

**BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING
OCTOBER 4, 2021
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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ATTENDANCE: Mayor Rilling; Ed Abrams; James Frayer; Troy Jellerette

STAFF: Henry Dachowitz, CFO; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Anthony Carr, Chief of Operations; Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Mickey Docimo, Norwalk Police Department; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; William Ford, Tax Assessor; Steve Kleppin, Director of Planning and Zoning; Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; Joyce Liu, IT Director; Vanessa Valdares, Principal Engineer

OTHERS: Joseph Andrasko, Oak Hills Park Authority; Thomas Hamilton, Norwalk Board of Education CFO

Mayor Rilling called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Ms. King called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 13, 2021 – Regular Meeting

The following correction was made to the minutes:

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Under attendance – remove Mr. Frayer’s name and add Mr. Jellerette’s name.

**** MR. ABRAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. FRAYER)**

2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A) None

3. TRANSFER AGENDA (Section B)

FISCAL YEAR 2021-22:

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

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

From	To	Amount
01-9600-5900 Contingency 01-1310-5286 \$217,996	Business Expenses \$118,000 01-1310-5258 Other Professional Services Business Expenses 99,996	

Transfer 1: This transfer is from Contingency to cover the Board of Education \$118,000 Portion of the Evergreen Solutions, LLC Operations Review-Efficiency Study.

Transfer 2: This transfer is from the CFO’s Business Expense Budget to cover Other Professional account for the City portion of \$157,500 for the Evergreen Solutions, LLC Operations Review-Efficiency Study.

The total contract for the City and Board of Education Operations-Review Study is \$275,500.

Finance recommends approval.

Mr. Dachowitz reviewed the transfer request. He said that the people from Evergreen Solutions are ready to start, but before they can, they need sign offs.

Mr. Frayer asked why the City is funding the Board of Educations’ portion. Mayor Rilling explained that when the efficiency study was recommended, it was agreed that the City would pay for the efficiency study.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TAX ASSESSOR DEPARTMENT.

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

From	To	Amount
01-1320-5110 Salary & Wages - Regular 01-1320-5140	Salary & Wages – Part-Time	\$60,000

This transfer is to cover consulting services to assist with the responsibilities of the vacant Assistant Tax Assessor position.

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Finance recommends approval.

Mr. Dachowitz reviewed the request. He explained that Mr. Ford's office has been without a Deputy Assessor for almost two years and they have been consulting with individuals. These funds would cover those costs. He noted that they do not expect to pay the entire \$60,000. He added that there are very few qualified candidates in this field.

Mr. Ford said they are expanding their in-house training, but it will be a while before anyone is trained for this position. He said they will continue to look for candidates.

Mr. Dachowitz said there is a five year cycle with the assessment. There was a backup, but Mr. Ford did a tremendous job. He hopes that there will be less appeals with the next assessment.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER**

From	To	Amount
01-3049-5110 Salary & Wages – Regular	01-3049-5140 Salary & Wages - Part-Time	\$15,000

This transfer is to cover salary for Part-Time Administrative Services for the remainder of the current fiscal year FY-2021-22.

Finance recommends approval.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed the request.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. **OTHER BUSINESS** (Section C)

Mr. Dachowitz reviewed the roll over requests. He said that part of the concept behind the roll over is to reward the managers who beat their budget. Supply chains were stretched because of Covid, and as a result, departments had a surplus, because they were unable to spend their money. He described the concept of a roll over.

Ms. Biagiarelli reviewed the request for the Tax Collector's office. The funds will allow the department to conduct title searches and post the public legal notices for the tax sale. The money will be returned once the taxes are paid.

Mayor Rilling explained that most, if not all communities outsource their tax sales. Ms. Biagiarelli has been doing this for some time and has saved the City of Norwalk millions and millions of dollars.

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Ms. Liu explained that the request from IT is related to cyber security.

Mr. Daniels reviewed his request. Fair Rent continues to see an increase in terms of residents receiving services. He said it has been challenging to replace the previous Director. They conducted a recruitment, and had a hire, who withdrew.

Mr. Daniels explained that the language line is a service the City facilitates when there is no one on staff who speaks a particular language. There has been an increase in the use of the language line in the last three months.

Ms. D'Amore reviewed the two request put forward by the Health Department.

Mr. Daniels said that the Mayor's Summer Youth program relies on donations; however, they were hit hard this year. He asked for \$95,000 because they have an outstanding balance. He noted that the students were paid. He said that going forward they may have to decrease the number of youth participants, but they do not want to do that.

Mr. Dachowitz said that Mr. Daniels had a significant surplus, but this is one area where they are asking for \$95,000. This roll over would replenish next summer's program.

Mr. Docimo reviewed the request for \$116,000 by the Police Department. He explained that these funds were intended to be used last year. If the request is approved, they will work with the Division Commander.

Mr. Fryer asked about the status of adult vests. Mr. Docimo said adult vests were purchased. As they expire, they will be replaced.

Mr. Kleppin reviewed the request from Planning and Zoning. He explained that the Conservation Commission hired a firm out of Boston to conduct a study for them. The study is expected to be completed in the spring.

Mr. Dachowitz reviewed the request from Transportation, Mobility and Parking. He said they have enough surplus to cover the request.

Mr. Carr reviewed the requests and said the majority are Covid related. A lot of the materials they use were not available or there was a price increase.

Mayor Rilling said that he, the Chief of Staff and Mr. Dachowitz went over every single line to be sure they were comfortable with each item. He said that the department heads do an exceptional job in coming in under budget.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

FYE 2021 Balance Surplus Roll Over Request BOE CGS 10-248(a) maximum Surplus Deposit into a non-lapsing Account.

PURSUANT TO CGS10-248 (A) REQUEST APPROVAL FROM THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION TO DEPOSIT \$326,909 TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S UNEXPENDED BALANCE FROM FY 2020-21 INTO A NON-LAPSING ACCOUNT TO SUPPORT EXTRAORDINARY EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE COVID -19 PANDEMIC

Mr. Hamilton explained that this is a request the Board of Estimate and Taxation saw in prior years from the Board of Education.

Mayor Rilling praised the teachers and the Norwalk Public School staff. He said he supports this request and said it is rather nominal.

Mr. Abrams asked Mr. Hamilton if he met with Mr. Dachowitz. Mr. Hamilton said he has not had the opportunity to meet with him, but would be happy to meet with him to go over all of the numbers in as much detail as he would like.

Mayor Rilling discussed the new level of cooperation between the City and the Board of Education regarding budgets. He said that budgets are not an exact science and everyone did a good job staying within their budgets. He said that the Fire Department and Police Department work hard 24/7 during Covid.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Section D)

Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status – September

Mr. Andrasko explained that over the last month there were tech glitches, therefore he did not know about the invites to meet with the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

Mr. Andrasko reviewed the August financials and reported they came in on budget. September started to show a slight amount of weakness and they will track that carefully.

The financial audit is wrapping up. It is in partner review and once that is done and accepted, that will trigger a 1% payment to the City. That will be about \$20,000.

In response to questions from prior meetings about how they factor the monthly payment to the City. Mr. Andrasko said they treat that as non-revenue rounds. Mr. Abrams said the agreement was \$2.00 per round. Mr. Andrasko said that it is \$2.00 per revenue round

and the 1% is over the total revenue. He added that the agreement was set before they established seasonal passes.

Mr. Abrams asked how non-revenue rounds are defined. Mr. Andrasko explained they are barter rounds and seasonal passes. Mr. Abrams said that bartering is no way to run a business.

Mayor Rilling said the agreement was formulated before the seasonal pass program. Mr. Jellerette said they need to come up with an analysis to project usage. He added that it would be very helpful if Oak Hills shared how they do their projections for next year.

Mr. Jellerette said the courses look great, but he is disappointed that the restaurant still isn't open. Mr. Andrasko said the relationship with the vendor has been productive, but there have been construction delays and new things found during the final push for their permit. He said their other operations, such as the Half Way House provide revenue. He said they hope to open the restaurant as soon as they can.

Mr. Jellerette asked about the capital expenditures for the continuous cart path. Mr. Andrasko said that they have a contract for \$130,000, but unfortunately, due to the heavy rain from the recent storms, they had erosion by the Sixth green. He said there are going to be additional costs beyond the original costs. Mayor Rilling suggested looking at the agreement and updating it, especially in the area of the permits.

Mr. Frayer asked Mr. Andrasko if he could explain the barter agreement at the next meeting.

The remainder of the agenda is for informational purposes only.

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2021-22
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2020-22
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – FY 2021-22
- Police Wages
- Fire Wages
- Public Works Wages
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2010-22
- Tax Collector's Narrative – August 2021
- Tax Collector's Report – August 2021

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

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services