

**CITY OF NORWALK
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 7, 2022
VIA ZOOM**

ATTENDANCE: John Kydes, Chair; David Heuvelman; Thomas Keegan;
Thomas Livingston; Barbara Smyth; Darlene Young (7:16)

STAFF: Sabrina Church, Director Business Development and Tourism; Vanessa Valadares, DPW, Thomas Kulhawik, Police Chief; Gino Gatto, Fire Chief, Chris Torre, Public Works; Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; William Hodel, Board of Education; Lunda Asmani, Chief Financial Officer; David Westmoreland, Norwalk Historical Commission; Patsy Brescia, Lockwood Mathews Mansion; Bill Travers, Director of Transportation; Robert Stowers, Parks & Recreation; Ed McCabe, Assistant Fire Chief

OTHERS: Diane Lauricella; Diana Revolous, Common Council; Diane Cece, Brain Bidoli, Norwalk Redevelopment Agency; Gregory Burnett, Common Council

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Kydes called the roll.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Diane Lauricella said she is in favor of planting trees and making the city more walkable and liveable. She added she would like to see more investment in green infrastructure projects which are taking awhile to get moving. Ms. Lauricella believes the city cannot wait another year to

move on this project. She added she was glad the Broad River Complex was kicked another year or two. She requested that Recreation and Parks conduct a diagnostic study to find out more about natural turf and the true cost of maintaining artificial turf. She said it's very expensive and might find out the benefits of natural turf. She said if a study was done it would find natural turf is worth further consideration.

Ms. Brescia was the next speaker and she spoke about the Lockwood Mathews Mansion project. She said this is the final step toward the mechanical steps to upgrade the mansion.

Ms. Cece of East Norwalk Association mentioned the capital budget approval to point out the funding for Veteran's Memorial Park seems inadequate. She said she wanted the committee to take this into account. She said the existing plan for the park was never fully funded.

I. ADMINISTRATION

A. Approval of the Minutes of March 3, 2022, Meeting

**** MR. KEEGAN MOVED THE MINUTES**

Mr. Livingston made one correction. He said on page 4 "commented" should be changed to "commended".

**** MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED OF THE MARCH 3, 2022 MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY2023 CAPITAL BUDGET

1. Approve the advancement of the FY2023 Capital Budget to the Common Council for approval.

Mr. Livingston moved the item.

Ms. Valadares said the salt shed in the garage is worn out and will cost \$174,000. She said the bridge repairs for all bridges less than 20-foot span. Ms. Valadares had a filler on Rowayton Avenue Bridge. She said for the West 7th Street bridge the state will pay for 80% and the city 20. Ms. Valadares said the pavement manage program is a 5 year forecast and she asked for \$7 million because construction costs are higher. She said it's a very large program. Ms. Valadares

said only \$2 million was funded this year. The next item was sidewalks and historic street lights on the last block of Wall Street up to East Avenue. She said won't need \$425,000 and would like to move that to sidewalks and curbs. Mr. Kydes believes Mr. Travers is fine with this change. Mr. Kydes said the amendment should read Wall Street Historic Street Lighting of \$425,000 will be moved to item C0318 Sidewalks and Curbs totaling that request to \$2,425,000.

Mr. Livingston moved the item.

**** MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

The next item was foot path replacement which not additional money is needed. She said general drainage will be funded by ARPA Act. For Coastal Resilience a study to start the initiative will be needed. Regarding Tree planting, she said a staff member from Tree Advisory Committee is working on this and will apply for grants. She said regarding the East Avenue Roadway and Bridge construction the work of routing underground utilities between Winfield to Fort Point Street and then to Olmstead is to be paid in three installments. The first installment was paid last year and the second installment will be paid in June/July.

Ms. Valadares said she want to improve right of way. She said on Elizabeth Street the city would like everything to go underground. A consultant will be needed to design the project for cable, fiber and phone.

She said the goal is to find ways to increase green infrastructure. She said regarding fleet replacement older trucks from the 80s. Ms. Young asked how many trucks would be replaced.

Mr. Torre said that money only replaces one truck. He said typically they replace two trucks a year. He added the cost is \$800,000 for one electrical vehicle. Mr. Livingston pointed out the allotted funds would cover the cost of two trucks.

Ms. Lam of the Finance Department spoke next. She said this request is to install walls for two offices.

Ms. Liu of IT spoke next about nine items for \$683,000. The items include public safety, library and cybersecurity. She said the Police Department refresh for mobile data for 10 patrol cars will cost 53K, microsoft office 2021 upgrade version from 2013 totals \$120,000. Ms. Liu said the fire truck technology will be upgraded including hardware and software. A price of \$175,000 for cybersecurity and technology to manage the network including data encryption and server refresh \$17,500 to maintain the infrastructure and basic needs in case the server is down. There is also a desktop and laptop refresh for \$165,000 for City Hall, Library and Public Works. The

Health conference room smart board will be upgraded for \$7,500 for better technology. The final item is \$38,000 for library public computer access for Sono and Main Library.

Ms. Harris talked about Community Services she explained they are in the final year of the 5 year program digitalizing the newspapers at the library. Two of the historic publications are the Norwalk Centennial and the Norwalk Gazette and the cost will be 33,000. She said the next item is the Sono Branch she said more senior citizens have come in to read and having rooms that can be repurposed. Ms. Harris looking for furniture that can be easily cleaned. The technology upgrades will include upgrading the access points. She said they are replacing their 7-year-old Mac computers, the 3D printers and laptops.

Chief Kulhaik was the next speaker. He said the only item that was not approved was the request for unmarked vehicles. He said the those for himself and his two deputy chiefs. Chief Kulawik explained that if it is not approved this year the vehicles will have well over 100K miles and would have little value.

He said the cost is \$170,000 for the three vehicles and one ATV for the beach.

Chief Kulhawik talked about a new 3D scanner for crime reconstruction. The department has one but it cannot be upgraded. He said it is important for serious crime and everything has to be documented when they go to court.

Mr. Livingston asked if there are any other sources of revenue that can be used for the vehicles. Chief said other money has been used before and added he will do his best. He said electric vehicles not an option for regular fleet because they are used 24/7. He said there is a 30 week wait for any vehicles ordered on July 1 due to supply chain issues.

The next speaker was Chief Gatto from the Fire Department. He said all six items have been approved. The items included two new engines. The second is for a refurbished fire bolt, building repairs (including locker room facilities and led in the garage), vehicles (3 Ford Maverick Pick Up Trucks), Station 5 Room Replacement and Ladder Truck refurbishment.

Mr. McCabe said the ladder truck refurbishment is for \$117K and is from 2010. The current plan is to replace every 18-20 years. He explained the truck has held up but has rust from salt on the roads during winter.

The next item was Economic and Community Development for Lockwood Mathews Mansion. Ms. Brescia said this has been in the works since 2008 and will bring heat and electricity to all floors of the building. She said they have \$8 million from the state plus the money requested

from the city. She said the building was built during the Civil War and not easy to be brought up to code. She said the goal is to go to bid late summer and start construction as soon as possible. Ms. Brescia said the project has to be done all at once.

Mr. Westmoreland said the issue is no other work can be undertaken until this gets done. He said he is only asking for the minimum this year. He requested the following: Smith Street restoration of the old jail, AA access Mill Plan, some repair done on the tower, repairs or preservation of the Museum collection and rebuilding walls at Pine Island Cemetery and Cemetery.

Mr. Bidoli spoke about affordable housing. 359 a deal with Trinity for financing for affordable housing. He said this will pay off the existing debt. The second item was a grant for infrastructure was approved around South Norwalk Train Station and the amount is \$3 million from the city. Also a \$3 million grant was approved and the city will contribute \$1.1 million.

Ms. Church talked about the Arts Commission request for \$50,000 that was made to add public art to the city inventory. She said they want to work on the Monroe Street bridge underpass. Ms. Church said the second item is a public art inventory and the goal is to continue to update and digitize it.

She said the Small Business and Main Street Program request is for \$150,000. She said any additional money will. She said the second request is for planters, urns and some maintenance of local parks and the third request is \$10,000 for a new plotter to print out maps and plans.

Mr. Travers said the Wall Street Corridor Project is in Phase 1 and Phase 2 includes Belden Avenue down to Mott and into East Avenue. He said the third phase includes Wall Street to Burnell and Issac. He said already they were awarded \$3.5 million and have another grant application for \$3.5 million.

The next item is the Norwalk River Valley Trail which started 10 years ago and this money is to keep the trail in a state of a good repair. He said the next item is final inventory of all sidewalks. He said sidewalks requests are quite common. Mr. Travers said the next item is for roadway design and reconstruction and traffic signal improvement.

Mr. Kydes asked Mr. Tavares to speak to some of the items that were not approved. Mr. Travers cited George Street sidewalks to advance the design. Autonomous shuttle pilot the lowest rated item and should wait at this point. Gregory Boulevard and 5th Street traffic circle. He said he is concerned about the lack of a pedestrian connection. Mr. Travers said looking at some solutions, but the plan was not approved. He also cited Seaview Avenue designs and funding was set aside

and need to work on advancing that. Safe routes to school. Need sidewalks installed on Highland Avenue to make it safer for kids walking to school. The problematic 5 road intersection on East Avenue with Park Street and Main Avenue.

Mr. Kydes asked about Parking Authority items. Mr. Travers said the Wall Street is being transformed and will be redoing the Yankee Doodle Garage. He said it is an unfriendly garage and they are working on advancing some designs. The other issue is revenue control equipment. He said the Sono Train Station and Maritime Garage want people to be able to get out in time. He said there is a demand for contactless payment.

Mr. Kydes asked about the Gregory Boulevard roundabout. Mr. Taveras said this one has seasonal traffic volume and he wants to create a more friendly network for cyclists and pedestrians too. Mr. Taveras said he feels this would be an opportunity to get grant money. He stated total construction costs would be \$1.5 million and \$100,000 would get the project into semi final design.

Mr. Kydes asked about public art inventory. Ms. Church said it was done in 2015 and added it is not time sensitive. Mr. Kydes pointed out getting the ball rolling will be more important.

Mr. Kydes proposed an amendment to take \$100,000 from public art and apply it to the project for Gregory Boulevard/Calf Pasture Road interior improvements.

Mr. Keegan moved the amendment

**** MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT TO TAKE \$100,000 FROM PUBLIC ART INVENTORY TO GREGORY BOULEVARD/5TH STREET/MARVIN/CALF PASTURE ROAD INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Rennie was the next speaker and he spoke about building management which consists of three projects: building repair at City Hall for \$95,000, new carpeting on 1st floor for \$40,000 and rehabilitation of the bathrooms on first floor.

The other items were as follows: various capital improvements, police facilities to replace heat and smoke detectors and improve the locker room areas, public work center salt shed roof replacement, Nathaniel Ely for \$275,000 for rooftop air conditioning and heating units and make it more energy efficient. Building and energy efficient equipment, redo the parking lot at Ben Franklin, environmental remediation for all the buildings, Roosevelt (\$20,000 for design services) for a new roof and the final item was for the health department for additional doors and keep children out of lab areas and new doors and access controls.

Ms. Young asked whether Ben Franklin was funded and Mr. Rennie clarified that Ely was not funded.

Mr. Stowers spoke about Parks & Recreation The items included: school park programs upgrades at playgrounds and Devon's Place \$260,000 and some improvements at Flax Hill Park (\$150,000). replacing a Box Truck from 2006 and a Bobcat Tool Cap machine to assist with snow blowing and leaf collection and replacement of a F 250 Pickup Truck and 2010 FF 2020 (\$48,000) and a slope mower for Oyster Shell Park (\$64,000). The next item is Calf Pasture Beach (\$1.8 million) including \$500,000 for pavement reconfiguration at the beach and for a Skate Park. The fourth item is for basketball and tennis courts including Cranbury Park and Roosevelt Center. Mr. Stowers said regarding Cranbury Park at the Mansion they have a \$5 million grant for work on the mansion.

Mr. Livingston asked for more specifics about Cranbury.

He said Parks & Recreation is looking at a trail system plan and demolishing the garage and building a new garage for equipment. Mr. Stowers said most of the work will go into the kitchen, rest rooms, electrical and plumbing. The kitchen will be upgraded. He said there is also work to be done on the basement due to drainage problems.

Mr. Stowers said on Veteran's Park the ask was for \$750,000 (\$700,000 for marine replacement) and \$50,000 for a study about tides, drainage and agriculture. He said the need is to solve the flooding problem. Mr. Stowers said athletic fields have to be regraded and clay added, new mounds and bases and they have to be maintained annually. He added \$560,000 will be spent to replace the existing track at Brien McMahon. Mr. Stowers said \$50,000 was asked for tree replacement to remove or replace damaged trees. He said \$50,000 was requested for backstops and fencing maintenance and Oyster Shell Park (\$250,000) part of the Master Plan for walkways and paving. He said paving and curbing is needed at some of the school parks. Urban Freeze Park (\$25,000) is part of the Master Plan for fencing and lead paint to be removed. The estimate is \$425,000. He said the Mayor recommended almost everything that was requested.

Mr. Asmani spoke about the Board of Education items. The first item was security upgrades after reviewing some incidents at Norwalk High School and a new committee was convened. Mr. Asmani said they are enhancing the IB Program to the Middle School at Nathan Hale and Roton. The request was for \$100,000 for textbooks. Mr. Asmani said the air conditioning request was made for Wolfpit and then to Naramake and the Rowayton. He said the ask for capital repairs and maintenance is for a fund to be created. He said funds have been requested for underground fuel tank removal and none are leaking. The goal is to remove tanks at West Rocks, Columbus

and Tracey. He said the final request is for a vehicle request. He said the truck is 18 year old. He said the recommendations is for a gas vehicle for \$90,000 which is \$35,000 less than propane.

Mr. Livingston asked why the decrease from propane to gasoline. He said they do have a propane box truck which is two years old. Mr. Livingston said he is not in favor of going from propane to gasoline. Mr. Heuvelman agreed and said it would be a step back.

Mr. Kydes recommended an amendment to take \$125,000 from C0112 Instructional Technology and move to C0123 District Vehicles.

Mr. Livingston moved the item.

**** AMENDMENT TO MOVE \$125,000 FROM INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY DISTRICT VEHICLES**

**** AMENDMENT PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Burnett said what is the process to recommend an addition to the capital budget He said he would propose it at the Council table. He said the item goes back to the Police Department for three unmarked vehicles and a comment was made if the Chief did not receive a vehicle he would be ok. The recommendation would be to add two vehicles. Mr. Burnett said he would look at the other line items to see where he could come up with the money. Mr. Burnett was informed the deficit would be about \$110,000.

**** MOTION TO APPROVE THE FY2023 BUDGET AS AMENDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

III. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MR. SMYTH MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
G. Venuto