

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 4, 2020**

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ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chair; Ed Abrams;
Sheri Brown; Troy Jellerette; Artie Kassimis;
James Frayer (6:50 p.m.

STAFF: Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer; Angela Fogel, Director of Management and Budgets; Donna King, City Clerk

OTHERS: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Richard Breccia, Chair Norwalk Parking Authority; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Thomas Hamilton, Norwalk Public Schools, Chief Financial Officer; Kathryn Hebert, Chief of Transportation Mobility Parking; Ralph Kolb, Senior Environmental Engineer; Ralph Valenzisi, Chief of Digital Learning and Development

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Ms. King called the Roll and a Quorum was present.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 2, 2020 – Regular Meeting

**** MS. BROWN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

April 22, 2020 – Special Meeting

- ** **MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. KASSIMIS)**

April 22, 2020 – Public Hearing

- ** **MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. KASSIMIS)**

2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A)

BOE Special Capital Appropriation

Ms. King read the resolution.

Mr. Camacho read a letter from Mayor Rilling in support of the special appropriation.

- ** **MS. BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION TOTALING \$1,642,470 TO INCREASE AVAILABLE FUNDS IN BOARD OF EDUCATION CAPITAL.**

PROJECT NUMBER 09-205010-C0112, INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY, FOR THE PURCHASE OF E-TABLE COMPUTERS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN GRADES K-8

Mr. Hamilton gave an overview of the request for the special appropriation, noting these are unprecedented times for everyone. He said that the school system moved 12,000 students to distance learning in a matter of a few days. There were not enough devices for the younger students and in addition, they anticipate a more robust summer school.

Mr. Hamilton said they plan on a very different learning environment because they expect social distancing will continue to be a requirement. He said they may have to go to a hybrid model of teaching if the virus comes back in a more sustained way.

Mr. Valenzisi reviewed the specific uses for the devices being requested.

Mr. Frayer joined the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Mr. Valenzisi reported that Altice has been providing free public access and have been a wonderful community partner. He was asked if it was possible that families did not have internet access. He said more families than expected did not have internet access.

Mr. Frayer asked if there has been any education provided for students and parents on how to use the computers. Mr. Valenzisi said his focus has been on putting out a digital literary curriculum. He said he will send a link to the parent resources.

Mr. Frayer asked about the quotes. Mr. Valenzisi said they received three and went with the lowest quote. He added that they are under a State contract.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. TRANSFER AGENDA (Section B)

Health Department

Mr. Daniels explained that the Health Department needs to have security in the building. He said that since his arrival, there have been situations of unwarranted behavior by clients. He described the various programs offered to the public at the Health Department.

Mr. Frayer asked if this request for security in the building is related to the COVID-19 situation. Mr. Daniels said this was brought to his attention that this also occurred prior to his arrival. He added that the request for \$40,000 is for the new fiscal year and will cover the full fiscal year. Mr. Dachowitz added that this is a modification to the budget request and recommended taking it out of contingency and moving it to security.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER**

Health Department

From	To	Amount
019600-5900 Contingency	012012-5296 Security	\$40,000

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. OTHER BUSINESS (Section C)

a. Adoption of Tentative FY 2020-21 Operating Budget

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE TENTATIVE FY 2020-21 OPERATING BUDGET**

Mr. Dachowitz gave an overview of the tentative Operating Budget. He reviewed the objectives and said that it is a very solid budget, but it must remain flexible. He said these are the same numbers that were presented last month; there have been no changes.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Approval of FY 2020-21 Parking Authority Budget

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2020-21 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET**

Mr. Breccia explained that the Parking Authority suspended parking fees during the month of April. He said the Parking Authority has been meeting twice a month and evaluating the way to re-build their fund balance.

Ms. Hebert reviewed the budget assumptions. She explained that the State of Connecticut began requiring the collection of tax for parking. Everything changed due to the COVID crisis and they suspended fees and enforcement through the end of May. They are looking at a slow recovery.

Mr. Frayer asked if staff was furloughed when the parking fees were suspended. Ms. Hebert explained that 39% of the Parking team were furloughed.

Mr. Dachowitz asked about the sales tax expense. Ms. Hebert explained that the Parking Authority passed a policy that they would absorb the parking sales tax expense. Mr. Breccia added that the Parking Authority felt it was in the best interest of the customers. He noted that this decision was made when they had a very healthy fund balance and before the COVID crisis. Mr. Frayer asked if other municipalities pay the sales tax for the residents. Ms. Hebert said each municipality operates differently.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

c. Approval of FY 2020-21 WPCA Budget

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2020-21 WPCA BUDGET**

Mr. Kolb explained the request as indicated in the March 26, 2020 memo. He said that on May 18, 2020 they entered into a new contract with Suez OMI. He reviewed the revenues and expenses.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

d. Appointment of Auditors

Mr. Dachowitz explained that three firms submitted proposals, including their current firm. However, their current firm withdrew their proposal because they decided to deemphasize this practice area.

Blum Shapiro was unanimously chosen as the Auditors. Mr. Dachowitz reviewed their qualifications. He noted they were less expensive than the other firm.

**** MR. CAMACHO MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BLUM, SHAPIRO & COMPANY, PC TO PERFORM THE CITY'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 AND 2024 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$495,000.**

ACCOUNT #011310-5253.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

e. Approval of FY 2018-19 Suspense list

Ms. Biagiarelli submitted the proposed suspense list totaling \$833,560.44. She explained that this list represents taxes that have been deemed uncollectable for a variety of reasons.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Section D)

Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status –February 2020

Ms. Fogel reported that the February financials showed they were having a positive financial experience and managing their operating expenses.

Mr. Frayer said he heard a rumor that because they have been closed with no revenue coming in, they were looking for volunteers to come in and work. He asked about the liability of having volunteers working. He also asked if there would be repercussions with laid off employees. Ms. Fogel said these were questions for Risk Management.

Mr. Jellerette said he heard a rumor that Mr. Dickens was looking for \$20,000 because they are in arrears with payroll. Ms. Fogel said that request has not come to Finance.

Mr. Camacho said there were discussions about Parks and Recreation helping with the courses, but he did not hear about using volunteers.

Mr. Dachowitz said that regarding volunteers, he would be happy to get opinions from Risk Management and Corporation Counsel. He added that he would want Parks and Recreation and Public Works involved in the operational decisions.

Mr. Jellerette said representatives from Oak Hills Park Authority need to come to the June meeting. Ms. Fogel said she reached out to them, but has not heard from them. She said she will reach out again.

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2019-20
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2019-20
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – FY 2019-20
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2019-20

Salary accounts

- Police • Fire
- Public Works

Ms. Fogel reviewed the salary accounts and said they are on target.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services