

**CITY OF NORWALK  
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
VIA TELECONFERENCE  
MARCH 10, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Greg Burnett, Chair; Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, David Heuvelman,  
Tom Keegan, Diana Revolus, Jenn McMurrer, John Kydes (7:45 pm)

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector, Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller;  
Henry Dachowitz, Chief Finance Officer

OTHERS: Gino Gatto, Fire Chief; Mark Conte, Assistant Fire Chief

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m., and called the roll. He acknowledged the above members in attendance, (as appeared on the Zoom meeting screen), and stated that a quorum was present.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr. Burnett reported there were no emails or correspondence, or members of the public requests for participation.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Approve the Minutes of the following Finance Committee Meetings:

February 10, 2022 – Regular Meeting

Mr. Burnett noted the following corrections to the minutes: Pg.2 Change Pickens to Dickens in paragraphs 4-5; Pg.3: paragraph 6 insert ‘said’ after Rilling; Sentence 3 correct ‘Rilling’ to Rilling and change ‘gave’ to ‘have.’ Following sentence 5: change counsel to Committee.

**\*\* MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 10, 2022 AS AMENDED WITH CORRECTIONS AS NOTED.**

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

February 17, 2022 – Minutes - Public Hearing and Special Meeting

- \*\* **MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING PUBLIC HEARING OF FEBRUARY 17, 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Claims Committee: Receive the monthly Claims Report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated March 10, 2022.**

Ms. Biagiarelli reported there were three claims needing approval—two were overpayments and one was a special abatement. She referred to the claims page of her report and explained the abatement was for Rowayton Senior Housing based on a 40 yr. term income level.

- \*\* **MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CLAIMS AS SUBMITTED.**
- \*\* **THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Narrative on Tax Collections dated March 10, 2022 – Receive Report and discuss.**

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that collections were 97.7% of current levy as of the end of February. She referred to the Narrative as contained in the agenda packet and reported all was going well operationally with the renewal of health permits and enforcement activities on target. She reported the tax sale ended with sale of 234 of 240 properties resulting in revenue of \$8.6 million on the sale. The next sale will be 2023 and staff will be beginning the work involved this fall.

Mr. Niedzielski-Eichner asked about the deeding of the sold properties, and Ms. Biagiarelli explained the process of public auction of properties sold and deeded to the highest bidders. She further explained there is only one unsold property that the City has claimed the deed.

**Monthly Tax Collector’s Reports dated February 2022– Receive Report and discuss.**

Ms. Biagiarelli referred to the report as contained in the agenda packet. There were no further questions.

Ms. Biagiarelli noted that she will not be in attendance for the April meeting, as she will be on vacation. Mr. Al Palumbo, Assistant tax Collector will attend the meeting in her absence.

**Receive Oak Hills Authority monthly Financial Statements for January 2022.**

There was no one in attendance to represent Oak Hills Authority. Mr. Burnett noted that this would be added to the agenda for next month's meeting.

**Update from the Tax Assessor's Office on Senior Tax Relief Program and preparation for City of Norwalk revaluation.**

Mr. William Ford presented the item and referred to the charts in the agenda packet. Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner asked if this was state and local tax relief overlap, and Mr. Ford replied that yes, seniors do get both. He explained it was 50-50 state/city reimbursement but that the state part is going away.

Ms. Revolus asked if there was mortgage relief for transfer of ownership to families. Mr. Ford answered that this is based upon taxes paid. He added that he is not in a position to provide tax advice, but there may be trust funds that could be set up, and local agencies such as Senior Centers could provide tax advice referrals for families.

There was discussion on how this is communicated to seniors, and if there are strings attached to those homeowners. Mr. Ford explained that applications are mailed, it is posted on the City website, and there is a two-year renewal for the program.

There was further discussion on the values of residential versus commercial property. Mr. Ford explained that both are rising in value, but that commercial has raised at a lower rate compared to residential. He further explained the factors that go in to the property evaluations, city services such as police, schools, etc. that are factored in to the value formula equation.

Mr. Heuvelman asked about the Tax Assessor's Office role and if there was a primer on how the office operates. Mr. Ford gave an overview of the Tax Assessor's role relative to the levy process for property revaluations, both commercial and residential, and an overview of personal property tax. Mr. Dachowitz added that it is a complex process that cannot be done in isolation, as there are many factors that must be taken into account.

Mr. Ford explained the audit process that crosses over fiscal years and although costs are budgeted in 2022-23 revenue is reflected in 2023-24 fiscal year. He added that there are contracted services based on an RFP for a company to provide the best services and pricing for the City.

Mr. Burnett added that this education is very important for this Committee and equally important for the public. He asked that the RFP include an educational element to provide tax payers with explanations of how the revaluation process is done.

**RESOLUTION:**

**Requesting Special Emergency Funding from the ARPA Fund in the amount of \$301,066 for the Fire Department to carry out Emergency repairs at Fire Station No. 1 at 90 New Canaan Avenue.**

Fire Chief Gatto, and Assistant Fire Chief Conte provided an overview of the background of a dispute with the contractor for work uncompleted and code violations that occurred with the project over the past few years.

There was discussion over the scope of the revised project since walls are now open and repairs can be done properly. Deputy Chief Conte explained that ventilation issues and HVAC problems can be corrected with the project as outlined. Mr. Heuvelman asked about pending legal action with the former contractor, and Chief Gatto replied that nothing has been paid to the previous contractor.

There was further discussion on ARPA Funds for the City. Mr. Dachowitz replied that ARPA funds have been allocated, and due to actual expenses, there are funds leftover that the Mayor recommended be used for this project. He added that \$39 million has been allocated to the City along with \$27 million to the Board of Education. He explained that Capital Projects have been developed and approved for the City's funding, but he has not seen the funding plans from the Board of Education.

**\*\* MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL:**

**REQUESTING SPECIAL EMERGENCY FUNDING FROM THE ARPA FUND IN THE AMOUNT OF \$301,066 FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO CARRY OUT EMERGENCY REPAIRS AT FIRE STATION NO. 1 AT 90 NEW CANAAN AVENUE.**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. Knox  
Telesco Secretarial Services

City Of Norwalk  
Finance Claims Committee  
March 10, 2022