

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 1, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chairman; Thomas Keegan; Tom Livingston; Lisa Shanahan; Barbara Smyth; George Tsiranides; Darlene Young

OTHER: Alex Knopp, Norwalk Library Board Chairman; Jessica Vanashek; Sherelle Harris; Angela Fogel; Anthony Carr; Brian Bidolli; Chris Torre, Public Works; Diana Revolus; Dominique Johnson; Gino Gatto, Fire Chief; Greg Burnett, Council Member; James Travers; Jeff Oduro; Joyce Liu; Lisa Shanahan, Council Member; Mickey Docimo; Nick Roberts, Recreation & Parks Director; Steve Kleppin, Zoning Official; Steven Ivan; Thomas Kulhawik, Police Chief; Tom Hamilton, BoE CFO; David Westmoreland; Henry Dachowitz, City CFO; Diane Lauricella; Lamond Daniels, City Administration; Sabrina Church, Business Development & Tourism, and Arts Commission.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Chairman Kydes. There was a quorum present.

ROLL CALL

Chairman Kydes gave a roll call for those present.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2021-2022 CDBG ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

There was no one who wished to speak on this item.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Diane Lauricella came forwards to speak. There are two items that she felt were of importance that relate to things that were restored. She was pleased that money was added for school bathrooms. She is amazed that it got to the point that it did and urges the Committee to accept the mayor's additions to the school lavatories as it is a public health issue. She suggested that they send a letter to Health Director as well as the Board of Education that these sorts of issues cannot be allowed to accumulate. They should have a process to deal with maintenance issues.

Secondly, she is not in favor of the issue related to the Broad River. She asked that this Committee that the time has come for a neutral party that is qualified to give information so they may give an informed vote related to the consistent use of artificial turf. She wished for a comparison between the cost of the artificial and natural turf. It is still a problem and a health issue. The time has come for a true and professional review of the use of artificial turf on the fields.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021 MEETING.

**** COMMISSIONER KEEGAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COMMISSIONER LIVINGSTON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Norwalk Library Board Chairman Knopp came forwards to speak. He had been accidentally overlooked before in the Public Participation. He is present to speak on the behalf of the Library. He is asking for \$38,000 to move forwards a five-year project which is the digitization of the Norwalk Hour. The Library currently has the Norwalk Hour on microfilm which requires the readers to come in and go through ancient technology to utilize. He suggested that they finish existing projects before funding new ones. There is also a need to refresh and upgrade the technology in the main branch auditorium. This is a major project to deal with the post-COVID use of the area to comply with social distancing. The first request is to restore funding to the fourth of the five-year digitization project. Additionally, if the project is not constantly funded to completion, there will be a large gap and someone who is going through the collection will need to use both the digital and microfilm which is both inconvenient and unhealthy. Thirdly, this is now an effort to digitize records that are 51-67 years old with many records being extremely fragile and easily damaged.

B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2021 MEETING.

**** COMMISSIONER LIVINGSTON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2021 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** COMMISSIONER TSIRANIDES SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 4, 2021 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY2022 CAPITAL BUDGET

**** COMMISSIONER YADES MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE FY 2022 CAPITAL BUDGET AS SUBMITTED.**

Police Chief Kulhawik came forwards to speak for the Police Department. He had the following items on his list.

- 1) \$150,000 for firing range repairs. It has been in the capital budget for the past several years. The range is the same range that was originally built in 2005 and is almost unusable. There are maintenance issues as well due to a lack of replacement parts. It needs a complete upgrade.
- 2) Their standard annual item for cars. This is for marked patrol cars and unmarked police vehicles. This is 10 patrol cars and 3 unmarked vehicles. He proceeded to list the financial details for the cars.

- 3) \$110,000 for the Pharaoh 360 Standard. It has been requested for several years now. It is a 360-degree computerized scanning system for crash investigation and crime scene documentation. This item was removed from the capital budget by the Planning Commission.

It was noted that, in the Mayor's recommendation, there was a column marked 'Available' with \$181,000 in it. It was clarified that these were prior fund that had not been spent. Discussion followed regarding the details.

Fire Chief Gatto came forwards to speak for the Fire Department. He had the following items on his capital list.

- 1) \$70,450 Vehicle replacement to purchase two vehicles. A 2021 Ford Explorer and a 2021 Ford Transit cargo van to replace an arson investigation van.
- 2) \$650,000 for apparatus replacement. This will replace a frontline fire engine. It is on a 12-15 year replacement cycle. They are looking to replace another fire engine in 2023.
- 3) \$195,000 for a 25-foot Defender Coast Guard boat to replace one of two marine division boats.
- 4) \$19,100 for Foam for flammable liquids and spills. The current foam is considered a hazard to the environment and needs replacement. They need to discontinue use of the old foam and replace it with new foam.
- 5) \$20,000 for high pressure bags designed to lift objects and vehicles.
- 6) \$20,000 Security Cameras and Intercom Systems. This is a continuation from last year.
- 7) \$35,000 Used Tractor for Hazmat Trailer.
- 8) \$35,000 for building repairs.
- 9) \$145,000 for a new roof at Station 5 at Meadow Street. The house was built in 1969 and still has its original roof. Two estimates have been provided for \$145,000 and the other was \$160,000.

It was questioned about the \$21,000 left over for security cameras from last year was being used for, especially with the request for an additional \$20,000. Fire Chief Gatto clarified that they can begin work with the money they have but they won't have enough to finish the project.

The condition of Station 5's roof was also question. Fire Chief Gatto said that they've already needed to do patchwork and it was leaking and in need of replacement.

Mr. Steve Kleppin came forwards to speak for Planning & Zoning. He had one request.

- 1) \$150,000 for field card scanning. This will digitize their current system. This will also allow for easier access to permits and access older permits. The cards are currently held in boxes at the office and are so old they are afraid of disintegration if handled.

It was asked how this was different from similar services. Mr. Kleppin responded that this represents what the current conditions of the property are like. This is especially helpful when dealing with potential legal and illegal uses of the property. He then reviewed the details of the timeline for implementation for the Committee.

Mr. Brian Bidolli came forwards to represent Redevelopment. He had two requests:

- 1) \$250,000 for Affordable Housing. He proceeded to review the details for the Committee.
- 2) \$125,000 for Façade improvements and redevelopment.

Ms. Joyce Liu came forwards to speak for Information & Technology.

- 1) \$645,000 for City Technology improvements. This is combined technology requests for things such as the Public Library, Public Works, & Public Safety. She proceeded to review the details for the Committee and went into detail about the items covered in these improvements.

Mr. Anthony Carr came forwards to speak for Public Works on the following items: They are not requesting any additional money outside of the Mayor's recommended budget. He allowed Ms. Vanessa Valadares came forwards to speak on the following items:

- 1) \$500,000 for Bridge Repairs. A design consultant had been hired the prior year.
- 2) \$35,000 for Structural Inspections & Repair. They need someone to check the retaining walls.
- 3) \$1,800,000 for West Cedar Bridge. This bridge is part of the bridge program.
- 4) \$5,000,000 for a Pavement Management Program. They only do existing sidewalks. Discussion followed on the details of the paving.
- 5) \$2,000,000 for Sidewalks & Curbs
- 6) \$500,000 for Watercourse Maintenance. They have requested \$3,500,000 but are comfortable with the recommended \$500,000 but will request more next year.
- 7) \$100,000 for Norwalk Flood Control.
- 8) \$65,000 for Tree Planting programs.
- 9) \$2,000,000 for East Ave Reconstruction. She reviewed the details of the reconstruction plans for the Committee.
- 10) \$1,991,800 for Tea 21 Local Match. This is 80% funded. She reviewed the details of the funding for the committee.
- 11) Right of Way Use Policy Study which she went into detail about regarding the proposed study. They are looking to form policy to manage certain issues.
- 12) \$200,000 for State Projects Non-Participating City.
- 13) No requests for the Wall Street Area Sidewalk & Historic Street Light District Project.
- 14) No requests for the Elizabeth Stree Streetscape for this year.

A question was raised about the West Cedar Street Bridge. It was asked if the dollar amount was the city's contribution of 20% or if they'd be reimbursed for it. Ms. Valadares said that the total cost of the bridge was closer to \$4,000,000 so their cost will be only 20% of that. Discussion on the details of the bridge funding followed.

Mr. Nick Roberts came forwards to speak on the Public Works Operations items. He discussed the following items:

- 1) \$250,000 for Truck Scale Replacement. This is the truck scale located at the DPW operations center. There has been a lot of settling and a closed conduit. A full replacement is recommended.
- 2) The request for Tipping Floor Refurbishment has been reduced to \$0. It is not in severe deterioration yet. This item will likely be requested again in upcoming years.

- 3) \$540,000 to replace two 1996 plough trucks. This is based on their fleet replacement and efficiency plan.
- 4) Compact replacement which has been reduced to \$0. It is assumed that their available budget of \$210,00 will be enough to cover replacement.

Mr. Kydes came forwards to speak for the Recreation & Parks section of Public Works. He spoke on the following items.

- 1) \$260,000 for School & Park Playgrounds. In particular the locations of Blackstone Park, Oyster Shell park, and Devon's Place. \$87,000 will be needed for Oyster Shell Park due to its rubberized playground surfacing. There is also a major issue with settling. There is a bunch of settling and erosion underneath the playgrounds causing problems. \$260,000 has been requested just to do the work at Devon's Place and Oyster Shell Park.
- 2) \$700,000 for Calf Pasture Beach. This includes work on the parking lot. They were last paved over 17 years ago. The asphalt is currently cracking and there is a lot of wear and tear. He went into detail about the parking lot plans. There may be a reconfiguration of the perimeter roadway at some point in the future.
- 3) \$620,000 for the Turf softball field at Brian McMahan High School. The design was completed this year. The new totals come out to \$1,620,000 The \$600,000 will fund the lights for the facility. There is no softball field dedicated to girls' sports in the city.
- 4) \$2,500,000 for Broad River Baseball Complex. This is based on the estimate from the consultant this year. They are planning to scale the project down. Discussion followed on the details.
- 5) \$225,000 for Cranbury Park. They are looking to continue to seal the envelope of the building and the historic mansion. They were able to complete the shingling on the roof. Projects have come in under budget this year. They generate about \$180,000 in revenue from the mansion and there is more that can be done to open it up to the public.
- 6) \$300,000 for basketball and tennis courts. There are three tennis courts at Matthew's Park that are in bad shape. They would like to replace them with a post-tension system. This has a 20-year guarantee against cracking. There are also courts at the high schools that need work.
- 7) Veteran's Memorial Park. Mr. Kydes clarified that there had been some issues with properly presenting a price. The main priority is the docks, namely the marina slips. They are in bad shape and over 20 years old. Mr. Kydes detailed the damage that has been done to the docks.
- 8) \$270,000 to replace two pick-up trucks. They have only one vehicle with a plough attachment. There was also a request for a dedicated vehicle for Cranbury Park. They also need a replacement for their backhoe. The floor in the vehicle is completely rusted out.
- 9) \$500,00 for Casagrande and Tesla field. This is for the replacement of track around the football fields.
- 10) \$200,000 for Ben Franklin Gymnasium. The request is to provide air conditioning in the gym. They do not run programs in the summer due to the lack of air conditioning. This will allow for another site in which programs can be run during the summer.
- 11) \$400,000 for Irving Freese Park. The request is for phase 2 but they have yet to finish phase 1 meaning the cost can be deferred a bit.
- 12) \$50,000 for Backstop and Fencing.
- 13) \$50,000 for paving and sidewalks.
- 14) \$50,000 for Tree Planting. There is \$105,661 dollars in the fund currently due to the impact of COVID this year. Mr. Kydes reviewed the tree planting locations for the Committee.

- 15) \$50,000 for Open Space Fund. This money will be transferred over to conservation at the end of the year.
- 16) Mr. Kydes did not initially request anything for Athletic Fields but subsequently asked for \$50,000 due to other projects since, if they are not going to fund the turf fields this year, they can spend the money on other areas of the athletics parks.

It was asked to clarify the budget issues regarding Veteran's Park. Mr. Kydes explained that the dock replacement was \$725,000 but was listed incorrectly on the fiscal year. Due to entry error the actual request is for \$425,000.

There was no one present to speak for the Department of Public Works Building expenses.

Mr. Anthony Carr came forwards to discuss the Water Pollution Control Authority. He spoke on the following projects.

- 1) \$1,000,000 for Collection system rehabilitation. This is a capital project in place to rehabilitate appx. 200 miles of sanitation sewers throughout the city. This includes spot repairs for broken or collapsed sections of pipe. Mr. Carr discussed the repair details for the Committee.
- 2) \$1,000,000 for Pump Station Upgrade/Replacement. There are multiple wastewater pumps throughout the city in need of work. Mr. Carr reviewed the stations in need of upgrades and repairs. They are looking to work on 5 pump stations over the next few years.
- 3) WWTP Rehabilitation /Improvement which will not have a request this year for funds. \$750,000 has already been council-approved for this project. Mr. Carr reviewed the plans for the rehabilitation/improvement system.

Mr. David Westmoreland came forwards to speak for the Historical Commission. He discussed the following items.

- 1) \$150,000 for the Smith Street Buildings. He reviewed the buildings in need of work for the Committee.
- 2) \$180,000 for the Lockwood Matthews Mansion Code & Repairs. \$2,544,995 is available already for this project. They received additional grant money from the state and have agreed with the finance department to spend the state grant money first. As a result, this will likely be requested for another year or two. He went into detail about the repairs.
- 3) \$50,000 for ADA Access for Mill Hill. The money will be used to replace the crumbling spillways leading up to the townhouse building as well as other repairs. He went into detail about the proposed repairs.
- 4) \$10,000 for Archiving and Cataloging the Museum Collection. The city owns a substantial museum collection and the money is to improve the care of that collection.
- 5) \$110,000 for Cemetery Restoration. This will mostly go towards the restoration of Pine Island Cemetery for things such as repairing headstones that have been damaged over the years.
- 6) \$50,000 for WPA murals in need of restoration.
- 7) There were no requests for the Lockwood House ADA access.

Ms. Sabrina Church came forwards to speak for Arts Commission. She spoke on the following items.

- 1) \$50,000 for Arts in Public Places program. This will go to install murals and other pieces of art around the community. They are currently half-way through this project.
- 2) \$6,000 for Washington Street Barriers art. This is for artistically decorated banners.
- 3) \$100,000 for Public Art Inventory. There is a lot of art stored in the basement of the Public Health Department. The Pieces are not currently valued and need to be appraised. Additionally, there are multiple pieces owned by the city which need to be located and appraised.

Mr. Lamond Daniels came forwards to speak for Community Services. He discussed the following items.

- 1) \$80,000 for ADA compliance in Human Relations and Fair Rent. He believes that, despite the impact of COVID, they can still work to complete many ADA compliance projects.
- 2) \$75,000 for the Auditorium Refresh for the Library.

It was requested that more detail be given for the Auditorium Refresh. Mr. Daniels said that this was an upgrade and the last time that this had been done was in 2012. The details of the proposed upgrade were covered for the Committee.

Ms. Jessica Vonashek came forwards to speak next on Economic and Community Development. She spoke on the following items.

- 1) \$150,000 for Small Business/Main St. Program. This program was launched last fiscal year. She reviewed the details of the program for the committee and how it will help small businesses. They are anticipating a second round for the store front improvement program.

She then moved on to E-7, Code Enforcement where she discussed the following items.

- 1) \$30,000 for Gateway Sign replacement. This is to replace the signage of the exits off the highway. She reviewed the signs getting replaced for the Committee.
- 2) \$150,000 for Streetscape Improvement. This item is normally under the redevelopment agency due to landscaping. It has been changed due to budgetary issues which Ms. Vanashek explained to the Committee. They want to increase the geography that they are focused in with the improvements. There is also a planned code re-write.

James Travers came forwards to speak on Traffic. He discussed the following items.

- 1) \$30,000 for protected Crosswalks/Warnings. This is a continuation of a program. This will improve mobility and safety throughout the city.
- 2) \$250,000 for Safe Routes to school. This will improve the sidewalks and crosswalks around the schools.
- 3) \$100,000 for new sidewalk construction.
- 4) \$150,000 for Rowayton Avenue Sidewalks. These sidewalks have worn out paths and are highly used.
- 5) \$50,000 for Norwalk River Valley Trail.
- 6) \$90,000 for the Transportation Master Plan. The city is in contract for updating the master plan. Items within the plan are to be brought into design to look for funding options for these.

- 7) \$600,000 for Traffic Signal Equipment. This will replace aging infrastructure for traffic signals. Some of which are 30-40 years old.
- 8) \$50,000 for Traffic Signal Enhancement. There is a requirement from the federal government that the push buttons have to be ADA accessible.
- 9) \$350,000 for West/Belton/Mott Intersection. This is a very confusing intersection. There was a pedestrian fatality at this location. It is nearly impossible to safely cross this intersection.

There was a request for a bit more information on the background and history of the money that's been allocated over the years from the Committee. Mr. Travers went over the current efforts on how the money is being spent to help the schools and their crosswalks out. He also pointed out that Norwalk has among the lowest walk score in the state despite its size. This means people cannot safely use the system of sidewalks and walkways.

A question was raised about the amount of funding already available for traffic and sidewalk improvement. The funding available is to support the master plan itself. Discussion followed on the details of the spending. (1:40:00)

Ms. Jessica Vonashek came forwards to speak next on the Parking Authority. She discussed the following items.

- 1) \$200,000 for Revenue Control Equipment. This is the pay stations of which some are antiquated and need to be replaced. Additionally, some of the equipment will be upgraded to be contactless.
- 2) \$250,000 for Parking Wayfinding Signage. This is an effort that the parking authority has been very eager to approach. The hope is to not only do a plan/study but implement new signage for the parking authority that allows people to understand where the parking assets are.

She also pointed out that they had money in the budget already for parking garage maintenance. They were concerned people might think that they were not maintaining the garages like they should which is not the case. There is money in this account.

Ms. Sabrina Church came forwards to speak on Business Development & Tourism. She discussed the following items.

- 1) \$100,000 for Arts and Culture Program. There is currently no Arts and Culture plan in Norwalk. Norwalk has a plan of conservation and development that has identified this as a need. The state of Connecticut has the 4th highest economic impact per capita in the nation. As a result there are a large amount of people coming to invest in the city when it comes to arts and culture. This plan will outline all the current publicly owned assets the city currently has including murals and public art. This will also highlight assets that are not publicly owned as well. This is a place where the city should invest. The mayor has suggested \$50,000 but Ms. Church's research indicates \$100,000.
- 2) \$200,000 for Entrepreneurship Microgrant Program. This grant will hopefully either support or be paired with a program to help a small business development. A large portion of the people who participate in these programs are minority or woman-owned and have a greater percentage of success.

It was pointed out by Ms. Vonashek that a portion of this money would be spent to work with the company/organization that would actually run the program and training. Further discussion followed on the details.

Chairman Kydes asked what had been done with the funding provided for the tourism funding and branding imitative the prior year and why there had been no request for new funding this year for that item. Ms. Church said that they had the \$100,000 from the tourism branding imitative. This is being partnered with the Parking Authority funding for visits to Norwalk. They are currently making a new website so they can monitor and edit the website from a staff perspective in the future. This had not been asked for previously as it had been moved into the operating budget. They ask asking them to do less going forwards due to shifts in responsibility. A lot of the upfront costs were completed in the first fiscal year. The work done this year has been for facilitation and set-up to take the project entirely in-house.

Committee Member Young asked what the difference was between the Entrepreneurship Microgrant Program and other, similar, programs. Ms. Vanashek explained that this program will educate entrepreneurs and minority/women-owned businesses. Once complete should these entrepreneurs open a business in Norwalk they will be given a grant to help them get started. She proceeded to go into detail about expenses covered by the various programs in regards to helping small businesses including improvements to streetscapes, garbage bins, and planters.

Finance Chief Tom Hamilton came forwards to speak on Board of Education. He proceeded to thank the mayor for additional funding recommendations and thanked him for funding additions. Thanks to the mayor's recommendations they have gone a long way towards meeting the needs of the Board of Education. He discussed the following items.

- 1) Funding for the Briggs Family Welcome Center. The project has the intention to create a one-stop shop to meet the various needs of the families as they come forwards. The current process is disjointed and registration is decentralized meaning families have to start at individual schools. The hope is that, by centralizing the process, they can make it more streamlined and efficient. The multi-lingual learners welcome center, currently housed at city hall, can be relocated to the Briggs Family Welcome Center for further centralization. Specialized learning services would also be located at this welcome center. The transportation office for the Board of Education would be located at this location so families with questions about bus stops and passes and other transportation needs can do so conveniently. Food services for lunch services, billing and payments, and providing menu information. Student health services will be located here for information on vaccinations and other services. A technology depot will be located here which is important as there is currently one device for every student within the district. This way replacement laptops and Chrome books can be distributed easily. Student records, transcripts, and similar stuff will be managed at the welcome center. This has not been recommended for funding. They are separately pursuing options to try to secure funding.
- 2) \$747,000 for Curriculum Materials & Textbooks. This is to replace literacy resources and other materials for K-5, 9-12 literacy sources, and to increase the cultural representation of texts in the school learning commons. They are willing to work with the numbers provided.

- 3) \$1,456,700 for Instructional Technology. This is to replace an additional year of replacement for the 1:1 initiative. This will go on to a 4–5-year cycle. Students will get their first device in first grade, a second at the end of 5th grade, and a final device when they enter into high school. The Board of Education feels it makes sense to include this in their operating budget going forwards. He went into details about the funding for the technology needs.

Committee Member Smyth asked if the technology that is turned in will be repurposed, worked on, or whatever else. Mr. Hamilton responded that, if they are still in good working condition, they will be refurbished and used. Though, he noted, a device that is 4-5 years old is nearing the end of its life. Though they will attempt to refurbish and redeploy the items where several more years of use can be obtained.

Committee Member Smyth asked where they all went. Mr. Hamilton said he did not know and would need to ask someone for that information. He presumed they went to some form of recycling center.

- 4) The air conditioning program. The preferred solution is for all buildings to have a central air conditioning system. They will be doing this for new buildings and refurbishing old buildings with central air conditioning. A big part of the recent project at Ponus Ridge Middle School was the installation of central air conditioning. There is a project to install portable/window/modular air conditioning units in other schools as well.
- 5) BoE Asbestos Abatement Program. There are multiple schools still with asbestos floor tiling. These are deteriorating in several schools causing problems. These are a safety hazard. They want to replace all the asbestos floor tiles over the next five years. These also impede other work within the buildings as the tiles need to be removed before other work can proceed.
- 6) Bathroom renovation work. They are currently in the middle of an update to a prior study on bathroom use. Many of the bathrooms are original to the building.

Committee Member Livingston said he was concerned with how these were being portrayed. He said that they were being portrayed as decrepit, absent, and in need of replacement. He said that they were not and, while some needed work, they are clean and were not bad. He was not certain that they needed replacement. It was too much money for something that wasn't needed. He had suggested that the Land Use Committee and the Facilities Committee get together with select individuals to talk about these items. A lot of the issues are cosmetic and maintenance, and is not all in need of replacement.

Committee Member Shanahan said that they had visited all the bathroom stalls in all the schools and the problems were not renovation but maintenance. The bathrooms are cleaned twice a day.

Mr. Hamilton said he had heard complaints from parents and children that the bathrooms smell and complained of issues such as doors that don't shut. The bathrooms are dated and, in many cases, original to the construction of the building.

Mr. William Hodel noted that upgrades had been done to the bathrooms and there have been some replacements.

Committee Member Smyth said that it depends on the school. She said that the bathrooms inside Norwalk High are very bad. She said some of the sinks can be pulled away from the wall or have no running water. She asked if this was specific to middle schools or schools overall.

Mr. Hamilton said that the initial schools would be middle schools but over a five-year period they would handle all the schools.

Committee Member Smyth said that there has been an issue with maintenance over the years which needs addressing.

- 7) \$400,000 for Fuel tank replacement. This is to replace underground fuel tanks at Tracey, Columbus, and West Rocks. The tanks have reached the end of their useful life and the federal government has mandated their replacement. This is eligible for a partial state reimbursement of \$130,000. This makes the net amount that the city would be paying \$270,000. There is a risk of being cited and fined if they are unable to replace these tanks.

Mr. Hodel noted that they had been appointed funds to work on previous tanks. Those tanks reached their 30-year life in 2020. These tanks were installed in 1991 meaning they will reach their 30-year life this year.

- 8) \$250,000 for Capital Repairs and Replacements. This is for unplanned but necessary repairs to the schools. This account has been vital to meeting unplanned needs.
- 9) \$350,000 for School District Paving and Concrete. This is to repave parking lots and replace parking lots. This will be primarily spent at West Rocks and Kendell Elementary school.
- 10) \$110,000 to replace vehicles. This has not been recommended for funding.
- 11) Silvermine driveway improvements. The city has previously approved \$80,000 and the estimated cost is \$1,500,000. This is to help with the bottleneck problem that the driveway currently has for letting people in and out.

Chairman Kydes pointed out that money had been allocated for a plan for the driveway yet the plan hasn't been completed. Mr. Hamilton confirmed that this was the case. The engineering work on this has not been completed. There were higher priorities due to COVID. They will be in a position to put this out to bid a year from now. Discussion followed on the details.

Chairman Kydes asked if they would be able to use the funding for the Asbestos Removal Program during the fiscal year. Mr. Hodel said that they were planning to do Silvermine this summer. He mentioned that, over the years, many floor tiles have been removed in the hallways but not the classrooms. It is a more involved process removing it from the classrooms. Chairman Kydes asked if they would be able to remove it in the limited timeframe with that amount of complexity or if they could wait for removal. Mr. Hamilton said that the funds were already earmarked for Silvermine School. The replacement was going to happen this summer. The removal projects are also eligible for state reimbursement. He reviewed the details of the reimbursements. He pointed out that, if they do not have the money in the budget and don't apply for it now, they will not be able to do the replacements in the summer of 2022 and will need to wait a year at minimum.

1. APPROVE ADVANCEMENT OF THE FY2022 CAPITAL BUDGET TO THE COMMON

COUNCIL.

Chairman Kydes proposed an amendment to the \$38,000 from the Board of Education Bathroom Renovation line item to item F-3 the Library to digitize the newspapers. This will bring the Board of Education from \$1,500,000 for renovations to \$1,462,000 for renovations.

**** CHAIRMAN KYDES MOTIONED TO TRANSFER \$38,000 FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION BATHROOM RENOVATION LINE ITEM TO THE LIBRARY NORWALK NEWSPAPER DIGITIZATION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** CHAIRMAN KYDES MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AS AMENDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATION

1. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATION OF CT GENERAL

STATUTE 12-63C AND ASSOCIATED PENALTIES.

Mr. William Ford, the City Assessor, came forwards to discuss this item. He explained that the incoming expense forms are required to be filed with the assessor's office by all commercial property owners in the city. That information is used to derive assessments. The commercial property trades on an income approach. As such this information is needed to accurately determine the value of the property. The penalty is a 10% penalty and it is for anyone who does not file their income expense lean. The City of Norwalk has about an 80% reporting rate. There have been issues due to COVID and they have done different things with that depending on if they have historically filed or not. They do not believe there is an issue or a need for the local ordinance. He assured that, if the penalty was eliminated, the number of filings will go down significantly. The jurisdictions that have it usually have appx a 40-50% reporting rate. The more accurate assessments are the less court cases there are. He does not believe there is a need to have an ordinance to allow the waving of the fee.

Chairman Kydes said that he was in agreement with Mr. Ford. He said he believed that, in the current circumstances, there needs to be a bit of leniency to account for those suffering both financially and physically from the pandemic. That is why he recommends that there are circumstances due to the pandemic where someone is unable to file in time that they should not be subject to a 10% penalty. Discussion followed. It was noted that people who have historically filed on-time but were late this year would be handled differently than people who have historically filed late.

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old Business at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

**** COMMISSIONER SHANAHAN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.
** COMMISSIONER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:57 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Ian A. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services.