

**CITY OF NORWALK  
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 12, 2016**

**ATTENDANCE:** Bruce Kimmel, Chair; Douglas Hempstead, John Kydes,  
John Igneri, Nick Sacchinelli (7:30 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Fred Gilden, Comptroller; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector;  
Kathryn Hebert, Parking Authority Administrative Services  
Manager; Bruce Chimento, Director of Public Works.

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Mr. Kimmel called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no one from the public that wished to address the Committee at this time.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING:**

**April 14, 2016**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 14, 2016 MEETING.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (KIMMEL, KYDES AND  
IGNERI) AND ONE ABSTENTION (HEMPSTEAD).**

**CLAIMS COMMITTEE**

**Claims Committee: receive the monthly Claims Report, review and approve  
claims as required for the Claims Report dated: May 4, 2016.**

Ms. Biagiarelli said that there were no special requests and the report was for the Council  
Members' information only.

**Narrative on Tax Collections dated May 12, 2016. Receive Report and  
discuss.**

**Monthly Tax Collector's Report - Receive Reports and discuss: April 30,  
2016.**

Ms. Biagiarelli then presented her report to the Committee. The Tax Sale is now  
underway. The Website and the filing to the Land Records went up on May 4th. There

was one double page legal notice in The Hour has been published. There will be two additional legal notices published.

Mr. Hempstead said that the Tax Collector's Office was very professional.

Mr. Kimmel asked if the auditors ever wonder about the high collection percentage. Ms. Biagiarelli said that the auditors have seen the tax sale activity and know that Norwalk is serious about collecting taxes. Several people have asked why their property remains on the boards after they have paid. Ms. Biagiarelli said that the department prefers to have the taxes paid before the tax sale is finalized. Once a property is in the tax sale, it remains there even if the taxes have been paid once the sale commences.

Mr. Kimmel asked about the criteria. Ms. Biagiarelli gave an overview of the criteria used. Basically, if a parcel is three years in arrears or the total is \$17,000, Some residents have asked if they could pay one year's taxes to keep their property out of the sale. If a property qualifies for the Tax Sale, it is in the sale.

#### **Approve FY 2016-17 Parking Authority Budget.**

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE ITEM.**

Ms. Hebert came forward. Mr. Kydes asked about the costs of the snow removal. Ms. Hebert explained that the department averages the cost of the items. Mr. Kydes asked about the costs of the signage. Ms. Hebert explained that the line item is for when information changes on the signs.

Ms. Hebert presented her report.

Mr. Igneri asked about the valet parking. Ms. Hebert said that in larger cities, there are valet parking services for those residents who visit the downtown. She said that it is an expensive operation and has to be evaluated in terms of density.

Mr. Hempstead asked if there were any revenue difference since Ironworks has opened. Ms. Hebert said that there has been an increase for both Water Street North and the Maritime Garage. He asked whether the North Water Street lot would be affected by the Walk Bridge project. Ms. Hebert said the parking lot is currently not included in the plan.

Mr. Kimmel asked about the parking at the East Norwalk station. Ms. Hebert said that St. Thomas Church had rented their lot to the City for East Norwalk Railroad parking. However, the church has decided not to continue their lease. She then gave a quick overview of various scenarios under discussion.

*Mr. Sacchinelli joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m.*

Mr. Kimmel asked why the church decided not to renew. Ms. Hebert said that the church has decided to expand their programs. Discussion about the details followed.

Mr. Kimmel asked if the Parking Authority was involved in the Circulator. Ms. Hebert said that she was involved with the Circulator Committee. She said that right now, the City is at capacity in the South Norwalk Train Station.

Mr. Kimmel said that on the agenda, it says "the Council approves". He asked what would happen if the Committee did not approve. Ms. Hebert said that she had just had a conversation with Corporation Counsel about this and basically, the Parking Authority would continue with business because the Parking Authority manages large City assets. Mr. Kimmel asked if the Council had any authority. Mr. Gildea pointed out that without the Council's approval, the Finance Department would not be able to pay the bill.

Mr. Igneri asked who oversee the creation of the budget. Ms. Hebert said she works together with the Director of Public Works, Mr. Chimento and presents the budget to the Parking Authority for discussion and approval. Mr. Chimento gave an overview of how the budget is created. Mr. Igneri asked about what percentage of the City budget the Parking Authority covers. Mr. Gildea said that it was not part of the general budget. Discussion followed about the process. Mr. Igneri said that he would like to see the budget be presented to the DPW Committee also.

Mr. Kydes asked what role LAZ plays. Ms. Hebert said that they manage on and off street parking and the garages and the \$100,000 management fee has not changed for many years.

Mr. Kimmel said that there have been questions and he has directed those questions to Ms. Hebert. Mr. Chimento then spoke about a new program called "Park Mobile". Ms. Hebert said that they do provide tours, which are two hours long.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the details involved in appealing a ticket. Ms. Hebert said that the residents can go to the Parking Authority main office at the Maritime Garage. A second method is appealing online and a third one is via the mail.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Personnel and Benefits. Ms. Hebert said that there are 30 FTE employees. Mr. Kydes asked about hiring process. Ms. Hebert said that the LAZ employees are required to perform a variety of tasks, such as customer service, office tasks, maintenance, landscaping, building and equipment repairs, enforcement, cleaning, customer service, outreach, permit and ticket processing among other tasks. Mr. Kydes asked about the 9% increase in the salary line item. Ms. Hebert said that the budget includes additional customer service and ambassadorial staff in both the Wall and SoNo Districts. Mr. Chimento said that LAZ was a Connecticut company that was created by two men in Hartford who were parking cars on a parking lot.

Mr. Sacchinelli asked what the \$100,000 managerial fee covered. Ms. Hebert said that the fee covered the cost of the back office for tasks such as project management staffing, general and administrative services, financial, accounting, technology, data and purchasing analysis.

Mr. Kimmel asked about the innovations in parking and asked Ms. Hebert what she thought about new innovations. Ms. Hebert said that new innovations are discussed and analyzed and it is important that the Parking Authority always continue to look ahead and reinvest into city assets and the community. Mr. Kimmel asked if there would ever be a point where LAZ would have to readjust their costs downward. Ms. Hebert said that while the investments on equipment may decrease in the future with the increase use of technology, there would still be a need to have staff to assist the public. Net revenues are reinvested into the parking system and the community.

Mr. Hempstead said that he would be extremely cautious about bringing the parking back to the City and listed his reasons why it was worthwhile to have a third party handle this.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FY 2016-17 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Approve FY 2016-17 WPCA Budget.**

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Chimento pointed out that there were two members of the Council and a member of the BET on the WPCA board.

Mr. Kydes asked about methane gas. Mr. Chimento said that methane is odorless. The smell that people complain about is actually carried on the methane gas. Mr. Kydes asked about capturing the methane and using it. Mr. Chimento said that a sewer processing plant is a flow through process so it is not possible to capture the gas at this time. The capturing of the methane happens in landfills, where it is enclosed. He said that there would be a tour of the sewage treatment plant in June.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the smells. Mr. Chimento said that he could not guarantee that there would be no smells, because when the solid sludge is removed from the system, the doors are opened up. He said that he did not know of any wastewater treatment plant that does not have this problem.

Mr. Hempstead asked about water conservation and said that he felt that it was not fair to have everyone pay the same flat fee for the water use age. He asked if there was a plan to put this in effect. Mr. Chimento said that to be equitable across the board, the system has

worked. He pointed out that the First and Second Taxing District have control over how much water is used by the various residences. He added that the Taxing Districts do not release that information to the City. Discussion followed.

Mr. Kimmel asked if there was any leverage over the two Taxing Districts. Mr. Chimento said that his department coordinates with them because of the need for repairs and such. However, there is nothing that could be used a leverage.

Mr. Igneri asked where the measuring is done. Mr. Chimento said that it was done when the water went into the residence.

Mr. Hempstead said that the First Taxing District has used the City for bonding purposes. Mr. Gildea agreed.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FY 2016-17 WPCA BUDGET PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (KIMMEL, KYDES, IGNERI, AND SACCHINELLI) AND ONE OPPOSED (HEMPSTEAD).**

**Closeout the following capital project, Health Department Security System Replacement with an available balance of \$6,400. (Account: 09152012-5777-C0552).**

**Resolution: Approve a special capital appropriation in the amount of \$6,400 to fund HVAC repairs at the Health Department building. (Account: 09162012-5777-C0453)**

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED BOTH ITEMS.**

Mr. Gildea came forward and said that the capital project has come in a bit higher and there was funding left from the security system replacement.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**CLOSEOUT THE FOLLOWING CAPITAL PROJECT, HEALTH DEPARTMENT SECURITY SYSTEM REPLACEMENT WITH AN AVAILABLE BALANCE OF \$6,400. (ACCOUNT: 09152012-5777-C0552).**

**RESOLUTION: APPROVE A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$6,400 TO FUND HVAC REPAIRS AT THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT BUILDING. (ACCOUNT: 09162012-5777-C0453)**

**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Receive Oak Hills Authority Monthly Financial Statement for March 31, 2016.**

Mr. Gilden said that Oak Hills seems to be doing much better than last year. He said that some of that was the reduction of the bond interest payments.

**Update on State Budget.**

Mr. Kimmel said that he would like to withdraw this item until next month as there is no new information available at this time.

**Resolution making appropriations for various public improvements aggregating \$29,034,000 for the 2016-2017 capital budget and authorizing the issuance of \$23,902,000 general obligation bonds of the city to meet certain appropriations in the 2016-2017 capital budget.**

**Resolution with respect to the authorization, issuance and sale of up to \$47,500,000 City of Norwalk general obligation refunding bonds, effective until December 31, 2016.**

Mr. Gilden came forward and explained that the first item would allow the City to take the budget authorized in April and appropriate it along with creating bonding authority. He added that the difference between the two numbers was because the WPCA did not need to bond for any projects. They have enough fund balance to cover any capital improvements. He explained that the City would be looking to get \$600,000 from a State grant.

Mr. Gilden said that every year, the financial advisor looks for ways to refund previous debt. There is a potential refund opportunity that is being reviewed.

Mr. Gilden said that both items would have to be approved by a Committee with the Council President, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Majority leader and the Minority leader in order to issue the bonds. Discussion followed.

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

**RESOLUTION MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AGGREGATING \$29,034,000 FOR THE 2016-2017 CAPITAL BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$23,902,000 GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE CITY TO MEET CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS IN THE 2016-2017 CAPITAL BUDGET.**

**RESOLUTION WITH RESPECT TO THE AUTHORIZATION, ISSUANCE AND SALE OF UP TO \$47,500,000 CITY OF NORWALK**

**GENERAL OBLIGATION REFUNDING BONDS, EFFECTIVE UNTIL  
DECEMBER 31, 2016.**

**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services