

BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION MEETING ACTIONS

**MAY 2, 2005
CITY OF NORWALK REGULAR MEETING**

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Alex Knopp

Gregory Burnett

Tim Buzzee

Tanya Court

James Clark

Ron Coley

Also present were: Pam Stark, City Clerk; Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Ann Twomey, Director of Management of Budgets

Mr. Burnett called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

FEBRUARY 7, 2005 – REGULAR MEETING

**** MR. CLARK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED**

**** MR. COLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

APRIL 5, 2005 – REGULAR MEETING

**** MR. CLARK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED**

**** MR. COLEY SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH FOUR VOTES IN FAVOR AND ONE ABSTENTION
(MR. BUZZEE)**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (SECTION A)

List of Resolutions

Advertised Items – 6 : The City Clerk read the items into the record as follows.

Report on Special Appropriations

Justification/ Back-up material

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$5,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Town Clerk's Office to for an expected shortfall in the postage account due to the 2004 election and a backlog of returned mail. (Account No. 01-0500-5211).

o Ms. Twomey updated on this item as it was outlined.

Mr. Burnett asked if the Town Clerk's office just picked up work.

The representative present on this matter stated there is ongoing work. He stated that extra staff was hired. It was found they were eleven months behind, but there has been an influx of business of over 40%. But the postage account is in arrears due to the 2004 election and a backlog of returned mail.

Mr. Clark asked if the backlog would be under control soon. The response was that yes, he expected it would be within a month's time. But this depended on staffing.

**** MS. COURT MOVED TO ACCEPT THE APPROPRIATION**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$31,176 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Public Works Department to pay for a shortfall in utility accounts due the severe winter. (Account No. Various).

o Ms. Twomey said this request needed to be withdrawn.

**** MR. CLARK MOVED TO WITHDRAW THE ITEM**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$16,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Fire Department to pay for a shortfall in utility accounts due the severe winter. (Account No. 01-3153-5246).

o Ms. Twomey said this request was similar to item #2 in reference to the fuel account and the cost of fuel. She noted a lot of accounts were over and they wanted to take care of the Fire Department. She updated that research was done to determine if the bills were correct, but they still needed \$17,500.00.

o Mr. Hamilton said they had a new Fire Chief Dennis McCarthy who began in the position today. He was present tonight.

Mr. Burnett asked if the amount being recommended was \$17,500 instead of the advertised amount of \$16,000. Ms. Twomey said that was correct.

**** MR. CLARK MOVED TO ACCEPT AND APPROVE THE AMENDED AMOUNT OF \$17,500.00 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$235,798 be and the same is hereby transferred from Undesignated Fund Balance Police Department to pay for seven new police vehicles. (Account No. 01-3022-5731).

Mr. Hamilton said this budget was approved for 2005-2006. They originally had monies for seven (7) new police cruisers. There was final action by the board and the projection

was to take funding out of next year's budget and pre-fund it for this year. This will allow delivery of the vehicles earlier. He noted the request was recommended since it was a prudent thing to do and have the cruisers in service as soon as possible.

**** MR. BUZZEE MOVED TO APPROVE**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$96,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Undesignated Fund Balance to the Recreation and Parks Department to pay for Maintenance Vehicles. (Account No. 01-6031-5732; 01-6031-5735).

Mr. Hamilton said that as part of deliberations on the budget, the board elected to remove \$96k for recreation and parks vehicles and equipment from next year's budget and pre-approve it for this year.

Mayor Knopp arrived at 8:30 p.m.

**** MR. BUZZEE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE REQUEST**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mayor Knopp introduced the new Fire Chief McCarthy. He expressed that they were pleased to have him. He was officially sworn in this week and he looked forward to working with him. He noted he would meet with his staff shortly to review key issues.

6. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$116,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Undesignated Fund Balance to a Special Revenue Fund for the Summer Youth Employment Program. (Account No. 35-0190-4836).

Mayor Knopp spoke about this item. He said that in dealing with issues of youth violence, there needs to be a 4-prong approach. And establishing the special task force has been successful in preventing anymore incidents as seen in past months. In addition, they have sought support for youth programs in the past, but most of those programs have been abolished. So this leaves the city on its own. But since there were no Weed & Seed funds available, they were left to their own devices to expand youth programs in Norwalk, so that is the reason for the \$116k appropriation that will allow an additional (100) jobs this summer that will pay minimum wage for six (6) weeks. He stated that they have had beneficial meetings with other city services and donations have also been forthcoming. But the request is to fund (100) jobs and if that amount is matched, then they would be able to fund another 200 jobs. He expressed that although this may not be enough jobs, it will help the problem. So they were seeking to get the additional funds and provide the jobs.

Mayor Knopp said he asked every city department to identify at least one position that should be filled by a youth. The employment opportunities will consist of varied positions within the city. He further spoke to trying to create partnerships that was a good way to involve the community and get kids interested in job experiences and earn money

at the same time. But the focus is on 14 to 18 year olds for the summer. He further highlighted details of the summer program. He relayed that they had a great kickoff for the program with everyone involved.

Mr. Clark commented that it seemed like this was an excellent approach and he commended the Mayor for initiating the program.

**** MAYOR KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE THE REQUEST**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

It was stated that the board would go out of order of the agenda and take up the Fire Overtime matter under Financial Reports– see below.

TRANSFER AGENDA (SECTION B)

Ms. Twomey reviewed the following items:

HEALTH:- \$5,000 REQUEST. She noted this was not an unusual amount.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: - \$15,000 REQUEST. She noted this amount would be to pay for other professional services. The account is used for testing and promotions and it's under budgeted.

COMBINED DISPATCH: - \$10,000 REQUEST. The amount will pay for needed repairs.

DPW: - \$54,056 REQUEST. The amount is needed for gas and fuel.

Catch Basins – \$10,000 request. They need the additional funding to complete work for spring.

Disposal- \$17,000 request. This amount will cover leaf and tree removal. And there is an ongoing problem with the roof leaking. It was a prefabricated building that was previously purchased, but the skylight is in disrepair and causing extensive damage, so they are trying to avoid more damage.

Mr. Coley questioned the two bids submitted. He asked why the lowest bid wasn't taken. It was stated that it was difficult to get people to bid on the work because it's a specialty roof. So they took the higher bid because it included replacement of the flashing, but the lower bid didn't cover that.

Mr. Coley asked how bids were obtained. The response was that they try to get at least three different bids.

Mr. Buzzee asked if they needed additional repairs to the building. The response was that they will have to replace the ceiling tiles and drywell. But this can be done from next year's budget.

LIBRARY: - \$6,150 REQUEST. Ms. Twomey said this request was to pay for the last order of fuel oil.

Mayor Knopp asked about the Board of Education budget for fuel. Mr. Hamilton said he didn't have an update for this year yet, but he will research it.

**** MAYOR KNOPP MOVED TO APPROVE ALL THE TRANSFERS AS THEY WERE REQUESTED**

Mayor Knopp commented that they successfully completed the installation of the 911-SYSTEM. It was tested today and it's in operation. And there was no interruption of service.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OTHER BUSINESS (SECTION C)

No discussion.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (SECTION D)

Oak Hills Park Financial Status – March, 2005

Mr. Hamilton commented the status was the same as last month. It was updated through March. He noted that May and June would be critical months due to active golf season.

Summary of Special Appropriation – FY 2004-05

Mr. Hamilton said this item was just a compilation of all that was approved.

Status of Contingency – FY 2004-05

Ms. Twomey noted there was enough to cover the Police Department.

Financial Reports

Year- to date Capital Budget Report (FY 2005)

Year-to-date Operating Budget Report (FY 2005)

Mr. Burnett mentioned that it might be a good idea to review the line items to be sure there was nothing out of sync.

Mr. Hamilton said the police accounts/overtime should be updated shortly.

He also noted that they were expecting reimbursement from FEMA for snow removal.

Board of Education Budget Report (FY 2005)

Mr. Burnett reviewed a letter received from Dr. Corda, Superintendent of Schools.

Mayor Knopp said the BOE ended the year with a surplus. He explained that generally funds go back to the general fund, but in previous years, they worked out an arrangement with how the surplus would be utilized. So this year, they recommended trying to dedicate the surplus funds towards operations of the BOE and the budget anticipates a \$55k surplus. So Dr. Corda asked what they suggested they do with the surplus. This was reviewed with people on the BOE Committee and the memo outlined how the central office can identify the surplus and set it aside. The bottom line was that they will adopt a budget reconciliation, so that at least \$55k will be returned to them at the end of the year. This will assist in the anti-gang effort in terms of enforcing school security. He noted that Dr. Corda agreed this effort should be pursued. So he hoped to transfer the existing funds for better utilization.

Mayor Knopp also spoke about off-duty officers for school events. They are looking to allocate extra payment towards a school police officer.

Mayor Knopp also updated that they applied for a "Safe Schools Grant". He said he met with a key person that leads up the program in Washington, but he was told there were no new applications being accepted.

Mr. Hamilton said they were pleased with the response regarding the budget appropriation, but he was told if the surplus funds could be allocated sooner, that would be good. He noted they will continue to work with the BOE on this matter.

Salary Accounts – no comments.

Fire Overtime

Mr. Hamilton said they monitored this department the same as the Police Department. They projected a fairly small shortfall between regular and overtime wages where they transfer funds at the end of the year. He said he hoped the two would balance out, but at this time, there would be a shortfall of \$100k between overtime and regular wages. So it has grown a bit and there have been some retirements that caused severance payments. However, they were comfortable with the projection and there is no need for an additional appropriation at the end of the year.

Mayor Knopp said that Fire Chief McCarthy will review the budget situation and meet with staff. He expected they should have a good reading from him soon, as well as his thoughts on any improvements or changes.

Dispatch Overtime - no comments.

Police Overtime - no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

** MR BUZZEE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Pam Stark, City Clerk

