

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
APRIL 14, 2022**

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

STAFF: Al Palumbo, Assistant Tax Collector, Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller;
Henry Dachowitz, Chief Finance Officer; Tom Ellis, Budget Director;
OTHERS: Carl Dickens, Oak Hills Authority; Lamond Daniels, Chief Community Services;
Dept. Public Works: Anthony Carr, Vanessa Valdares, Ralph Kolb, Engineer;
James Emery, Parking Authority; Jessica Vonachek, Chief Economic Development

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and called the roll. He acknowledged the above members in attendance, and stated that a full quorum was present.

Mr. Burnett noted a change in the order of the agenda to move items 10-11 to 8-9 in the order.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Burnett reported there were no emails or correspondence for requests for participation. Ms. Lam reported there was one member of the public to comment.

1. Diane Lauricella thanked the Committee for all the hard work and hopes that other Boards and Commissions would operate as this does. She applauded the great initiatives under ARPA and commended the DPW projects and Public Health Community Climate Plan and requested consideration for resilient energy plan for municipal buildings with renewable energy sources such as solar, geo-thermal and wind. She asked for more initiatives to maintain the grid of power to avoid outages and highlighted the need for ventilation repair for public schools and municipal buildings with improved facility plans.

There were no other public comments.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

March 10, 2022 – Regular Meeting

- ** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Claims Committee: Receive the monthly Claims Report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated April 14, 2022.

Mr. Palumbo presented the report and highlighted there were no special requests and nothing outstanding that required approvals.

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

Narrative on Tax Collections dated April 14, 2022 – Receive Report and discuss.

Mr. Palumbo presented the report and highlighted the collections were on track at 98.82%, 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. He reported the tax sale ended with sale of only five properties remaining that are vacant business lots. He noted the sale has resulted in revenue of \$9.4 million. He explained the goal is to collect past due taxes and to help expedite the necessary action of dormant properties.

Monthly Tax Collector's Reports dated April 14 2022– Receive Report and discuss.

Mr. Palumbo referred to the report as contained in the agenda packet. There were no further questions.

8. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to submit an application to the State of CT for grant funds provided under the State of Connecticut's Local Capital Improvement Fund for Local Capital Improvement Program (\$648,140 - 2022 Entitlement)

Mr. Anthony Carr presented the back-up documentation and highlighted this is yearly funding of DPW roadway improvements as outlined in the agenda packet.

- ** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL:**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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9. RESOLUTION: requesting for various Department of Public works public improvements projects aggregating in the amount of \$9,759,820 from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund. Accounts: 134010-5796-APW01 DRG2021-1 DREAMY HOLLOW BETTS; 134010-5796-APW02 GLENDENNING STREET STORM SEWER; 134010-5796-APW03 GLENWOOD AVENUE STORM SEWER; 134010-5796-APW04 DRG2022-1 LOCKWOOD LANE HEATHE; 134010-5796-APW05 GENERAL DRAINAGE-VARIOUS CITY; 134010-5796-APW06 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN; 134010-5796-APW07 COASTAL RESILIENCY CITYWIDE; 134010-5796-APW08 TREE PLANTING DPW CITYWIDE; 134010-5796-APW09 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CITYWIDE

Mr. Carr presented the back-up documentation and highlighted the nine activities and tasks representing six capital project improvements and two initiatives for Coastal Resiliency and Green Infrastructures as outlined in the agenda packet.

There was discussion on how projects are allocated with RFPs. Ms. Valdares explained the projects are for infrastructure improvements, such as sidewalks or drainage repairs, managed by DPW. She further explained the approval process with the contracts goes through the layers of City Commissions through the Common Council.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if there is bonding and Mr. Dachowitz explained how the intention is to use these funds in lieu of bonding. He explained the methodology of how the projects are allocated and expenditures tracked in compliance with federal guidelines. He noted that as projects are approved, the Comptroller's office moves expenditures into accounts as authorized to control payments and provide quarterly tracking of funds. Mr. Burnett asked for the quarterly report to be provided by each department and to include any hiring of full-time employees as a result of ARPA for tracking of staff head count.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner asked what categories these are for the records, and Mr. Carr replied that all are Category 516 Clean Water and Storm Drainage.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL:**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. Receive Oak Hills Authority Monthly Financial Statements January-February 2022.

Mr. Carl Dickens reviewed the reports as provided and highlighted the financials, emphasized the debt repayments, operations and recent improvements. There was discussion on the new objectives in the marketing plan to promote the food and beverage operations, tennis courts, and nature trail programs.

He reported that the Authority is looking to replace three positions on the Board and ideally, looking for members with experience with recreational business management. He added there is an initiative to increase public affairs and address community outreach with social media and One to One Marketing. There are plans for offering more lessons and youth programs partnering with the high schools, Grass Roots Tennis and Kings Highway Tennis. He added the potential of golf simulators in an old pro shop room as a new venture.

11. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute the Grant Assignment Certification, SFY 2023 assigning State of Connecticut 13b-38bb Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Municipal Grant Program apportioned funds to operation of transportation services coordinating entity, Norwalk Transit District.

Mr. Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services presented the item and outlined the summary goals and funding directives.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE THE GRANT ASSIGNMENT CERTIFICATION, SFY 2023 ASSIGNING STATE OF CT 13B-38BB ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSIVE MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM APPORTIONED FUNDS TO OPERATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES COORDINATING ENTITY, NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

12. RESOLUTION: requesting for Community Service projects aggregating in the amount of \$2,000,000 from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund to address ongoing public health needs. Accounts: 132010-5796-ACS01 NORWALK COMMUNITY RECOVERY and 132010-5796-ACS02 COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECT PROGRAM.

Mr. Daniels presented the item and outlined the summary goals and funding directives to access services, and produce a more effective and efficient health & social service system, continuation of family navigator program, expand Mayor's summer youth employment youth services, care coordination model library improvements

Ms. Revolus asked about mental health treatment models geared to cultural sensitivity. Mr. Daniels noted that he will provide the Committee with an update on the Family Navigator position.

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**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADOPT THE RESOLUTION AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL:**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13. RESOLUTION: requesting for Economic and Community Development ARPA Projects aggregating in the amount of \$8,178,750 from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund.

**Accounts: 133710-5796-AEC01 WALL STREET CONSTRUCTION;
133710-5796-AEC02 MOBILITY SIDEWALK AND BIKE;
133710-5796-AEC03 COMPLETE STREETS; 133710-5796-AEC04 PROJECT MANAGER; 133710-5796-AEC05 BUSINESS COVID ASSISTANCE;
133710-5796-AEC06 REDEVELOPMENT SMALL BUSINESS;
133710-5796-AEC08 CAPITAL ACCESS MANAGER MICROLO; 133710-5796-AEC09 WMBE GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESS; 133710-5796-AEC10 INNOVATION GRANTS FOR START UP; 133710-5796-AEC11 PERMITTING AND LICENSING SOFTW;133710-5796-AEC12 DIGITIZING DOCUMENTATION; 133710-5796-AEC13 BUSINESS NAVIGATION ONLINE; 133710-5796-AEC14 ADMINISTRATOR FOR ARP; 133710-5796-AEC15 PERMIT COORDINATOR; 133710-5796-AEC16 EVENT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM; 133710-5796-AEC17 TREE PLANTING PROGRAM; 133710-5796-AEC18 TREE PLANTING SIDEWALK; 133710-5796-AEC19 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN; 133710-5796-AEC20 REDEVELOPMENT MARTIME AQUARIU; 133710-5796-AEC21 HARBOR USE PLAN STUDY; 133710-5796-AEC22 AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN;133710-5796-AEC22 SOUTH NORWALK SCHOOL SIDEWALKS**

Ms. Vonachek shared the Economic Development Agency presentation and fielded questions and comments throughout. Ms. Revolus complimented the extensive work that addressed how we evaluate our progress with other communities on green space initiatives.

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

14. RESOLUTION: requesting for Broadband fiber optic cable network project in the amount of \$100,000 for legal costs from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund.

Accounts: 131340-5796-AFN01 BROADBAND FIBER OPTIC

Mr. Dachowitz presented the item and explained how the Finance Department met with new vendors to provided the upgrade for the City's cable network.

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

**15. Receive Board of Estimate and Taxation Other Business from April 4, 2022:
a. Adoption of the Tentative FY2022-2023 Operating Budget**

Mr. Burnett explained that the approved Cap remains in place as evaluated through the BET deliberations. Mr. Dachowitz presented the budget and the methodology how the cap was established with the components of intergovernmental fees, offset credits, revenues, departmental reductions, and draw down of the rainy fund. He referred to the budget charts and outlined the tax levy and mill rates and how this was established for each district.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Recreation & Parks addition of new employees to the budget. Mr. Dachowitz explained this was funded through a reduction of operating expenses and resulted in a budget neutral funding. Mr. Burnett reviewed the BET schedule that listed funding for an electrician and supervisor in the amount of \$160,000. Mr. Dachowitz replied that he did not have his complete file of departmental budget requests, but that all salary lines were reconciled for each department. He referred to Mr. Ellis for the clarification and noted he would email Mr. Kydes with the details prior to the Council meeting.

Mr. Burnett listed the past three years' tax levy amounts of 2020 \$3.51; 2021 \$3.57; and for 2022 \$3.67 asked the Committee if there were concerns with this steady increase. Mr. Dachowitz explained the process going from gross to net and increase in expenditures, combined with a conservative collection rate along with intergovernmental revenues.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ADOPT TENTATIVE FY2022-2023 OPERATING BUDGET AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH SIX VOTES IN FAVOR (BURNETT, KEEGAN, HEUVELMAN, MCMURRER, REVOLUS, NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER) NONE OPPOSED AND ONE ABSENTION (KYDES)**

b. Discuss and approve FY 2022-2023 Parking Authority Budget as revised.

Mr. James Emery presented the financial report and reviewed trends and budget improvements. There was discussion of rates and Mr. Emery explained operational impacts.

Ms. Niedzielski-Neichner inquired about the excess funds and if there was a cap to the fund balance. Mr. Dachowitz clarified that there is debt service and the goal is to set rates to breakeven, and a surplus is preferred versus deficit. He further explained that if there is surplus every year, we need to examine the rates if they are too high and make a reduction.

- ** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AS REVISED AND TO FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

c. Discuss and Approve FY 2022-2023 Water Pollution Authority Budget.

Mr. Ralph Kolb presented the budget and explained the how this self-supportive government fund of sewer use fees is derived with chargebacks and tax assessments.

- ** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE WATER POLUTION AUTHORITY BUDGET AND FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR APPROVAL.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

d. Appointment of Auditors to audit Fiscal Year 2022.

Mr. Dachowitz presented memo from the BET and explained how the Finance Department has used Bloom Shapiro in the past and has performed the City's audit satisfactorily. He recommends them to be appointed to audit fiscal year 2022 for \$99,000.

- ** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE AUDITORS APPOINTMENT AS RECOMMENDED FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services