

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 13, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Greg Burnett, Chair; David Heuvelman, Tom Keegan, Diana Revolus, George Theodoridis

OTHERS: Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Henry Dachowitz, Finance Director; Michael DePalma, Sharon Connors, Lamond Daniels, Mayor's Office; Bruce Chudwick, City of Norwalk Bond Counsel

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 7:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Burnett called the roll. A quorum was present. Mr. Burnett said that he had been contacted by Mr. Kydes who said he would not be able to attend the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one who wished to address the Committee at this time.

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

- **April 8, 2021** – Regular Meeting

**** MR. HEUVELMAN MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 8, 2021 –
REGULAR MEETING.**

Page 1, under **ATTENDANCE**, “Jessica V.” should be changed to “Jessica Vonashek”

Page 2, last paragraph: please change the following from:

“due to the extended grace period, March 31st was not the end of the cycle rather
April 1st was.”

To: “due to the extended grace period, February 1st, was not the end of the cycle, rather April 1st was.”

Page 3, paragraph 1, second to last sentence: please change: “They will be filing lean certificates.” To: “They will be filing lien certificates.”

Page 6. first paragraph: please correct Ms. Vonashek’s last name.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF APRIL 8, 2021 REGULAR MEETING AS CORRECTED PASSED WITH THREE (3) (HEUVELMAN, KEEGAN AND REVOLUS) AND ONE (1) ABSTENTION (THEODORIDIS).**

Claims Committee: receive the monthly Claims Report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated: May 13, 2021

Narrative on Tax Collections dated May 13, 2021 – Receive Report and discuss.

Monthly Tax Collector’s Reports dated April 2021 – Receive Report and discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli presented her report. The Claims report was for Information only. Lien Variance Certificates have been filed. Mr. Burnett displayed the report on the screen.

The tax bills will be sent out by the middle of June. She explained that the sale has been moved to the third Monday in September.

Mr. Burnett asked about the two remaining months in relationship to the amount already collected. Ms. Biagiarelli said that the collection rate was a bit spotty last year due to COVID, but things are smoothing out. Mr. Dachowitz agreed and reviewed the details with the Committee. He said that he expected that they would come in at 98.7%.

Mr. Heuvelman thanked Ms. Biagiarelli for the work that she and her team have done. He asked how many properties were still on the tax lien sale. Ms. Biagiarelli said that there were over 200 on the list but they are working on reviewing the list. She gave a brief overview of how the decision for including a property on the list was made. Generally, when they start the sale, they start with 200 but this year will most likely be lower due to the State mandated moratorium on lien sales because of COVID.

Mr. Dachowitz said that the notifications had been sent out and a number of property owners submitted payments.

Mr. Heuvelman said that Ms. Biagiarelli had seemed to indicate that there would not be an extension on taxes this year. Ms. Biagiarelli said that they were in touch with State OPM Office about this but there have not been any details released at this time.

Mr. Heuvelman asked about the e-check cost increased from .99¢ to \$1.25, but the credit card cost decreased.

Mr. Burnett said that the three reports were all for informational purposes. He thanked Ms. Biagiarelli for all the hard work she and her team did during COVID.

Receive Oak Hills Authority monthly Financial Statements for March 2021.

Mr. DePalma, the Oak Hills Authority Vice President, said that their revenue had exceeded their budget planning. They expect the half way house to be opened on the 20th and restaurant repairs are underway.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if the lease was to come through the Council for approval. Mr. DePalma said that his attorney had informed him that they did not need to bring it to the Council. He said that the agreement had been circulated and he had no problem bringing it to the Council if needed. The Authority will be paying for the repairs. A discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Burnett said that the City legal team has been working with the Authority and they are trying to clarify whether it needs an approval or just as an informational item.

Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling to execute the Grant Assignment Certification, SFY 2022 assigning State of Connecticut 13b-38bb Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Municipal Grant Program apportioned funds to operation of transportation services coordinating entity, Norwalk Transit District. City of Norwalk General Fund budget grants to Elderhouse \$18,000 and grants to Norwalk Senior Center \$390,000 for Fiscal Year 2022.

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

Mr. Daniels said that this was an annual grant that the City provides for Elderhouse and the Senior Center. He explained that the grants have been moved to his office. He then provided the details about what the grant funding covers to the Committee. The City needs to be committed to the dollar amount so that the NTD can provide the transportation for the elderly.

**** THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE THE GRANT ASSIGNMENT CERTIFICATION, SFY 2022 ASSIGNING STATE OF CONNECTICUT 13B-38BB ELDERLY AND DISABLED DEMAND RESPONSIVE MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM APPORTIONED FUNDS TO OPERATION OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES COORDINATING ENTITY, NORWALK TRANSIT DISTRICT. CITY OF NORWALK GENERAL FUND BUDGET GRANTS TO ELDERHOUSE \$18,000**

AND GRANTS TO NORWALK SENIOR CENTER \$390,000 FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Receive Board of Estimate and Taxation Other Business from May 3, 2021:

a. RESOLUTION, MAKING APPROPRIATIONS, for various Public Improvements aggregating \$31,416,972 for the FY 2021-22 Capital Budget and authorizing the issuance of \$31,416,972 General Obligation Bonds of the City to meet certain appropriations in the FY 2021-22 Capital Budget.

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Dachowitz said that this was the culmination of the Capital Budget. This structured the same way as it has been in prior years.

Mr. Bruce Chudwick, the City of Norwalk Bond Counsel, presented a brief overview of the bond process. Mr. Dachowitz then explained that there was a disconnect between the time that an amount of a bond is authorized and the time when the actual bonding is borrowed. Mr. Dachowitz then explained that the City had received a request from the Sixth Taxing District in order to borrow on their behalf. Due to the timing, all of the figures for this District Capital Project are not available. The Taxing Districts do not request the City to borrow on their behalf on an annual basis. He said that the Taxing Districts are current on their loan repayments. Discussion followed about the interest rates and other details.

Mr. Heuvelman thanked Mr. Dachowitz for the information that he has provided to the Council during COVID. He asked what the City's status was regarding borrowing and the interest rates. The City has about \$280 million in outstanding bonds. They have a capacity of approximately \$21 million in new debt. There is about \$20-\$22 million in old debt that will be retired. He reviewed the details with the Council.

**** THE MOTION TO RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION OTHER BUSINESS FROM MAY 3, 2021:**

A. RESOLUTION, MAKING APPROPRIATIONS, FOR VARIOUS PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AGGREGATING \$31,416,972 FOR THE FY 2021-22 CAPITAL BUDGET AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$31,416,972 GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OF THE CITY TO MEET CERTAIN APPROPRIATIONS IN THE FY 2021-22 CAPITAL BUDGET.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Authorize the Mayor to execute Amendment one (1) to the Master Lease Agreement for Office Copiers with TGI Office Automation to execute a four (4) year extension to this master agreement for a total amount not to exceed \$268,505.21.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED THE ITEM.**

Ms. Connors, the Purchasing Agent came forward and said that TGI Office Automation had been providing services to the City and the administration has been pleased with them. Due to COVID, the staff were working from home and this significantly reduced the amount of copying. The staff will be returning to work on site on the 20th. People are working smarter, so she expects to have a reduction in usage. She said that they would like to continue their partnership with TGI.

Mr. Burnett asked if they would have any flexibility in the contract if the usage does decrease. Ms. Connor said that she would look into this and report back to Mr. Burnett. Ms. Connor said that unlike a corporate office, there is no copy room and each department has their own machines. They will be reviewing the office space environment to insure they have enough machines.

Mr. Burnett asked about the BOE. Ms. Connor said that they have a similar arrangement, but with a different contractor. She said that she often coordinates with the BOE Purchasing Agent.

Mr. Dachowitz asked about the various rates for the machines, which Ms. Connor reviewed with him.

Ms. Revolus said that when there is a decrease in copies, there is an increase in cost. Ms. Connor said that they have a flat rate for black and white and a different rate for color.

Ms. Revolus asked if there was an increased charge per page if the count goes lower. Ms. Connor said this was correct and the toner and repairs are part of the contract.

**** THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AMENDMENT ONE (1) TO THE MASTER LEASE AGREEMENT FOR OFFICE COPIERS WITH TGI OFFICE AUTOMATION TO EXECUTE A FOUR (4) YEAR EXTENSION TO THIS MASTER AGREEMENT FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$268,505.21 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Burnett asked Ms. Connor to send additional information on the flexibility of the contract.

ADJOURNMENT.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services