

BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION MEETING ACTIONS

APRIL 9, 2007

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chairman; Mayor Richard Moccia; James Clark; James Feigenbaum; Stuart Wells.

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the Chairman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MARCH 5, 2007 REGULAR MEETING

The following correction was made: On page 2, last paragraph, 2nd sentence, "Mr. Wilms" was added after "Mrs. Roman".

** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MARCH 15, 2007 SPECIAL MEETING

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

MARCH 21, 2007 SPECIAL MEETING – CAPITAL BUDGET CAP

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

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

\$75,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT FOR CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS AND ARBITRATION

Mr. Hamilton said that all six labor contracts are unsettled, although two will go to the Council tomorrow night for settlement and two are in arbitration. Arbitration is not necessarily assumed when budgeting takes place, and arbitration requires a lot of legal work.

Mr. Haselkamp, Personnel Director, said they are in arbitration with the Police and Fire departments. Legal fees, arbitrators' fees and court stenographer fees are large.

Mayor Moccia said hopefully these two contracts will be settled within the next few weeks. Mr. Haselkamp's experience in negotiations has saved a lot of money in the other settlements.

Mr. Wells asked if the legal fees were appropriate and Mr. Haselkamp responded affirmatively.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED: RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$75,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE PERSONNEL AND LABOR RELATIONS DEPARTMENT TO PAY FOR CONTRACT NEGOTIATION AND ARBITRATION. (ACCOUNT NO. 01-0700-5258).**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

\$61,640 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT FOR EMERGENCY REPLACEMENT OF THE LIBRARY'S ELEVATOR HYDRAULIC SYSTEM

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED: RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$61,640 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT TO PAY FOR EMERGENCY REPLACEMENT OF THE LIBRARY'S ELEVATOR HYDRAULIC SYSTEM (ACCOUNT NO. 01-6200-5774).**

Mr. Hamilton said that a purchase order was issued to Shindler Elevator Corporation. The hydraulic system failed a state inspection and must be repaired.

Les Kozerowitz, Library Director, said it is a hardship for the handicapped, the elderly and mothers with young children in strollers. The staging was delivered today and demolition will start tomorrow and last for a week, which may necessitate closing the library for a day or two.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TRANSFER AGENDA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFERS AS PRESENTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT

** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFERS AS PRESENTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Mayor Moccia said that this was another example of inter-departmental cooperation. Hal Alvord, Director of Public Works, said that the WPCA has an existing contract with Malcolm Pirnie for a collection system master plan. They have agreed to a change order which will save more than three months because of not having to go out for a competitive process.

The Chairman said this had been flagged by Mr. Alvord as being important. Mr. Alvord said they know where all of the storm drains and catch basins are but the pipes beneath the ground are not known, and they have little understanding of easements throughout the city.

Mayor Moccia said that this would help in dealing with the flooding problems.

** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER AS PRESENTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER AS PRESENTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$18,875 FOR THE FORT POINT INTERCEPTOR SEWER EMERGENCY REPAIR CHANGE ORDERS FROM THE WPCA FUND BALANCE

** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED APPROVAL.

Mr. Hamilton said this is a WPCA appropriation. Earlier this fiscal year, this sewer collapsed, requiring repair. This amount is under the amount in this budget. This is an appropriation from the WPCA fund balance.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVE THE FY2007-08 PROPOSED PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET

** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY2007-08 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AS PRESENTED.

Mayor Moccia said when he took office, there was a deficit of approximately \$500,000. Thanks to Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Alvord and his meeting with Laz Parking, he is trying to turn this around. This deficit has turned into a break-even, revenue-neutral and possibly a profit of \$80,000+. It is not perfect but they are doing better. No paid parking is ever perfect.

Mr. Hamilton said there has been a real turnaround over the past few years. For the current year, they expect to either break even or have a little bit to put into a contingency fund, and next year, they expect to make \$86,000.

The Chairman asked about project parking revenue for next year. Mr. Alvord said, based on their data over the past few years, the more you enforce, the more you collect. The Chairman asked about gross wages of \$105,000. Mr. Alvord said this relates to salary increases, including those of union employees, for a two-year period.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVE FY 2007-08 PROPOSED WPCA BUDGET

Mr. Hamilton said this budget had been approved this evening by the WPCA board in the amount of \$12,243,457. It includes modest rate increases of approximately 5%. The biggest change in the budget is a significant increase in contingency to allow flexibility. The new position of a Junior Engineer has been added and electricity costs also continue to increase.

Mr. Alvord said that, overall, they have a consistent program. There are modest annual increases.

The Chairman said there is a clear strategy of capital improvements to upgrade the plant and facilities and a financial model that has been developed.

Mr. Wells asked if there were any plans to extend this to other parts of town. Mr. Alvord said that the city has no plan to expand the sewer system to other parts of the city.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2007-08 PROPOSED WPCA BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$12,243,457.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PROPOSED FUND BALANCE POLICY

Mr. Hamilton said this has been an internal policy. Standard & Poors has suggested that a more standardized policy would be looked on favorably. They came up with this draft policy, which Mr. Hamilton reviewed.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE POLICY AS PRESENTED.**

Mayor Moccia said that the Charter lays the financial responsibility on the Board of Estimate & Taxation. At the Board of Estimate & Taxation meeting the other night, he told them that they were not going to start funding non-emergency situations based on what other boards feel is necessary. They have fiduciary responsibility, which should be exercised by boards within the Charter. The rating agencies give guidelines and question the future. This policy is well within our parameters. If there is a true emergency, they will need this money.

Mr. Wells agreed with Mayor Moccia. He said if someone needed more money, it is up to the Council to raise the cap. The Chairman also agreed. He said using a fund balance would only mask a problem. Mr. Clark said he also supported this policy; having a policy is very responsible. Mr. Feigenbaum said rating agencies are getting tougher; this is prudent.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

FISCAL YEAR 2006-07 PROJECTED RESULTS

Mr. Hamilton said this information is provided quarterly. They are remarkably close to budget. The Police Department found a creative way to fund overtime, which helped greatly. Public Works has reflected the \$120,000 transfer made this evening, and still projected a turn back in that budget. They may look at using this money for other items, such as trees, drainage, etc.

Mayor Moccia said he has asked the Recreation & Parks department to look at their budget for additional money.

Mayor Moccia said he had received a petition to support the full Board of Education budget, but some of the names on this petition are those of people who don't live in Norwalk and some of the names do not include addresses.

**** MR. WELL MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services