

**CITY OF NORWALK  
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE  
February 1, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE:** Barbara Smyth, Chairwoman; Tom Keegan; Tom Livingston; Lisa Shanahan; Dominique Johnson; Nora Niedzielski-Eichner; Darlene Young

**STAFF:** Anthony Carr, Chief of Operations and Public Works; Vanessa Valadares, Principal Engineer; Drew Berndlmaier, Senior Civil Engineer; Paul Sotnik, Senior Civil Engineer; Jessica Paladino, Waste Programs Manager

**OTHERS:** Diane Revolus, Common Council Member; Diane Lauricella, Resident

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. A quorum was present.

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Chairwoman Smyth called to order the Public Works Committee meeting on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. She stated that the meeting is being done by video conference. She announced all the committee members by name. A quorum was present.

Chairwoman Smyth stated before they move on to the first order of business, she wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the great work from the Public Works Staff during the Saturday Snow Storm. She has been on this Committee for two (2) years now and it has been difficult to get down to see the operations and what's going on and that is because of one thing or another, particularly covid. She thanked Mr. Keegan for picking her up in his big jeep and getting her down to the Operations Center. She thanked Mr. Torre for the tour of the garage and all the

facilities and Mr. Carr for running a really tight ship and for arranging a ride along with her and Mr. Livingston. They rode with one of the City's plows and she said it was quite an experience. She thanked Brian who is her plow driver and Bob the supervisor as well. She said she has seen, for years, what a great job Public Works does and the snow crews. It was a wonderful experience to see how hard they've been working and what a great job they're doing firsthand.

Mr. Livingston said he wants to echo that. He has been on the Committee for almost seven (7) years and had never done a ride along until last weekend. He said one of the biggest things residents see and complain about or what they used to complain about, how they plow the snow and how they take care of it. He rode with a driver by the name of Fred DeVilla and met his foreman, Jose Ortiz. He said they are very professional people. He mentioned the care and attention to detail that Freddie put into it and it was just remarkable. Freddie knew the route and the kids on the route and how long they been there. While driving he noticed that they always plowed on the side with the traffic generally and there was a street he was going down, and he was plowing on the other side and he asked Freddie why is this different and he said it is different because this side has driveways and the other doesn't. Freddie was taking extraordinary care to move the snow away from the driveways wherever he could during the entire route. He said it was amazing and he is proud of them and thankful they have them doing it because they do such a tremendous job and it's just remarkable. He thanked them for all of their hard work. He thanked Mr. Carr and his staff and said it is just a great team.

Mr. Carr said thank you very much.

Chairwoman Smyth added that when she was in the plow with Brian, he drove around quite awhile before he could find a street that really needed to be plowed because the team had done such a good job already.

Mr. Livingston added that the technology in the trucks is amazing. He said they know where every truck is, where it's been, how much salt it's putting down, how much sand, the speed it's going and it's amazing. He said he doesn't want to over burden the staff with Council Members riding along but it is worth it.

Ms. Young stated there were former Council Members who took advantage of the same opportunity and had the same praise for DPW Staff and she thinks it's one of the requirements for leadership or whoever is part of heading this Committee moving forward because you get a very different perspective on the work that needs to be done that gets done every day in the City and folks want to complain about but they don't know all the intricacies of how DPW does their job. She commended Chairwoman Smyth and Mr. Livingston for going on the ride along and she thinks that is something that needs to continue. She said they sit on the other side and talk about things but when you can actually experience what the workers are going through and how well they do their job as a City it's a very different experience. She would also like to go on a ride along but don't want to burden them but thinks it's a really fantastic thing because they seem very happy about having that experience. She thanked them for doing it and sharing.

Chairwoman Smyth said it was a learning experience and she sits on the WPCA (Water Pollution Control Authority) and that is all new to her as well. She said that Ralph Kolb was at the

Operations Center on Saturday and he went through every aspect of the digital screen that shows the actual process that all the water goes through before it is released into the river which was just terrific. She said getting a tour of the plant is on her agenda. Chairwoman Smyth complimented Mr. Carr on his great staff/team.

Mr. Keegan said they had an unusual circumstance present itself this morning so he reached out to Mr. Torre and asked for help and he and Chief Carr's guys went out and they were able to assist one of his constituents in District D and he just wants to publicly thank Chief Carr and the whole team. He said there is a reason why they call them public works because they do work real hard for them. They are public works and he is very proud to be a small part of it. Kudos to you and your team, they are just great.

Mr. Carr thanked him.

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

### **PUBLIC INPUT (GUESTS AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS MAY SPEAK TO ANY ITEM ON THE AGENDA. COMMENTS SHALL BE LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN THREE (3) MINUTES PER SPEAKER.)**

Diane Lauricella began by saying the snow plowing praise is well deserved. She greeted the members and told them she does not have covid but the flu. She asked for a correction in the minutes and understood why it was misconstrued possibly due to the articulation and the recording of the word, she said it is WIN Waste and not Wind Waste. She asked that the Committee approve item #5 the National Fish and Wildlife Five-Star Urban Waters Restoration. She has participated in those types of grants before in her work on the Norwalk River years ago. She said also with the Housatonic, the H2H and NRWA and all of the Tree Alliance, she thinks that is terrific and will be a terrific program. She is very happy that Helpsy is going to be engaged. Two (2) years ago, February 2020, she made a presentation with an Ad Hoc Norwalk Zero Waste Committee that she continues to head up. They asked for a textile curbside program for simple recycling stopped operating at the time due to covid they are back in Connecticut, however she feels Helpsy has a better model. She asked that it doesn't become just a pilot program. The City of Stamford has been doing this and they are a larger city than Norwalk and Helpsy also done work in Cambridge and Boston and she thinks they are a proven entity and they need to spend more time on environmental education. She said she knows others would love to help Ms. Paladino and others get the word out in a much more robust way than just the website. She asked that the Committee considers it not to be a pilot program but roll it out perhaps district by district to make it more manageable. Pilot programs are only needed when they are new technologies or unusual situations. People have been throwing their clothes either in a dumpster or in a donation. She doesn't think this would be a big ask of the public and thinks the public could handle a more robust program because they are in a waste crisis. She said eventually it would save money for the City of Norwalk and the taxpayers because it is heavy and takes up enough of their typical trash dumpster. She thanked them for all of the programs. She asked again that they not make it a pilot program and if it takes a little more work, she asked if they could go back to the drawing board and make this an entire City program.

Chairwoman Smyth thanked Ms. Lauricella. There were no other public participants and public input was closed at 7:13p.m.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2022.**

Ms. Shanahan had a few revisions to the minutes. On page 16 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph under Information/Discussion Item B change “Ms. Shanahan had a concern about some of the types of treatments that are used are herbicides and she wants to know what types are being used, why they are being used and whether there is notification of likely homeowners. She said that they have watersheds that run right into Long Island Sound and that is a very big concern for them”, to Ms. Shanahan had a concern about some of the types of tree maintenance programs that include the use of herbicides. She wants to know what types of herbicides are being used, why they are being used, and whether there is notification of the use to affected homeowners. She said that Norwalk has many watershed that run right into Long Island Sound and the use of herbicides is a very big concern for the City”.

Page 16, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Information/Discussion Item B change “Ms. Shanahan asked if this is something the homeowners can know that it’s been put in any vicinity of their homes”, to Ms. Shanahan asked if homeowners can be notified to the use of herbicides in the vicinity of their homes”.

Page 17, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, under Information/Discussion Item B change “Mr. Berg said he is looking at the literature right now and it shows the product pathfinder on the literature, and he would have to look at the active ingredient to be certain that it is a glyphosate product. He said it very well may not be, but it is pathfinder two is the product that is being used”, to Mr. Berg said he is looking at the literature right now and it shows the product is called Pathfinder on the literature, and he would have to look at the active ingredient to be certain that it is a glyphosate product. He said it very well may not be, but it is Pathfinder Two is the product that is being used”.

Page 21, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph, under Information/Discussion Item B change “Ms. Shanahan also agreed with Ms. Young. She said that she would like to coordinate with Mr. Sotnik on inviting other organizations to the Tree Advisory Committee meeting knowing that this presentation will be happening”, to “Ms. Shanahan also agreed with Ms. Young. She said that she would like to coordinate with Mr. Sotnik on inviting other conservation organizations to the Tree Advisory Committee meeting to let them know that this presentation by Eversource will be happening”.

Ms. Johnson also had a change. She said it didn’t quite capture what she was trying to convey. On page 20, 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph under Information/Discussion Item B change “Ms. Johnson said she is going to remove herself from this because she is not looking for a direct line but for the residents who may not know and they show up, there could be a resident very upset”, to “Ms. Johnson said that she would like to remove herself as an example from this

because she is not looking for a direct line but for the residents who may not know and they show up, there could be a resident very upset”.

**\*\*MS. SHANAHAN MOVED THE ITEM**

**\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY AS AMENDED**

2. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute an Agreement between the City of Norwalk and Tighe & Bond, Inc., for Professional Engineering Services for the Project 4177/DRG2022-1 Design and Permitting for Lockwood Lane & Heather Lane Storm Drainage Improvements, on an hourly basis, for a sum not to exceed \$ 256,000.00.

Account No. 09 22 4021 5777 C0440  
01 40 30 5258

Mr. Carr reported on this. He said there is a lot of history and gave a synopsis. There was a drainage study completed in the area on or around Heather’s Lane to about the Norwalk River in 2007 by Tighe and Bond. In 2012, the City completed the recommendations to that study to improve the drainage system and reduce flooding. As part of those recommendations there was a project that was recommended for construction and half of that project was constructed in 2012. The limits of that project were approximately from 21 Lockwood Lane down to the Norwalk River, so the upstream half from 21 Lockwood Lane towards East towards George and Heather’s Lane was not completed. He said with the flooding in that area, it is a DPW problem spot. Following Tropical Storm Elsa and Ida and having that in their database, there have been numerous inquiries to the City of Norwalk, Department of Public Works to rectify the situation, complete the project and further investigate the drainage. He and his staff looked at the projects city-wide and he learned about the history and the background that half of the work was completed. The other half was not completed due to capital funding shortages. A request for proposals went out to finish basically the second half of the project. Tighe & Bond was the successful proposer they received. They received two (2) proposals and one (1) proposal was double in price. Tighe & Bond was the lower bid at \$256,000 and that essentially gets them the design work that’s needed to prepare construction bid documents, project specifications and drawings for contractor bidding to complete that upstream half. He said this is a hot spot, a known trouble area. They couldn’t finish it the first time. They will be using ARPA funding for the design of the construction bid documents. At this point, it is unsure if they will have funding available for the construction. He said they did the original drainage study in 2007 for the entire area.

**\*\*MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED THE ITEM**

**\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute a no-cost Agreement between the City of Norwalk and HELPSY, for curbside collection of textiles in the City of Norwalk.

Mr. Carr reported on this. He said the hardest thing to get new programs introduced and implemented is the wind-up, public outreach, interest, money and capital and the operating expenses. Once the project is in, it can be hard to take it off the books. He said the heart of the lift is getting it on the books so when they say pilot program, it’s just because the

program is in its inception. He mentioned the Food Scrap Program and how it began as a pilot and has been operating for two (2) years now. At some point they will remove the word pilot. He explained that often times the word pilot is left on because it gives them a little more flexibility with the vendor and it basically lets the public know that it is a new program. Residents are not encouraged to call Customer Service but he realizes that may happen. Once everyone is acclimated to the new system, people will know how to contact Helpsy directly with any pickup or collection issues. They will remove the word pilot at some and that is not a finite point in time. He said he has seen pilot programs last from one (1) to four (4) years and he very much hopes it becomes a permanent program.

Mr. Livingston stated that he reviewed the presentation and did not see the word pilot and asked if he was missing something.

Mr. Carr responded he wasn't. He said in passing, it may have been in emails or when he or his staff verbally described it at the last council meeting. The word pilot is certainly not on the agreement between Helpsy and the City of Norwalk. It is also not going to be called a pilot program on the City's website either. He said sometimes in passing that term comes up.

Mr. Livingston wanted to know what the initial term is projected to be.

Mr. Carr answered the initial contractual, the no cost contract, is one (1) year. He referred to Ms. Paladino for clarification.

Ms. Paladino stated Mr. Carr is correct. She said it is for one (1) year with the option of terminating it if either party needs to and/or extending it year by year.

Ms. Shanahan said assuming this gets passed by Council in the next week or two, when will it start.

Mr. Carr responded once Council passes then about 10 to 14 days, the Law Department generally prepares a contract for execution by both parties, the Mayor and Helpsy, once Helpsy has the executed contract it would be approximately six (6) to eight (8) weeks roll out after that.

Ms. Paladino agreed with the timeline. She said they were looking early Spring to launch the program, start advertising and reaching out to the public.

Ms. Shanahan said her district will help and reach out to the neighborhood associations to let them know.

Chairwoman Smyth is thrilled about this. She said the number of sweaters, blankets and things like that she had to throw away because her dog chewed a hole in them and they're perfectly good but she can't donate them or do anything with them.

Ms. Paladino said that the Transfer Station has bins that you could bring items like that to.

Chairwoman Smyth forgot about the bins at the Transfer Station and said she has not taken advantage of that but now with curbside it will be better.

**\*\*MS. SHANAHAN MOVED THE ITEM  
\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute an Amendment to the April 13, 2021 Agreement between the City of Norwalk and The Grasso Companies, LLC. for Project PM2021-1 Pavement Management Program. The Amendment is to extend the Agreement for a period of one (1) year at a sum not to exceed \$1,535,029.39, with an option of a potential amendment, after the new fiscal year funds become available.

Account No. 09 20 4021 5777 C0021  
09 21 4021 5777 C0021  
09 22 4021 5777 C0021  
09 21 4027 5777 C0302  
09 22 4021 5777 C0302  
09 20 4021 5777 C0503  
09 21 4021 5777 C0503  
09 22 4021 5777 C0503  
09 20 4021 5777 C0649  
09 22 4021 5777 C0649  
09 19 4021 5777 C0318  
09 21 4021 5777 C0318  
03 00 00 2602

Ms. Valadares said this is the first extension of the paving contract. They had the bid out last year and they have the option to extend Grasso's Contract for two (2) periods of one (1) year. They are about to finish that one (1) year and now it's time for the extension. She said the paving program runs on a calendar year and the funds run on a fiscal year. It was never an issue in the past. She said they usually come before the Committee around this time of year to approve the contract and the funds become available in July, they go back for an amendment to the contract to add the extra streets to pave. She said this is exactly the same thing. They do not have enough funds in the account to put all the streets that they are planning to pave under that one-year extension. They will come back in June to request the addition of the fy23 account and the remaining of the funds to finish what they are planning to do this year. This is still part of the first-year extension but there will be an amendment because of the funds. Next year, if both parties agree, they will go back for a second extension and again they will have an amendment. Last year they spent about 3.5 million dollars on the year contract and they have now 1.5 million in the account and they will go back depending on the roads they still have left which is closer to 2 million dollars. Ms. Valadares said the whole department has done a very good job this year. The whole team brainstormed for many hours to see how they can be extremely efficient this year and try to complete the three (3) operations at the same time, drainage, sidewalk and paving. They came up with a list. The plants open in April so the funds they have, have to bring them from April to June which are the streets you may be seeing now. She said some of them may slide to July but they want to be sure that it is already part of this contract that they are giving to

them. They did not make a change order item that they usually make for 10% because they are trying to put everything in the contract based on the funds that they have in the account. The Committee will see the amendment with the change order in case they have something extra they could do at the end of the year.

**\*\*MR. KEEGAN MOVED THE ITEM  
\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute any and all necessary documents for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration grant related to the City of Norwalk participation as a partner in the grant.

Mr. Carr gave a brief high-level overview before turning it over to Ms. Shanahan. He said Ms. Shanahan, Ms. Washer and the Norwalk River Watershed Association and Land Trust put a lot of time into this. He said grants are never easy. Mr. Carr and his staff are applying for several grants, one (1) of them related to climate change and trees and pollinated pathways and then there is a third. He said the grants take time and they are not always awarded. This grant is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Grant, the grantee was a student working with H2H which is also part of the Hudson to Housatonic Corridor and that is where they get the H2H from. U.S. Fish and Wildlife service is the top tier. The grantee that will manage the grant will be the grant administrator is H2H and all the other participants are called lower tier participants and those include the Norwalk Land Trust, Tree Advisory Committee, City of Norwalk Departments like Recreation and Parks, Engineering, Tree Alliance and others. This is a \$50,000 grant. It is a one-to-one match meaning if they receive \$50,000, they have to match \$50,000 in in-kind services. They were able to do better than that and matched about \$74,000 so they gave more than they took. Staff put a lot of work into this as well as Ms. Shanahan and Ms. Washer. Out of the \$50,000, \$10,000 is earmarked for ten trees at approximately \$1,000 each which would be paid out of the Almstead Tree contract to be planted at Woodard Park. He said they are working with Ms. Shanahan, Ms. Washer, and others to situate and plant those trees. He commended his staff for working with everyone and he also commended Ms. Washer and Councilwoman Shanahan for taking the lead.

Ms. Shanahan thanked Mr. Carr, Mr. Sotnik and Mr. Torre for all their hard work on this project. This was her first introduction to Norwalk's Public Works Department, and they gave her the impression that Norwalk wants to say yes first because they had a big ask. They needed to have matching funds and the City was responsive and assisted them in finding a way to make it work and support them on this. Ms. Shanahan thanked the Department of Public Works for showing up and agreeing to dig holes for all of those trees and helping with the planting. She said they have a couple of more grants in the works, and she is excited about that. She said their Public Works Department is about getting to yes first and she expressed her appreciation to Mr. Carr and Mr. Sotnik and Mr. Torre for doing all the heavy work such as digging holes. She said Ms. Washer is a force of nature in the City of Norwalk and she has her fingerprints on so much good work that is going on. She said they are delighted that they were able to get this started. They were on the telephone today with the Norwalk Tree Alliance and Norwalk Land Trust comes on board later in the week. Ms. Young was also helpful in this project. A lot of the work will be done in the Woodward Park area and the idea is to try to connect Woodward Park and Oyster Shell Park and bring trees

and greenery in a part of Norwalk that really needs it. She thanked Ms. Young for meeting Ms. Walsh and herself at Woodward Park at least twice.

Chairwoman Smyth thanked Ms. Shanahan for working on this and bringing it to the Public Works Committee.

Mr. Livingston thanked Ms. Shanahan for doing this. He also thanked Ms. Washer as well. He recognized all the hard work that was put into this and he is very appreciative of their efforts. He thanked Mr. Carr and staff for being so accommodating and putting in so much work as well. He thinks this is really great and thanked everyone again for bringing it to the City and doing the work.

Ms. Young thanked everyone as well. She said to Ms. Shanahan and Ms. Washer, we clearly know where your passion lies and it is so good to have an opportunity to see things happen. She said it takes time and dedication and they are moving forward and she just appreciates their efforts.

Chairwoman Smyth pointed out that the City is benefitting in so many areas from this project. She said they are focused on Public Works with the 10 trees but there's also going to be restoration work done. One of the things that the Tree Alliance is doing is a Tree School, an outdoor classroom management, reduction in storm water. So many benefits for Norwalk through these grants.

**\*\*MS. SHANAHAN MOVED THE ITEM  
\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

6. Authorize the Mayor, Harry W. Rilling, to execute an Amendment to the agreement between the City of Norwalk and Tighe & Bond, Inc., for Construction Inspection/Observation Services, to extend the agreement for the first of two optional additional terms, of one (1) year, billable on an hourly basis, for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00.

Account No. 09 21 4021 5777 C0440  
09 22 4021 5777 C0440  
09 20 4062 5777 C0361  
09 22 4062 5777 C0361  
09 19 4021 5777 C0021  
09 20 4021 5777 C0021  
09 21 4021 5777 C0021  
09 22 4021 5777 C0021  
09 14 4021 5799 C0315  
09 22 4021 5777 C0315  
09 19 4021 5777 C0318  
09 21 4021 5777 C0318  
09 22 4021 5777 C0318

Mr. Carr reported on this. He said that they have been working with Tighe & Bond for quite a bit on Construction/Observation Services. Tighe & Bond have been doing extremely well,

they're very competent, sound and fair with prices. There haven't been any quality control issues. They have been extremely responsive to when they need them to go from project to project. He said their capital project list is growing and there are a lot of things that come up in between. This is an amendment for the first of one (1) two years and they get up to two (2) year extension so they're requesting the Committee's and then Mayor's authorization to execute the first of two (2) extensions. They will oversee a variety of projects.

Ms. Valadares added that this is for inspection services on the major projects they have going on throughout the year. She said usually they have one (1) person with the paving crew at all times, and also they move them around to cover sidewalks or drainage when needed. This year, they will probably need their help to cover some of the drainage projects at Dreamy Hollow. She said last year they had more money in their contract, this extension they realized they didn't use as much so they are going with a smaller amount but believe it will be enough to cover them for the year.

Mr. Livingston asked if this is because they always have a hard time hiring engineers or is this just a more efficient way of doing this or both.

Ms. Valadares answered that she has a full staff now. She said unless they open new positions, they will still need it. They use a lot of people to cover the ground during the construction season. They use interns they hire during the Summer and they need people to be there at all times during construction so they can make sure everything is being built as per their specs and standards. She said this is really two (2) extra hands that they need. She said they do not have the positions to hire as full-time employees and that is why they go out for this which may also be cheaper because they are used as needed. This covers two (2) inspectors, one (1) for most of the year and the second is usually needed on the months that they are the busiest.

Chairwoman Smyth said this is a bit of a change from what you were saying a few years ago. She wants to confirm that they are actually saving money now by doing it this way as opposed to having someone on staff.

Ms. Valadares said now the engineering market is extremely high. She said it changes all the time. Two (2) to three (3) years ago or more this was more expensive but they could have hired people on a lower rate now what the public sector is paying isn't attractive anymore and they are seeing that big companies are stealing engineers from other companies and the salaries are much more higher. She said now with all the change supply issues with the construction being so high they will not be able to fill a position. She said the person that they have is very experienced, not fresh out of college or one (1) that was just trained to become an inspector. Ms. Valadares continued that the person they are working with now has been working for them for a few seasons and has all the credentials and very experienced. She said to hire someone at his level would be very expensive.

Mr. Carr added that having an independent inspector helps the City and protects them and in some instances serves as a buffer. He gave an example to the Committee. He said they are a third party that is independently licensed. It provides an outside perspective of third-party

expertise and it helps buffer the City and gives them time to think about things as they're moving dynamically and it gives them ability to oversee more projects.

**\*\*MR. LIVINGSTON MOVED THE ITEM  
\*\*MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **Information / Discussion**

### **A. Discussion**

No report on this item

### **B. Tree Operations Report and Programming**

#### **1. 2022 Tree City USA Recertification and Growth Award Application Information**

Mr. Carr said they are a Tree City and this is the Eighteenth year if they recertify, which he is sure they will. There are two (2) components of this item. He said it is a big deal to be a Tree City especially with all the effort being made to preserve the tree canopy and expand it. The recertification applications can be intense. The growth award is to show that you have an existing tree program and it is growing and there is a certain amount of points you need to show growth and that number is 10 and they received a 13 and that is shown in different areas such as enhancing existing ordinances and introducing new ones. Expanding the program by planting more trees than the last. He looked at the application because he had to review it and felt it to be pretty robust for the recertification and growth award. The review took a lot longer than anticipated but they gave it the attention it deserves and Mr. Sotnik worked very diligently and quantified right down to the penny, the program which is very important for these applications.

Ms. Valadares said they want to bring their attention to everything the Public Works Department accomplishes and this program is one (1) of them. She said they are also the ones that applied for these grants and asked Mr. Sotnik to explain the difference between the Tree City Recertification and the Growth Award. She said it may be a couple of months before they receive notification of the award or not.

Mr. Sotnik said that basically the Tree City USA Recertification is something they do every year. He said that the memo reads 2021 and that is correct, it is the end of fiscal year 2021. There is a variety of information that has to be included and it is a full digital application. Everything has to be uploaded to the website for the Arbor Day Foundation. He put together the budgets of what they propose to spend on the budget and then what we actually end up spending is the number that gets put in. He said they want to know the population of Norwalk as well. He said they have to spend \$2 per capita and they have to have a Tree Ordinance, Arbor Day Celebration, an affiliation with a 501c3 tree organization and the Norwalk Tree Alliance is that body and they work with grants and a variety of other things. When they put all the numbers together of all of the different categories and they give you specific categories they all total between the City Parks and Rec and different City Organizations and the 501c3 organization all together with the time, volunteer time, it came out to \$803,455, basically \$9.10 per capita and they only need \$2. The number is a little down from previous years because sites were closed during covid

which delayed the disposals of some of the trees, but everything spent on trees counts toward that number. They want to know what was done for the community management of trees, how many trees were planted between all of those organizations which ended up being 171 total trees planted in that time period. 290 trees were pruned and 110 trees were removed by the City. The growth award is basically expanding your programs and there are 87 different categories that fall under five different areas; building your team, measuring the trees and forest, planning the work, performing, and community framework. They established a new tree list when they put out the new tree contract. He explained how they received their points for the grant. He said he picked an extra category when applying for the grant just in case there was something they may not have liked. He said they should be notified around Arbor Day if they received the grants or not. He said after July 1<sup>st</sup>, which was not eligible in this package, with passing the new ordinance and the revisions and some of the other things, said he probably have close to 20 points for next year.

Chairwoman Smyth thanked Mr. Sotnik and stated that he always goes above and beyond well done.

Mr. Livingston thanked Mr. Sotnik and the team for doing all of this. He said there is a lot of information for this but also a lot of work involved in doing this. He really appreciates all the effort that they have put into this and it really shows. 20 points next year and the following will be 30. He thanked them again.

Ms. Shanahan thanked Mr. Sotnik for all the times she would call him up about trees and Mr. Carr for allowing her to call Mr. Sotnik and Mr. Torre about trees. She said that they have really gone above and beyond and this was a big heavy lift this year on the tree summit that she and Mr. Carr pulled together in May. She said it was a lot of work and she enjoyed every minute and thanked Mr. Carr for being such a good partner on that. She told Mr. Sotnik that she knows how much work goes into it and it is so obvious with all of the numbers so she appreciate that and once again the Public Works Department is supporting this really important initiative for Norwalk to bring more trees to a City that desperately needs them. She appreciates all of the support when they do call about keeping trees in the ground and putting more of them there.

Chairwoman Smyth added since the talk about the tree canopy about a year or two ago, they have all made such great concerted effort to improve upon that. She said last summer with all of the storms they had, even people not known to be environmentalist and tree huggers, have really become aware that climate change is here and is being dealt with and trees are part of the solution and that is something everyone can get behind.

#### C. Monthly Solid Waste Report – December 2021

Mr. Carr reported on this. He said less garbage is going out compared to the same time last year. Garbage is the municipal solid waste (MSW). Recycling numbers are down which means revenue is down. They are the only City in the State of Connecticut that receives a

revenue for recycling on a pro tonnage basis under their existing agreement with City Carting which expires June 30, 2023 for the operation of their Crescent Street Transfer Station for the collection and disposal of the recycling and City garbage. They are paid \$17.50 revenue under the recycling contract. He said it is very likely that once they open this up to an RFP and get a new vendor that will change and become an expense. In fiscal year 2024, they are going to have to start budgeting for that. Mr. Carr asked Ms. Paladino to give an overview of the report for the new Committee members.

Ms. Paladino said the report compares the month of December 2021 to the month of December 2020. December 2020 was the height of the pandemic and they were really seeing huge increases in numbers, both in garbage and recycling. The fact that they are 10% to 15% lower now last month is really a testament of how high they were in December 2020.

Mr. Livingston asked if that means they are going back to “normal”.

Ms. Paladino said they are closer to a normal. She said what they are seeing is still a little bit higher than what they were pre-pandemic normal because people are still working from home and there is a work-life balance that’s more at home so their numbers are slightly higher.

Mr. Livingston stated that people are pretty much cleaning out their closets but they’re still working at home.

Ms. Paladino said they are leveling out probably to the new normal. Under MSW which is City garbage, curbside tonnage is the tonnage collected in the Fourth Taxing District by City Carting, under that contract that is expiring next year. The MSW tonnage out are the tractor trailers that you see leaving the Transfer Station that have been loaded with the MSW off the tipping floor and brought up to the burn plan. The Transfer Station operating fee is the cost of the monthly operation fee that City Carting charges them to operate the facility as well as haul the MSW out. The transportation and disposal fee is that cost of \$95 a ton that they are paying for the MSW to be hauled and then incinerated. The curbside collection fee is the fee for the Fourth Taxing District collection of garbage. Recycling collection numbers: the curbside tonnage is the City Carting collection curbside so not only do residents have totes, they also have the availability for buildings or small condos associations to have dumpsters. She said that is all the curbside collection that City Carting does citywide. The Transfer Station tonnage is the compactors that is on site at the Transfer Station for both cardboard and single stream as well as the hard plastic container. They are paid \$17.50 for all of that tonnage that comes into the Transfer Station. Curbside collection fee for recycling is what they pay City Carting on a monthly basis to collect that recycling citywide. Their Transfer Station tip fees is what the City receives for garbage that is dumped at the Norwalk Transfer Station. She said there are no other fees that they would accept at the Norwalk Transfer Station and that does not include the cost to dispose of air conditioners, tires, and certain batteries and things like that. This is only for the disposal of garbage. The recycling revenue curbside is based on the tonnage from what City Carting collects curbside in their trucks and then the recycling revenue from the

Transfer Station are those three (3) items, the single stream, cardboard and the hard plastic.

Chairwoman Smyth thanked Ms. Paladino.

Ms. Johnson asked Ms. Paladino what she thought may be a long term approach to this diminished revenue from the recycling. She asked if that is something they should be concerned about or is it a pattern they see emerging that they may need to address.

Ms. Paladino answered that she thinks the diminished recycling for the month of December 2021 is just them getting back to what was normal about that same time. She doesn't see a problem with those numbers sort of leveling back out to where they were.

Ms. Johnson said that there has been some talk in the press about recycling and in a way that may potentially have a negative effect.

Ms. Paladino said that they will see a swing once they put out the RFP for recycling after June 2023 and what they are seeing now is a lot of the contracts are sort of a sliding scale. They paying for one (1) type of recycling but they're not paying for another. She said there are a lot of different contracts out there and she named a few.

Ms. Johnson thanked her.

**D. Food Scrap Drop-Off Report – December 2021**

Mr. Carr reported on this. He said the report does say pilot at the top. This is the second year of the food scrap drop off. They have two (2) locations, Crescent Street Transfer Station and Rowayton Community Center. He said when they finished the initial pilot year, the first year which was last year, the amount of volume was split roughly 65% going to Rowayton Community Center and 35% going to the Transfer Station. He said the tonnage was approximately 55 tons of food scrap removed from the municipal waste stream which would have been MSW or City garbage. This year the numbers are trending pretty similarly. They received 70% from Rowayton Community Center and 30% from the Transfer Station as of today which basically is about 40 tons. He said they are approaching that 100 ton mark which is about 200,000 pounds of food scraps so almost a quarter million of tonnage. He thinks this program is thriving and will do more so once the third location is introduced which will be at Cranberry Park. They applied for two (2) grants different compost organizations but were denied in October for \$15,000 each so they included that amount into the operating budget request knowing they might get denied. He said assuming that doesn't get taken out of the budget or reduced, they will be able to expand and introduce the location after July 1, 2022 which will be Cranberry Park barring any unforeseen changes to the plan.

Chairwoman Smyth agreed with Mr. Carr about the program increasing once the third location is open. She said she thinks a lot of people are like her in a sense that they may not think to drop off at the Transfer Station or Rowayton Community Center but if they are able to drop off food scraps at Cranberry Park which she visits on a regular basis that would be great and she thinks it would increase as well.

Ms. Shanahan asked about the numbers for 2021-2022, she said it looks like 40 tons and wanted to know if that was through December 31, 2021 or January 31, 2022.

Mr. Carr said it is up until December 31, 2021.

Ms. Paladino agreed.

Ms. Shanahan said it looks like they are actually collecting even more than they did last year and she is hoping that they keep that in the budget because she worries it will become more and more expensive. She asked if there was ever a place where the tipping fees we're paying for regular garbage is kind of being offset to some degree or any impact at all, is that part of the narrative.

Mr. Carr said it is from a sustainability aspect yes there are a lot of pluses but fiscally they are paying \$95 a ton to get rid of the garbage MSW so they have proven that they have taken \$95 tons of MSW out so they are not paying \$95 a ton on that which is fantastic instead they're paying from \$110 to \$150 a ton so they are paying more to get rid of the food scraps. He said the industry standard is \$120 to \$150 a ton. He asked Ms. Paladino to speak to that.

Ms. Paladino said they are paying a sliding scale because it is based on the number of toters that they have and the weight of the toters. She said there is a flat fee of \$65 for the pickup and then it's \$5 a toter for the small toters and \$10 a toter for the large toters. Rowayton had switched to the large toters or the 65 gallon toters a few months ago, the Norwalk Transfer Station, right after the pumpkins switched over to the large toters there as well. Each location is now \$10 per toter. So that is sort of how the sliding scale of the cost per ton is based on the number of toters that is picked up at each time that it is picked up. The price point is anywhere from \$115 to \$150 based on the number of toters that they are picking up, each time they pick up. She said the increase on the report is also because of the November collection of pumpkins. They did not account for that in the last fiscal year. That jump in tonnage are those pumpkins.

Ms. Young asked about recycling and what to do with a box full of campaign signs. She said over the weekend she was trying to figure out if she should throw them in the garbage or not. The suggestion she received was to not dispose of them, if it could be avoided and to kind of upcycle or recycle them. She was given examples of how to do that for instance an artist could use them to create something or spray paint them and reuse them or even donate them. She wants to know how to dispose the signs.

Mr. Livingston told her to run again.

Chairwoman Smyth said that is a valid question.

Ms. Paladino said the metal stanchions can either be reused or recycled and metal is a very good commodity for recycling. Unfortunately, the signs themselves are paper that is probably laminated in plastic. That would be the hardest thing to recycle. She suggested upcycling or reuse would be great. Donating to a school to see if they can use them for

announcements for school events or a community center. She said she can dig in to see if they can actually be recycled but off the top of her head she doesn't think they can be.

Mr. Carr reverted back to the beginning of the meeting with the plow rides. He thanked everyone that came along for the plow rides. He said that there was one (1) complaint to the Mayor's Office about a mailbox that was damaged which happens. He said a claim is filed and they are typically paid out or the box would be replaced. It was also said that the plows were going really fast so he asked Mr. Torre to pull up the gps on the plow trucks. The gps system is called Fleet Complete. They watch and monitor the storm for liability purposes and progress. That particular driver was in that location three (3) different times and the speed was 24mp at 10:30am, 25mph at one something in the afternoon and 24mph around 3:40pm. He said and that is from a 30mph speed limit but often times from the house it does look like they are going quickly. It could look like they are going faster than that when decelerating around a curve. He said generally they go about 20 to 30mph. He thanked them for their support.

**Adjournment**

**MS. YOUNG MOTIONED TO ADJOURN  
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY  
MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:25P.M.**

**Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday, March 1, 2022  
Public Works Committee  
7:00 P.M. Location TBD**