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**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 5, 2021  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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

STAFF: Mario Coppola, Corporation Counsel; Henry Dachowitz, CFO; Angel Fogel, Director of Management and Budgets; Donna King, City Clerk

OTHERS: Anthony Carr, Chief of Operations and Public Works; Jessica Casey, Chief of Economic and Community Development; Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Michael Harden, Chair, Parking Authority; Ralph Kolbe, Supervisory Environmental Engineer; James Travers, Director TMP

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Ms. King called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

March 1, 2021 - Regular Meeting  
March 22, 2021 - Special Meeting  
March 24, 2021- Special Meeting

Board of Estimate and Taxation  
Regular Meeting  
April 5, 2021  
Via Teleconference  
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March 24, 2021 – Operating Budget Public Hearing

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

March 1 – correct the spelling of confidence

March 22 – Correct Ms. James' name

**\*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS  
AMENDED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA** (Section A) None

3. **TRANSFER AGENDA** (Section B)

**SECTION B**  
**CITY OF NORWALK TRANSFERS 2020-21**  
**BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION**

**FISCAL YEAR 2020-21**

**Recreation & Parks Department**

"FROM" ACCOUNT	"FROM" ACCOUNT NAME	"From" Account AVAILABLE Budget	"TO" ACCOUNT	"TO" ACCOUNT NAME	TRANSFER AMOUNT
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$ 540,085	01-4150-5585	Park Improvements	\$ 25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$ 25,000</b>

Transfer 1: to purchase Calf Pasture Sailing School building

**Health Department**

"FROM" ACCOUNT	"FROM" ACCOUNT NAME	"From" Account AVAILABLE Budget	"TO" ACCOUNT	"TO" ACCOUNT NAME	TRANSFER AMOUNT
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$ 540,085	01-2011-5268	Furniture, Office Machinery	\$ 14,000
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$ 14,000</b>

Funds needed to cover furniture for expanded staff. New employees do not have adequate workspaces with current layout.

**Corporation Counsel**

"FROM" ACCOUNT	"FROM" ACCOUNT NAME	"From" Account AVAILABLE Budget	"TO" ACCOUNT	"TO" ACCOUNT NAME	TRANSFER AMOUNT
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$ 540,085	01-0300-5252	Legal Services	\$ 282,000
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$ 540,086	01-0300-5258	Other Professional Services	\$ 82,000
01-0300-5110	Regular Wages	\$ 403,666	01-0300-5140	Wages PT	\$ 55,400
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$ 419,400</b>

Transfer 1: to cover legal fees associated with the POCO case.

Transfer 2: for continued tax assessments in the course of tax appeals.

Transfer 3: to fund continued employment of Irene Alarcon and legal assistance of Attorney Leisner.

**Contingency Account Balance After the Above Approved Transfers** \$ **81,685**

**CONTINGENCY PRIOR APPROVALS**

Department	Explanation	TRANSFER
Health Department	Fund PT Epidemiologist	\$ 44,000
Building Department	Maintenance of 98 S. Main Bldg	\$ 40,000
IT Department	25% Match Harbor FEMA grant	\$ 71,509
Recreation & Parks	Increase exp LAZ Parking	\$ 31,509
Economic & Community Development - Code Enforcement	Fund neighborhood cleaup - Blight	\$ 23,000
Registrar	Laptop purchases for election day	\$ 7,800
Health Department	Food bank event expenditures	\$ 700
Town Clerk	Laptop purchases for election day	\$ 5,200
Library	Security Contract shortfall	\$ 38,044
Operations & Public Works	Recycling account shortfall	\$ 48,859
Economic & Community Development - Business Development	Small business program matching grants	\$ 75,000
Registrar	Building & Office Rental - election	\$ 600
Registrar	Equipment moving exp related to election	\$ 4,590
Registrar	Ballots, memory card programming & shipping for election	\$ 15,809
Library	New security guard	\$ 38,440
Mayor's Office	Translation Services	\$ 5,000
Fire Department	Entrance Exam Consulting	\$ 75,000
Community Services	Equity and Justice for All Commission	\$ 150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 675,060</b>

## RECREATION AND PARKS

Mayor Rilling reviewed the item and said the lease is expiring and the sailing school program is going out to bid to give others an opportunity to run the program. He said the person currently running the school was told he was welcome to submit an RFP.

Mr. Coppola explained that this transfer request is for the purchase of the sailing school building. Mr. Camacho asked how this building was erected on City property. Mr. Coppola said that this was done many years ago, before his involvement with the City. He noted that the owner of the building received approvals to build the structure on City property. He said this is a win – win for everyone, especially the City.

Mr. Frayer asked how much will be paid to run the school. Mayor Rilling said they are looking to put out an RFP and there is a percentage that the City looks to recover. He noted that this structure is located on prime waterfront property.

Mr. Camacho said that he understands the current owner of the school is not going to submit a bid. Mayor Rilling said that he hopefully will change his mind; he does not want to exclude anyone from the opportunity to run the school.

**\*\* MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$25,000  
FROM CONTINGENCY TO PARK IMPROVEMENTS  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Ms. D'Amore reviewed the request. She said the Health Department has a growing workforce and needs funding to cover the cost of furniture for six workspaces. Part of the cost will be covered by grants.

Mr. Frayer asked if the contingency account is the only place for this funding. Mr. Dachowitz said if there were other funds available, they would have taken it. There are three months left of the fiscal year and he said he was confident they will have a bit of a surplus. They want to be sure the funding is available now. Mr. Frayer said he was concerned because they are getting down to only \$81,000 left in the contingency account with three months left in the year. He said that net – net he is comfortable there will be a surplus. He added that he does not know of anything else coming in. Mayor Rilling said the City received a settlement for \$200,000. This was unplanned and unbudgeted.

Mr. Camacho said \$14,000 is a small amount that is being supplemented by a grant. It is now April and as they get closer to the end of the fiscal year, they will know how much the surplus is. This is a reasonable request.

- \*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$14,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO FURNITURE, OFFICE MACHINERY**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

CORPORATION COUNSEL

Mayor Rilling reviewed the request as indicated in the backup material. He said a surplus can go back into contingency.

Mr. Jellerette asked for an update on POKO. Mr. Coppola gave an overview of the project and said there was an application to amend the LDA and LRA to also include the defunct theater property in the rear. Mr. Mulligan filed an appeal and a lawsuit against the owner of the property and is holding up the development from starting to complete the building. He added that they are in the process of finishing the deposition.

- \*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$282,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO LEGAL SERVICES, \$82,000 FROM CONTINGENCY TO OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND \$55,400 FROM CONTINGENCY TO WAGES PART TIME FOR A TOTAL OF \$419,400**
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**4. SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section C)**

a. Adoption of the Tentative FY 2021-2022 Operating Budget

- \*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO APPROVE THE ADOPTION OF THE TENTATIVE FY 2021-2020 OPERATING BUDGET**

Mayor Rilling thanked the department heads, Mr. Dachowitz and Ms. Fogel. He said he hopes to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the approval of the American Rescue Plan. He said that Ms. Fogel and Mr. Dachowitz put together a very lean budget. He also gave credit to the department heads and said they are all responsible, good managers.

Mr. Dachowitz explained that the big change is that at the Mayor's direction, they are going to use the American Rescue Plan funds to off set a tax increase for a zero percent tax increase and replenish the \$8 million draw down that was going to occur from the Rainy Day fund. They believe this will allow them to come in at a flat tax rate. They are not permitted to use funds to reduce taxes.

In addition to the funds the City will get, the Board of Education will also get significant funds from the American Rescue Plan. The budget proposes a zero percent increase with the understanding that the Board of Education will get that funding from the

American Rescue Plan. There were discussions with Mr. Hamilton and funds can be used for certain items.

Mayor Rilling said that at this time of Covid, individuals have suffered, and the funds should be used for the greatest good and the best usage comes with a zero percent tax increase.

Ms. Brown asked if this funding will address the concerns of the parents about cutting programs. Mr. Dachowitz explained that the Board of Education decides how they allocate their dollars. The American Rescue Plan says these funds are designated to prevent lay offs.

Mr. Camacho asked how much the Board of Education is anticipating they will receive. Mr. Dachowitz explained that approximately \$27.5 million will come in over a two year period. Mr. Dachowitz said his recommendation was \$4 million. Mr. Camacho asked if Mr. Hamilton was in agreement with the proposal for the Board of Education. Mr. Dachowitz said that Mr. Hamilton understands the goal of the City is to keep taxes flat.

Mr. Dachowitz said he expects the Efficiency Study will take place within the next six to nine months and hopes it will help off set some of the gaps.

Mayor Rilling said the general public will expect the City and the Board of Education to use the funds on needed services. Mr. Camacho said the money being received from the federal government are one time dollars. This will have to be addressed in year three. Mayor Rilling said they will have to have a method in place for year three. Mr. Frayer expressed concern that there is going to be a false sense of security.

Mr. Jellerette asked Mr. Dachowitz where they will see adjustment for the Board of Education. Mr. Dachowitz said they will come in as a one line item expense. He said that he hopes through the efficiency study the consultants will look at the expenditures and make a recommendation.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

b. Approval of the FY 2021-2022 Parking Authority Budget

**\*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2021-2022  
PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET**

Ms. Casey, Mr. Harden and Mr. Travers were present. She reviewed the budget and reported that the Parking Authority worked through challenges this year and reduced their budget \$1.3 million. They saw a huge reduction in parking and this is offset by a

reduction in expenses. The Parking Authority did a good job in maintaining their infrastructure. There is money in the capital budget for the maintenance of the garages.

Ms. Casey explained that they tried to be responsive to the pandemic. The debt service has gone up, which impacts the expense side. The debt service schedule will continue to go up, but that is not a concern to the Parking Authority. Employee benefits were reduced.

Ms. Casey said that LAZ has been great at working with the City, which allows them to have a lot of confidence in their work.

Ms. Casey explained that a lot of salaries and benefits were reduced due to early retirement. New positions were hired at a lower grade.

Mr. Jellerette asked when the contact with LAZ will end. Ms. Casey said it ends in 2023 and they plan to go out to bid in 2022.

Ms. Casey said that as the number of people return to riding the train, they are seeing the parking numbers increasing. For the upcoming fiscal year, they are assuming the number of parkers will be 30 less than pre-covid. She added that there are waiting lists for the parking garages. A discussion took place about parking capacity. They also discussed concessionaire fees.

Mr. Frayer expressed concern about not seeing actuals for FY 2020/2021. Ms. Casey said they anticipate a shortfall for FY 2020/2021. She explained that the Parking Authority has been in a very tough spot and is trying to be responsive. They actively think about the commuters and how to help them. She added that the Parking Authority had two months with no fees, but that was sustainable. She said added that LAZ has been very responsive in 2021 and feels they will be as responsive in 2022.

Mr. Harden said that members of the Board are happy they were able to trim the fat n the budget. It is going to be fall before they start seeing revenue numbers come back.

Mr. Jellerette said it would be helpful to see the year to date budget and the year to date actuals. Ms. Casey said that information will be added next year when they present their budget request.

Mr. Dachowitz commended the Parking Authority for downscaling their expenses. Mayor Rilling also commended the Parking Authority, Ms. Casey and her team.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

c. Approval of the FY 2021-2022 WPCA Budget

**\*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2021-2022 WPCA BUDGET**

Mr. Kolb referred to his letter dated March 18<sup>th</sup> and included in the meeting packet. On March 15<sup>th</sup> the Board of Directors approved a 0% sewer increase and waived fees for food establishments.

Mr. Kolb highlighted initiatives taken during 2020. He noted that the WPCA has a healthy fund balance and pointed out key budget items. Mr. Kolb thanked all those who assisted with the WPCA budget process.

Mayor Rilling commended the WPCA and said Suez is doing a great job and Mr. Kolb is doing a remarkable job. He asked Mr. Kolb about the cap on the sewage treatment plant. Mr. Kolb explained that in the last five years, the flow at the treatment plant has gone down. He added that there are no concerns about capacity.

Mr. Carr said that over the last five years they saw the flow decrease from 13 million gallons a day to 12 million gallons a day. He commended Mr. Kolb and explained that the WPCA is an enterprise fund and the surplus funds go into reserves. He thanked Mayor Rilling, Mr. Dachowitz and the finance staff. Mayor Rilling thanked Mr. Carr.

Mr. Jellerette asked if the Master Plan calls for the City to run pipes to connect to City sewer in the Cranbury district. Mr. Carr explained that in general there is not necessarily a plan. He described the procedure for petitioning the City for the addition of City sanitary sewage lines. He said that is typically done during the construction of a subdivision or during the construction of a new development. He said there is nothing specific in the Master Plan.

Mr. Kolb said that at this time they do not anticipate any sewer extensions. If there is an area where all the septic tanks fail, the neighborhood can petition the City and the City would take it under consideration.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

d. Appointment of Auditors to audit FY 2020-2021

**\*\* MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS TO AUDIT FY 2020-2021**

Mr. Dachowitz explained that the City entered into a five year contract with Bloom Shapiro. They merged with another firm, CLA.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Section D)**

Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status – February 2021

Mr. Jellerette asked for an update on the restaurant negotiations. Ms. Fogel explained that Oak Hills is currently in negotiations on the restaurant and will provide an update.

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2020-21
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2020-21
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – FY 2020-21
- Police Wages
- Fire Wages
- Public Works Wages
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2020-21
- Tax Collector’s Narrative – February 2021
- Tax Collector’s Report – February 2021

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

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services