

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING
July 14, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chair; Ed Abrams; Sheri Brown; James Frayer; Troy Jellerette; Artie Kassimis

STAFF: Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services;
Michele DeLuca, Deputy Director of Emergency Management;
Angela Fogel, Director Management and Budgets; Gino Gatto,
Chief, Norwalk Fire Department; Donna King, City Clerk;

OTHERS: Michael DiPalma, Chair, Oak Hills Park Authority

Mr. Camacho called the special meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 7, 2021 - Regular Meeting

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 3: Should read: Mr. Frayer expressed concern that the internal controls and other controls were not very effective and that other systems may not be in working order

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- ** **MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED**
- ** **MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. KASSIMIS)**

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

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

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Mr. Daniels explained the transfer request. As of July 1, 2021, the Family and Children’s Agency (FCA) was awarded the contract as the new municipal agency to administer services for the elderly on behalf of the City of Norwalk. Funding was always administered under the Health Department, but Mr. Daniels said he asked to transfer the funding into the Community Services Department.

Ms. Fogel said there was a disconnect during the budget process and this was not budgeted for during the current budget. Mr. Lamond said this is the exact amount that was budgeted the year before. The full amount going to FCA is \$150,000. Mr. Daniels said he has \$30,000 budgeted.

Mr. Lamond described the services that will be provided and said that it is a perfect fit, although the name can be misleading. He noted that during the process of choosing an agency, the Family and Children’s Agency was the strongest candidate to provide senior support services. He said there were three applicants.

- ** **MR. ABRAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER REQUEST**

FROM ACCOUNT	FROM ACCT NAME	FROM ACCT AVAIL BUDGET	TO ACCOUNT	TO ACCT NAME	XFER AMT
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$552	01-1000-5298	Other Contractual Services	\$121,748
Total					\$121,748

TRANSFER FROM HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO FUND THE MUNICIPAL AGENCY FOR THE ELDERLY. PREVIOUSLY BUDGETED IN THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Gatto explained that message signage is a reimbursable item. He said that the existing signs are about 10 years old and are lent out to various agencies such as the Norwalk Hospital.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER REQUEST**

From Account	From Acct Name	From Acct Avail Budget	To Account	To Acct Name	Xfer Amt
01-9600-5900	Contingency	\$1,500,000	01-3120-5262	Other Machinery Equipment	\$34,567
Total					\$34,567

Variable message signs at the end of their useful lives.

Ms. DeLuca explained that there is a very limited window when they can put these items through for reimbursement. She said they are supposed to be reimbursed at 100%. She added that she does not know when the Governor will end the emergency declaration, which closes out all of the eligible purchases.

Between the various departments, there are about seven message signs. Ms. DeLuca described how they are used. She said that the deployment of these signs is a valuable asset.

Mr. Frayer asked about the age of the other signs and suggested purchasing more signs if the City is being reimbursed for two. Ms. DeLuca said they are trying to replace the old ones, but it would be good to get a third or fourth sign. The Police Department sign is one year old and the DPW and Parks and Recreation sign is about two to three years old.

Mr. Frayer asked Chief Gatto if there is any benefit to getting more signs. Chief Gatto said he has the room to store the signs. He said they were trying to replace what they had; if they had more signs, they would use them. Ms. DeLuca said they have always been very conservative in how much they spend. She said that for the most part, five signs could be deployed at any time. They always have requests for the signs.

Mr. Kassimis said the Governor’s power was extended to September and suggested that the Chief come back with an assessment to see if more signs are needed. Ms. DeLuca said there is a small benefit in buying in a group.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. **OTHER BUSINESS** (Section C) None

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

Financial reports

- **Oak Hills Financial Status** – June 2021

Mr. DePalma reviewed Oak Hills financials. He reported that they have money on hand and discussed putting in a continuous golf path. They went out for bids and feel the payback will be quick. In addition, they are looking at putting in a golf simulator. Financially they are very stable right now.

Mr. Jellerette congratulated Mr. DePalma on being named Chair of the Oak Hills Park Authority. He asked about the delay in opening the restaurant. Mr. DePalma explained that all three walk in refrigerators were out of commission and there are supply issues. Without the refrigerators, they are unable to get the permit to open. Everything else is ready. The goal is to open before August 1st.

Mr. DePalma reported that so far, the Half Way House has generated \$50,000 in revenue. Mr. Jellerette asked if they budgeted for the season pass. Mr. DePalma said the Controller is looking into the break even point.

Mr. Camacho asked how the City was being paid back for the loan Oak Hills Park Authority received. Mr. DePalma explained that it is based on rounds. They paid back over \$80,000 last year. Mr. Camacho asked if there have been any discussions with the City about creating a new arrangement in terms of repaying the City. Mr. DePalma said he did not believe there have been any discussions about renegotiating the payment arrangement.

Mr. Frayer said that part of the problem was that Oak Hills was saddled with debt. He suggested being careful; part of the liability of the golf course is the need to maintain and improve the property. It would be a shame to jeopardize their reputation because the maintenance went down.

Mr. DePalma said they need more data about golf trends and where they are going. They want to work with the City. He noted that any investments they make are revenue generating. A discussion was held about the suggestion to renegotiate the repayment plan to the City.

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Mr. Jellerette congratulated Mr. Dachowitz and the team on the City retaining its AAA bond rating. Ms. Fogel said that they put together a forecast for the rating agencies and said they would not need the \$8 million fund balance transfer. He added that they expect a surplus of \$1.2 million. The collection rate came in over 98%. The trend is that New York residents are moving into this area adding a \$4 million surplus in the permit revenue. Overall, they came in \$9 million positive.

The remainder of the agenda is for informational purposes.

- 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 – June 2021
- Tax Collector’s Report – June 2021

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

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