

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 3, 2012**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chair; Erik Anderson, John Federici, Michael Kolman

OTHERS: Erin Halsey, City Clerk; Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director;
Robert Barron, Director of Management and Budget

CALL TO ORDER.

Mr. Wilms called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Halsey called the roll. A quorum was present. Mr. Wilms welcomed Mr. Anderson to the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

November 5, 2012 -Regular Meeting.

**** MR. FEDERICI MOVED THE NOVEMBER 5, 2012 MINUTES.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2012 AS SUBMITTED PASSED WITH TWO IN FAVOR (WILMS AND FEDERICI) AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (ANDERSON AND KOLMAN).**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A)

List of Resolutions

Advertised Items - 2

Report on Special Appropriations

Justification/Back-up material

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$75,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Historical Commission to cover the rent payment to the Norwalk Museum Partnership until 6/30/2012 (Account No.: 01600-5620)

Mr. Hamilton said that when the budget was put together, there were discussion about the Museum and a decision was made to close the Museum. The budget that was created there was uncertainty about the time that the collections would remain in the present locations. There were also some funds for professional services for the collections. Mr. Hamilton then suggested that the Board appropriate an amount to have the rent for the remaining six months.

Mr. Westmoreland then spoke about how the Norwalk Museum Committee was formed and who was on it. This is documented in the back up documentation. He said that the Committee had narrowed down the locations to the current location or the Lockwood House. After analyzing the costs involved, it ahs been recommended to move the Museum collections back to the Lockwood

House and the archives to the Norwalk Library.

Due to fact that Lockwood house is being currently occupied by the Fire Department, the basement of the Lockwood would be used for storage along with some storage in the Health Department.

Mr. Westmoreland went on to state that there were claims against the collection by the Friends of the Norwalk Museum. This has been turned over to the Corporation Counsel.

The Committee will be looking for a business consultant to move the Museum forward. The Historical Society would like to take over the management of the Museum, so Mr. Westmoreland.

Mr. Federici said that there never had been a catalog done. Mr. Westmoreland said that there had been a portion of the cataloguing done. Discussion followed.

Mr. Hamilton said that the actual lease had been extended on a month by month basis. By moving back to a City Building, it will allow the funding to be used for programs rather than paying rent.

The discussion then moved back to rental situation on North Main Street.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$75,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO COVER THE RENT PAYMENT TO THE NORWALK MUSEUM PARTNERSHIP UNTIL 6/30/2012 (ACCOUNT NO.: 01600-5620)

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$725,00 be and the same is hereby transferred from Fund Balance to various account for emergency response and debris removal expenses related to Hurricane Sandy (Account No.: Various)

Mr. Barron then directed everyone's attention to the list summary of Hurricane Sandy damages to City properties in the information packet.

Mr. Alvord then came forward and greeted the Board members. Mr. Hamilton said that it was expected that FEMA would be reimbursing approximately 75% of the cost for both the regular wages and overtime costs where it involved debris removal. FEMA will also be reimbursing the City for the use of the vehicles that were used during the emergency period. Mr. Hamilton said that he believed that FEMA would be reimbursing the City for a major portion of the \$725,000 costs. These figures were outlines in the backup material

Mr. Alvord gave an overview of the storm events and subsequent damages. He pointed out that the storm had a range of over 900 miles, rather than the normal 300 mile range. The winds were sustained at about 60 miles an hour. There was a major storm surge. A decision was made to evacuate the Public Works Center. Due to the fact that the Norden property was not accessible, the command center moved to 100 Connecticut Avenue. With the exception of Sammis Street, the sanitary sewer system worked well.

There were over 1,000 trees downed in the City. Line crews from CL&P were working through the night and the roads were open again by Sunday night. The old garbage trucks were used for picking up debris that could be done by hand. The larger items have to be done with a grappler.

Mr. Barron then spoke about firm figures. Mr. Hamilton said that he expected that the City would be submitting a second request. He reminded everyone that the City was still waiting for the funds from the October 2011 storm. Mr. Hamilton then informed everyone that FEMA will only pay for the pier to be restored to its former condition, which was the damaged condition it was in following Hurricane Irene. He explained that FEMA would most likely provide funding to bring the pier back to the condition it was before Irene hit.

Mr. Wilms then asked about the use of the fund balance. Mr. Hamilton said that the rating agencies want the City to have funds to use when there is a catastrophic event, which is what Super Storm Sandy was. He added that he fully expected that the \$725,000 that was listed on the Initial Emergency Response & Debris Removal for Sandy would come in promptly. Mr. Hamilton said that previously FEMA would cover the cost of outside contractors, but not City crews, which FEMA assumed the City had already budgeted for. The rating agencies are monitoring the situation. Mr. Hamilton said that the rating agencies had already contacted him about the use of the fund balance for storm repairs.

Mr. Anderson asked about the details of the payment and a possible advancement of payment. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the details with the Board members.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$725,00 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM FUND BALANCE TO VARIOUS ACCOUNT FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DEBRIS REMOVAL EXPENSES RELATED TO HURRICANE SANDY (ACCOUNT NO.: VARIOUS)

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Kolman asked if Sammis Street pumping station had been brought back on line. Mr. Alvord said that it had been.

TRANSFER AGENDA (Section B)

There were no items to discuss at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS (Section C)

Discussion of NFT binding arbitration contract settlement

Mr. Wilms said that at the June meeting, the Board had appointed him to be a representative on the negotiation team with the Board of Education and the Teachers' Union. He gave an overview of the three phases of the negotiations and the details of the arbitration. Mr. Wilms said that Mr. Hamilton's report to the arbitration board was quite clear. He pointed out that one reason that Norwalk has such a high rate of taxation for the education was because Norwalk does not receive as much CES funding as similar sized municipalities.

The discussion moved to the "steps" salary policy. The one year hard wage freeze was approved by the arbitrators. The arbitrators also ruled in favor of eliminating the subsidy for the Union president.

Mr. Wilms pointed out that the HSA (Health Savings Accounts) changes would have an impact on approximately a third of the entire City budget.

There was a discussion regarding the length of the contract and the panel awarded a three year contract. The Board of Education can reopen the wage/step portion of the contract in the future.

The Common Council voted not to reject the contract, with one Council member recusing himself. Mr. Wilms said that with the wage freeze, it should make the upcoming budget process easier.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Section D)

Key Review Report.

Mr. Barron said that because the BET meets early in the month, the departments frequently have not finished recording all their income and expenses. He said that the numbers are running almost 10% ahead of a forecast. Mr. Hamilton said that it was encouraging to see the numbers trending ahead of the projections, but he cautioned everyone that these figures would be more meaningful in the second half of the year.

Mr. Barron said that the Tax Collector's narrative was not yet completed. The department has completed the supplemental automobile billings.

Oak Hills Financial Status - October 2012.

Mr. Federici asked for an update on the current financials. Mr. Hamilton said that there would be more information available from Oak Hills next month. Mr. Barron then reviewed the fact that they had a \$43,000 drop in revenue during October due to Sandy. Oak Hills has a very tight budget and the storm damage did have an impact. They are working on their cash flow. Now the course is in the negative cash flow season. They are currently running \$53,000 behind budget.

Discussion followed.

Summary of Special Appropriation

Status of Contingency

Financial reports

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report (FY 2012-13)
- Year-to-date Operating Budget Report (FY 2012-13)
- Board of Education Budget Report (FY 2012-13)
- Tax Collector's Report – October 2012
- Tax Collector's Narrative – October 2012

Salary Accounts

Fire Overtime

Dispatch Overtime

Police Overtime

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.