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**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; David Heuvelman; Thomas Keegan;
John Kydes; Diana Revolus; Nicholas Sacchinelli;
George Theodoridis

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial
Officer; Bill Ford, Tax Assessor

Finance Claims Committee
March 11, 2021
Page 1
Via Teleconference

OTHERS: George Tsiranides, Common Council member; Joseph Andrasko, Oak Hills Park Authority; Bill Lindsay, Munistat

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Burnett called the Roll as indicated above.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public wished to participate.

4. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

February 11, 2021 – Regular Meeting

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Correct the spelling of Mr. Heuvelman’s name throughout.

Correct the spelling of Ms. Revolus’ name throughout.

Page 1 – add Mr. Tsiranides’ name under attendance.

Page 1 – correct the spelling of Tax Assessor.

Page 2 - Ms. Biagiarelli said they are doing all the regular tax enforcement – should read: Ms. Biagiarelli said they are doing other types of tax enforcement.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MR. SACCHINELLI; MS. REVOLUS; MR. THEODORIDIS; MR. KYDES; MR. BURNETT)**

February 11, 2021- Special Joint Finance and Claims and BOE Committee

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Correct the spelling of Mr. Heuvelman’s name throughout.

Correct the spelling of Ms. Revolus’ name throughout.

Finance Claims Committee

March 11, 2021

Page 2

Via Teleconference

Page 1 – add Mr. Keegan’s name under attendance
Page 1 -

Page 4 - Mr. Heuvelman said these dialogues are important and need to extend to these two committees, should read Mr. Heuvelman said these dialogues are important and need to extend to these two committees throughout the year.

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A SHOW OF HANDS**

February 18, 2021- Finance/Claims Committee Public Hearing (e-mailed public comments attached)

The following correction was made to the minutes.

Page 1 – Each speaker ill be given three minutes should be, each speaker will be given three minutes.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. THEODORIDIS)**

February 18, 2021- Finance/Claims Committee Special Meeting

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 6 - He (Mr. Heuvelman) said the comments were reflective should read, the comments were reflective of all the views on this subject.

Page 6 - He (Mr. Heuvelman) said the taxpayers understand that taxes will need to go up, should read He said the taxpayers understand that taxes will need to go up to support the school program.

**** MOTON PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A SHOW OF HANDS**

5. CLAIMS COMMITTEE:

Receive the monthly Claims Report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated:
March 11, 2021

Ms. Biagiarelli explained that there was one special request, by virtue of the dollar amount. It is for \$59,465.15. The others are standard refunds that are issued without approval. She explained that the special request is for an overpayment by the taxpayer through their escrow account. She noted that this happens a lot when people refinance.

Finance Claims Committee
March 11, 2021
Page 3
Via Teleconference

- ** **MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CLAIMS COMMITTEE REPORT DATED MARCH 11, 2021**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MR. SACCHINELLI; MS. REVOLUS; MR. THEODORIDIS; MR. KYDES; MR. BURNETT)**

6. **NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS** dated March 11, 2021 – Receive Report and discuss.

7. **MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS** dated February 2021 – Receive Report and discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli shared her screen and reviewed her reports. Through the end of February they collected \$337 million. Taxpayers have until the end of April to pay. A mailing went out to real estate accounts reminding them that their payment is due on April 1st. If they pay on April 2nd, they will be charged 6% interest. A delinquent billing will go out mid April.

This is a Tax Sale year and Ms. Biagiarelli explained that they are hampered by collection enforcement this year. She added that they are working on wage garnishments.

Starting on Monday, Ms. Biagiarelli said they will re-open the payment window from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. In addition, the office will be open. She noted that spring is a busy time and she wants to be prepared.

Ms. Biagiarelli said she will start working on the Tax Sale within the next three weeks. It is planned for August 16th.

- ** **MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE MAYOR HARRY RILLING TO AGREE TO THE CONNECTICUT GREEN BANK COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (C-PACE) PROGRAM ASSESSMENT BILLING AND COLLECTING CHANGE.**

Ms. Biagiarelli reviewed the item. She said this is a billing change for the State of Connecticut's C-Pace. She said the State created a Green Bank. The Tax Office is a collection agent on behalf of the CT Green Bank. The CT Green Bank notified the Tax Office that they want to take over the billing. This is not a revenue item for the City of Norwalk. This request needs approvals to extricate her from collecting the fees commencing July 2021. She said that Norwalk was the first city in the State to take part in this initiative.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. HEUVELMAN; MR. KEEGAN; MR. SACCHINELLI; MS. REVOLUS; MR. THEODORIDIS; MR. KYDES; MR. BURNETT)**

9. RECEIVE OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR JANUARY 2020.

Mr. Andrasko, reported that January and February are the least compelling months for Oak Hills. In February they had no revenue because no rounds were played. He said February looks like it will be \$40,000 in the negative, but that is par for the course. The difference this year is in their cash balance. This year they have \$260,000 in cash and will not have to borrow. They are set up well to enter the 2021 season.

Mr. Andrasko discussed their season passes and noted they increased the fee by about 35 – 40%. He said this will bring their fees up to the market rate. He said they made good on their promise to deliver their budget to the City. It is a high level budget. He said they expect to have a positive cash balance of about \$93,000 that they can put back into the course.

Mr. Heuvelman asked Mr. Andrasko how the debt to the City is structured. Mr. Andrasko explained that it is a consolidated debt that they pay over the course of a number of years. They pay \$2.00 per round and that is increased by \$.05 each year and then once they have audited financials, they will pay 1% of their golf revenue.

Mr. Burnett asked Mr. Andrasko if there was any progress with the restaurant vendor. Mr. Andrasko explained that they are in the final stage of authorizing the license agreement and that he expects to have it approved at the next Authority meeting. Mr. Kydes noted that the agreement will have to go through the Common Council. He asked if the terms are still under negotiation. Mr. Andrasko explained that the structure of the agreement will increase restaurant revenues about double versus what they had in prior years. He noted that it is not the same vendor they had last year.

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO TERMINATE CONTRACT WITH HILLTOP SECURITIES, INC. FOR PROJECT NO. 3986 FINANCIAL ADVISORY SERVICES FOR BOND SALE.**

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH BILL LINDSAY AT MUNISTAT.TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ADVISORY CONSULTING SERVICES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 THROUGH 2024. ACCOUNT #301340-5523**

Mr. Dachowitz read his memo that was included in the meeting packet. He said that Mr. Lindsey has been serving as Norwalk's financial advisor since 2001, most recently through Hilltop Securities. He and Hilltop Securities parted ways and he is now with Munistat Services. Mr. Dachowitz said the City would like to enter into an agreement with Munistat under the same terms and conditions as the existing agreement with Hilltop and terminate the agreement with Hilltop. He reviewed the terms of the contract.

Mr. Burnett asked if an RFP should have been created. Mr. Dachowitz said he checked with the Legal Department and they said it was up to him. He said he wants the services of Mr. Lindsey and it was not appropriate to go out for another RFP.

Mr. Lindsey explained that he has worked with the City of Norwalk for 20 years and he is happy with the platform at Munistat. He said that with the Committee's permission, he would be happy to work with the City.

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12. DISCUSSION ON SENIOR TAX RELIEF PROGRAM.

Mr. Ford said that at this point, they would be receiving applications for tax relief, but the Governor eliminated the requirement for Seniors to re-file their applications this year. The process was adjusted and letters were sent to Seniors advising them that they did not have to file this year, unless there was an income change or change in their financial situation.

Mr. Ford said they also looked at people's applications that were rejected over the last three years in case they may now be eligible due to income changes.

Mr. Burnett asked Mr. Ford if he is doing additional outreach to be sure Seniors are aware of the program. Mr. Ford explained that they expanded the website and the staff is in constant contact with employees who work with Seniors. They also do e-mail blasts to different groups of people in the City. Mr. Burnett noted that this is a great offering to our Seniors.

13. ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services