.

Our Target Market

Although Veterans Conference Facility will initially serve small to medium sized business, from new ventures to well established businesses and individual clients, but that does not in any way stop us from growing to be able to compete with the leading event planning and party rental companies in Connecticut. As an all — round event planning and

Veterans Conference Facility offering a wide range of services hence we are well trained and equipped to services a wide range of clientele base.

Our target market cuts across people of different class and people from all walks of life, local and state-wide organizations as well. We are coming into the industry with a business concept that will enable us work with the highly placed people and companies in the country and at the same with the lowly placed people and smaller businesses.

Below is a list of the people and organizations that we have specifically design our products and services for:

- Potential Couples / Young Adults
- Blue Chips Companies
- Corporate Organizations
- Religious Organizations
- Political Parties / Politicians
- Households / Families
- The Government (Public Sector)
- Schools (High Schools, Colleges and Universities)
- Sport Organizations
- Small, medium, large business

Our Competitive Advantage

We are quite aware that to be highly competitive in the event planning and party rental industry means that your conference hall must be well — positioned and well — equipped with enough parking space and security,

You should be able to deliver consistent quality service, your clients should be able to experience remarkable difference cum improvement and you should be able to meet the expectations of both participants and organizers of events.

Veterans Conference Facility might be a new entrant into the event planning and party rental industry in the United States of America, but the management staffs and owners of the business are considered gurus. They are core professionals and highly qualified event planners / managers in the United States. Our conference center must be well — positioned and well — equipped with enough parking space and security. These are part of what will count as a competitive advantage for us.

Lastly, our employees will be well taken care of, and their welfare package will be among the best within our category (startups event planning and party rental companies) in the industry meaning that they will be more than willing to build the business with us and help deliver our set goals and achieve all our aims and objectives.

MARKETING STRATEGY

We are mindful of the fact that there is stiffer competition amongst event planning and conference rental companies in the United States of America; hence we will hire some of the best business developer to handle our sales and marketing.

Our sales and marketing team will be recruited based on their vast experience in the industry and they will be trained on a regular basis to be well equipped to meet their targets and the overall goal of the organization.

We will also ensure that our excellent job deliveries speak for us in the market place; we want to build a standard conference hall rental and event planning business that will leverage on word of mouth advertisement from satisfied clients (both individuals and corporate organizations).
Our goal is to grow our conference rental and event planning company to become one of the top 20 banquet hall rental and event planning companies in Middlesex County which is why we have mapped out strategy that will help us take advantage of the available market and grow to become a major force to reckon with not only in Middletown, Connecticut but also in other cities in the State of Connecticut.

Veterans Conference Facility is set to make use of the following marketing and sales strategies to attract clients:

- Introduce our business by sending introductory letters alongside our brochure to corporate organizations, schools, households and key stake holders in Middlesex County and other cities in State of Connecticut.
- Promptness in bidding for event planning / event management contracts from the government and other cooperate organizations.
- Advertise our business in relevant business magazines, newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations.
- List our business on yellow pages ads, (local directories) face book, business web-site etc.
- Attend relevant State and local expos, seminars, and business fairs et al
- Create different packages for different category of clients to work with their budgets and still deliver quality event planning services to them.
- Leverage on the internet to promote our business.
- Engage direct marketing approach.
- Encourage word of mouth marketing from loyal and satisfied clients.

**Sources of Income**

Veterans Banquet & Conference Facility is established with the aim of maximizing profits in the event planning and rental industry and we are going to go all the way to ensure that we do all it takes to attract clients on a regular basis and sign retainers — ship with most of our clients.

Veterans Conference Facility will generate income by offering the following event planning / rental services for individuals and for corporate organizations;

- Wedding Planning
- Corporate Event Planning
- Outdoor Party Planning
- Annual General Meetings
- Sports Tournaments / Competitions Planning
- Children’s Party and Birthdays Party Planning
- Bar Mitzvah
- Veterans Organizations
- Profit & Non-Profit Organizations
- Birthday rentals
- Educational and PTA Organizations
- Family Reunions
- Church’s (Pastor & Church Anniversary)

**Sales Forecast**

One thing is certain, there would always be parties, corporate and business meetings, organizational, events in the United States of America and as such the services of event planning and rental companies will always be in demand.

Veterans Conference Facility will be well positioned to take on the available market in Middletown and Middlesex County Connecticut and we are quite optimistic that we will meet our target of generating enough income / profits from the first six month of operations and grow the business and our clientele base beyond Middlesex County to other cities in Connecticut.

Veterans Conference Facility has been able to critically examine the event planning and conference rental market. We have analyzed our chances in the industry and we have been able to come up with the following sales forecast. The sales projection is based on information gathered in the field and some assumptions that are peculiar to startups in Middletown, and within the State of Connecticut.

Below is the sales projection for Veterans Conference Facility it is based on the location of our business consulting firm and the wide range of consulting services that we will be offering;

- First Fiscal Year:- $900,000.
- Second Fiscal Year:- $1,200,000.
- Third Fiscal Year:- $1,700,000.

N.B: This projection is done based on what is obtainable in the industry and with the assumption that there won’t be any major economic meltdown or natural disasters within the period stated above. There won’t be any major competitor offering same additional services as we do within same location. Please note that the above projection might be lower and at the same time it might be higher.

**Our Pricing Strategy**

Just like in rental and the consulting business, hourly billing for event planning / event management and rental services is also a long time tradition in the industry. However, for some types of event planning/management services, flat fees make more sense because they allow clients to better predict the overall service charges. Because of this, the Conference Facility will be in the position to charge our clients both flat fee and hourly billing if it favors both parties.

Veterans Conference Facility

To will keep our fees below the average market rate for all our clients by keeping our overhead low and by collecting payment in advance. In addition, we will also offer special discounted rates to start— ups, nonprofits, cooperatives, and small social enterprises.
We are aware that there are some clients that would need regular access to event planning consultancy and party / rental services, we will offer flat rate for such services that will be tailored to take care of such clients’ needs.

Payment Options
Veterans Conference Facility, our payment policy will be all inclusive because we are quite aware that different people prefer different payment options as it suits them. Here are the payment options that we will make available to our clients;
- Payment by via bank transfer
- Payment via online bank transfer
- Payment via company check
- Payment via bank draft
- Payment with cash

In view of the above, we have chosen banking platforms that will help us achieve our plans with little or no hitches.

Publicity and Advertising Strategy
We have been able to work with our brand and publicity consultants to help us map out publicity and advertising strategies that will help us walk our way into the heart of our target market. We are set to take the event planning and party rental industry by storm which is why we have made provisions for effective publicity and advertisement of our event planning outfit.

Below are the platforms we intend to leverage on to promote and advertise Veterans Conference Facility;
- Place adverts on both print (community-based newspapers and magazines) and electronic media platforms
- Sponsor relevant community-based events / programs
- Leverage on the internet and social media platforms like; Instagram, Facebook, twitter, You Tube, Google + et al to promote our brand
- Install our Bill Boards on strategic locations all around Middlesex County,
- Engage in road show from time to time in target neighborhoods
- Distribute our fliers and handbills in target areas
- Ensure that all our workers wear our branded shirts and all our vehicles are well branded with our company’s logo et al.

Financial Projections and Costing
Starting a Conference Facility and event planning business can be capital intensive; this is so because on the average, you would need enough capital to build a well — positioned and well — equipped facility. Veterans Conference Facility is seeking (grants) funding in the amount of $3,500,000. These funds (grant) will be used to purchase identified property, retrofitting expand interior into 24,000 sq. ft. conference area, and 14,400 sq. ft. 206 Inc. and American Legion (Will bring in additional revenue) improving the exterior landscaping, minor repairing the parking lot, improving the building cosmetically. Veterans Conference Facility will enthusiastically hire veterans and veterans’ family members as Conference and other additional staff. Based on the detailed financial projections, Veterans Conference Facility future sales for 2019, 2020 and 2021 are expected to be $ 900,000, $1 and $1,750,000.

When it comes to starting a medium scale but standard conference and event planning company, we will need Three Million Five Hundred Thousand ($3,500,000) U.S. dollars to successfully set — up business in Middletown, Connecticut.

Generating Funding I Startup Capital for Veterans Conference and American Legion Post 206 Facilities;
Veterans Conference Facility American Legion Post 206 Facility; is a non-profit corporation business that will be owned by 206 Incorporation. 206 Incorporation is the sole financial of the Veterans Conference Facility.

The start-up capital for the business, to just three major sources. These are the areas we intend generating our property purchase and start-up capital;
- City and State-Bonding Funding
- Non-profit Tax credits
- Apply for loan from HEDCO Inc.
- Corporation Grants

Starting a Veterans Conference and American Legion Post 206 Facilities; and event planning business can be capital intensive; this is so because on the average, you would need enough capital to build a well — positioned and well — equipped Conference facility.

When it comes to starting a medium scale but standard Conference facility and event planning company, the following expenditure are our guide;
The budget for basic insurance policy covers, permits and business license — $2,500
- The Amount needed to acquire a suitable facility that will accommodate a well — equipped and well — positioned banquet hall in a good location (Re — Construction of the facility inclusive) — $2,288,000
- The Cost for equipping the office (computers, software applications printers, fax machines, furniture, telephones, filing cabinets, safety gadgets and electronics et al) — $ 65,000
- The Cost of Launching an official Website — $600
- Budget for paying at least 4 employees for 2 months plus utility bills — $200,000
- Additional Expenditure (Business cards, Signage, Adverts and Promotions et al) — $2,500
- Miscellaneous: $1,000
Going by the report from the market research and feasibility studies conducted, we will need three million five hundred thousand ($3,500,000.00) dollars to successfully set-up a medium scale but standard conference.

Sustainability and Expansion Strategy

It is easier for businesses to survive when they have steady flow of business/customers patronizing their products and services. We are aware of this which is why we have decided to offer a wide range of event planning and other related services to both individual (i.e. Veterans Business Incubator) and corporate clients.

We know that if we continue to deliver excellent event planning services, and our conference facility is always in tip-top shape and highly secured, there will be steady flow of income for the organization.

Our key sustainability and expansion strategy is to ensure that we only hire competent employees create a conducive working environment and employee benefits for our staff members.

We know that if we implement our business strategies, we will achieve our business goals and objectives in record time.

206 Inc.
P.O. Box 755
Middletown, CT 06457
Phone (860)316-5476

Who We Are:

206 Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit Veterans support organization devoted to fostering an ongoing partnership with Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206, a 501 (C) (19) veterans non-profit group. Our Corporation participates and gives our primary support to working with Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post programing and events and/or functions which benefit individual veterans in need.

We work hand-in-hand helping, supporting, referring, counseling, veterans or veteran families affected by someone going off to serve in the military (i.e. during wartime, and/or peace time).

From experience Veteran’s, men and women, need systems to help them deal with the many issues surrounding them. Veterans and their families must deal with the emotional and lifestyle issues of having a disabled, mentally challenged or a terminal loved one, other family members must also cope with watching a loved one suffer from a rare and terrifying experience.

By sharing information, resources, and support 206 Inc, will create a “Circle of Hope” for all Veterans.

Our Mission

Veterans Helping Veteran’s, is a series of programs designed for successful reintegration of veterans into home and community. 206 Inc. and American Legion Post 206, have a goal; to establish a state of the art Veterans facility in order to sustain programing for “veterans by veterans”.

The 25 Industrial Park Drive property will allow 206 Inc. and Harry Ruffin Jr., American Legion Post 206 to provide a multi-faceted approach to enhancing a veteran’s life in the Middlesex Community, such as:

- It all begins with a Conference Facility. Our vision is to build a conference center rental and event planning brand that will become the number one choice for both individual clients and corporate clients in the whole of Middlesex County — Middletown, Connecticut. Our vision reflects the values: integrity, service, excellence and teamwork of Veterans. Focus is on hiring and training veterans. American Legion networking and programs begin with a state of the art gathering place with WIFE accessibility at all times, and computer access. This facility includes private conference rooms.
- A Veteran & Community, unique education, Research Center
- Veterans business incubator and start-up business support. We will provide office and management assistance, funded through grants and the conference facility. The plan is to support veterans small business development by providing no rent to nominal rents for space, our goal is to generate success. We will work closely with HEDCO Inc. using their model, inspiration and guidance. Since 1975, HEDCO Inc. has helped clients and their communities improve, achieve and succeed by supporting their growth and progress. We build productive partnerships, create new programs that meet the changing needs of entrepreneurs and increase the funds available to help people build and improve their business and non-profit organizations. We have the satisfaction of seeing people transform an idea, a dream or a passion into a thriving business.
- ‘Raising Hope’ is a national community outreach program for mothers raising their son’s alone. This program is developed by Rory T. Edwards, Founder of the Rory T. Edwards Group. Rory is an Educator, Author, Transformational Speaker, Coach and Veteran. He has worked relentlessly over the last 30 years in a multitude of leadership positions in education, community development, corporate business and non-profit organizations. In addition to his civic involvement, Rory has taught at the college level as well as in K-12 public, private, technical and charter schools. RoryTedwards.com
- Satellite offices will be made available for other services and veteran programs.
- Boot’s to Teaching Careers, an American Legion program that trains and inspires veterans to become teachers.
- Parents and children learning together. After school programing and education Created and designed by “U-Fit Education”. This organization will lease space and work with our veterans and their families as well as the community at
- ROTC programing on site, no need for taking up school property. Transportation provided.
Creating another facility for veteran organizations to meet. Currently across the street from 25 Industrial Park Drive is a National Guard unit and an Army Reserve unit. At this time in Middletown there are 15 veteran groups meeting.

Employment opportunities for Veterans, Veterans Families, and youth

Veteran and Veterans' family counseling and support services

'Veterans Helping Veterans' will continually research to provide up to date support for new and old concerns identified by veterans and their families. This includes housing and the issues of homelessness. We will begin by offering a Warming Station.

Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta reads the resolution and moves for approval. Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr. seconds the motion.

Seeing no discussion the Chair calls for a vote.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano states that this is the problem that came up at the Finance & Government meeting where a resolution was brought forward, committing the Council to doing something at some point in the future, adding that this is not allowed under the Charter. The Council cannot commit to a future act and cannot bind a future Council to an action. He believes that the resolution is not in order and is not legally sustainable. He urges a "no" vote on this matter.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta

Councilwoman Bartolotta reminds the Council that, in the past, the City has held private partnerships where the City has donated money, in-kind services, and so on: the military museum, Green Street Arts Center, Kids City, Connecticut Health Center (CHC), Middletown Youth Soccer, Oddfellows education grants, and matching funds to other organization the Council also does this when they bring forth resolutions allowing the Mayor to sign lease agreements in the future, guaranteeing that we stand behind something once we receive a grant. She asks that the Council move forward with this resolution.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano states that, once again, this is a commitment a Council to do something in the future. The Council has approved the appropriation, which should take care of it. He is not sure what it does or purports to do. He reads it as an attempt to commit the Council to vote to do something in the future. He states that it is not within the Council’s authority. This is not the same as the items described – approving a lease, which is a current legal action, only requiring a signature. Resolving to do something is resolving to do something right now is in the Council’s authority. “Resolving to resolve” is not a proper act and muddies the water about what the Council can and cannot do. He states that the resolution is confusing and, he believes, will produce an illegal result.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley states that he does not have the information that Councilwoman Bartolotta cited, so he is not sure about the examples offered. He gives Councilwoman Bartolotta the benefit of the doubt that the Council has committed to take future action. He believes that there are differences in future action, as Councilman Giuliano pointed out, authorizing the mayor to execute a lease. The military museum involves a lease for City-owned land. That said, he will vote "no" as he has a problem adopting a resolution that violated the Code of Ordinances. The Ordinances have the force of law. A resolution does not. He again cites to Code Section 44-11, which was in an email shared with the Democratic caucus on March 29th. They are supposed to have financial statements and other information, which the Council has not received. He reiterates the he will be voting “no.”

The chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta.

Councilwoman Bartolotta, not to belabor, points out regarding the (military museum) lease agreement. It is still a building that the Council put in approximately $600,000, which they did not ask the individual running that busing for any business reports. If they fail, it is a building that the City helped fund and would need to fill and try to get revenue. The Council is not asking for revenue. If the Council contributed $600,000 for someone to build and utilize a building, then where is the money coming back. Is the option to sell it? The Council votes on things all the time – public works, for example – that does not get used before the end of the budget year or before a new Council is elected, yet the Council still does it. To now say that this is looking to do something different, is an argument that is offered simple to vote "no." She urges her colleagues to vote "yes" and to move this forward.

The Chair states that, before calling on Councilman Faulkner, he wants to clear up one thing: the military museum was asked for a business plan and did produce one.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner reads language from the proposed resolution: “Reviewed by Finance & Government on March 27, 2019; approved to forward to the Common Council with appropriation.”
The Chair states that, seeing no further discussion, he calls for the vote and asks for a show of hands. The Chair states that the motion is approved with seven (7) aye votes (Councilmembers Bartolotta, Blanchard, Chisem, Cotten, Faulkner, Nocera, and Pessina) and four (4) nay votes (Councilmembers Daley, Giuliano, Salafia, and Santangelo). The resolution is approved by a vote of 7 to 4.

B. Approving that, though some members remain opposed to tolls under any circumstances and others are supportive of tolling systems as part of a long term plan to fund transportation infrastructure, this body opposes the Governor’s current proposal for the following reasons:

- the Governor’s office plan implements tolling systems that effectively create a regressive tax for residents and businesses of Connecticut and may increase traffic congestion on local roads by those seeking to avoid tolls;
- the Governor’s office has not presented a substantive plan to implement needed transportation infrastructure improvements in a timely manner in that the proposed tolling systems would not generate revenue for at least four (4) years; and,
- the tolling systems are proposed in conjunction with numerous measures that would increase taxes on working people while other proposed measures would reduce taxes on Connecticut’s wealthiest individuals; and,
- the Governor’s proposals would implement tolling systems and other regressive measures that would increase financial burdens on working people and small businesses while simultaneously proposing measures that would reduce taxes for Connecticut’s wealthiest individuals without addressing the immediate needs for transportation infrastructure improvements.

APPROVED
RESOLUTION No. 26-19; K: review / resolution/ CC anti-tolling –RES 26-19 – 11 April 2019

Whereas, the Governor’s office has proposed implementing numerous electronic tolling systems on Interstate 84, Interstate 91, Interstate 95 and portions of Connecticut Route 15 (Merritt Parkway); and,

Whereas, such tolling systems would be costly to implement and would not generate any revenue to improve the State’s transportation infrastructure for at least four (4) years; and,

Whereas, such tolling systems may effectively create a regressive tax for residents and businesses of Connecticut and may increase traffic congestion on local roads by those seeking to avoid tolls; and,

Whereas, the Governor’s office has simultaneously proposed measures that would retroactively repeal the increased exemption for Social Security benefits from the income tax included in the FY 2018 –2019 biennial budget and scheduled to take effect for the 2019 income year, retroactively repeal the phased in exemption for pension and annuity income included in the FY 2018 –2019 biennial budget and scheduled to take effect beginning in the 2019 income year, retroactively and permanently caps the amount of teachers’ pensions that is exempt from the income tax at 25% (this amount was slated to increase to 50% in income year 2019 under current law); repeals a number of exemptions currently in the sales and use tax code, including massage therapists, electrology services, renovation and repair of residential property, non-prescription drugs, text books, newspapers and magazines, Connecticut credit unions, campground rentals, bicycle helmets, child car seats, vegetable seeds, safety apparel, and repair or maintenance of vessels effective 1/1/2020, repeals exemptions for trade-in of vehicles and the lower sales tax rate of 2.99% on sales of vessels 7/1/2019, repeals the exemption for winter boat storage effective 10/1/2019, increases the sales and use tax rate on digital goods (i.e. electronically accessed or transferred audio works, visual works, written materials, ring tones, and software applications) from 1% to the standard 6.35% rate, effective 10/1/2019, expands the sales and use tax to encompass professional services including legal, accounting, architectural, engineering, interior design, and real estate activities and agents effective 1/1/2020; and expands the sales and use tax to agents personal services including veterinary services, barber shops, beauty salons, dry-cleaning and laundry services, parking, sports/recreation instruction and industries, horse boarding and training, travel arrangement and scenic transportation, services to buildings and dwellings, and waste collection effective 1/1/2020; and,

Whereas, while the above measures may generate additional revenues that would directly or indirectly help to fund design and installation of the proposed electronic tolling systems, they are arguably regressive tax policies in that they would create additional burdens on working class residents and small businesses; and

Whereas, the Governor’s office has simultaneously proposed measures that would retroactively eliminate the gift tax portion of the Gift and Estate Tax effective 1/1/2019, and delay the filing date for the estate tax return from six months to nine months; and,

Whereas, the Governor’s office has estimated that the above two measures relating to gift and estate taxes would reduce taxes on Connecticut’s wealthiest individuals by $1.6 million dollars over the budget biennium; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MIDDLETOWN: That though some members remain opposed to tolls under any circumstances and others are supportive of tolling systems as part of a long term plan to fund transportation infrastructure, this body opposes the Governor’s current proposal for the following reasons:

- the Governor’s office plan implements tolling systems that effectively create a regressive tax for residents and businesses of Connecticut and may increase traffic congestion on local roads by those seeking to avoid tolls;
- the Governor’s office has not presented a substantive plan to implement needed transportation infrastructure improvements in a timely manner in that the proposed tolling systems would not generate revenue for at least four (4) years; and.
Councilman Gerald Daley reads the resolution and moves for approval. Councilman Philip Pessina seconds the motion.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley acknowledges Mr. Bogli for coming to the Council. Some have said that this is a “feel good” resolution and not a town issue and, for that reason, should not be taken up. On April 1st, the entire council received Mr. Bogli’s email, forwarded by the Council Clerk. He is reading this email because this resolution arose in response to a constituent, who wrote to the Council. Councilman Daley reads from the email:

“I have lived in Middletown for 25 years and would like to voice my opinion on the topic of tolling in Connecticut. I believe as many other hard working citizens of this state that tolling will be a hardship, I do believe no matter what we as individuals tell the Hartford Legislature they have already made up their minds to start tolling. The one thing unique I am noticing is that city’s voices and are enacting “No Toll Resolutions” with this in mind I would like our city of Middletown to do the same to tell Hartford “Enough is Enough”.

He states that when he read this email, he found that Mr. Bogli is correct: many towns are taking a stand on this issue. He checked the Governor’s website regarding the toll proposal, a house Bill, which is still before the legislature. He also looked at the revenue proposals in the Governor’s budget. Councilman dicey states that he believes that some form of tolling system may be part of a long term approach to address transportation infrastructure needs. In looking at the Governor’s proposal, raise concerns about the effectiveness, fairness, and transparency of the current proposal. In terms of effectiveness, the Governor removed the $250M in general obligation bonds that the current bipartisan budget earmarked for transportation infrastructure. The Governor also capped the new car sale tax going into the transportation fund, making the fund almost insolvent by 2022. According to a DOT (Connecticut Department of Transportation) memo, the limit on bonding would have significant impacts on our capital program, severely constraining the number of new projects that advance in current and future years. . . . Government costs for such an extensive toll system are significant, approaching $300,000,000. The time to plan, gain regulatory approvals, design, and construct a toll system are estimated to take four (4) years with partial revenue service in years 5 and 6 and revenue operations would be achieved in year 7.

He suggests two (2) questions: (1) How are the $300M in development costs paid; and (2) What happens with the transportation infrastructure while waiting 5 to 7 years for revenue to start. Despite the evidence from DOT that funding for infrastructure is already inadequate, after that memo was written, the Governor redirected sales tax on new car sales. The law diverts 8 percent of that sales tax to the special transportation fund with scheduled increase to 33 percent on July 1, 2019, 56 percent on July 1, 2020, 75 percent on July 1, 2021, and 100 percent on July 1, 2022. The Governor’s FY20-21 budget repeals the increases starting July 1, 2019, freezing the amount of sales tax on car sales that go to the special transportation fund at 8 percent. The Governor’s website states that this reduces funding to the special transportation fund by $91M in FY 20 and $175.8 in FY21, a total reduction of $266.8M to the special transportation fund, making the effectiveness of the Governor’s proposal, raise concerns about the Governor’s FY20 budget. This two measures would reduce taxes on the wealthiest by $51.6M over the next 2 years, which is money that could be used to partially offset the reduction in special transportation fund revenue. The Governor’s proposed budget retroactively repeals the increased exemption for social security benefits, included in the FY18-19 bipartisan, biennial budget. These increased exemptions are scheduled to take effect in 2019 income year. It also retroactively repealed the phased income exemption for pension and annuity income and retroactively caps the amount of teachers’ pension exempt from income tax to 25 percent, noting it was scheduled to increase to 50 percent in 2019. These taxes hurt working people while the wealthy are benefited. These were adopted as middle class tax relief. Most appalling is the elimination of the August tax-free week that parent rely on to get their children ready for school and that retailers need to boost sales. It eliminates 5 years/$500 tax credit for STEM college graduates intended to encourage pursuit of STEM education and retain Connecticut graduates. It repeals sales tax exemptions for just about everything. The bill originally championed by the Commission for Fiscal Stability 7 Economic Growth proposed extending sales the tax to 20 new items to create $230M in additional revenue annually, far less than the $500M that the Governor’s plan, which would add 39 sales tax changes primarily impacting small businesses and working people, not the wealthy. These changes place added burdens on working people, families and students while diverting $266.8M from the special transportation fund and provide
$51.6M in tax reductions for the State’s wealthiest. As far as this not being a local issue, there are already people figuring out how their commute will change if they avoid roads slated to have tolls and use local roads. There will be increased costs for traffic control, traffic condensation, and increased road maintenance as people use local roads to avoid tolls. In terms of transpire, the new Commissioner of DOT says that they are revising the overall plan for the special transportation fund in relation to diverting funds from the sales tax on new cars and were unable to say what projects are re-prioritized and that DOT will have “an ongoing dialog with the Governor’s budget team regarding what programs and which may be delayed.” This is not transparency, telling the people what the impacts are. The Governor’s plan does not tell how it will pay the $200M+ cost for developing the toll system. The Governor’s website describes as a “broad proposal that does not fix the type of vehicles tolled or the toll amount.” The other aspect is the proposed privatization, which people have a problem with as it does not describe how such tolls would be implemented, including the opportunity for private companies to profit from public improvements. For these reasons, he urges his colleagues to vote in favor of this resolution to send a message to the Governor and legislature that there are concerns exist, he appreciates the comments from the OPM Secretary McCaw tonight, adding he had some off-line discussions with her to clarify some of these things. He adds that the OMP Secretary McCaw and Governor Lamont have a difficult job, but middle class taxpayers have a difficult job and this needs to be fair, honest, and open for them. He reiterates, asking his colleagues to support this resolution.

The Chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano addresses the point if whether or not this is a “feel good” resolution or something in which the Council has no interest, that it is not a local matter. If this resolution only expressed Council opinion, it would be a “feel good” resolution, which is something that he believes that the Council should not do if they have no legal significance or if the Council has no direct interest. This is not that. Middletown was settled in 1651, but the first limited access highway was the Merritt Parkway, which opened in 1940. Prior to 1940, he asserts that people got around by using local roads. These local roads still exist and tolls will continue to be charged. He add money to the cost of that commute. Using the highway will add money to the cost of that commute. That is a half tank of gas. We are trying to make a living. If someone travels 100 miles per day. Tolls will add another $15 to their commute. Here we have news now suggests that gas will go up to as much as $5.00/ gallon this summer. There is no good choice. The facts are the facts, the Council has heard tonight. The Council also knows that this plan has about 40 percent of the revenue coming from out-of-state residents, which is a plus; it is in negotiations. The pending House bill will only improve as there are strong feelings in the State to improve this plan. He wants to allow this process to move forward, which he encourages and wants Tobe involved in. He asks if the current plan is a good plan. He states “no,” adding that he is convinced that the plan will land in a good place. This tolling plan, in his opinion, is the best option for the State to earmark direct funds for transportation and infrastructure needs. The community is looking for that to occur, the business community is looking outside of the State for a revenue stream to improve roads and bridges. It is clearly an important factor for the businesses to move into Connecticut. He agrees with Councilman Daley’s comments that the wealthiest are not paying a fair share and the Governor cannot stand by the former Governor’s plan or decrease the state tax and other prisons. There has to be an increase so there is plan that is not on the backs of the middle class.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera states that he is not sure of the impact on voting up or down will have. He had a lengthy conversation with State Senator Matt Lesser, who is currently making the rounds at Town meetings and speaking to constituents on tolling and other matters. They are in dire straits to fashion a plan. Residents and taxpayers know that in looking at the conditions of the State’s roads and bridges. They are also looking to foster economic growth in the State, which is critical to Connecticut, adding that it also trickle down to the local level. The facts are the facts, as the Council has heard tonight. The Council also knows that this plan has about 40 percent of the revenue coming from out-of-state residents, which is a plus; it is in negotiations. The pending House bill will only improve as there are strong feelings in the State to improve this plan. He wants to allow this process to move forward, which he encourages and wants Tobe involved in. He asks if the current plan is a good plan. He states “no,” adding that he is convinced that the plan will land in a good place. This tolling plan, in his opinion, is the best option for the State to earmark direct funds for transportation and infrastructure needs. The community is looking for that to occur, the business community is looking outside of the State for a revenue stream to improve roads and bridges. It is clearly an important factor for the businesses to move into Connecticut. He agrees with Councilman Daley’s comments that the wealthiest are not paying a fair share and the Governor cannot stand by the former Governor’s plan or decrease the state tax and other prisons. There has to be an increase so there is plan that is not on the backs of the middle class.

The Chair calls on Councilman Robert Santangelo.

Councilman Santangelo states that, in listening here and in talking with co-worker, he heard Councilman Daley speak. He heard someone mention that here, in Middletown, people will be charged 10 cents for a paper bag and that they would instead go to Portland, Cromwell, and Meriden to save 10 cents on a paper bag. It’s not too far-fetched. His co-workers come from all over the State, from Norwich, Tolland, Bridgeport, and New Hartford. They say that this will cost them more. A co-worker coming from Tolland will need to travel 2 hours one way using local roads to commute. Using the highway will add money to the cost of her commute. They both add money. People will need to pay attention: it is a user tax. We don’t need to look, referring to an incident last week on Camp Street, which is notorious cut thru from Country Club Road to Route 66, the 2 main arteries in the City. It cuts thru a residential neighborhood. A car went off the road and into a house, adding that thankfully, no one was there. What was damaged can be repaired and placed. It was normal, middle of the day traffic at 2:30PM, not rush hours traffic, adding that was without tolls. To say that these tolls will not have a local impact is unrealistic. He will support this, adding that, in addition to the reasons cited by Councilman Giuliano, noting we may or we agree on these things. He add that, in looking at the safety of citizens and condition of local infrastructure, so he will support this resolution.
that roads need to be repaired. The transportation lock box was not used wisely, so now we are paying twice. The Council has discussed encumbering money and future Councils because someone somewhere is not planning wisely. Take a step back and listen; people do not want to pay anymore, the 10 cents on the bag. To stop that, bring your own bag. In terms of gas costs, consider getting an electric car. No one wants to pay more than they need to. If people want to travel quickly and efficiently, they may need to pay more. Right now, it may mean no tolls.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that he is glad to hear that Councilman Nocera spoke with State Senator Lesser. He asks: where are our State delegates, who are directly responsible for voting for or against this Governor’s proposal. From what he has heard from OPM Secretary McCaw, this plan is evolving. Sooner or later, we need to understand where we are and what we need to do to address infrastructure. Hearing that the Governor is happy to hear that the Governor is being sensitive to the needs of the wealthy, of business owners, of reductions in taxes. This is a plan and a proposal at the State level. Our elected officials – the Middletown delegation – represent all of the Council as well as all of our constituents. None this proposal is refined and the DOT and Governor try to bring forward a good program that our State delegation will come back to the district – the constituents – and explain the final program. That being said, based on his conversation with OPM Secretary McCaw, there is another bill, which will increase the weight of the tractor trailer that travel the highway. The truck create the problems on roads, so he believes that there needs to be some form of tolling at the borders: Rhode Island, New York, and Massachusetts. For years, when traveling on vacations or travelling for businesses, we pay tolls without thinking twice. It is time for Connecticut to look at a bold plan and move forward. We need to give the administration time to develop its plan and come back to the constituents. This is when we should make our final decision. He believes that this is a “Feel Good” resolution. Last month, the Council had the plastic bag ordinance, which insults the business community, saying let’s get rid of plastic bags for the right reasons and the businesses agreed. Then the ordinance adds a fine on the businesses, causing government to cross the threshold of a business and telling owners what it can and cannot do, if the Council is interested in doing something locally. At a future Council meeting, let’s look at eliminating that fine out and stop the economic deterioration, which will occur as people go outside of the borders.

The Chair interjects, saying that this item was passed at a previous Council meeting and, if it comes up again in the future, he is welcome to make those arguments.

Councilman Pessina replies that what he is saying is that it is local.

The Chair replies, that Councilman Pessina must keep his remarks to this item.

Councilman Pessina replies that is what he is doing, noting that this plastic bag ordinance is local; the toll issue is not local as there is no mention of Route 9. He does not understand why we are digging holes in a plan when it is still in the formative process. He will abstain tonight he wants to take the politics out of this. He wants to see State government come up with as a plan to garner some money to improve road condition. He will then, then the Council should make an informed decision, not during the developmental process. The Council should not be people who inhibit progress, but, rather, who support progress and make an informed decision, including hearing from the State delegation.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady L. Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner states that, first and foremost, he is not in favor of tolls, but they are a part of our lives. He is along the same line as Councilman Pessina, wondering where our State representatives are. We hear people complain that they do not want tolls, but he does not hear solutions. He would have been happy to have workshop to get the facts, which are all over the place. Like the bag situation, this is a State issue, not a city to city issue where we don’t really know where to go. The Council has more to deal with on Middletown issues and the State representatives should have workshops for us. This empowers citizens to speak thru their State representatives. The other issue involves prioritizing things on the State level. That is an issue. There has been a lot of construction on State properties, so we need to prioritize of “have to do” versus “like to do.” If we get to people, we can get ideas to be recommended. The State is in a tight situation, but it did not happen overnight and will not be resolved over night. Like everyone here, we cannot have a regressive tax situation that falls on the lowest folks in the State and the middle class. These people have been killed from the top. We can’t need that. We need to be mindful. Our community needs a dialog, a conversation to educate people and to respond. He would have loved to have seen a letter from the Council on this issue.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Linda Salafia

Councilwoman Salafia states that she does not believe that the State needs tolls. She does not want to see that door opened because, once opened, we know that the doors are wide open: Sales tax, income tax. It will take years to build these toll stations. It will be years before any revenue comes it. In the meantime, we need to fill that gap. She has heard of one plan where the State would borrow against the anticipated revenue. If they do that, how do they pay it back? The only way to pay it back is to have more money, which means more taxes or more tolls. When you stop taking tolls, the State will still owe the money. She is also unsure of the studies that say whether or not the State needs tolls. She understands that one company that is a proponent of tools is heavily invested in a group that provides tolls. How is that an unbiased study? It seems a given that the conclusion will be that we need tolls. She notes that if
people don't have use of the highways because of tolls, what may now be an estimated 2 hour commute will only get worse. She recounts her own commute to City Hall, which was just 3 miles. She could not get on Route 9 in the morning without spending 20 minutes on that highway. She had to use City streets. There is no transparency. She notes that the City is installing bump outs on Main Street. There was a community meeting and she is not sure where this concept came from.

The Chair interjects, asking that Councilwoman Salafia limit her comments to the resolution.

Councilwoman Salafia states that the bump outs are an indicator that there is no real transparency in what the City is getting from the State. She explains that she travels to Main often. The State of Maine has moved toll booths from the actual point of entry at the State border some 15 to 20 miles into Kennebunkport, Exit 3, beyond the major tourist sites. This allows people to visit places like Ogunquit without tolls and it is the same Down East: no tolls.

The Chair calls on Councilman W. Vance Cotten.

Councilman Cotten reiterates the discussion question: what are we going to do about the tolls. He knows that we need to do something. He is baffled hearing things because he does not know all of the pros and cons. What he does know is that he does not want to see the rich get richer and the poor getting poorer and the middle class stuck in between. He will abstain tonight. Once he gets to know more on the issue, he will give an educated reason for his decision.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta

Councilwoman Bartolotta states that there is clearly disagreement on whether or not here is a need for significant investment and upgrades to infrastructure. Across the street is an 81 year old bridge and a highway with issues, which cuts this City off from valuable riverfront and which needs to be corrected carefully. The issue tonight is how to pay for this infrastructure work, which is now the subject of debate. The State delegation has the City’s best interest as its focus. She has reached out to the delegation and they will keep the Council up to date. They are open to comments and suggestions. To address Councilman Cotten’s comments, we do need to wait, so she, too, will abstain.

The Chair calls on Councilman Gerald Daley.

Councilman Daley states that Councilman Nocera raised the issue of State Senator Lesser regarding the House bill, which embodies the Governor’s proposal and it will improve. Councilman Pessina stated that it is evolving. He stresses that, if this is how these people feel, then they should support the resolution. The resolution does not say that we do not want tolls under any circumstances. He acknowledges the difficult situations. This resolution addresses the Governor’s proposal which is before the General Assembly and is in his budget, if adopting this resolution will facilitate negotiations that lead to a better plan and provides funding in the short time to move transportation infrastructure, restore funding to the special transportation funds, better balances the burden among the wealthy and working people and retirees. All that is in this resolution is cut and pasted from the Governor’s website. This resolution only specs to the Governor’s proposal. The media shows that the Governor has indicated some movement in this balancing act as the Council does with the City budget. All this resolution is meant to do is to send a message to the Governor and our State delegation is that we see a fairer plan, a plan that is fairer to working people and retirees. This plan needs to honor commitments and promises made to middle class taxpayers and asks the wealthy to pay their fair share. The resolution does not say that we oppose tolls; it says that we oppose the Governor’s current plan. If a better plan is brought forward, then we have accomplished something.

The chair calls on Councilman Sebastian Giuliano.

Councilman Giuliano states that he agrees with Councilman Daley, adding that many Councilmembers are old enough to remember when we lived with tolls. There were tolls on I-95 and Route 15 and on various bridges. Connecticut was called the “Tollbooth State.” Had it not been public outcry from communities like Stamford and Wallingford, what we would have is 82 gantries, which was on the table. No one would be able to go anywhere without it costing money. It is that sort of outcry that has gotten the movement from the Governor. We need to continue to engage to get something reasonable. It does not say “no tolls,” recognizing that tolls serve a purpose. The solution may include tolls, but the headlong rush needs to be derailed. He agrees with Councilman Daley: If we are looking to engage, then there is no reason not to support this resolution.

The Chair calls on Councilman W. Vance Cotten.

Councilman Cotten states that he heard what Councilman Daley has said, noting that what he is saying is not “no tolls,” but rather to wait to see if there is a better offer. Is that correct? If we are trying to meet on grounds to get a better solution, then he may change from abstaining. He wants to see the Council trying to do something that will help. Right now, tolls are the best that we have and he is not sure that there is something better, he is willing, if they are truly ready to sit down and discuss the issue.

The Chair remarks regarding a blog that he, personally, is a long time, vocal supported of tolls. He states that this is true and that he is still a supporter of tolls. He thanks the Councilmembers for their considered responses. He takes issue with this particular proposal because it comes concomitantly with the repeal of
the gift tax, changes to the estate tax, and privatizes portions of the system, he has a fundamental problem with these and believes it is wrong as it places a larger burden on middle class and working class people.

The Chair states that Councilman Daley cannot speak again, pursuant to the Council rules, as he has already spoken twice,

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that the Council needs to give the State delegation opportunity to work with this proposal – the initial proposal – and that the Council is moving too fast and without all of the facts. There is information on the Governor’s website, but, taking politics out, we have an individual who is trying to do something. We should depend on out State delegation so that, in the end, after all consideration haven been made, and changes to the proposal are made, before the final proposal goes to the legislature, the public needs to be informed so that we can make an informed decision. We do not need to rush this on early proposal, noting the Governor has been in office only 5 months. Give the individual an opportunity to create his proposal, listen to the public, and allow the Governor to make an informed decision as to how he wants to go. Our delegation can bring the information back to this Council and then the Council can make a statement. We can either agree or disagree as something needs to be done with our State highways.

The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera states that he does not know if he made his position clear. He will be abstaining since he does not believe that the Council has all of the information. He understands the various positions of the Councilmember’s. There are active, ongoing negotiations and he has full confidence that elected officials will develop a plan that we will be pleased with. In his opinion, this is the best option now for tolling tolling on trucks alone will not provide the needed revenue for the highways. We need a plan that is user-bases. Connecticut is uniquely positions between New York and Massachusetts and travelers are zipping thru without providing anything to support our highways. He will abstain on this item and wait for a good result.

Seeing no further discussion, the Chair calls for the vote and asks for a show of hands. The Chair states that the motion is approved with five (5) aye votes (Councilmembers Chisem, Daley, Faulkner, Giuliano, and Santangelo) and one (1) nay vote (Councilman Blanchard). Five (5) Councilmembers abstain (Councilmembers Bartolotta, Cotten, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia). The Chair states that motion is approved with five (5) aye votes and one (1) nay vote, and five (5) members not voting.

(Inaudible) the abstention count against the vote. The Chair replies that they do not. It means that the member has chosen not to vote it not a yes or not. There is a quorum so the abstentions . . . (inaudible). The Chair states that he does not know what (inaudible) this Council means.

6. Executive Session to Discuss Pending Litigation

A. Approving that the Common Councilmembers convene in Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and to consider communications privileged by the attorney-client relationship in the case of Michele DiMauro v. City of Middletown (Case No. 3:13-CV-00170-JAM).

APPROVED

B. Attendees: Common Councilmembers, CIRMA Attorney Michael Rose, and Attorney Michael Harrington to attend for the purpose of discussing this pending litigation and such privileged communications.

Councilman Nocera moves to approve that the Council to convene in Executive Session.

The Chair asks who is being inviting into the Executive Session.

Councilman Nocera replies that in addition to the Common Councilmembers, the invitees for the executive Session are CIRMA Attorney Michael Rose and Attorney Michael Harrington.

Councilman Philip Pessina seconds the motion.

Seeing no discussion, the Chair calls for the vote. The Chair states that the vote on the motion is unanimous with 11 aye votes. The motion is unanimously approved.

The Chair states that he relinquishes the seat as Chair to the Deputy Mayor and asks that the Clerk close the doors on the way out.

The Common Council begins its Executive Session at 8:28 PM.

7. Return to Public Session

Public session resumed at 9:37 PM.

8. Meeting adjourned
Councilwoman Mary Bartolotta moves for adjournment. Councilman Sebastian Giuliano seconds the motion. The Chair calls for the vote. It is approved unanimously with 11 aye votes. The Chair states the motion passes with 11 affirmative votes.

The meeting is adjourned at 9:37 PM.

ATTEST:
LINDA S.K. REED,
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK

K: review/minutes/19 April 11 – special meeting minutes – 11 April 2019