

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 2, 2018**

ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chairman; Mayor Harry Rilling; James Feigenbaum; James Frayer; Troy Jellerette; Artie Kassimis; James Page (6:55 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.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 5, 2018 – Regular Meeting

**** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 5, 2018 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. KASSIMIS).**

2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (SECTION A)

FISCAL YEAR 2017-18:

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$276,422 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to Purchase 179 Electronic Control Weapons (ECW's) and 179 Body Cameras. (Account #01-30-22-5329).

Mr. Asmani stated that the special appropriation request is from the Police Department is in the amount of \$276,422 for the purchase of Tasers and body worn cameras. He stated that of this amount, \$196,536 will purchase 179 body worn cameras and \$78,886 will purchase 179 Tasers and cloud based storage. He stated that the items are being offered as a package and the funds will be drawn down from contingency funds.

Mr. Asmani stated that the purchase was originally planned for FY 2018-19. The Police Department was later informed that the special state reimbursement grant that would cover the \$196,536 for body cameras would be reduced from 100% to 50% effective July 1, 2018. In order to take advantage of the 100% reimbursement rate, this item was removed from the FY 2018-19 operating budget request and a special appropriation from contingency in FY 2017-18 is now being requested.

**** MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO APPROVE THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$276,422 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO**

**PURCHASE 179 ELECTRONIC CONTROL WEAPONS (ECW'S) AND 179 BODY CAMERAS.
(ACCOUNT #01-30-22-5329).**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. TRANSFER AGENDA (SECTION B)

Mr. Barron stated that the Department of Public Works has requested \$72,821 for operating expenses at the 98 South Main building. Of this amount, \$37,821 is being requested as reimbursement for expenses incurred from September 2017 to date and \$35,000 for projected expenses through June 30, 2018.

Mr. Barron recommended an initial transfer of \$15,000 to meet current expenses that are due. He stated that he will be recommending additional transfers once a permanent resolution to the building is reached. He stated that the \$15,000 is available as a result of an eight month vacancy following the retirement of Mayor's Office Grants Administrator and will be transferred into the Engineering – Facilities Administration Account.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO TRANSFER \$15,000 FROM THE GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR WAGES & SALARIES ACCOUNT TO THE BUILDINGS/RENOVATIONS ACCOUNT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. OTHER BUSINESS (SECTION C)

c. Approval of the FY 2018-19 Parking Authority Budget

Mr. Dick Brescia stated that the Courtesy Card Parking Violation Program was implemented July 1st and expanded on October 1st. He stated that the program involves offering an additional 20 minutes free parking on random streets and days to parkers who overstay their time. It is anticipated that by the end of the Fiscal Year the number of potential violation issuance will have decreased by about 7,000 tickets. Lost revenue will be about \$200,000 for an overall reduction of about 25%.

Ms. Kathryn Hebert stated that the parking turnover rate is important for the business community. We do not want to create a negative experience for parkers. We are seeing an increase in compliance with an increase in parking options and the use of the parking phone app. We are slowly building a more positive perception.

Mr. Bruce Chimento stated that the program was immediately successful and received numerous compliments directly and on social media.

Ms. Brescia stated that, through the Now Collaborative Business Marketing Program, we have been working with the business community to improve economic development in the long term in the downtown business districts. He stated that we have invested \$100,000 per year in a collaborative business marketing business startup called Norwalk Now. Ms. Hebert stated that we had an event called the Norwalk City Limits, which was very successful. We also have a scavenger hunt scheduled for April 28.

Ms. Hebert stated that we hope to provide Road Assistance and Ambassador Programs in FY 2019. She stated that the hours of operation would be between 4 p. m. and midnight. We would direct people to local businesses or help them if they had car trouble.

Mr. Page arrived to the meeting at 6:55 p. m.

**** MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2018-19 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET.
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION (MR. PAGE).**

d. Approval of the FY 2018-19 WPCA Budget

Mr. Ralph Kolb stated that the WPCA FY 2018-19 budget includes a \$17 rate increase for a single family residence and an overall blended rate increase of approximately 5% over the previous fiscal year. He stated that the WPCA has contracted with Mark McCormick to provide professional management services including the closeout of the OMI contract, procurement of a new operating agent, and other quality control reviews related to capital and operating projects.

Mr. Kolb stated that the WPCA is budgeted to receive \$157,831 in nitrogen credits. The WPCA will also receive \$421,020 in reimbursements for support services billed to the City and the City sewer use fee.

Mr. Kolb stated that expenditures include reimbursement of City support services billed to the WPCA in the amount of \$522,203. He stated that professional services increased due to professional consulting services related to procurement preparation of future Service Agreement and contract closeout. Mr. Kolb stated that legal services increased due to ongoing main lift pump litigation and procurement of a future Service Agreement.

Mr. Chimento stated that we are currently handling 13 million gallons of water per day. 18 million gallons would be the maximum amount that we could handle, and we would be required to take action if we got to 90% of 18 million gallons. He stated that we have had a slight decrease in volume over the past few years. Developments such as the mall, have had little impact on overall volume.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2018-19 WPCA BUDGET.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b. Discussion of Redevelopment Agency Innovation District Incentive Package

Mr. Tim Sheehan stated that the city has begun the process of creating an Urban Innovation District that will consist of the Wall Street and West Avenue Corridor. He stated that an Urban Innovation District a defined geographic area within a city where technology and creative class business and institutions are clustered. He stated that those businesses would then connect with start-ups, accelerators and incubators. He stated that the defined geographic area for a typical innovation district it is amenity rich, operates twenty-four hours a day, has diversified housing opportunities and is a hyper-connected area through technology and transportation.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the Agency has gathered input from the Innovation District Subcommittee and Planning Committee of the Common Council and is proposing an incentive program. He stated that the proposed incentive program will only apply to a targeted area within the City to draw new jobs and businesses to a specific area that is of interest. It is important that the chosen area has the foundation to support an Innovation District.

Mr. Sheehan stated that anchor institutions are crucial. Having these institutions within the incentive boundary will benefit the cohesiveness of the district and incentivize the anchor institutions and new businesses. He stated that the institutions have the potential to create synergistic relationships with one another.

Mr. Sheehan stated that demographic data of the area has been analyzed and new residential developments have been taken into account. He stated that there has not been a significant increase in the number of school age children as a result of the new developments.

Mr. Sheehan stated that the proposed incentives include a real estate development incentive, a skilled job creation tax credit, a district commercial preservation incentive, a small business incentive, and a B Corporation tax incentive.

e. Appointment of Auditors to audit Fiscal Year 2017-18

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS TO AUDIT FISCAL YEAR 2017-18.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

a. Adoption of Tentative FY 2018-19 Operating Budget

Mr. Barron stated that in FY 2016-17, the Board of Education received a 3.0% increase to its operating budget, or \$5,162,216. He stated that in this same year, the Norwalk School District had the second highest spending per pupil in its DRG.

Mr. Barron stated that the BET's current proposed increase for the Board of Education budget for FY 2018-19 is the same as FY 2016-17.

Mr. Barron stated that this year's increase to the Board of Education budget is \$7.9 million or 4.5%. During this year, the Board of Education added 57 employees to its General Fund 11. He stated that 13 employees came from the Grants Fund 12 and 3 more were added to the Insurance Fund for those on workers compensation and 1 was eliminated from the School Lunch Fund 41 for a total net gain of 47 employees.

Mr. Barron referred to the fund balance and stated that one time revenues should and can be used to reduce the tax burden, but not to increase the budget. He stated that our mantra has always been to first craft an affordable budget and then consider what fund surpluses can be used to provide tax relief.

Mr. Barron stated that the city has made a tremendous capital investment in our schools and will be issuing greater than \$200 million of bonds in the next five years. The need for the City to retain its AAA bond rating to secure the lowest possible interest rates on this debt is a top priority for the City.

Mr. Barron stated that a review of recent Connecticut municipal rating actions support an increase to the City's fund balance and led the City's financial advisor to make the following comment, "based on the rating agencies opinions of the long-term credit outlook for the State of Connecticut and the expectation of the pressures that will place on CT local governments, we believe that they are signaling that municipalities who cannot maintain balanced operations and weaken their financial flexibility by drawing down reserves will experience downward rating pressure. With that understanding, we feel that issuers should be looking for ways to strengthen their credit positions by increasing reserve levels. Those that can find ways to achieve structurally balanced operations will stand apart from the crowd and should benefit accordingly."

Mayor Rilling stated that he had discussions with Steven Adamowski regarding appropriations to the Board of Education. He stated that he had offered \$950,000 from the City's Fund Balance if the Board of Education also contributed \$550,000 from its health insurance reserve. He stated that the \$950,000 was not a commitment and was contingent upon the Board of Education contributing the \$550,000.

Mayor Rilling stated that we have always shown the willingness to work with the Board of Education and not have an adversarial relationship. He stated that he knows that at least one person on the Board of Ed was very upset when my initial offer was rejected because that brought them back up to the \$1.5 million that they needed. So there was a disappointment there that was stated very clearly. I have done what I could do to move this forward.

**** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED THE ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE FY 2018-19 OPERATING BUDGET.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (SECTION D)

**Special Appropriation
Status of Contingency**

**Financial reports
Oak Hills Financial Status – January 2018
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 - January 2018
Tax Collector's Report**

**Salary accounts
Police
Fire
Public Works**

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Mr. Asmani submitted the reports to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney
Telesco Secretarial Services