

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 13, 2017**

ATTENDANCE: Bruce Kimmel, Chair; John Kydes, Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Travis Simms

OTHERS: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Robert Barron, Finance Director; Dick Brescia, Parking Authority Chairman; Kathryn Hebert, Parking Authority Administrative Service Manager; Jeffrey Spahr, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kimmel called the meeting order at 7:09 p. m. A quorum was present

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No member of the public came forward.

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: MARCH 9, 2017

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 9, 2017 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.
** THE MOTIOIN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO TAKE ITEMS FIVE AND SIX ON THE AGENDA OUT OF ORDER.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**5. CLAIMS COMMITTEE: RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT; REVIEW AND APPROVE CLAIMS AS
REQUIRED FOR CLAIMS REPORT DATED: APRIL 13, 2017**

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REPORT ON THE APRIL 13, 2017 MONTHLY CLAIMS
REPORT
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED APRIL 13, 2017- RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS.

Ms. Biagiarelli came forward to present the narrative for the March 2017, Tax Collector's Report. She stated that through the end of March, 2017, we collected more than \$300 million, or 98.29% of our \$305 million adjusted tax levy. She stated that as of the end of March 2017, we collected in excess of \$15 million of our sewer use levy or 98.34%.She stated that through March, we collected nearly \$3.9 million in back taxes. We appear to be on target to meet or exceed our budgeted collection goals for this fiscal year.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that delinquent notices were issued at the end of February with a pay-by-date of March 15, 2017. She stated that we have collected in excess of \$2.5 million in past due business

personal property taxes through the direct involvement of the state marshals and our delinquent tax collector. She stated that we plan to work with the Recreation and Parks Department to ensure that residents are not able to receive resident beach passes unless their motor vehicle taxes are paid.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that a company called the Original Grasso Construction Company filed for federal bankruptcy protection in 2009. She stated that the company is still in bankruptcy and there are nine years of taxes due. The new entity that was awarded the City of Norwalk paving project bid on April 11 does not currently owe any property taxes although in the past, it has been late in paying property taxes to the City. She stated that this information was provided to the Common Council prior to April 11, 2017.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that the past due business personal property tax obligation of the Original Grasso Construction Company could not be included in any tax sale because the company owing the bill is in bankruptcy and tax sale is precluded in this situation. She stated that the tax collector's office did not compromise our position in any way or show favoritism or leniency to this entity.

7. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS - RECEIVE REPORTS AND DISCUSS: MARCH 31, 2017.

The monthly tax collector's reports were submitted.

4. DISCUSS AND APPROVE FY 2017-18 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET.

Ms. Kathryn Hebert and Mr. Dick Brescia came forward in favor of the item. Mr. Kimmel stated that revenues and expenses usually equal but that the Parking Authority budget has revenues that are \$300 thousand higher than expenses. Mr. Barron stated that it is best practice but not a requirement for the Parking Authority to have a ten percent fund balance. He stated that last year it had a 13% unrestricted fund position. He stated that the 13% will carry over to this year and it is not necessary to add an additional \$300 thousand in revenue to the balance.

Ms. Hebert stated that actual activity is up and parking rates are designed to create turnover in the South Norwalk area. Parking spots closer to businesses have higher rates than garages. This is done to create incentive for the public to park in the garages. Mr. Brescia stated that last year there were 22 thousand more parking activities over the previous year. This increase was after the parking rate increases were put in place. He stated that an increase in enforcement revenues led to an increase in revenues. He stated that in response to the increase enforcement, certain parking areas had meter hours cut back from ending at midnight to ending at 9:00 p. m.

Mr. Simms stated that he has heard from business owners stating that the parking rates were too high and that the maximum time limits on the meters were not long enough. He stated that the Parking Authority seems to have no trouble generating revenue each year and does not see a need to approve a budget with a \$300 thousand surplus.

Mr. Kimmel stated that he does not see how short time limits on parking meters and increases in rates helps local businesses. He stated we are trying to attract people to come and have lunch at local restaurants. Having them go out to fill the meter before they can finish a meal does not create that attraction.

- ** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO APPROVE FY 2017-18 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AND FORWARD IT TO THE COMMON COUNCIL.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. DISCUSS AND APPROVE FOI ACT LNDIGENCY POLICY

Mr. Jeffry Spahr came forward in favor of the item. He stated that people are charged for each sheet of paper when an FOI request is made. He stated that there are cases when a person making an FOI request claims to be indigent. He stated that it is not clear what qualifies an individual as indigent. A policy defining indigent would allow people qualifying to gain access to records they would not otherwise be able to access. He stated that a policy must be fair and objective. He stated that a policy may need to cap the number of pages an individual can request per day or in a certain period of time in order to prevent requests being put in every day for thousands of pages. He stated that the use of a straw man needs to be prevented.

Mr. Kimmel asked Mr. Spahr to come back before the committee in a month with more detail in the proposed policy. Mr. Spahr agreed to do so.

8. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THOMSON REUTERS WESTLAW FOR SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES RELATED TO LEGAL RESEARCH FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$78,446.00. ACCOUNT 010300-5234.

Mr. Spahr stated that the subscription provides city attorneys with research information. It billed based on the number of attorneys that will be using the software and is less expensive than purchasing the hardbound books that were used in the past.

- ** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THOMSON REUTERS WESTLAW FOR SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES RELATED TO LEGAL RESEARCH FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$78,446.00. ACCOUNT 010300-5234.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. RECEIVE OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY, 2017.

Mr. Barron stated that for the first eight months of this year, Oak Hills had \$10 thousand more revenue than expenses. In the same period last year, they had \$72 thousand more revenue than expenses. This year they have been spending more on staffing to provide a better customer experience. Significant work has been done on the course and they expect to see a significant increase revenues in May and during the upcoming season.

10. Receive Board of Estimate and Taxation Appropriations dated April 3, 2017.

The Board of Estimate and Taxation Appropriations dated April 3, 2017 were submitted.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney
Telesco Secretarial Services