

**CITY OF NORWALK  
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE  
APRIL 12, 2018**

**ATTENDANCE:** Gregory Burnett, Chair; Douglas Hempstead; John Kydes; John Ignieri; Travis Simms (7:11 p. m.); Faye Bowman (7:24 p. m.)

**STAFF:** Lunda Asmani; Management and Budgets; Lisa Biagiarelli; Fred Gildea Comptroller; Bruce Chimento, Director of Public Works

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mr. Burnett called the Roll. A quorum was present.

**3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No member of the public came forward.

**4. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

**February 15, 2018**

**\*\* MR. KYDES MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 15, 2018 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**February 22 2018**

Page 3 Change "does not support fully funding the Board of Education." To "does not support fully funding the Board of Education unless and until additional savings and revenue sources were found."  
Change "position to the Fire Department" to "position to the Finance Department"

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 22, 2018 MINUTES AS AMENDED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**March 8, 2018**

**\*\* MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 8, 2018 MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED WITH TWO VOTES IN FAVOR AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (MR. KYDES AND MR. HEMPSTEAD).**

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

**April 12, 2018**

Mr. Simms arrived to the meeting at 7:11 p. m.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that we have an abnormally high number of special requests. There were a number of overpayments made due to the changes in the federal tax code. She stated that there are seven special requests in excess of \$10,000.

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE THE CLAIMS REPORT WHICH INCLUDED SEVEN ITEMS IN EXCESS OF \$10,000.**

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

**6. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED APRIL 12, 2018- RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS.**

**7. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS - RECEIVE REPORTS AND DISCUSS:**

**March 31, 2018**

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that as of the end of March, we collected nearly \$307 million, or 98.52% of our adjusted tax levy. She stated that we also collected 86.63% of the year's Industrial Pretreatment Program fee on behalf of the Water Pollution Control Authority.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that compared with the prior fiscal year, we are slightly ahead with regard to current taxes and very slightly behind with regard to current sewer use collections. She stated that through March, we showed a net collection of more than \$3.3 million in back taxes, interest, lien fees and other fees. This amount is still significantly less than we collected last fiscal year at this time.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that our current collection percentages are overstated, because some of what we show as currently collectible revenue will have to be refunded within the next several months. She stated that many of the refunds are due to taxpayers have already been processed, and these collection figures are net of those that have already been returned.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that we sent delinquent notices at the end of February to taxpayers whose accounts were unpaid. Taxpayers had until March 15, 2018 to pay outstanding balances due in order to avoid placement of a lien continuing certificate on the land records.

Ms. Bowman arrived to the meeting at 7:24 p. m.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that in regards to the July 2018 tax sale, an initial set of letters was sent in November 2017 to owners of 144 properties, owing a total of just under \$2.5 million. This warning letter served as advance notice to taxpayers whose properties were affected. She stated that in February 2018, we added 29 more properties that fell within the criteria after missing their January 2018 payment at the conclusion of the second installment tax cycle.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that in February 2018, we also sent letters to 20 additional properties that were borderline or close to the criteria, in case we had to adjust it. She stated that it brought the total number of properties potentially involved to 193. It raised the dollar amount we sought to collect to about \$3.9 million. In early March, we added another 27 properties and the total collectible increased to \$4,598,644 due from 220 properties.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that we have already collected in excess of \$1.6 million. 36 accounts are already paid in full. We will be sending formal demands this week. The formal demand is the official start of the sale process. Those demands will have a pay-by date of the end of April. The sale will be held Monday, July 23, 2018. She stated that we expect to file the notices of sale on land records, and to put up the posting in the City Hall lobby, in early May. She stated that if taxpayers wish to keep their properties off the public list, payment would need to be made by the pay-by date on the demand.

Ms. Biagiarelli stated that maintaining a high current collection rate by efficiently enforcing collection of past due taxes allows our budget making authorities to set lower mill rates. There can be less of an allowance for anticipated uncollectibles in the coming fiscal year. She stated that she has been gratefully for the past support of elected and appointed policymakers when questioned about the policy reasons for delinquent enforcement mechanisms, such as the tax sale.

**8. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W RILLING, TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR GRANT FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT'S LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR 2018 LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (\$1,184,801- 2018 ENTITLEMENT)."**

Mr. Asmani stated that this is a catch up year. Typically we apply for and receive about \$615,000 to \$625,000 per year. Due to financial difficulties last year, the window in which we usually apply was closed. The State just reopened the window in March. Therefore, the dollar amounts that we are applying for now is almost two years of requests. We are requesting the maximum amount that we are allowed to request.

- \*\* MR. SIMMS MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W RILLING, TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FOR GRANT FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT'S LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND FOR 2018 LOCAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (\$1,184,801- 2018 ENTITLEMENT)."
- \*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**9. DISCUSS AND APPROVE FY 2018-19 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AS REVISED.**

Mr. Dick Brescia stated that the Courtesy Card Parking Violation Program was implemented July 1st and expanded on October 1st. He stated that the program involves offering an additional 20 minutes free parking on random streets and days to parkers who overstay their time. It is anticipated that by the end of the Fiscal Year the number of potential violation issuance will have decreased by about 7,000 tickets. Lost revenue will be about \$200,000 for an overall reduction of about 25%.

Ms. Katheryn Hebert stated that the parking turnover rate is important for the business community. We do not want to create a negative experience for parkers. We are seeing an increase in compliance with an increase in parking options and the use of the parking phone app. We are slowly building a more positive perception.

Mr. Bruce Chimento stated that the program was immediately successful and received numerous compliments directly and on social media.

Ms. Brescia stated that, through the Now Collaborative Business Marketing Program, we have been working with the business community to improve economic development in the long term in the downtown business districts. He stated that we have invested \$100,000 per year in a collaborative business marketing business startup called Norwalk Now. Ms. Hebert stated that we had an event called the Norwalk City Limits, which was very successful.

Ms. Hebert stated that we hope to provide Road Assistance and Ambassador Programs in FY 2019. She stated that the program would run Thursday to Saturday between 4 p. m. and midnight. We would direct people to local businesses or help them if they had car trouble.

Mr. Simms stated that there seems to be a large number of ticket violations in the SoNo area. Ms. Bowman stated that residents that need parking permits in the SoNo area are hurt by increases in the price of parking permits. Mr. Hempstead requested that a job description for the Ambassador position be forwarded to the committee.

**\*\* MS. BOWMAN MOVED TO APPROVE FY 2018-19 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET AS REVISED.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **10. DISCUSS AND APPROVE FY 2018-19 WATER POLLUTION AUTHORITY BUDGET.**

Mr. Chimento stated that the WPCA FY 2018-19 budget includes a \$17 rate increase for a single family residence and an overall blended rate increase of approximately 5% over the previous fiscal year. He stated that the WPCA has contracted with Mark McCormick to provide professional management services including the closeout of the OMI contract, procurement of a new operating agent, and other quality control reviews related to capital and operating projects.

Mr. Chimento stated that the WPCA is budgeted to receive \$157,831 in nitrogen credits. The WPCA will also receive \$421,020 in reimbursements for support services billed to the City and the City sewer use fee.

Mr. Chimento stated that we are currently handling 13 million gallons of water per day. 18 million gallons would be the maximum amount that we could handle, and we would be required to take action if we got to 90% of 18 million gallons. He stated that we have had a slight decrease in volume over the past few years. Developments such as the mall, have had little impact on overall volume.

**\*\* MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2018-19 WATER POLLUTION AUTHORITY BUDGET.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **11. RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION APPROPRIATIONS DATED APRIL 2, 2018**

Mr. Burnett stated that the special appropriation request is from the Police Department is in the amount of \$276,422 for the purchase of Tasers and body worn cameras. He stated that of this amount, \$196,536 will purchase 179 body worn cameras and \$78,886 will purchase 179 Tasers and cloud based storage. He stated that the items are being offered as a package and the funds will be drawn down from contingency funds.

Mr. Burnett stated that the purchase was originally planned for FY 2018-19. The Police Department was later informed that the special state reimbursement grant that would cover the \$196,536 for body cameras would be reduced from 100% to 50% effective July 1, 2018. In order to take advantage of the 100% reimbursement rate, this item was removed from the FY 2018-19 operating budget request and a special appropriation from contingency in FY 2017-18 is now being requested.

### **12. RECEIVE OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2018**

Mr. Burnett stated that he would like Oak Hills to come before this committee to report on the loan payments that are required.

### **13. ADJOURNMENT**

\*\* MR.IGNERI MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney  
Telesco Secretarial Services