

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
APRIL 5, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chairman; Michael Kolman; Mayor Moccia; Leo Mellow (8:10 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Ossie Lewis, Director of Management & Budgets; Ellen Wink, City Clerk.

OTHERS: Fire Chief Denis McCarthy; Tim Callahan, Health Department Director; Hal Alvord, Director of Public Works.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by the Chairman. Mayor Moccia noted that there was not a quorum present, but Mr. Mellow would join the meeting later so that they could vote on the action items. Until then, they will take up the discussion items.

OTHER BUSINESS

REPORT ON OAK HILLS

Mr. Hamilton said that the Board of Estimate had asked, a few months ago, for an updated financial report. This was provided and Mr. Hamilton met with Mr. Grillo and Mr. Aikenhead, who said they have experienced some financial difficulties over the past year. As of the end of February, total cash on hand was \$62,000 vs. \$286,000 in February of 2009. Total equity has also weakened, down to \$174,000 vs. \$286,000 the year before. The reason for the decline in revenue is bad weather. The number of rounds of play was down 6.7%, which they attributed to the rainy summer weather. They hope to get back up to 45,000 rounds of golf. They acknowledge that it was a mistake to not raise rates last year. They have now implemented a price increase of \$3 for 2010.

Mr. Hamilton said that, on the expense side, expenses are up this year by \$69,608 or 8.7%, mostly due to the cost of park functions. They indicated that their cash position was negatively affected by the following:

1. Making principle repayments on the restaurant debt service back to the City.
2. The ongoing issue with the DEP and permit and use of water in the pond and the need to buy more water. Mayor Moccia explained that they could not use City water. The Chairman noted that the DEP is saying that the water that is suitable for human consumption cannot be used for grass.

On a positive note, Mr. Hamilton said long-term liabilities have decreased by approximately \$200,000 in the last year. The rate increase should generate \$138,000 of

additional revenue. They have enough money for the month of March into April and don't expect to have to come to the City.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Lewis for the report but said that the liquidity issue bothered him. Mr. Hamilton said they expect April to start positive months for the golf course.

Mr. Kolman asked when the bonds for the restaurant went out; Mr. Hamilton said he thought that was in 2003. Mr. Kolman said that the rounds of golf fell off starting in 2002. Mayor Moccia said that is happening across the country. In hindsight, it hurt that the driving range was not put in. They are talking about bringing a modified driving range in.

It was noted that the DEP expenditure was a one-time expenditure. Mayor Moccia pointed out that Martha Lemon had saved the City a lot of money in legal fees.

The Chairman said they should monitor this account. Mayor Moccia pointed out that the restaurant has changed hands and hopefully they will attract more tournaments. Mr. Hamilton said he receives monthly financial reports but receiving a monthly list of rounds would also be helpful. Mr. Kolman suggested that he should receive weekly e-mails.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

KEY REVENUE REPORT – MARCH 2010

Mr. Lewis reviewed this report. Mr. Hamilton said that, overall, the fund balance projection should be better than they had anticipated.

TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2010

Mr. Hamilton reviewed Ms. Biagarell's letter dated February 11, 2010. Discussion took place on the status of the Seligson properties. Mr. Hamilton noted that no overdue taxes were owed at this point. Anyone who meets the criteria will be included in the tax sale.

At 8:10 p.m., Mr. Mellow arrived at the meeting and there was now a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MARCH 1, 2010 REGULAR MEETING

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED APPROVAL.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MARCH 24, 2010 SPECIAL MEETING

The following corrections were made: On page 1, this was noted as a Special Meeting, not as a Regular Meeting. The spelling of Michael Kolman's name was corrected.

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE AS CORRECTED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MARCH 24, 2010 PUBLIC HEARING

The following corrections were made: On page 1, the spelling of Michael Kolman's name was corrected. On page 6, last paragraph, the spelling of Mr. Feigenbaum's name was corrected.

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE AS CORRECTED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

\$52,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO COVER COSTS FOR EVICTION SERVICES

Mr. Hamilton reviewed Mr. Lewis's report and recommended approval.

Mr. Callahan said that they must remove belongings from the curb to a storage place and keep them for 30 days. This year, evictions have increased in numbers. Any proceeds from an auction go back to the City. He noted that Scott Merrell's items are still in inventory in Fitts Garage.

- ** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$52,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO COVER THE COSTS FOR EVICTION SERVICES. (ACCOUNT #01-2020-5617).

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

\$141,876 FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TO COVER SNOW REMOVAL COSTS

Mr. Hamilton reviewed Mr. Lewis's report and recommended approval in the amount of \$120,707.

- ** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$120,707 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT TO COVER SNOW REMOVAL COSTS. (ACCOUNT NOS. VARIOUS).

Mayor Moccia said that the plowing of the roads has generated very few complaint calls over the past few years.

The Chairman noted that not using sand has other benefits as well.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

TRANSFER AGENDA

FIRE DEPT.

\$11,512 FROM 01-3110-5110 TO 01-3160-5258

Chief McCarthy explained the Code Red Reverse 911 system.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-LISTED TRANSFER.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

Mayor Moccia said that Chief McCarthy, Ms. DeLuca and Mr. Alvord had done a fabulous job during the storm. Chief McCarthy said they have done the reviews. The Public Assistance Team was down to all of the sites. The damage to the city is approximately \$375,000. The State will attempt to get a National Disaster Designation. Given the amount of damage in the county and in Westchester County, it is anticipated they have a strong case for a Presidential declaration. The individual benefit to home owners, however, is limited to low interest loans.

Chief McCarthy said that the Emergency Management Team is really a team. He said that they learned some valuable lessons from this emergency.

\$9,044 FROM 01-3110-5110 TO 01-3130-5328

Mr. Hamilton and Chief McCarthy reviewed this transfer to cover the cost of the City's 20% match of the 2009 fire prevention grant.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-LISTED TRANSFER.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TAX ASSESSOR

\$6,716 FROM 01-1320-5110 TO 01-1320-5130

Mr. Hamilton reviewed this transfer to cover wages for a temporary employee to will in for the Assistant Assessor who is out on leave.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-LISTED TRANSFER.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC WORKS

\$21,170 FROM 01-4021-5110 TO 01-4025-5110

Mr. Hamilton reviewed this transfer to cover a deficit in the snow removal regular wages account.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-LISTED TRANSFER.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OTHER BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE FY 2010-11 OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Hamilton said they are waiting for the Common Council to act on the NMEA contract adjustment. He noted that the Police Commission can change the makeup of the force in terms of rank. There were some recent promotions to lieutenant and sergeant, which will be added to the final budget. Mayor Moccia pointed out that they are leaving captain positions vacant, which will result in a balance when there are retirements.

Regarding the budget, Mayor Moccia noted that they have not dramatically cut any services. The Chairman said this is a good balance of keeping taxes down while maintaining services.

Discussion took place on mileage gas allowances to Board of Education employees.

Mr. Hamilton said this tentative budget includes the open items discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Mellow asked Mr. Hamilton when he expects the Board of Education to get back to him. Mr. Hamilton answered that the tentative budget set tonight would be communicated to the Board of Education.

The Chairman asked for an updated open items list at the next meeting in May and Mr. Hamilton said he would provide that information.

Extensive discussion took place on the Board of Education's budget.

- ** MR. WILMS MOVED TO ADOPT THE TENTATIVE FY 2010-11 OPERATING BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$281,043,243 AND TO FORWARD IT TO THE COMMON COUNCIL.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVE THE FY 2010-11 PROPOSED PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET

- ** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2010-11 PROPOSED PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET OF \$5,383,516 IN REVENUE AND \$5,326,911 IN EXPENSES.**

Mayor Moccia said t his will add \$56,000 to the Capital Reserve.

The Chairman asked if the violation revenue would hold up and Mr. Alvord said it is not intended to. Revenues will increase because of compliance.

Mayor Moccia spoke in favor of the Parking Authority.

The Chairman said there has been a tremendous turn-around in the past four years but he cannot vote for a large increase in the under 90-days violation revenue that could lead to a \$150,000 loss if that does not pan out. Mr. Alvord said that the Parking Authority would significantly reduce expenses if that happens. Mayor Moccia said they really don't have any choice; this is as good a budget as possible. They can use the fee-in-lieu-of-parking fees if necessary. Mr. Hamilton noted that there is also a \$25,000 contingency. Mayor Moccia said they have to accept what the Parking Authority is saying now, given that they have had a good track record over the past four years. This is in far less worst shape than Oak Hills and the fee-in-lieu-of-parking can offset capital expenses.

Mr. Mellow asked if the maintenance could be done at will and Mr. Alvord responded affirmatively. Mr. Hamilton said the change at the Webster Lot is creating a new opportunity for violation income than in the past.

Mr. Kolman asked about gross wages going up by 12%. Mr. Alvord said that related principally to LAZ employees. Mr. Kolman asked about the legal services retainer and Mr. Alvord said it is the estimated cost of legal services.

Discussion took place on credit card fees.

- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVE THE FY 2010-11 PROPOSED WPCA BUDGET

Mr. Hamilton reviewed this proposed budget in the amount of \$14,494,840, noting that they are trying to keep the increases in the 6% range.

The Chairman said that he and Mayor Moccia sit on this Authority and it is very strong. This is fairly straight-forward with a stable, secure revenue stream.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2010-11 WPCA BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$14,494,840.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services