

BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION MEETING ACTIONS

**JULY 5, 2005
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING**

PRESENT: Mayor, Alex A. Knopp Tim Buzzee
Gregory Burnett Tanya Court
James Clark

ABSENT: Randall Avery Ron Coley

Also present were: Pam Stark, City Clerk, Thomas Hamilton, Director of Finance, Ann Twomey, Director of Management and Budgets, Police Chief Harry Rilling; Fire Chief Dennis McCarthy.

Mayor Knopp called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm and requested that they take the agenda out of order. There were no objections.

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

Section A – Advertised Items – 3

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$350,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to pay for severance payments. (Account No. Various)

Mr. Hamilton said this is one of two appropriations for the Police Department. The first is as set out in the resolution and is regarding severance payments for employees who left in the last year due to the DROP program (he explained the DROP program). There were ten employees who used the program that generated \$348,703 in severance payments. As noted in the back up material Mr. Hamilton said that this is not considered to be a new or an additional liability to the city it is more of a timing issue of when the expense is recognized. In addition to this there is good reason to suggest that it is less costly to pay this money out now.

**** MR. CLARK MOVED APPROVAL OF THE ITEM.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$310,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to pay for a shortfall in overtime expenses. (Account No. Various)

Mr. Hamilton stated that this was an item that was identified last September as the overtime expenses for the Police Department were running higher than anticipated. Mid-year they called the Chief in and discussions indicated that the biggest driver was the number of vacancies in the department. There were thirteen vacancies at the beginning of the year and the difficulty is the long time while officers are in training before getting out onto the street. Mr. Hamilton said they are now approaching the point that all the positions have been filled and the officers are on the street. There were other demands placed on the department including the Youth gun violence program.

Chief Rilling indicated that there were other factors pushing the overtime costs including twenty-four hour protection of prisons or victims at the hospital.

Mr. Burnett said during the past fiscal year the police HQ was moved and he asked if this had meant overtime.

Chief Rilling said there was some overtime involved however it was kept to a minimum. He said the amount incurred was approximately \$27,000.

There was discussion on special services and the gun violence program in Norwalk.

Mayor Knopp concluded by stating that they will spend what it takes to make the city safe.

**** MR. BUZZEE MOVED APPROVAL OF THE ITEM.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$77,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Fire Department to pay for a shortfall in overtime expenses. (Account No. Various).

Mr. Hamilton remarked that this is an end of year clean up as it is not unusual for the Fire Department to need money at the end of the year. Reductions have been made in the Fire Department by eight positions and there are financial gains to the city to maintain those vacancies. Finance is recommending approval.

Mayor Knopp thanked Chief McCarthy in resolving the Firefighters' contract. He noted that there was a special meeting today to hire four firefighters who will also be in a training period at the academy.

Ms. Court referred to the Matrix study regarding the eight vacancies – she asked for an explanation in light of the Mayor's comments.

Mr. Hamilton replied that the recommendation is to keep eight positions vacant and Matrix agreed it would cost money to fill those positions. The four vacancies that the Mayor referred to were four positions that had to be filled. The calculus to use is what is the optimal level of staffing that takes into account the high class of benefits for uniformed services but also taking into the impact on account sick leave utilization and other types of cost drivers.

Chief McCarthy said the four positions are for long term vacancies and one firefighter just resigned. They are going to manage the balance between the number of vacancies and the impact on other budgets – he said they are working closely with the Finance Department.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED APPROVAL OF THE ITEM.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The following corrections were made to the minutes of June 6, 2005.

Page one, under 1 of Section A correct the figure in the body of the motion to \$12,000.
Page four, correct the spelling of Mr. Clark.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TRANSFER AGENDA

Section B

Regarding the Police Department Mr. Hamilton explained that the transfer is to offset the costs – funds were found in the utility account.

**** MR. CLARK MOVED APPROVAL OF THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TRANSFER AS PRESENTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Under Parks and Recreations Mr. Hamilton this transfer is to put the remaining funding in place to proceed with the online software package funds were found in the Finance Department's budget.

**** MR. CLARK MOVED APPROVAL OF THE PARKS & RECREATIONS TRANSFER AS PRESENTED.**

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS

Section C

There was no other business this evening.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Section D

Oak Hills Park Financial Status – May 2005

Mr. Hamilton stated that Oak Hills had a good May, however there is still a delta of \$19,000.

Status of Contingency

Mr. Hamilton indicated that they are on budget and have not exceeded the amount set aside in contingency.

Board of Education

Mr. Hamilton referred to the memorandum from Dr. Corda (Superintendent of Schools) regarding the anticipated end of year results of \$750,000.

The Mayor indicated that they have been discussing how to put school safety resources in place. He said they have been going over what has been spent in the high schools and how police officers can have a more effective presence.

Mayor Knopp added that a more disappointing item was the item regarding the Health Department, as this will not be moving forward. He said that he had assumed that the district would be created and the city would be able to benefit from the reduction in expenditure.

Lastly, the Mayor stated that the Government Finance Officers Association had presented a certificate of achievement to Mr. Hamilton for their excellence in finance reporting. He thanked and congratulated Mr. Hamilton and the Finance Department.

** MR. BUZZEE MOVED TO ADJOURN.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Kye
Telesco Secretarial Services

