

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 10, 2020**

ATTENDANCE: Greg Burnett, Chair; David Heuvelman, Tom Keegan, John Kydes, Nicholas Sacchinelli, George Theodoridis

OTHERS: Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Kadeem Roberts, Joe Andrasko, Oak Hills Authority Treasurer; Karen DelVecchio, IT Director; Carl Dickens, Oak Hills Authority President; Laurie Iffland, Norwalk Library Technical Manager; Angela Fogel, Finance Manager; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.
The public was able to listen to this meeting by calling a conference line.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Burnett called the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lam said that there were no written submissions from the public at this time. Mr. Manzi stated that there was no one from the public on the call.

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

- **August 13, 2020 – Regular Meeting**

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED THE MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST 13, 2020 REGULAR MEETING.**

The following corrections were noted:

Under Item 6 - Narrative on Tax Collections, paragraph 1, line 1:
please change the following from:

“because at the end of June had not yet reached”

to: “because at the end of June, they had not yet reached”

Under Item 6 - Narrative on Tax Collections, paragraph 2, line 8 : please change the following from:

“She said they knew at that time that was going to impact”

to: “She said they knew at that time that it was going to impact

Under Item 6 - Narrative on Tax Collections, paragraph 3, line 1: please change the following from:

“Ms. Biagiarelli said the tax sale”

to: “Ms. Biagiarelli said regarding the tax sale”

Under Item 6 - Narrative on Tax Collections, paragraph 3, line 4: please change the following from:

“thinks it is an appropriate,”

to: “thinks it is appropriate,”

Under Item 6 - Narrative on Tax Collections, paragraph 3, line 2: please change the following from:

“and if not for the sale would have”

to: “and if not for the sale, they would have”

Under Item 8, Receive Oak Hills Authority Monthly Financial Statements, paragraph 2, Line 1: please change the following from:

“Mr. Dachowitz said “no”

to: “Mr. Dickens said “no”

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE AUGUST 13, 2020 REGULAR MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Claims Committee: receive the monthly Claims Report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated: September 10, 2020

Mr. Burnett shared his screen showing the Claims Report. Ms. Biagiarelli presented her claims report and noted that there were no items in excess of \$10,000 this month, so it was for information only.

Narrative on Tax Collections dated September 10, 2020 – Receive Report and discuss.

Monthly Tax Collector’s Reports dated August 2020 – Receive Report and discuss.

Mr. Burnett shared his screen showing the Narrative Report. Ms. Biagiarelli explained that there were two months in the report for this meeting. She then reviewed the report with the Committee members and noted that the collection is 98.22%, which will meet the projected budget.

The building has reopened by appointment only. The Tax Collector’s office has an external window available and no appointment needed to conduct business.

The grace period will end on October 1st and the interest charges will resume on October 2nd. Those who have taken advantage of the extension should be sure to pay by October 1st, because on October 2nd, the interest rate will be 6%.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if they would have any figures available from October at the next meeting. Ms. Biagiarelli said that she could give a brief overview of those figures.

Mr. Heuvelman asked about the details of the tax sale. Ms. Biagiarelli gave an overview and noted that 84 properties have paid off their debt. Regarding the SoNo Collection, one major payment has been received but the two anchor stores have not yet submitted their payments.

Mr. Burnett asked about communicating the fact that the taxes paid on October 2nd will have interest at 6% (three months). Mr. Burnett suggested that perhaps Josh should include a news release about this. Ms. Biagiarelli said that she had spoken to Josh about this.

Receive Oak Hills Authority monthly Financial Statements for July 2020.

Mr. Burnett noted that Mr. Dickens and Mr. Andrasko were on the call. Mr. Dickens then narrated a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Oak Hills budget.

Mr. Dickens said that he would like to thank Mr. Andrasko and the team for all the hard work they did on the budget, which was approved the previous evening.

Mr. Andrasko said that there were four goals in mind when crafting the current budget, including the repayment of debt to both the City and the financial institution, reduce the reliance on the line of credit, cautious with expenses.

He spoke about the non-revenue rounds (season pass use), which remained flat. Mr. Andrasko reviewed the various line items with the Committee members.

Mr. Kydes asked about the sale of seasonal passes this year and the plan for the seasonal pass going forward. Mr. Dickens said that there were two tiers (limited and unlimited) and while it is expensive, those who play frequently save money. He reviewed the costs for both the limited and unlimited seasonal passes. While there have been some who have voiced their concerns regarding the cost, the tee sheets have been filled. The Board will start to consider the rates for next year later in the month or in October. Discussion followed about having some tee times available between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Mr. Kydes asked if the Authority meetings were available to the public. Mr. Dickens said that they have worked out an agreement with the City to use the City's Zoom account for the meetings. The link to the meeting is listed on the agendas. He added that the reason that they used Executive Session was because he does not like discussing staff salaries in public. He said that they did vote on the budget after Executive Session. Mr. Dickens said that when they voted on the budget, there were five in favor and one against. He was the single member in opposition.

Mr. Kydes asked what the status was on the restaurant. Mr. Dickens said that the current agreement will end on October 31st. One of the Board Members is in the restaurant business. Mr. Dickens said that the contracts have not been well structured and encountered several building issues. They will be reviewing the menu, the dining area and kitchen area, hours of operation along with considering special events. They are not considering an RFP for a new provider at this time.

Mr. Burnett asked if the Authority would be coming before the Council with a new long term lease. Mr. Dickens said that he did not know when that would happen. He went on to speak about leasing the tennis courts for package deals that the Board will be considering.

Mr. Burnett said that there were many people who were interested in pickle ball. He asked if there were any discussions about adding a pickle ball court. Mr. Dickens said that the demand for pickle ball was great and they have discussed adding a pickle ball court.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if they could put a limit on the tee time reservations during the two week scheduling block. Mr. Dickens said that they had schedule the tee times to 10 minutes apart and that this had allowed more rounds without rushing players.

Mr. Heuvelman said that everyone wants January to come and for everyone to be done with COVID. He asked if they were looking at using the line of credit if COVID continues. Mr. Andrasko said that they had talked about this so they would not have to struggle.

Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute a 12 month Agreement with 2 one-year optional extensions with Innovative Interfaces Solutions, a sole source provider, for Integrated Library System Cloud Hosting Services and Maintenance/Support for the Norwalk Public Library for an amount not to exceed \$59,990.00. Account # 011370-5742 (budgeted operating expense, no special appropriation required) and forward onto the Common Council for further action.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED THE ITEM.**

Ms. DelVecchio introduced Ms. Iffland and explained that not only does the library have physical books and resources, but also has a large collection of online resources. The Library also has an integrated library information system that handles the patron information, check in and check out information, reservations, and material ordering.

Ms. DelVecchio said that the two servers needed to be completely updated every five years and the proposal is to move the system to the Cloud. The vendor will handle upgrades and provide support. The staff contacted other libraries to hear their observations. After reviewing this, the Library staff is ready to move forward with this project. This will be a one year agreement. All the details of this were contained in the memo that Ms. DelVecchio submitted to the Committee. The ITT Committee has unanimously approved the contract. The Law Department has received a copy of the agreement but has not responded at this time.

Mr. Heuvelman asked why they were doing a one year with optional two one year renewals rather than a long term agreement. Ms. DelVecchio said that when they shift from an on site operation to a vendor, they want to make sure the vendor is able to deliver the services without being locked into a five year contract. This also allows for the Board to have flexibility.

Mr. Burnett noted that this was a sole source provider. He wished to know why they were so exclusive. Ms. Iffland said that the Library was using the Sierra system for 20 years. The other companies are newer and have not been fully tested.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if it was a simple migration rather than a more complex migration. The patrons will not notice a difference but the staff will.

**** THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A 12 MONTH AGREEMENT WITH 2 ONE-YEAR OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS WITH INNOVATIVE INTERFACES SOLUTIONS, A SOLE**

SOURCE PROVIDER, FOR INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM CLOUD HOSTING SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE/SUPPORT FOR THE NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$59,990.00. ACCOUNT # 011370-5742 (BUDGETED OPERATING EXPENSE, NO SPECIAL APPROPRIATION REQUIRED) AND FORWARD ONTO THE COMMON COUNCIL FOR FURTHER ACTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Finance updates on capital spending, bond sale, bond rating and COVID expenditures.

Mr. Dachowitz presented his report. He spoke about a recent story in Barron's about cities facing major shortfalls in revenues. The question is how many municipal bond issuers will not be able to pay their investors. Norwalk's conservative financial policies have continue to put the City in a good financial position. They were able to continue operations with no furloughs after COVID started. The administration is looking at a potential draw down on the Fund Balance.

Mr. Dachowitz spoke about the long term debt such as school buildings. Although they are about to bond for the buildings, the interest rates are very low. They are also issuing taxable bonds so they can refund the bonds. The triple A rating for the City has been confirmed which indicates the City is managing their finances correctly.

Mr. Dachowitz said that the City had been impacted by COVID would appear as a shortfall in revenue and the unplanned expenses. The Parking Authority and the Parks Department did not have revenue during the quarantine. This shortfall came to about \$1.25 million dollars. The BOE had slightly over \$2 million shortfall from lunches not sold. There is no reimbursement for these shortfalls.

There were some unexpected costs, such as building shields for the staff and police overtime. He reviewed the figures for the City and also noted that the BOE had several requirements in order to reopen. The BOE has submitted a request for \$21 million to reopen but only about \$10 million has been allocated.

Due to the time, most of the costs occurred in the 2020 budget. Any reimbursement after the close of the 2020 budget year, will be considered as part of the 2020-2021 revenues.

Mr. Burnett asked if the BOE has any schedule as to when they may have their request to cover the additional \$11 million. Mr. Dachowitz said he didn't know.

Mr. Heuvelman thanked Mr. Dachowitz, Ms. Fogel and Ms. Lam for the work that they were doing.

Mr. Dachowitz then briefly spoke about Capital Expenditures. He said that it was important to keep the debt to less than 10% in order to maintain the AAA rating. He

spoke about some strategies to manage the debt in order to keep the debt under the 10% ceiling.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MR. KYDES MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services