

BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION MEETING ACTIONS

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
MAY 5, 2008**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chairman; Stuart Wells; Leo Mellow; Jim Feigenbaum; Jim Clark; Michael Lyons; Mayor Moccia (7:40).

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Ossie Lewis, Manager of Budgets & Systems; Mary Roman, City Clerk.

OTHERS: Karen Doyle-Lyons, Registrar of Voters; Larry Reilly, Assistant Fire Chief; Hal Alvord, Director of Public Works; Frank Favano, Police Department; Lisa Biagarelli, Tax Collector.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by the Chairman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MARCH 19, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING

**** MR. WILMS MOVED APPROVAL.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MARCH 26, 2008 PUBLIC HEARING

The following corrections were made: On page 1, Mr. Feigenbaum's name was added under attendance for the Board of Estimate & Taxation. Under "Public Hearing", 1st sentence "Board" was added to the end of the sentence.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

MARCH 31, 2008 SPECIAL MEETING

**** MR. WILMS MOVED APPROVAL.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$60,970 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Registrar of Voters to cover the cost of administering the Presidential primary election in February. (Account No. various).

Mr. Lewis reviewed his memo and recommended approval.

Mrs. Doyle Lyons said that the Republican primary requires 71,876 for the payroll budget. They have bills for their moving company that have not been paid since February. Their operating budget has been depleted and without the funds being reimbursed, they will not be able to pay their operating bills and the moving company. She reviewed various expenses, such as training sessions.

** MR. WILMS MOVED: RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$60,970 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Registrar of Voters to cover the cost of administering the Presidential primary election in February. (Account No. various).

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

At 7:40 p.m., Mayor Moccia arrived at the meeting.

2. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$237,586 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to cover severance payments. (Account No. Various).

Mr. Lewis reviewed his memo and recommended approval. Mr. Hamilton said they don't include any money for severance payments when putting budgets together, but they do include money in the contingency fund for police and fire severance payments.

Mr. Favano said this resolution was prepared by the Finance Department and reflects everything that was agreed to.

It was noted that the maximum DROP is a 5-year period. Mr. Favano said beginning next year, the DROP plan goes from 100 to 90.

** MR. WILMS MOVED: RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$237,586 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to cover severance payments. (Account No. Various).

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$150,583 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to pay for an anticipated shortfall in overtime wages. (Account No. Various).

Mr. Lewis reviewed his memo and recommended approval. Mr. Hamilton noted that this request is less than in prior years.

Mayor Moccia said that the reduction in overtime and the addition of three officers is good news. There will always be overtime in the police department. He thanked Mr. Hamilton and Chief Rilling for working to reduce overtime while putting more officers on the street. Hopefully asset forfeiture funds can be used for overtime.

** MR. WILMS MOVED: RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$150,583 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to pay for an anticipated shortfall in overtime wages. (Account No. Various).

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$20,000 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to purchase Uniforms for new recruits and replace uniforms and equipment damaged in the line of duty. (Account No. 3061-5276).

Mr. Lewis reviewed his memo and recommended approval.

** MR. LYONS MOVED: RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$150,583 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Police Department to pay for an anticipated shortfall in overtime wages. (Account No. Various).

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$156,574 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Fire Department to cover severance payments. (Account No. various).

Mr. Lewis reviewed his memo and recommended approval. Mr. Hamilton applauded the fire department for keeping control over overtime.

** MR. LYONS MOVED: RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$156,574 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Fire Department to cover severance payments. (Account No. various).

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADOPTION OF THE FINAL FY 2008-09 OPERATING BUDGET AND SET TAX RATES

Mr. Hamilton reviewed minor changes due to the fact that the legislature decided to keep the biennial budget in place. The changes are not significant. They made a reduction in the Pequot grant, an adjustment in the pilot program for low income housing and an adjustment to exempt property. The reductions in revenue total \$38,068; the reductions in expenditures total \$50,763. The overall budget is \$273,684,634, an increase of \$11,300,000 or a 4.2% expenditure increase. Total tax revenue would be \$236,921,000, an increase of 5.39%. The 4th district tax rate would be set at 22.547 mills, an increase of

3.79%. They did not add the GIS position, and Mr. Hamilton does not recommend it. They should take a wait and see attitude at this point.

The Chairman said they have worked on this for a long time and have heard from many people. It has been an honor to serve with this Board. They have been able to come in under the Council's cap and kept the tax rate at 3.8%. He was pleased that they took the recession into account and he feels very good about this budget.

Mayor Moccia said the Board did a fantastic job, but the budget is under his administration. He would like to come in with no increase, but given the times, he is pleased with this budget. There is no easy balancing act in today's economy. This budget balances the needs of road maintenance, education, public safety, etc. He cannot remember a Board of Estimate working more in unison than this one. This city work well and so does this Board of Estimate.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO ADOPT THE FINAL 2008-09 BUDGET AND SET THE TAX RATES AS OUTLINED IN THE HANDOUT TONIGHT.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Members signed the rate bill.

TRANSFER AGENDA

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFERS AS LISTED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

OTHER BUSINESS

1. RESOLUTION, authorizing the Issuance of \$5,920,000 Bonds of the City to meet an appropriation for Infrastructure and Traffic Improvements in the Reed-Putnam Redevelopment Area and Pending the Issuance Thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memo and recommended approval.

Mayor Moccia said it is important to understand that this is part of the LDA and the infrastructure work. This is a commitment made 7 years ago by the Council that authorized these funds based on the agreement in the LDA. It is important to go forward. It will go to the Finance Committee and then to the Common Council. He pointed out that the Chairman of the Board of Estimate was on the Council and voted in favor of this seven years ago.

The Chairman said he agreed with Mayor Moccia and said when he was on the Council he had voted for this. This is absolutely appropriate to support this.

Mr. Clark said the \$4,700,000 that will be generated annually was important to point out. It will help the City tremendously.

Mr. Sheehan said that, in addition to the money being pledged by the City, the work currently being done is through an infrastructure state grant.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED THE RESOLUTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. RESOLUTION, Making Appropriations for various Public Improvements aggregating \$29,716,500 for the 2008-09 Capital Budget and Authorizing the Issuance of \$27,088,500 General Obligation Bonds of the City to meet certain Appropriations in the 2008-09 Capital Budget.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memo and recommended approval. He said that the interest rate is project at approximately 4.1%. Their bonds should sell without a problem.

The Chairman noted that they don't need credit insurance because of their AAA rating.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED THE RESOLUTION.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Approve FY 2008-09 Proposed Parking Authority Budget.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memo and recommended approval.

Mr. Alvord said this will be the second year that they have been able to operate in the black because they eliminated the project deficit, stabilized the rate structure and stabilized operations.

Mr. Wells said security and maintenance are critical elements.

Mayor Moccia said they don't necessarily have to make a large profit. Generating income to put back into security and maintenance is the way to go. The fees are very reasonable. The Parking Authority has done a good job of moderating its fees. LAZ has improved its service, although they have a way to go.

Mr. Alvord said that Kathryn Hebert has done a very good job.

Mr. Wells said it is important to have a fee-based parking system.

The Chairman said there has been a real improvement – keep up the good work.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2008-09 PROPOSED PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4. Approve the Proposed FY 2008-09 WPCA Budget.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FY 2008-09 WPCA BUDGET OF \$12,868,473.**

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memo and recommended approval.

Mr. Alvord said that the WPCA has had the advantage of having functioned longer on a more financially stable basis than the Parking Authority. It has been easy working with this board. It is very healthy financially and has a large fund balance which will be needed over the next few years for a plant upgrade.

The Chairman said he and Mayor Moccia are on this board, and there is rigorous financial planning. The 5% increase over the next few years will completely fund the infrastructure upgrade needed.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

5. RESOLUTION, authorizing the reduction of the capital appropriation for the Rogers-Ritch-Merritt House by \$115,000 (Account No. 0903-6310-5777-C0275).

6. RESOLUTION, appropriating \$35,000 for Mill Hill Buildings (Repairs to Little Red Schoolhouse at Mill Hill). (Account No. 0908-6310-5777-C0276).

7. RESOLUTION, appropriating \$20,000 for Mill Hill Cemetery Restoration. (Account No. 0908-6310-5777-C0457).

8. RESOLUTION, appropriating \$40,000 for Norwalk Museum HV AC System for Museum Archives and Museum Collection Care and Restoration. (Account No. 0908-6310-5777 -C0449).

9. RESOLUTION, appropriating \$20,000 for Pine Island Cemetery (Security Lighting). (Account No. 0908-6310-5777 -C0459).

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ABOVE-LISTED RESOLUTIONS.**

Mr. Hamilton reviewed his memos.

Mr. Park said that the Historical Commission formed a special committee to look into where this money should be reallocated.

Mayor Moccia said he will be sending the letter out. The project has not been abandoned. Clay Fowler has allowed these trailers to be stored on his land at no cost. The trailers are rotting. They will work with the Historical Commission to see what they can do. A decision will have to be made on this house at some time.

Mr. Park said they are trying to form a committee for this house.

The Chairman said he was on the Council previously and voted in favor of the \$50,000 to take this house down; he will now vote the opposite way.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. Approve Suspense List.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed Ms. Biagarelli's memo.

** MR. WILMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUSPENSE LIST.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Biagarelli said they will have a tax sale. There are 98 listings. They collected \$2,300,000 from accounts that were delinquent. The sale will be July 14th; they anticipate there will only be approximately 30 listings at that time. They are working on publicity.

The Chairman said he was really pleased that Ms. Biagarelli is moving forward with this again. Ms. Biagarelli said she does not remove anyone from the sale unless they pay in fully by July. In addition, there is a six month redemption period.

Mr. Clark commended Ms. Biagarelli for the work she has done. Ms. Biagarelli said everyone in her department is very good at what they do.

11. Review FY 2007-08 Pro Forma Fund Balance Projection.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed this document and said they expect to be pretty much right on budget. They expect to use their planned \$3,000,000 draw-down fund balance. In the current year, they expect to come in short on the real estate conveyance tax but expect to come in over on tax collection.

** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.

** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Telesco
Telesco Secretarial Services