

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Nicholas Kydes, Chair; Andrew Conroy; Douglas Hempstead;
David Jaeger; Nora King; Kelly Straniti (7:10 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax
Collector; Frederic Gilden, Comptroller; Michael Stewart, Tax
Assessor

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING: FEBRUARY 10, 2011 FEBRUARY 17, 2011**

- ** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF
FEBRUARY 10, 2011
AND TO TABLE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2011 AND
REQUESTED A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF ITEMS #8 AND #13
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Straniti joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

- ** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**CLAIMS COMMITTEE: RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT;
REVIEW AND APPROVE CLAIMS AS REQUIRED FOR CLAIMS REPORT
DATED: MARCH 10, 2011**

Ms. Biagiarelli explained that there is one request that is over \$10,000 and needs Committee approval. It was a duplicate payment for \$12,168.65.

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED MARCH 10, 2011- RECEIVE
REPORT AND DISCUSS**

**MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT DATED FEBRUARY 28, 2011 -
RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS**

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that they are meeting collection goals and are slightly ahead of last year. She said that they will not have to hold a tax sale this year. The criteria for

placing a property in the tax sale is either the number of years the taxes are delinquent or a dollar amount. She said that the best tax relief you can give is a high collection rate.

** **MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

PREAPPROVAL OF NAC EQUITIES LLC PROPOSED STIPULATION FOR JUDGMENT, 57 WEST ROCKS ROAD, NORWALK FOR \$60,022.74 AND APPROVE PAYMENT NOT TO EXCEED \$60,022.74 UPON EXECUTION OF THE AGREEMENT

Mr. Hamilton explained the item. He said that this is a recommended amendment and the amount for the years 2008 and 2009 totals \$60,022.74. Ms. King talked about the purchase price of the property. Mr. Hamilton told her that this is a lawsuit and if she wishes to talk about specific items, the Committee would need to go into Executive Session. He added that they were limited to certain discussions in Executive Session. Ms. King said that this was public record and disagreed with Mr. Hamilton. She said that she did not understand why there has to be a strategy of closed doors. Mr. Hamilton explained that the court process is an open process, but the City process is confidential.

Ms. King said that she was confused. She asked why the City assessed the property for \$8.5 million when the property sold for \$6.2 million shortly after the assessment. She said that something was wrong in how the City looks at parameters in the evaluation process. Mr. Hamilton said that they have 29,000 real estate parcels; 3,500 personal property accounts and 85,000 motor vehicle accounts. When you are dealing with those numbers there will always be tax appeals. He said there were less appeals in the 2008 evaluation than in 2003. He said that there have been no systemic issues in the last three re-evaluations. He added that the re-evaluation is a massive process.

Ms. King said that it is their job that once the data comes in, to be sure that they know what is going on at such areas as Wilson Point and the commercial properties. She said that their job is to make sure that accurate assumptions are made. Mr. Hamilton told her that the re-evaluation met State required standards.

Mr. Stewart explained that the sale price does not necessarily a market value make; that is one price point. When the property was purchased there were a range of offers made, but that was the offer that was accepted. Ms. King said that the buyer bought the property for \$6.6 million and asked if that was factored into the re-evaluation. Mr. Stewart said that one price does not represent market value. The evidence is not one individual buying a property from one individual. Ms. King said that she disagreed and that what Mr. Stewart said was not 100% true.

Mr. Stewart said that he knows Tax Assessors in surrounding towns and Norwalk is in better shape than other towns, He said that they had an extensive review process at the end of the re-evaluation. He said that they are within acceptable standards and that the State certified the 2008 re-evaluation.

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. KING)**

Ms. King left the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

**RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION APPROPRIATIONS
FROM MARCH 7, 2011**

Mr. Hamilton explained that this appropriation is to purchase 8 Police cars. If this request is approved, the Board of Estimate and Taxation will reimburse the amount from next year's Operating budget for the Police Department.

Ford is going to discontinue producing the Crown Victoria and will be replacing it with a Taurus, but the Police package is not expected to be available until next year. The base cost for the Crown Victoria is \$22,000; the base cost for the Taurus is expected to be \$26,000. The order for the Crown Victorias needs to be place in March.

Mr. Conroy asked about the condition of the fleet. Mr. Hamilton said that Chief Rilling would like to have 12-14 vehicles. Public Works services the Police vehicles and he has not seen recent reports, but noted that the budget is stable. Mr. Jaeger asked about the lifespan of a Police vehicle. Mr. Hamilton said that they last 3-4 years because there is a lot of engine time on the cars.

**RECEIVE MONTHLY OAK HILLS PARK AUTHORITY REPORT FOR
JANUARY 31, 2011**

Mr. Hamilton explained that overall revenues are down 3% compared to last year at this time; however, expenses are down 9%. He said that the restaurant is a big piece of the debt.

RECEIVE REPORT ON LOCAL ELDERLY TAX RELIEF PROGRAM

Mr. Kydes explained that he spoke before the Board of Estimate and Taxation on Monday. The item was passed and yesterday it was brought to the Ordinance Committee.

Ms. Straniti said that the Ordinance Committee discussed this on Tuesday and scheduled a public hearing for March 21st. She thanked everyone who worked on this program.

Mr. Kydes said that he talked with Mr. Wilms and Mr. Hamilton and feels they came up with a program that would increase the tier one population of the program. This plan is an overall thought out, fair plan that limits the burden to the rest of the taxpayers. Mr. Hamilton said that the Board of Estimate wants to keep the cost below \$150,000. Mr. Kydes said that the total cost is \$145,000. Mr. Hamilton said that this was factored into the budget.

**** MR. CONROY MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services