

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

March 22, 2022, 7 p.m.,

Legislative Chambers

(Transcribed Remotely)

**Re: An Ordinance Amending Tax Exemption
Procedure for Ambulance Type Vehicles.**

A p p e a r a n c e s:

Town Council Members Present:

MAYOR SHARI CANTOR

LEON DAVIDOFF

MARK ZYDANOWICZ

ALBERTO CORTES

ADRIENNE BILLINGS-SMITH

CAROL BLANKS

BEN WENOGRAD

LIAM SWEENEY

MARY FAY

RICK LEDWITH

Town Manager

ESSIE LABROT

Town Clerk

JOSEPH DAKERS, SR.,

Town Assessor

1 **PRESIDENT CANTOR:** This is an
2 ordinance amending tax exemption procedure
3 for ambulance type vehicles. We will start
4 with a roll call. Ms. Labrot?

5 **MS. LABROT:**

6 **Ms. Billings-Smith?**

7 **COUNCILOR BILLINGS-SMITH:**
8 **Present.**

9 **MS. LABROT:** Ms. Blanks?

10 **COUNCILOR BLANKS:** Present.

11 **MS. LABROT:** Ms. Cantor?

12 **PRESIDENT CANTOR:** Here.

13 **MS. LABROT:** Mr. Cortes?

14 **COUNCILOR CORTES:** Here.

15 **MS. LABROT:** Mr. Davidoff?

16 **COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF:** Here.

17 **MS. LABROT:** Ms. Fay?

18 **COUNCILOR FAY:** Here.

19 **MS. LABROT:** Mr. Sweeney?

20 **COUNCILOR SWEENEY:** Here.

21 **MS. LABROT:** Mr. Wenograd?

22 **COUNCILOR WENOGRAD:** Here.

23 **MS. LABROT:** And

24 **Mr. Zydانowicz?**

25 **COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ:** Here.

1 MS. LABROT: Thank you.

2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
3 Ms. Labrot. And we'll go to, I think, our
4 Town Manager for the guide, the presentation.

5 MR. LEDWITH: Thank you,
6 Mayor. Good evening, everyone. Tonight's
7 public hearing is for an ordinance amending
8 the tax exemption procedure for ambulance
9 type vehicles.

10 This ordinance change was
11 first reviewed by our finance and budget and
12 personnel committee last month, and this
13 evening we have Joseph Dakers, our Assessor
14 who will give a brief presentation on the
15 changes within the ordinance. Joe?

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
17 Mr. Ledwith, and good evening Mr. Dakers.

18 MR. DAKERS: (Inaudible) --
19 Section 161-6, allow a municipal code that
20 allows for a 100 percent exemption on certain
21 ambulance type vehicles.

22 (Inaudible.)

23 PRESIDENT CANTOR: That was
24 quick. I'm not sure your mic is working, so
25 you may have to repeat it all. So just don't

1 go anywhere yet -- but are there any
2 questions for Mr. Dakers?

3 Maybe just repeat it?

4 Maybe for the record, you
5 could just repeat just because -- I don't
6 know if anyone is watching, but if they are
7 we can make sure you are recorded.

8
9 (Pause: 7:03 p.m. to 7:05 p.m.)

10
11 MR. DAKERS: Good evening,
12 Mayor Cantor and members of the West Hartford
13 Town Council.

14 I'm Joseph Dakers, the
15 Director of Assessments for the Town of West
16 Hartford. I'm here to speak to the request
17 to amend Article 4, Subsection 161-6 of our
18 municipal code that allows for a 100 percent
19 tax exemption on certain ambulance type
20 vehicles. This request merely increases the
21 timeframe allowed from 30 days to 120 days
22 after the vehicle is purchased, allowing more
23 time for the modifications to be completed.

24 This concludes my comments,
25 Madam Mayor.

1 **PRESIDENT CANTOR:** For the
2 third time -- thank you very much for your
3 patience. All right. Again, questions?

4 **Mr. Wenograd?**

5 **COUNCILOR WENOGRAD:** Yes.
6 Thank you, Madam Mayor. Through you, just if
7 you could clarify who exactly this is for? I
8 had been confused by that when I first heard
9 about this.

10 **It doesn't apply to ambulance**
11 **companies?**

12 **MR. DAKERS:** Yeah. This is
13 not for-profit ambulance companies. This is
14 for -- nonprofit ambulance companies are
15 already exempted. This is specifically for
16 individuals that have in most of the cases I
17 have seen severe disabilities.

18 **And these adaptations could**
19 **mean putting in a false floor in the vehicle,**
20 **or ramp, or lift, or some kind of break so**
21 **the wheelchair won't move around in there.**
22 **And they have hand controls to govern or to**
23 **handle the breaking and the acceleration of**
24 **the vehicle.**

25 **COUNCILOR WENOGRAD:** All

1 right. Thank you for that clarification.

2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
3 Mr. Wenograd.

4 Ms. Blanks?

5 COUNCILOR BLANKS: Thank you,
6 Mayor. Through you.

7 And so my question is, had
8 there been something that occurred in the
9 past that would require this increase in the
10 days after the purchase?

11 Could you elaborate on that?

12 MR. DAKERS: Yes. Through
13 you, Mayor Cantor. Thank you. That's a good
14 question. We have had in my tenure here,
15 which is almost 20 years, about 3 events that
16 I could recall. I suspect there may have
17 been others.

18 And essentially the applicant
19 has a very short turnaround time to get these
20 modifications made. Oftentimes they have to
21 send the vehicles away out of state to get
22 this work done, and for them to meet the
23 30-day timeframe is challenging.

24 I actually just had one this
25 week -- I take it back. That was last week,

1 and I think -- I don't want to mention names,
2 but I think the Council is aware of the West
3 Harbor resident. They reside on Burnham
4 Drive and they have several children that
5 require a lot of intensive care.

6 And so they just got a new
7 vehicle. They were on the program before,
8 but they had missed the filing date for this
9 vehicle. So even with the adjustments,
10 they're going to miss out on the current
11 grand list year. So we do have them
12 occasionally.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
14 Ms. Blanks. Any other question? Mr. Cortes?

15 COUNCILOR CORTES: So now
16 we're increasing this to 120 days, but with
17 everything going on with supply issues that
18 we're having across the country do you think
19 that we will run into problems with them not
20 being able to finish it in the 120-day
21 period?

22 MR. DAKERS: I don't have any
23 empirical data on that. The only thing I can
24 speak to about is our experience with where
25 we are now. That certainly is a possibility

1 if the vehicles have to be shipped out of
2 state. That could stall the process.

3 We don't have a lot of leeway
4 with in terms of the statute that enables
5 this local option. So the guidelines are
6 pretty much set out in state statutes, and
7 we've just adopted the enabling legislation
8 for local use.

9 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
10 Mr. Cortes. Mr. Zydانowicz?

11 COUNCILOR ZYDANOWICZ: Thank
12 you, Madam Mayor. I was actually going to go
13 on the record by not commenting -- but I
14 can't do that.

15 So you kind of alluded to my
16 question. There's no leeway or provision for
17 you with your particular title. If it came
18 in 125 days, or 132, you don't have the
19 authority to grant that even though to the
20 Councilor's example where maybe COVID and
21 supplies aren't -- and if that were the case;
22 we adopted the State, is there a way that we
23 could adopt our own provision so that you
24 have the authority to do that?

25 MR. DAKERS: Well, we do have

1 that latitude under the state statutes, which
2 is why, through you, Madam Mayor, I'm here
3 tonight because we worked to extend the day,
4 the days from 30 days to 120 days. But you
5 know, this made sense to us given the
6 challenges that we've already had and I
7 certainly didn't consider the issues of
8 supply chain.

9 This really started last
10 July -- actually this, this process. And we
11 don't have any other leeway other than what
12 the statute tells us to do, but if we decided
13 sometime down the road to amend this
14 ordinance again I would think that we have
15 the ability to do that.

16 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.
17 Mr. Zydanowicz -- are you? Okay. Thank you.

18 All right. Mr. Davidoff?

19 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Thank
20 you, Madam Mayor. Through you. Mr. Dakers,
21 in some of the documentation that we
22 received, you said there's approximately
23 about 20 vehicles in the town of West
24 Hartford with a total assessed value of
25 approximately \$162,400. Is that correct?

1 MR. DAKERS: Through you,
2 Madam Mayor. That is absolutely correct.

3 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: Okay. So
4 the total amount of estimated tax revenue for
5 all 20 vehicles that would be lost would be
6 approximately \$6,700?

7 MR. DAKERS: Yes, and that was
8 a projected amount based upon an implied mill
9 rate that we did not have at the time.

10 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: So I
11 think you would concur that the impact to our
12 budget is basically de minimus, and I think
13 that the greater social good that we're
14 accomplishing by those in a situation like
15 this --

16 MR. DAKERS: Yes, sir.

17 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: -- is
18 well offset by adopting this resolution?

19 MR. DAKERS: Yes, sir.

20 COUNCILOR DAVIDOFF: I mean,
21 this ordinance amendment. Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you,
23 Mr. Davidoff. Anything further?

24 Okay. I don't think there's
25 anyone in the audience that has signed up,

1 but I think we need to -- okay.

2 A VOICE: Madam Mayor, no one
3 has signed up to speak.

4 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you.
5 Is there anyone in the
6 audience that would like to speak to this
7 public hearing?

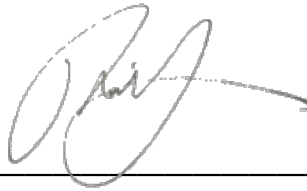
8
9 (No response.)

10
11 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. With
12 that I will close the public hearing. The
13 public hearing is closed.

14
15 (Whereupon, the above proceedings
16 were concluded at 7:08 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 12 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original verbatim notes taken of the Public Hearing in RE: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TAX EXEMPTION PROCEDURE FOR AMBULANCE TYPE VEHICLES, (transcribed remotely) held before the West Hartford Town Council, at Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 314, West Hartford, Connecticut, on March 22, 2022.



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