

TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

June 23, 2026, 7:41 p.m.,

50 South Main Street

Legislative Chambers, Room 314

Re: Ordinance and Resolution Dissolving the
West Hartford Special Services District

Reporter: Lisa L. Warner, CSR #061

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

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3 C o u n c i l M e m b e r s :

4 MAYOR SHARI CANTOR

5 DEPUTY MAYOR DEBRA POLUN

6 JOHN LYONS

7 DR. GAYLE HARRIS

8 LISA LAZARUS

9 TIFFANI MCGINNIS

10 BARRY WALTERS

11

12 T o w n M a n a g e r :

13 RICK LEDWITH

14

15 C o r p o r a t i o n C o u n s e l :

16 DALLAS DODGE, ESQ.

17

18 T o w n C l e r k / C o u n c i l C l e r k :

19 LEON DAVIDOFF

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1 (Commenced at 7:41 p.m.)

2 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Calling the 7:15
3 public hearing to order. This is an Ordinance and
4 Resolution Dissolving West Hartford Special
5 Services District.

6 Roll call, Mr. Davidoff.

7 MR. DAVIDOFF: Good evening, Madam
8 Mayor.

9 Mayor Cantor.

10 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Here.

11 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Harris.

12 COUNCILOR HARRIS: Here.

13 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Lazarus.

14 COUNCILOR LAZARUS: Here.

15 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Lyons.

16 COUNCILOR LYONS: Here.

17 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor McGinnis.

18 COUNCILOR MCGINNIS: Here.

19 MR. DAVIDOFF: Deputy Mayor Polun.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR POLUN: Here.

21 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Walters.

22 COUNCILOR WALTERS: Here.

23 MR. DAVIDOFF: Councilor Wang is
24 absent. Councilor Wenograd is absent. We have a
25 quorum.

1 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
2 Davidoff.

3 We will begin with a presentation by
4 the town manager. Thank you.

5 MR. LEDWITH: Thank you. Good evening
6 again, everyone. For the record, Rick Ledwith,
7 town manager. And tonight we're presenting an
8 ordinance and resolution to formally dissolve the
9 West Hartford Special Services District.

10 The district was created over 20 years
11 ago. Its purpose was to support and oversee a
12 unique public-private partnership that ultimately
13 led to the development of Blue Back Square and the
14 continued revitalization of West Hartford Center.
15 At the time, this structure provided a mechanism
16 for financing and managing public investments that
17 helped make this transformative project possible.

18 One of the district's primary
19 responsibilities was recommending the tax levy
20 necessary to service the debt associated with
21 bonds issued to support the Blue Back Square
22 development. And I'm pleased to report that those
23 bonds have been fully retired and the district has
24 successfully fulfilled the purpose for which it
25 was originally established.

1 Over the past two decades, Blue Back
2 Square has become one of Connecticut's most
3 successful public-private partnerships. Together
4 with West Hartford Center, it has transformed our
5 community into a premier destination for dining,
6 shopping, entertainment and culture. The
7 development has strengthened our tax base,
8 attracted significant private investment, created
9 jobs, and enhanced the quality of life enjoyed by
10 residents and visitors alike.

11 As the district's responsibilities have
12 diminished, the town has assumed direct management
13 and maintenance of our Isham and Memorial Parking
14 Garages, which were among the district's primary
15 assets. With the bonds paid off and the
16 operational functions now being performed by the
17 town, maintaining a separate taxing entity is no
18 longer necessary.

19 The ordinance repeals the section of
20 the town code establishing the Special Services
21 District, and the accompanying resolution
22 recognizes the success of Blue Back Square
23 Partnership while expressing our gratitude to the
24 many commissioners who have served the district
25 over the years. Their stewardship, commitment,

1 and volunteer service played an important role in
2 ensuring the success of this effort and the
3 long-term vitality of our center.

4 While tonight marks the end of the
5 Special Services District, it also serves as an
6 opportunity to reflect on what has been
7 accomplished. What began as a bold vision has
8 become one of the defining success stories of West
9 Hartford's economic development efforts. And the
10 benefits of that vision continue to be felt
11 throughout our community today.

12 So through you, Madam Mayor, I know we
13 discussed this at a Finance and Administration
14 Committee meeting, and we also discussed it during
15 our budget process as well during the spring, but
16 through you, Madam Mayor, happy to answer any
17 questions that the Council has regarding the
18 dissolving of the district.

19 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Mr.
20 Ledwith. I'm going to actually go to public
21 comment first, which I really don't think there's
22 any. And I'm a little surprised that there is not
23 one or two members of Heritage here, but that's
24 okay.

25 And Mr. Clerk, while Mr. Dodge is

1 checking, have you received any written comment?

2 MR. DAVIDOFF: No, Madam Mayor.

3 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Terrific.

4 All right. I'm going to go to Ms. Polun first
5 because we did discuss this in Finance and
6 Administration and just to add anything that you
7 would like to.

8 DEPUTY MAYOR POLUN: Thank you, Madam
9 Mayor. There's really not much to add. This is
10 self-explanatory. I appreciate the work of those
11 who have served as members of the Special Services
12 District, and we are ready to move forward.

13 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Thank you, Ms.
14 Polun.

15 Any questions or comments?

16 (No response.)

17 PRESIDENT CANTOR: Okay. Seeing none,
18 we're making up some time. We can close the
19 public hearing.

20 (Whereupon, the public hearing
21 concluded at 7:46 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the foregoing 7 pages are a complete and accurate computer-aided transcription of my original stenotype notes taken of the WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING IN RE: ORDINANCE AND RESOLUTION DISSOLVING THE WEST HARTFORD SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT, which was held before THE WEST HARTFORD TOWN COUNCIL, 50 South Main Street, Legislative Chambers, Room 314, on June 23, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Warner", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lisa L. Warner, CSR 061

Notary Public

My commission expires:

May 31, 2028

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