

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
SEPTEMBER 2, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chairman; Leo Mellow; Stuart Wells; James Feigenbaum; James Clark.

ABSENT: Mayor Richard Moccia; Michael Lyons.

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Ossie Lewis, Manager of Budgets & Systems; Mary Roman, City Clerk.

OTHERS: Vin Grillo & Larry Andronaco, Oak Hills Park.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by the Chairman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

JULY 7, 2008 REGULAR MEETING

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OTHER BUSINESS

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CLOSE-OUT OF THE CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE OAK HILLS RESTAURANT PROJECT/RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF 100,000 FOR REPAVING DETERIORATED OAK HILLS CART PATHS

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memo and recommended approval of both resolutions. The Chairman asked what would happen to the other \$50,000 and Mr. Hamilton responded that it closes out to fund balance. He noted, however, that the amount had actually not been borrowed. Mr. Mellow asked if the \$100,000 cost had been locked in; Mr. Grillo said they would try to do that by November. Mr. Andronaco said they need the work to be done before the park opens next year. Mr. Hamilton said that the money would be carried by the City until it is bonded. Mr. Andronaco said that their insurance company has told them that it is a safety issue.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CLOSE-OUT OF THE CAPITAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE OAK HILLS RESTAURANT PROJECT (ACCOUNT NO. 0900-6110-5777-CO121).**

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**
- ** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000 FOR REPAVING DETERIORATED OAK HILLS CART PATHS (ACCOUNT NO. 0909-6110-5777-CO461).**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

\$33,000 TRANSFERRED FROM INCREASED ESTIMATED REVENUES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FOR REPAIR WORK RELATED TO THE APRIL 2007 NOREASTER

Mr. Hamilton reviewed Mr. Lewis' memo and recommended approval.

Mr. Clark asked if there were any other remaining project expenses. Mr. Hamilton said his expectation is that this work will cover everything that was filed for with FEMA.

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$33,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM INCREASED ESTIMATED REVENUES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO PAY REPAIR WORK RELATED TO THE APRIL 2007 NOREASTER (ACCOUNT 01-4060-5777).**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TRANSFER AGENDA

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**

Mr. Mellow inquired about retro wages for Corporation Counsel. Mr. Hamilton said it is for fiscal year 2007-08 and is related to contracts that were not settled at the time that the budget was approved. He further noted that all of the items on the transfer agenda were the final transfers for 2007-08.

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FUND BALANCE PROJECTION FY 2007-08

Mr. Hamilton reviewed this report and said that the final numbers will come when the audit comes out in November/December. They are waiting for the final numbers from the Tax Assessor. The results for the year were pretty good. There is no surplus, but that was planned. Contingency had a surplus. Property tax revenue was approximately \$2,900,000

over budget, attributable to the tax sale and declining tax appeals. Tax transfers have declined. Mr. Hamilton said it is early to project for 2008-09 in terms of real estate conveyance fees.

The Chairman said that the fund balance should not be more than 10%, but the Board of Estimate deliberately made it more than 10% because of the economy. Mr. Hamilton said that was a wise decision because of real estate, etc. If the economy does not turn around, State aid may be cut and the additional fund balance could be used next year.

The Chairman asked if they could receive periodic updates on risk items, such as interest income, tax collections, building permit fees, etc. This would give them an early warning. Mr. Hamilton said they would give the Board of Estimate the monthly Tax Collector's report, which is currently received by the Finance Committee.

The Chairman asked if the effects of the tax sale could be stripped out so that they can see apples to apples. Mr. Hamilton said that would be very difficult to do.

REPORT FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Chairman reviewed the report from the Board of Education, including class enrollments, the status of illegal students and information that seems to suggest that Norwalk and other cities are shrinking in terms of special education students placed out of district. Mr. Hamilton agreed, noting that the amount of special ed students placed out of district is going down precipitously.

Mr. Mellow asked the status of establishing the position of CFO. Mr. Hamilton said he did not know the status at this time.

Mr. Wells said it would be a good idea if the State took over placement of special education students.

Discussion took place on the issue of "No Child Left Behind". Norwalk is one of 14 failing school districts in the State, which impacts on ECS aid. The State is withholding 20% (\$85,000), which the City has already given to the Board of Education.

OAK HILLS PARK FINANCIAL STATUS

Representatives from Oak Hills will be invited to the next meeting, according to the Chairman, to discuss this issue, as has been the practice for the past few years.

Mr. Hamilton will send members an e-mail regarding the reserve for encumbrances for fire department hydrants.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services

