

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION  
FEBRUARY 12, 2018**

**ATTENDANCE:** Edwin Camacho, Chairman; Mayor Harry Rilling; James Feigenbaum; James Frayer; Troy Jellerette; James Page (6:40 p. m.)

**STAFF:** Robert Barron, Director of Finance; Lunda Asmani, Director of Management and Budgets; Donna King, City Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:33 p. m. A quorum was present.

**\*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO TAKE THE PRESENTATION OF THE FY 2018-19 RECOMMENDED OPERATION BUDGET AS THE LAST ITEM OF OTHER BUSINESS (SECTION C)  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**January 8, 2018 – Regular Meeting**

**\*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 8, 2018 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (SECTION A)**

**FY 2017-18**

**1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$20,350 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Code Enforcement Department to cover the purchase of a new Ford Escape vehicle for building inspections and other daily activities. Account #01-3510-5731.**

William Ireland came forward in support of the item. He stated that he is requesting a special appropriation be made to the Building Department to fund costs for a new Ford Escape. He stated that the vehicle is needed for inspection purposes and daily operations.

Mr. Ireland stated that he is requesting \$20,350.00 for the purchase of the vehicle. He stated that the vehicle will replace a vehicle that has been taken out of service because it is in need of repairs. The old vehicle is in need of repairs, but there may be some trade-in credit that could lower the final purchase price of the new vehicle.

**\*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO RESOLVE, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$20,350 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE CODE ENFORCEMENT**

**DEPARTMENT TO COVER THE PURCHASE OF A NEW FORD ESCAPE VEHICLE FOR BUILDING INSPECTIONS AND OTHER DAILY ACTIVITIES.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**TRANSFER AGENDA (SECTION B)**

**Fiscal Year 2017-18**

**Police Department**

Mr. Asmani stated that a transfer is needed to cover a shortage in the overtime wage account.

**\*\* MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TRANSFER FROM THE WAGES & SALARY - 01-3064-5120 OVERTIME ACCOUNT TO WAGES & SALARY - 01-3062-5120 AND 01-3066-5120 OVERTIME ACCOUNT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,000.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Library**

Mr. Asmani stated that a transfer is needed to cover quarterly Connecticut Education Network charges.

**\*\* MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE LIBRARY TRANSFER FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND DUES ACCOUNT TO THE TELEPHONE ACCOUNT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,000.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**OTHER BUSINESS (SECTION C)**

**b. RESOLUTION, authorizing a Special Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$66,000 to the Fire Department to cover a shortfall toward purchasing a new Fire Engine.**

Mr. Barron stated that the Special Capital Appropriation will cover a shortfall for the purchase of a new fire engine and accessories. He stated that the additional funds will draw down from the balance in the Capital Fund. Mr. Barron stated that in the 2017-18 Capital Budget, the Fire Department was approved \$550,000 for the purchase of the fire engine and related accessories.

Fire Chief Gino Gatto came forward in support of the item. He stated that the actual bid price for a 2018 Pierce Enforcer Pumping Engine is \$576,000.00. The base price does not include a mobile radio or portable radios. He stated that he is requesting \$66,000.00 to cover the shortfall. \$26,000 will meet the bid price and \$40,000 will go toward the purchase of one mobile radio and four portable radios.

Fire Chief Gatto stated that there was going to be a price increase of 3% or \$17,280 on February 1, 2018. He asked for an extension and Pierce agreed to hold the price until February 28, 2018.

- \*\* MR. PAGE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$66,000 TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO COVER A SHORTFALL TOWARD PURCHASING A NEW FIRE ENGINE.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**c. RESOLUTION, authorizing a Special Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$167,080 to the Fire Department to replace the roof on the Fire Station Support Facility at 100 Fairfield Avenue.**

Captain Jim Hines came forward in support of the item. He stated that we are requesting a special Capital appropriation to replace the roof on the Fire Station Support Facility at 100 Fairfield Avenue.

Captain Hines stated that in the 2017-18 Capital Budget, the Common Council approved \$475,000.00 for roof replacement. He stated that the low bid price for the roof replacement is \$583,709.00 from Young Developers.

He stated that he has been working with Mr. Alan Lo, the City's building and facilities manager, on this project. Captain Hines stated that Mr. Lo recommended that he request the additional money needed to complete the project.

Captain Hines stated that we are requesting \$108,709.00 to cover the shortfall and a 10% contingency of \$58,371.00 for a total request of \$167,080.00.

Captain Hines stated that the building was built in 1984 and has its original roof. The life expectancy of the roof was 15-18 years, and it has lasted for over 30 years. He stated that it leaks in many spots. We have done many repairs but it gets worse every year. He stated that the building is used for Apparatus Repair and Maintenance, and garage space for storage of vehicles.

- \*\* MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO AUTHORIZE A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$167,080 TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO REPLACE THE ROOF ON THE FIRE STATION SUPPORT FACILITY AT 100 FAIRFIELD AVENUE.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**d. RESOLUTION, authorizing a Special Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$13,462 to the Fire Department to cover additional funding to customize the two new Ford Explorers with emergency lights and communication equipment.**

- \*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO AUTHORIZE A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$13,462 TO THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO COVER ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO CUSTOMIZE THE TWO NEW FORD EXPLORERS WITH EMERGENCY LIGHTS AND COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT.**
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**a. Presentation of the FY 201 -18 Recommended Operating Budget**

Mayor Rilling stated that we received some hefty increase requests for the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget. He stated that the amount of money being requested concerns him. He stated that it is not always feasible and wise to give everyone what they want.

Mayor Rilling stated that he is concerned because we are in a revaluation year. He stated he is also concerned about the State and Local Tax issue. Changes have been made to deduction amounts on Federal income taxes, and that will hurt our residents. It will be devastating to some people. He stated that we must keep that in mind as we are looking at the budget requests. We will have to make difficult decisions because we do not want to penalize people that live in Norwalk with extraordinary taxes.

Mayor Rilling stated that we need to be fair to the taxpayers, but also, provide the services that we need to provide.

Mayor Rilling left the meeting at 7:12 p. m.

Mr. Barron stated that the recommended FY 2018-19 budget has been developed as the nation and State of Connecticut continues a tentative economic recovery from a historic recession. The Great Recession caused financial difficulties for the city, including a loss in the value of the grand list. He stated that the City's 2017 grand list of 12.3 billion has yet to return to its 2008 pre-recession value of \$12.7.

Mr. Barron stated that the uncertainty of funding from the State places the majority of the increase of costs to run the City on the mill rate charged to its taxpayers. Mr. Barron recommended that the City draw down \$2.0 million of its fund balance to partially offset the mill rate increases caused by rising expenses. This draw on the fund balance is consistent with the City's fund balance policy that allows for any excess reserve over the target established to be used for tax relief. He stated that the recommended draw of \$2.0 million for next year's budget will result in a 12.7% unreserved fund balance as a percentage of GAAP revenues.

Mr. Barron stated that the recommended budget represents a spending plan that limits overall spending to an increase of \$5 million or 1.4% and an average mill rate increase of 1.9%. He stated that reducing expenditures to this level has been a challenge given the fact that the City faces rising structural expenses of Wages and Salaries, Debt Service, and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Barron stated that the Board of Education's recommended FY 2018-19 budget is a base recommendation equal to the current year appropriation. He recommended that the Common Council fund as much of the Board of Education's request as it believes the taxpayers of the City can afford by increasing its cap over the recommended base budget.

Mr. Barron stated that the Common Council can add to this base recommendation by increasing its cap over the base recommendation. An increased cap will create an opportunity for the Board of Estimate and Taxation to increase the Board of Education's appropriation over his base recommendation for the upcoming FY 2018-19. Mr. Barron stated that the current 2017-18 fiscal year's appropriation was the largest year over year percentage increase in nine years for the Board of Education's operating budget and represents the City's investment in the improvement of its Board of Education's delivery of educational services.

Mr. Barron stated that the recommended FY 2018-19 base budget is \$348,135,491 which represents an expenditure increase of \$4,970,515 or 1.4%. The combination of the Tax Assessor's 2017 grand list increase of 0.5% and proposed mill rate increase of 1.9% yields a total tax levy increase of \$7,340,333 or 2.4%.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (SECTION D)**

##### **Special Appropriation**

##### **Status of Contingency**

##### **Financial reports**

**Oak Hills Financial Status – October 2017**

**Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2017-18**

**Year-to-date Operating Revenues Report – FY 2017-18**

**Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2017-18**

**Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2017-18**

**Tax Collector's Narrative - October 2017**

##### **Salary accounts**

**Police**

**Fire**

**Public Works**

Mr. Asmani submitted the Special Appropriation, Status of Contingency, and Financial reports as well as the Salary Accounts.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney

Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk

Board of Estimate and Taxation

February 12, 2018

Page 5 of 5