

**BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION MEETING ACTIONS**

**MARCH 29, 2004**

**NORWALK, CONNECTICUT**

**REGULAR**

**MEETING**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**PRESENT:**            **Adam Farstrup, Chairman**            **Mayor Alex Knopp**  
                                 **David Davidson**                            **Greg Burnett**  
                                 **Ron Coley**                                    **Randall Avery**

Also present were: Mary Roman, Assistant City Clerk; Tom Hamilton, Director of Finance; Ann Twomey, Director of Management & Budgets; Scott Binger, Assistant Director of Management & Budgets

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 1, 2004**

**\*\* MR. COLEY MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2004 REGULAR MEETING AS AMENDED.**

The following corrections were made:

Page two, fifth paragraph, beginning "For the City Departments..." at end of paragraph add: For example nine-City departments they received less in 2004-2005 than in 2003-2004 and six departments will receive less than 1% increase."

Page three, fourth paragraph, beginning "Mr. Avery complimented..." at end of paragraph add: Mr. Avery said he could not vote for the budget as propose because of the reliance upon income from a tax he considered unjust.

Page four, third paragraph, beginning "Mr. Davidson said they..." should read "Mr. Davidson said the Board of Estimate allocates."

Page four, third paragraph, second sentence, the word "Their" should be "The Board of Estimate & Taxation."

Page five, under Oak Hills Park Financial Status – January 2004, paragraph two, should read: "Mr. Davidson said that the lease between the Oak Hills Park and the City calls for a sharing of net operating revenues from March 1, 2003."

Page six, last paragraph, second sentence the word "monthly" should be "quarterly."

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 1, 2004**

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 10, 2004 PUBLIC HEARING AS AMENDED.**

The following corrections were made:

Page two, paragraph three, "He said in the original budget proposal..." should read "The original budget proposal for the Board of Education represented a 9.2% increase over the previous year."

Page five, correct spelling of Sally Cordervano.

Page seven, first paragraph, correct spelling of Water house, should be one word.

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

**SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (SECTION A)**

**List of Resolutions – Advertised Items 1**

**RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$22,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE LIBRARY TO PAY FOR AN EXPECTED SHORTFALL IN VARIOUS ACCOUNTS DUE TO A CONTINUATION IN OPERATIONS UNTIL CONSTRUCTION BEGINS IN THE FALL. (ACCOUNT NO. 01-6200-5140).**

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MOVED THE RESOLUTION**

Ms. Twomey stated that the December budget had a reduction in the construction of the library and recommended special appropriation of \$8,000 be transferred to the library account.

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MOVED TO CHANGE THE AMOUNT FROM \$22,000 TO \$8,000.**

**\*\* AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**\*\* MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED WITH 6 VOTES IN FAVOR.**

---

**TRANSFER AGENDA (SECTION B)**

Mr. Hamilton stated that the request for the new equipment had been approved by the IT Committee. He said the Department actually has several computer requests that they are in the process of moving forward this year. There was some discussion with regard to price quotes from Hewlett-Packard.

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MADE A MOTION TO TRANSFER THE REQUESTED AMOUNT OF \$10,000 FROM ACCOUNT NO. 0140 21 5267 TO NEW ACCOUNT NO. 0140 21 5741 TO PURCHASE COMPUTER HARDWARE AND FILE SERVER FOR PUBLIC WORKS CENTER LAN PROJECT.**

**\*\* MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO TRANSFER THE REQUESTED AMOUNT OF \$10,000 FROM ACCOUNT NO. 0140 21 5267 TO NEW ACCOUNT NO. 0140 21 5741 TO PURCHASE COMPUTER HARDWARE AND FILE SERVER FOR PUBLIC WORKS CENTER LAN PROJECT.**

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MOVED TO ADD TO THE AGENDA THE DISCUSSION OF THE BUDGET.**

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

Mr. Hamilton stated that a meeting is being arranged for Friday evening at 5:00 p.m. to formally adopt the budget. Mr. Hamilton stated that, due to an oversight on his part, the notice of the meeting was not published in time for tonight's meeting. Mr. Farstrup stated that, with that in mind, the Board is unable to vote on the budget tonight.

---

**OTHER BUSINESS (SECTION C)**

## **Appointment of Auditors**

Mr. Foley stated that under the Charter the Board of Estimate & Taxation is required to appoint the City's auditing firm. For a number of years it has been with the firm Silicia, Dowling & Natarelli. Mr. Foley said that at the request of this Board the City did put out an RFP in order to test the market to see what prices were. Eight responses were received in response to the RFP. An Ad Hoc Audit Committee was formed and at the conclusion of the interview process McGladrey & Pullen, LLP was selected as the firm most qualified to provide these services for the City. McGladrey & Pullen currently serve as the auditors for Bridgeport, Meriden, Stamford, Danbury and a number of towns throughout the State. Mr. Foley said they are a highly qualified firm. He said the term of the contract award will be for five (5) years at a total cost of \$438,500.00. The fee structure of the contract award will be as follows: 2004-2005 \$83,000.00; 2005-2006 \$86,000.00; 2006-2007 \$87,500.00; 2007-2008 \$90,000.00; 2008-2009 \$92,000.00.

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE  
HIRING OF MCGLADREY & PULLEN, LLP TO SERVE AS  
AUDITORS FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK.**

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

## **Suspense Tax List**

### **Ms. Biagiarelli, CCMC, Tax Collector**

Ms. Biagiarelli said that once the items are transferred to suspense they are turned over to an outside collection agency who then is able to collect on about 25 to 35 percent of them. Ms. Biagiarelli stated that fewer items and less dollar amount is being transferred to suspense. She stated that the collection rate is higher. This year the requested transfer dollar amount is \$823,145.15.

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON MADE A MOTION APPROVE  
TRANSFER OF ITEMS ON THE SUSPENSE TAX LIST TO THE  
SUSPENSE TAX BOOK IN ACCORDANCE WITH CGS 12-165 IN  
THE AMOUNT OF \$823,145.15.**

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

## **Discussion 2004-2005 Budget**

Reference was made to the changes at the last Board of Estimate meeting on March 17, 2004. Recommendation was made to transfer a Teaching Technician position currently in library to the IT Department as well as for hardware installation, hardware maintenance and support functions.

Under Tax Assessor there is no change in the dollar amount.

There was discussion with reference to Public Works and the maintenance of street lighting and electric. A \$20,000 reduction was recommended for the electric because the 2<sup>nd</sup> District has taken over the maintenance of the lights.

The Board of Estimate requests a reduction in health insurance of 2.5 million dollars. Mayor Knopp stated that this was discussed at the last meeting. With regards to reducing expenditures, Mayor Knopp stated that there was no reduction of employee benefits.

Mr. Davidson stated that he is in total support of the Mayor's proposal but will not be attending the meeting on Friday.

Mr. Farstrup will also support the Mayor's budget proposal for the Board of Education on Friday evening.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the health budget overall package is 4.9% and the average budgetary impact on the mill rate is 4.84%.

Mr. Davidson inquired about library surveillance cameras. He stated that he fully supports the overall Capital Budget but objects to the funding of textbooks through the Capital Budget.

Mr. Hamilton gave an overview of Revaluation Phase In Options. He said the only open issue on the Capital Budget is the issue of the Lockwood Matthews Mansion. He said lease is owned by the City of Norwalk and is to be operated as a museum.

Mayor Knopp said the City is formulating a long-range plan for the budget and would be looking at prioritizing.

**\*\* MR. BURNETT MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE  
2004-2005 CAPITAL BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,632,232.00.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED, WITH 1 ABSTENSION (MR.  
DAVIDSON).**

**\*\* MR. DAVIDSON STATED THAT HE SUPPORTED THE  
CAPITAL BUDGET BUT ABSTAINED BECAUSE HE**

**DISAGREED WITH FUNDING OF TEXTBOOKS FROM THE  
CAPITAL BUDGET.**

---

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (SECTION D)**

**Revaluation Phase In Options**

Mr. Hamilton confirmed that the methodology for Option 1 – 25%/Year Phase In for a four-year period had already been approved by the Common Council.

**Oak Hills Park Financial Status – February 2004**

Mayor Knopp gave an overview of Oak Hills Park Financial Status for February 2004. Final interviews for Project Managers will be completed this week. All three contracts will be completed in the near future.

**Board of Education Budget Status**

The Board of Education has provided memorandum from their Labor Attorney regarding upcoming negotiations. Under State law they are expected to make the required decisions between May 5, 2004 and June 4, 2004.

Mr. Davidson urged the Board of Estimate to have an Executive Session immediately following the next regular meeting to establish the Board's position on Board of Education negotiations.

**Financial Reports**

Year-to-date Capital Budget Report (FY 2004) – report submitted.

Year-to-date Operating Budget Report (FY 2004) – report submitted.

Salary Accounts – report submitted.

Fire Overtime – report submitted.

Dispatch Overtime – report submitted.

Police Overtime – The Police Department needs to reduce overtime. Mr. Hamilton commented on the needs of the Police Department in reference to sick time and over time.

**\*\* MAYOR KNOPP MADE A MOTION TO MOVE INTO EXECUTIVE**

**SESSION.**

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

The regular meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m. to go into Executive Session.

**Attest** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mary Roman, Assistant City Clerk**

**/cm**

