

**FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2022
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; David Heuvelman; Thomas Keegan;
Jenn McMurrer; Diana Revolus (7:06 p.m.);
Nora Niedzielski Eichner (7:09 p.m.)

STAFF: Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer; Tom Ellis, Budget
Director; Alan Lo, Building and Facilities Manager

OTHERS: Nicol Ayers, Joshua Goldstein; Thomas Livingston;
Lisa Shanahan, Common Council members; Lunda Asmani, Chief
Financial Officer, Norwalk Public Schools; Dr. Alexandra Estrella,
Superintendent of Schools; Sandra Faioes, Assistant
Superintendent of Schools; Mike Zuba, Director of Education
Master Planner Slam

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Burnett called the special meeting of the Finance Claims Committee to order at 7:01 p.m. and called the Roll as indicated above.

Mr. Burnett referred to the backup and narrative that was sent to everyone and said he hoped everyone was able to review the information.

Ms. Revolus joined the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Mr. Burnett explained that items three and four total \$36,842,530. With the additional \$39,114,864, the total will be \$75,957,394. He said they are looking for \$72 million for the project.

II. RESOLUTION:

Mr. Burnett read the following resolution:

REQUESTING A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$72,000,000 TO PURCHASE PROPERTY AND CONSTRUCT A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL IN SOUTH NORWALK TO ACCOMMODATE 682 PREK – 5 STUDENTS. THE SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION SHALL BE FUNDED THROUGH:

(A) A REALLOCATION OF \$39,114,864 OF BOND PROCEEDS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY ISSUED FOR PROJECT #0918-5010-5777-C0607 (NEW COLUMBUS SCHOOL AT ELY AVENUE) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$17,314,319 AND PROJECT #0919-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND PROJECT #0920-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$21,800,545; AND

(B) THE REALLOCATION OF \$32,885,136 MILLION OF AUTHORIZED BUT UNISSUED GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OR NOTES OF THE CITY FROM PROJECT #0918-5010-5777-C0607 (NEW COLUMBUS SCHOOL AT ELY AVENUE), PROJECT #0919-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND PROJECT #0920-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES).

THE \$32,885,136 OF BONDS OR NOTES OF THE CITY SHALL BE ISSUED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS AND TERMS SET

FORTH IN THE ORIGINAL BOND RESOLUTIONS THAT AUTHORIZED THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS OR NOTES OF THE CITY FOR PROJECT #0918-5010-5777-C0607 (NEW COLUMBUS SCHOOL AT ELY AVENUE) AND PROJECT #0919-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND PROJECT #0920-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES).

Ms. Niedzielski Eichhorn joined the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION AS READ**

Dr. Estrella explained that this is a long awaited opportunity for the students in South Norwalk who have not had a school to call their own for some time. She described the challenges faced by the students such as being bused to schools that are a significant distance from their home.

Mr. Zuba gave a presentation showing statistics and data points that were used during this process. He reviewed the objectives and strategies and noted that he has been working on this project for over a year. Mr. Zuba reviewed the redistricting scenarios, including 8B, which is the one that is being moved forward.

In response to a question about the incubator process, Dr. Estrella explained that it is a process that is done across the country. She said it is a gradual process where a grade is added each year. As the school grows, they draw students from other schools. The students in the school will be South Norwalk students.

Mr. Dachowitz explained that the City borrows funds for capital projects and allocates the funds based on projections. Money has to be spent within two to three years according to the IRS. He said that he goes to the department chiefs on a quarterly basis and gets an update from them on what they spent and what reimbursement they expect. Mr. Dachowitz said he makes sure the funds are there.

Mr. Dachowitz said that \$72 million is designated for the South Norwalk school and he will make sure it is there. Mr. Heuvelman asked how much has been spent so far on the two school projects. Mr. Lo said that about \$3.5 million has been spent. He said they are looking for \$72 million, but that may fluctuate because of land acquisition costs. He said this project is very preliminary, but the allocation of \$72 million is based on current costs; however, they may come back for acquisition money. He added that they have not looked at what to do with a sustained Columbus School building.

Ms. Revolus said as a District B representative, she knows the District needs a school. The school is as strong as the residents. She said she was concerned about the capacity

and the resources for the students. Ms. Revolus said she wants to be sure the programs in the South Norwalk school will be as strong as the programs in the schools the students will be leaving.

Ms. Ayers said she believes the Committee agrees that this project is a long time coming and wants to make the neighborhood whole. They want to build a school they can stand behind and a school that is best for the community.

Mr. Burnett said that Mr. Lo and his team are excellent stewards of City of Norwalk finances. There is always the potential on any project, for the need for additional funding and there is a process to address that.

Ms. McMurrer asked how much of the \$72 million will be reimbursed by the State. Mr. Lo said he expects about 22.2% to be reimbursed by the State. Dr. Estrella said they are focusing on one building for this project instead of two and having the CMS students move to the Ponus lower campus. Mr. Lo said that on the capital side, there is some savings because they are only building one school and using that savings to buy property.

**** MOTON PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MS. MCMURRER; MS NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. REVOLUS; MR. BURNETT)**

This item will go before the Common Council for approval on Tuesday, January 25, 2022.

III. RESOLUTION:

Mr. Burnett explained that the next two items are to close out projects.

Mr. Burnett read the following resolution:

CLOSE OUT OF PROJECT #0918-5010-5777-C0607 (NEW COLUMBUS SCHOOL AT ELY AVENUE) AND DEAUTHORIZE \$24,250,000 OF AUTHORIZED BUT UNISSUED BONDS FOR PROJECT #0918-5010-5777-C0607 (NEW COLUMBUS SCHOOL AT ELY AVENUE).

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION
** MOTON PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MS. MCMURRER; MS NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. REVOLUS; MR. BURNETT)**

This item will go before the Common Council for approval on Tuesday, January 25, 2022.

IV. RESOLUTION:

Mr. Burnett read the following resolution:

CLOSE OUT OF PROJECT #0919-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND PROJECT #0920-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND DEAUTHORIZE \$12,592,530 OF AUTHORIZED BUT UNISSUED BONDS FOR PROJECT #0919-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES) AND PROJECT #0920-5010-5777-C0618 (NORWALK GLOBAL STUDIES).

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MS. MCMURRER; MS NIEDZIELSKI EICHNER; MS. REVOLUS; MR. BURNETT)**

This item will go before the Common Council for approval on Tuesday, January 25, 2022.

V. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the special meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services