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**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
NOVEMBER 2, 2020
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chair; Mayor Harry Rilling; Ed Abrams;
Sheri Brown; James Frayer; Troy Jellerette

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Anthony Carr, Chief of Operation
and Public Works Henry Dachowitz, CFO; Angela Fogel, Director
Management and Budgets; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community
Services; Gino Gatto, Fire Chief; Donna King, City Clerk; Alan
Lo, Building and Facilities Manager

OTHERS: Barbara Mayer Mitchell, Chair Finance Committee, Norwalk
Board of Education; Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of
Schools; Thomas Hamilton, CFO

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

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Oct 5, 2020 – Regular Meeting

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. CAMACHO)**

2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A) None

3. TRANSFER AGENDA (Section B)

Ms. Fogel reviewed the transfer requests.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFERS:**

Information Technology

FROM	TO	TRANSFER AMT
01-9600-5900 Contingency 2,633,653	01-1370-5741 IT Hardware	71,509
TOTAL 2,633,653		

This transfer was originally approved by the BET as a Special Capital Appropriation at the October 5, 2020 regular meeting. Approval by all legislative bodies was not completed. Prior to the Finance & Claims Committee meeting, The City's Bond Council advised the Comptroller that this amount should be moved from a Capital item to an Operating Budget item. These funds will provide the required 2020 Department of Homeland Security Port Security/FEMA Grant 25% matching fund. The City has been awarded \$214,525 in federal funds to proceed with the Security Camera & Fiber Optic Network Extension to Norwalk Harbor project.

FROM	TO	TRANSFER AMT
01-9600-5900 Contingency 2,633,653	01-4086-5266 Buildings	40,000
TOTAL \$ 2,633,653		

When the FYE 2021 budget was approved the Building Management department was expecting the maintenance expenditures for the City building located at 98 South Main Street would be transferred to the YMCA. Due to Covid-19, the YMCA was not able to move into the 98 South Main Street building. The Building Department has continued to maintain the building and is now underfunded in its building account.

Mr. Lo explained that he is going before the Land Use and Building Management Committee this week to ask them to consider an interim use of 98 South Main Street for six months. After that they hope to establish a permanent agreement with the YMCA where the full maintenance of the building will be their responsibility.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Ms. Fogel reviewed the Regular Wages transfers from contingency. The total amount from contingency was \$1,572 and the balance after the transfers was \$949,940, which is consistent with the \$1 million appropriated for contingency. Mr. Dachowitz said they had guidance from Mr. Burney and the amount that was negotiated was what was put into contingency.

**** MS. BROWN MOVED TO APPROVE THE WAGE TRANSFERS
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section C) None

5. OTHER BUSINESS

- Community Services Chief – Presentation of Grants to Outside Agencies.

Mr. Daniels presented the transition of grants to outside agencies to the Community Services Department. He reviewed the Community Services department mission, to include and sustain the social wellbeing and health of all Norwalk residents.

Mr. Daniels said that one year later after his arrival, the Community Services department is well positioned to identify human services needs. The Department has a sense of what is going on in the community and what the needs are in the community. He said that Norwalk dedicates resources to non-profit organizations that addresses the human services needs of the residents of Norwalk.

Mr. Daniels asked to move the \$538,325 that was allocated to non-profits to the Community Services budget. Non-profits would be able to apply for funding and the Community Services Department would allocate the funds on a rolling cycle rather than once a year.

Ms. Brown asked Mr. Daniels if he sees any gaps in services in Norwalk and how they are being addressed. She also asked who administers the Head Start program. Mr. Daniels said that the Head Start program is administered out of Danbury by the Connecticut Institute. He noted that one area he sees people struggling in is in basic needs, such as food and rent and people trying to find work. He said his department is distributing 2 – 3,000 boxes of food each week. He said the Department is building relationships with different organizations. Mr. Camacho commented that the Department has a birds eye view of what is needed in the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Daniels explained that using the rolling allocation methodology, allocations are approved on a quarterly basis. Mr. Dachowitz added that instead of spending the money in June or July, the money would be allocated throughout the year.

- Reverse the below action approved at the October 5, 2020 BET regular meeting. Prior Action Approved on October 5, 2020:

Ms. Fogel reviewed the item.

Prior Action Approved on October 5, 2020:

Authorize a special appropriation totaling \$71,509 allocated to capital account number 09-21-1370-5777-C0793 to provide the required 2020 Department of Homeland Security Port Security/FEMA Grant 25% matching funds to secure the \$214,525 in federal funds to proceed with the Security Camera Et Fiber Optic Network Extension to Norwalk Harbor project.

Acton Requested:

**** MR. ABRAMS MOVED TO REVERSE THE APPROVED SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION TOTALING \$71,509 ALLOCATED TO CAPITAL ACCOUNT NUMBER 09-21-1370-5777-C0793 TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED 2020 DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY PORT SECURITY/FEMA GRANT 25% MATCHING FUNDS. THIS PROJECT WILL BE FUNDED BY A REQUEST TO TRANSFER FUNDS FROM THE OPERATING BUDGET CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT TO THE IT DEPARTMENT'S IT HARDWARE ACCOUNT.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- BOE CGS 10-248(a) 2% maximum Surplus Deposit into a non-lapsing account.

Mr. Hamilton explained that the Board of Education has two items that are on the schedule with the City and has a larger request to place funds into a non-lapsing account pursuant to CGS 10-248 (a).

Mr. Hamilton said the Board of Education is requesting a carry over for \$52,457 for two outstanding purchases for Library materials and English Language Arts materials. He said that the other request to carry over up to 2% of the unexpended balance from FY 2019/2020. He explained that there are two components to this carryover.

Mr. Hamilton said that Covid upended what they need to do in order to continue to operate. Over the summer became more under control in CT and guidance was provided to open the schools. The Norwalk Superintendent of Schools formed a re-opening task force. He noted that Norwalk was one of the few districts to move to full in person instruction along with virtual instruction for those who needed that option. One of the challenges was maintaining social distancing and that is why they went to the hybrid model in the middle and high schools.

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Mr. Hamilton explained that they need more staff for the auxiliary classrooms and those classrooms require additional resources. He said the meeting back up material provides two different schedules. He said the District submitted an ambitious funding proposal to the State in August and in November was awarded the second highest amount of funding of any school district in the State. In addition, they have funding from a grant.

Mr. Hamilton said that they are learning about new rules every day and that has implications. The grant has to be expended by December 31st exclusively for re-opening. He said there is a gap in the second half of the year. He added that they expect to still be in the Covid environment in January. Mr. Hamilton said there are so many moving pieces and he feels they can cover what they need as long as they have the carry over funds. Ms. Mayer Mitchell emphasized the heroic duty Mr. Hamilton and his staff have done to meet the guidelines for funding. She said she hoped everyone could agree that this is a good investment for the students.

Dr. Estrella said that they were short despite scaling back. She said they need these additional resources to balance the budget.

Mr. Abrams said he fully supported this and asked if there was a way to keep this from becoming a part of the minimum funding budget. Mr. Hamilton said these items are under State law and go into a separate fund. They will be separate from the general funding and will not impact the minimum funding budget.

Mr. Frayer commented Mr. Hamilton for the amount of work put into this. He asked Mr. Hamilton if the remaining \$2.5 million was a result of the money not being spent. He noted that the Board of Education needs \$2.5 million to cover their re-opening expenses associated with Covid. Mr. Hamilton said they need \$2.5 million now. Mr. Frayer said that they underspent last year. Mr. Hamilton said a portion of that was related to the impact of Covid and resulted in the District not spending money it may have otherwise spent such as on sports stipends. He said they had savings in a number of areas and has positions that were not filled. Mr. Frayer asked about the ELL (English Language Learners) funding. Mr. Hamilton explained that some of those positions were not filled due to Covid.

Ms. Mayer Mitchell said the shortfall they are most concerned about is the ELL budget. The biggest expense they are facing is spreading out the class sizes. Mr. Frayer asked if they had an overall population drop. Dr. Estrella said the population drop is due to people taking the opportunity to home school their children, but she said she sees this as temporary until we are past the pandemic.

Mr. Frayer noted there was a net drop of about 100 students. Dr. Estrella said they had a decline of 136 students. Mr. Frayer asked if they are going to add more money into the budget due to an anticipated increase in non-English speaking students next September. Mr. Hamilton said he had Demographics update enrollment projections for next year. Ms.

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Mayer Mitchel said they will have to keep an eye on the trends, because there is a lot that is up in the air. She said that with the economy, people may be taking their children out of private schools and enrolling them in public schools. Ms. Brown said her sense is that they may need to be prepared for an increase.

Mr. Hamilton said that he does not anticipate coming back to the City for a special appropriation for the rest of the year.

Mr. Camacho commented Dr. Estrella, Mr. Hamilton and the Board of Education for doing such a great job.

ACTION REQUESTED:

**** MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

PURSUANT TO CGS 10-248(A), APPROVE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S REQUEST TO DEPOSIT \$3,969,827 OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S UNEXPENDED BALANCE FROM FY 2019-20 INTO A NON-LAPSING ACCOUNT, CONSISTING OF \$1,500,000 TO SUPPORT THE RECONCILED FY 2020-21 OPERATING BUDGET, AND \$2,469,827 TO SUPPORT EXTRAORDINARY COVID-19 REOPENING EXPENSES.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

- FYE 2020 Budget Surplus Roll Over Requests

Mr. Abrams asked Mr. Carr if there will be enough people to do the work. Mr. Carr said he is not concerned about the workload. He said he worked with Mr. Burney and most of the positions that were lost will be reinstated. Mr. Carr said the work has to be done and they have the people in place. Mr. Frayer noted the staff will be pushed hard. Mr. Carr said that with the capital budget coming up, they will have to re-focus their priorities or hire consultants to verse certain projects. Mr. Dachowitz noted that a lot of the items in the Public Works budget are for external services. Mayor Rilling said money was not spent due to reduced staffing to keep people safe.

Ms. Fogel reviewed the roll over requests.

**** MR. ABRAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE ROLL OVER REQUESTS AS PRESENTED**

ROLLOVER SUMMARY BY DEPARTMENT	BALANCE	REQUEST
DPW Subtotal	\$701,077	\$393,114
Economic & Community Development Subtotal	\$308,366	\$242,840

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Tax Collector Subtotal	\$76,762	\$60,000
Information Technology Subtotal	\$62,860	\$37,082
Purchasing	\$4,930	\$4,930
Recreation & Parks Subtotal	\$92,361	
Police Subtotal	\$144,899	\$90,000
Fire Subtotal	\$42,101	\$10,000
Human Resources Subtotal	\$51,054	\$43,724
Health Department Subtotal	\$50,789	
Management & Budgets Subtotal	\$1,959	\$1,959
Tax Assessor	\$250,278	\$45,000
Legislative	\$1,600	\$1,600
Grants	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
CITY SUBTOTAL	\$2,789,036	\$2,073,382
BOE	\$4,102,803	\$52,457
GRAND TOTAL	\$6,891,839	\$2,125,839

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Section D) Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status – August 2020

Ms. Fogel reported that Oak Hills Park Authority seems to be doing well. They hope to not have to rely on their line of credit going forward.

The following is for informational purposes.

- 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 2020-21
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2020-21
- Police Pg.
- Fire Pg.
- Public Works Pg.

- Tax Collector's Narrative – August 2020

- Tax Collector's Report – August 2020

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services