

CITY OF NORWALK
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
January 30, 2019

PRESENT: Frances DiMeglio, Chair; David Davidson; Brian Baxendale; Mike Mushak; Tammy Langalis; Nora King (left early); Steve Ferguson

STAFF: Mike Wrinn

OTHERS: Mickey Docimo; Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Lisa Burns; Vanessa Valdares; Paul Sotnik; Drew Berndlmaier; Deborah Goldstein; Ralph Kolb; Alan Lo; Neil Rennie; Tim Sheehan; Ken Hughes; Karen DelVecchio; Jeff Oduro

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. DiMeglio called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. DEPARTMENTS

1. Police Department & Combined Dispatch – Mickey Docimo, Administrative Manager of the Police Department, introduced himself to the commissioners. Chief Kulhawik began the presentation.

Scuba Dry Suits and Animal Control Units – Chief Kulhawik noted that the animal control vans were in the operating budget but Mr. Barron asked that it be on the Capital Budget, as it is an item that is kept over 10 years. There was a discussion of the current situation which was that there is only 1 van for 2 animal control officers. One of the officers uses a police car but that is not the ideal situation. He explained that they do have scuba dry suits but they are past their useful life. Norwalk is the city that is the first responder in the area if a dive is necessary. There was a discussion about the draft Plan of Conservation and Development (“POCD”) codes that were used in the Capital Budget which Chief Kulhawik said that he used at Mr. Barron’s suggestion. There was also a discussion about some projects that were in the out years, including the Firing Range and the scanner system. There was a discussion about funding from Justice Assistance Grants (“JAG”). Chief Kulhawik also noted that the city had turned down the 2018 JAG grant when the federal government asked the city to sign a waiver that it would turn over certain records to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”), if requested. There was then a discussion of how many police officers are in the department. There was also a discussion about community policing which was in the operating budget. There was then a discussion about illegal apartments which Chief Kulhawik said were generally handled by the Fire Department.

Communication Console – There was a discussion about the large amount of money being requested in the following year and whether it could be broken down. Chief Kulhawik said that part of it was but that the large request next year was for the infrastructure. The manufacturer said that it could not be broken down further. Presently they are replacing r fixing equipment but that the manufacturer does not support what they have. He did note that other departments’ radios would also be able to “trunk” on this system and they could also piggyback on a state system. Mr. Mushak thanked the Chief for all of the work that the department does. Mr. Davidson said that since he would not be at the Capital Budget hearings the following year, he would recommend that

the commissioners urge the Police Department to obtain funds for 2 new projects from the forfeiture funds.

2. Operations and Public Works (Includes WPCA) (“DPW”) – Lisa Burns, principal engineer of the department, introduced her team to the commissioners. Since there is no chief of the department she is filling in on the engineering side. There was a discussion about the James Street Bridge for which the department was not requesting money in this cycle.

Bridge Repairs – Ms. Burns explained that they should review the backup for this item. She then said they rely on the state’s bridge inspectors to notify them of the results. Once they find a bridge that is deficient they will begin the process of funding the repairs with 80% federal money and the rest is local funding. Certain small had not been inspected since 1991. There were 26 bridges, 17 of which needed repairs as soon as possible. She explained how they had arrived at their numbers. She also noted that they were contracting a company to do inspections. They would have specific costs in June. This funding is to get started on the most urgent bridges. There was a discussion about different types of bridges and culverts. There was a discussion about whether the department does the work in-house or contract the work out. It is looked at on a case-by-case basis. The state had told them that some of the bridges were urgent.

Structural Inspections and Repairs – Ms. Burns explained that there was no longer a structural engineer because there was not enough for a full-time engineer. They would rather pay for someone on an as needed basis. There was a discussion about a project on Washington Street, near Main and North Water Street for which they hired a structural engineer. There was a discussion about procurement guidelines and how the selections for consultants were done.

West Cedar Bridge – Ms. Burns gave a status of the project which included how many proposals they received for the design. Ms. Valadares explained that the process was a long one and how it would work. She noted that the whole project would take 3 years.

d. Fleet Replacement – Ms. Burns said she had worked on this for 15 years and that DPW is responsible for all vehicles except for the Fire Department which has its own mechanic. She discussed the history of the funding of this program and noted that funding had been dropping over the last 3-4 years. She explained that by investing in the fleet on the capital side, it kept operating costs flat on the operating side. There was a discussion about what had happened in the last few years with funding by the Planning Commission and Common Council. The commissioners asked Ms. Burns what the priority vehicles were. There was a discussion about the storm drainage camera truck and whether it could be multi-use. It is used year round. There was also a discussion about what last year’s funding was spent on and then a review of what was a priority in this Capital Budget. There was a discussion about the increase in funding requested. Ms. Burns said that some of the increase was because of the steel tariffs which increased the cost of many vehicles. She also said that they were looking closer at the out years and realizing what funding was needed.

Pavement Management Program, Sidewalks and Curbing – Citywide, Footpath Replacement and General Drainage – Ms. Burns asked that these all be discussed together. She explained that the city cannot pave the streets without fixing the curbs and sidewalks. While they are repaving a street, if they find a storm drain that needs to be replaced, the funds will come from the general drainage fund. There was a discussion of what DPW received in the previous Capital Budget cycle. There was then a discussion about a project on Rt. 136, near Highland and Covewood Avenues, which Mr. Berndlmaier explained that he was going before the Common Council for a special appropriation. There was a discussion about why the Footpath Replacement

request went up in later years. Ms. Burns noted that for paving, DPW would support other departments as well. There was a discussion about how DPW coordinated with the utility companies before roads were paved. There was also a discussion about which footpaths were chosen to do first.

Dredging – Marinas and Easements and Stormwater Quality Management and Norwalk River Flood Control – Ms. Burns said that this was all Watercourse Maintenance and should be discussed together. She also said that the department was working to address the concerns and complaints from around the city about the flooding. They had created categories and sub categories to deal with these issues to alleviate flooding. There was a discussion about dredging which Ms. Burns said she would like to deal with separately because of the flooding issues. There was a discussion about Water Pollution Control Authority pump station which Ms. Burns reminded them that was an enterprise fund, separate from the General Fund. Those funds could not be used for any other city projects. There was some discussion about the Perry Avenue project. They were hoping that they could get it done so that it would not be in the Army Corp. of Engineers Reports. Ms. Burns noted that they had created a place holder in the later years for Coastal Resiliency as climate change worsens. There have been preliminary discussions with Planning and Zoning for public properties.

Tree Planting General – At this point, Ms. Burns said that the next set of items would be discussed by Alan Lo, the head of Building Management. Mr. Sotnik explained that there is a Tree Advisory Committee which looked at the city as a whole to decide where trees should be planted. Mr. Mushak noted that he had worked with DPW to plant 50 trees down Martin Luther King Boulevard. Mr. Sotnik noted that with low funding for tree plantings, the city was at risk for losing its “Tree City” designation. Some areas of the city need more trees. There was some discussion of tree removal from the Shore Haven area, etc. It was noted that the Common Council had reduced this Capital Budget item in the previous year.

East Avenue Reconstruction – Ms. Burns gave an update on this project. There was a discussion about the funding which she noted had to be ready to be paid to the state for the grant. Mr. Mushak noted that the utilities should be buried underground from Exit 16 through Van Zant St. There was a discussion about Exit 16 also becoming a Diverging Diamond Interchange which will allow for flow off the highway. There was a discussion about the 3rd Taxing District’s involvement. Deborah Goldstein spoke on behalf of the 3rd Taxing District and said she was not against utilities underground. However, they don’t have enough staff to take care out of it so they have to hire outside people. They also have not had enough time to do an analysis.

At 8:42 p.m., the commissioners decided to take a break for 5 min.

FHWA Local Match – Ms. Burns explained that the city submitted 5 projects for funding. West COG called for 5 projects which DPW submitted for funding. Ms. Burns discussed various projects that were sent out for funding. Some were projects with the Redevelopment Agency. Mr. Berndlmaier gave an update on a project on Rt. 136 and he explained how they were hoping to get this grant to help with it. There was then a discussion about the fact that there are only 2 crosswalks on East Avenue. For the projects under this heading, the Capital Fund request is for the city’s half of the matching grant. The city has to show that they are requesting the money so that they are more likely to receive it.

Glover Ave. Infrastructure Improvements – Ms. Burns then gave a status update which indicated that the city would be working with the state on a project on Grist Mill and Glover Avenue.

There was a brief discussion about the Infrastructure Reinvestment (Capital Reserve) which the DPW was not requesting funding for in this budget season.

LED Street Light Conversion – Mr. Sotnik gave an explanation of this project. It is not replacing traffic signals, but rather, street lights within the Eversource territory in Norwalk. The estimated savings in electricity was \$500,000 per year, gross. An inventory has been done of the entire city's street lights. There was a discussion about doing the work in phases for design and implementation. Ms. DiMeglio asked Mr. Sotnik to submit this to the Planning and Zoning Department and Mr. Ferguson asked to include priorities. There was also a discussion about the type of lighting installed by the 3rd taxing district which are not night sky compliant and are distracting to drivers. Ms. Burns also briefly discussed the later year projects including rights of way policy study (all utilities). There was a discussion about funding it earlier or having another department handle the policy. Ms. Burns agreed to move this up. Ms. Burns discussed state projects (non-participating city standard amenities) that she believed the city should participate in. She said that she would like to set aside money for these projects, in case, they cannot get the state to fund some parts of it that should be completed as well.

Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) – There was a discussion as to why the WPCA comes to these meetings which Ms. Burns explained.

- a. Collection Systems Rehabilitation – Ralph Kolb continued the presentation with a status update of this project. He said they had received bids last week for systems throughout the city. He explained some issues that they had on some repairs on Main St. as well as other repairs. There was a discussion as to when the projects would begin.
- b. Pump Station Upgrade – Mr. Kolb gave a status update on this item for Keeler Brook and Five Mile River. They have also applied for FEMA grants. There was a discussion about where the stations are located, which are actually underground.

There was also a discussion about a place holder of Supplemental Treatment Upgrades.

City Hall Repairs and Improvements – At this point in the meeting, Alan Lo came in and introduced Mike Sgobbo's replacement, Neil Rennie, who continued the presentation.

Various City Buildings – General Capital Repairs – Mr. Rennie explained how they were refurbishing various mechanicals in buildings including elevators for City Hall to comply with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requirements. He said that they had not been prioritized on the list. He described several other sites around the city that needed repairs. Mr. Lo said that this funding is for unexpected capital repairs. Sometimes they use the money.

Energy Conservation – Various Locations – This funding is for replacement of lighting fixtures to upgrade them. Mr. Lo explained that sometimes they receive funding from EverSource but it is not 100% so they must contribute some money.

Branch Library – Mr. Rennie explained that the fire alarm panel had to be replaced since it was old and parts were no longer readily available. They were also upgrading fluorescent lighting with LEDs. Mr. Lo noted that although technology makes things easier, necessary upgrades are made on a shorter schedule.

Main Library – Repairs and Improvements – There was a discussion about the library moving locations. Mr. Rennie noted that there were amounts for new carpets. Mr. Davidson

suggested that they wait for updates from the library staff on the next night since the library would be redeveloped soon. These upgrades could be incorporated into that project.

Various Buildings – Environmental Remediation – Mr. Rennie described projects that had to be remediated.

Nathaniel Ely – He then gave a brief status update of this project which was to replace the gym air handler which was in the existing building.

Police Facilities – Mr. Rennie explained that they are requesting funds to replace roof top units which are 15 years old. The refrigerant is being phased out and repairs are becoming more frequent.

Ben Franklin – Mr. Rennie said that the roof, which is 28 years old, should be replaced as well as the insulation to make it more energy efficient. There was also a discussion about the “bullet proof glass” at the Mayor’s office which Mr. Lo said was not bullet-proof glass.

Health Department – Mr. Rennie said there was a lot of issues with the mechanicals in the Health Department building. They would like to upgrade systems which the Health Department had previously been managing themselves.

Safety Ladders – Mr. Rennie explained that these were ladders to get to mechanicals and not for people. They would meet OSHA requirements.

3. Redevelopment Agency – Tim Sheehan began the presentation with a brief description of Affordable Housing and that it was a yearly Capital Budget request. He then discussed the Urban Core which was based around the train station. He discussed the parking lot project on the New Haven side of the train station. The area is disorganized and making the area more trans modal with many different types of transportation in the area. There was a discussion about whether this project should be done by the Parking Authority. There was a lengthy discussion about what the project would look like, including reviewing the plans for it. Mr. Sheehan then discussed the Walk Bridge project, including the staging of the project in the IMAX area. He also discussed what would happen once it was completed. He said they would need to have a plan to send to the state as to how the area should be left relative to grading, etc. They would also do some work on the Harbor Loop Trail which included making parts of it like a boardwalk, as well as making better connections. It should seem like 1 unified system and not different parks. Mr. Sheehan also passed out information to the commissioners and said he would get them more. There was then a lengthy discussion about monies in other accounts that was not being used. Mr. Sheehan then discussed historic façade especially within the Wall Street area. He thought that there should be grants to improve the front ones. He thought that the Redevelopment Agency should not pay for all of it. There was then a discussion that the agency had received in 2017 which Mr. Davidson said had not been used. Mr. Sheehan said it had been. There was then a discussion about 50 Washington St. which Mr. Sheehan said the bids had come back.

4. Recreation and Parks – Ken Hughes, the Acting Director of the department began the presentation with a brief update of West Rocks and the bathrooms at Nathan Hale. He then continued with a discussion of the Capital Budget funding for the vehicles that the Recreation and Parks Department needed to replace, one of them was a mower. There was then a discussion about the basketball and tennis courts at Norwalk High. The under court drainage is broken but they are working on it. However, they do have to replace them because of the problem underneath. He also discussed the courts at Mathews which are the only lit courts in the city. He then discussed

park playgrounds and noted that the last sand one, at San Vincenzo, which the department had requested funds for in the prior year. They did not receive any funds. He also mentioned a couple of other parks that had recently been re-done. He also discussed the department's request for funding for vandalism at the parks. He then discussed Cranbury Parks. He explained that they were working on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant bathrooms for the Gallaher mansion which would be ready for wedding season in April. He also noted that there was water leaking which would have to be fixed as well. There was a discussion about whether it was worth spending approximately \$250,000 every 5 years for repairs on the mansion. Mr. Davidson asked that this item be placed on a Planning Commission agenda after the Capital Budget season has been completed. Mr. Baxendale requested a rate of return on investment for this item. Mr. Hughes continued the presentation with the department's request for window and door replacements at Calf Pasture Beach as well as repaving the parking lot. There was also a discussion about moving the gatehouse which would be better for residents and non-residents. The next Capital Budget request was for the Irving Freese Park. He explained how the project is broken out into 5 phases and what those phases were. The park will still be usable in between phases. There was a discussion about what was being replaced. Private contractors may take over portions of the project and pay the contractors directly. There was then a discussion on how projects were ranked. Mr. Hughes also continued with a discussion about the bathrooms at Nathan Hale. Mr. Hughes then discussed the Broad River Baseball Complex. There was then a discussion about the different types of turfs. Ms. DiMeglio said that she was concerned about the heat that was coming off of the turf and wondered about the cork fields. There was a discussion about the fertilizers being used. There was also a discussion about the use of the fields by sports. Mr. Hughes then discussed the yearly tree planting request from the Department. He also discussed the Testa Field Turf Replacement and the West Rocks Soccer field that is being designed now. There was a discussion about tournament play in Norwalk. There was then a discussion about buying properties around the school because parking was difficult. Mr. Hughes then discussed the Backstops and Fencing request which he noted was to maintain the fencing. Paving Sidewalk project was an item that was added just a few years ago so that the Department had the money for these types of projects. He acknowledged that they used the same contractors as DPW. Mr. Hughes then discussed the Parks Garage Capital Budget request. He said he was given some money last year but that it had not been spent. There was a discussion about some funds that been encumbered. There was also a question about having the ice rink again but Mr. Hughes did not think it would happen. The next item he discussed was Veterans Memorial Park and the building in the middle of the park which they were continuing to repair, including the copper roof. He said they could push it out. Mr. Hughes said that he was not sure what the Open Space Fund was and that he did not have access to it. Mr. Wrinn explained that the last time funds were used from it was for the White Barn Open Space. The next item was the turf softball fields which Mr. Hughes said the funds would be used for a feasibility study and design. The study would determine where the field would be built. The next item was Oyster Shell Park which still had things to be completed from the Master Plan.

5. Information Technology (IT) – Karen DelVecchio began the presentation with an introduction to members of Information Technology who would also be providing information to the commissioners. She explained how she broke down all of the various departments. There was a separate line for Public Safety, the Library and then all of the other departments. She began with describing how the city's website had to become ADA compliant especially for the visually impaired. There was a discussion about the priority which Ms. DelVecchio said was in no particular order. However, the ADA compliance they considered a priority since other municipalities were getting sued. She described the refresh rate, which was 3-5 years, for the city's computers and laptops. She did note that the request was slightly higher than last year because the IT department would now be taking care of the Health Department's computers as well. They had been refreshed erratically. There was also a discussion about buying vs. leasing. The Finance Department asked that they purchase them. Ms. DelVecchio said that all departments were now under the IT

Department jurisdiction except for the Board of Education. The next item that she discussed was the server and software license upgrade. Microsoft would not be servicing some of their software any longer because it was too old. She said this was a priority. Risk mitigation and information security was the next item that she discussed. There was a discussion about the amount for this request which Ms. DiMeglio thought was low. Ms. DelVecchio said they were also doing things under the Operating Budget. There was then a discussion about the city's firewall. The next item was for the phone system routers which they had requested funding for last year. She also discussed the phone system handset refresh project which had started two years ago. The next item was for software for the Special Event permit process. It would automate the intake process. Ms. King had been on the focus group for this project. The next item was systems management software would be used for the Health Department and the Library computers remotely. Ms. DelVecchio said that the next item could wait until next year and that was for A/V equipment. She also discussed the departments which could be upgraded. The next item was for the laptops in patrol cars which are upgraded every year. The police officers are now printing out in the cars such things as tickets, etc. The next item was for the Police Storage Area Network refresh. They currently have 52 terrabytes of data at the Police Dept. which equates to approximately 35 billion pieces of paper. They store a lot of images, videos, etc. This is a priority since it is almost full. There was a discussion of the backup for the Police Department's data. The switch upgrade device has to be upgraded as well. It will not be fast enough for the new storage area network. The next item she discussed was the Library and the public access computers. The request had gone down because usage of these computers has gone down. She noted that Christine Bradley, the director of the Library, could speak to them more about that on the following evening. She also said that the A/V equipment in the library could be put off if necessary. The last item was for a new printer/scanner for DPW since it is a large unit to make copies of large plans. Because it is so large it is quite expensive. There was a discussion about the 3D printer in the library. Mr. Davidson asked questions about funds that have been unencumbered since 2012. Ms. DelVecchio explained some projects that had been delayed so she would forward a spreadsheet to Mr. Wrinn to send them to the commissioners.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Langalis made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Davidson seconded.

Frances DiMeglio; David Davidson; Brian Baxendale; Tammy Langalis; Mike Mushak voted in favor.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero