

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2011**

ATTENDANCE: Nicholas Kydes, Chairman; Douglas Hempstead, Andrew Conroy, Kelly Straniti (7:08 p.m.); Nora King (7:11 p.m.)

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Director of Finance; Fred Gilden, Comptroller; Robert Barron, Budget Director

OTHERS: Karen DelVecchio, IT Director; Walter Englert, Independent Accountant for Oak Hills Park Authority; Vinnie Grillo, Oak Hills Park Golf Professional Lawrence Andronaco, Chairman of the Oak Hills Park Authority Board

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kydes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. A quorum was not present.

Claims Committee: Receive the monthly Claims Report; Review the monthly report; review and approve claims as required for Claims Report dated: January 13, 2011.

Narrative on Tax Collections dated January 13, 2011 - Receive report and discuss.

Monthly Tax Collector's Report Dated December 31, 2010 - Receive Report and discuss.

Mr. Hamilton explained that Ms. Biagiarelli was not able to be present tonight. He said that there were no special claims to discuss. Mr. Hamilton then reviewed the key points in Ms. Biagiarelli's written monthly report. Back tax collections are running behind last year, but this was expected. Because there was a tax sale in July, there are fewer properties on the list with delinquent taxes.

Ms. Straniti joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m. A quorum was now present.

A list of those residents who have outstanding personal property taxes has been compiled and turned over to a marshal for collections.

A brochure for the elderly tax credits was included with the tax bills. While there was a slight cost for the printing of the brochure, there was no extra postage costs.

Ms. King joined the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

Mr. Conroy asked about the back tax number versus the interest. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the possible reasons this could be and said that he would do some research to confirm the reason why.

Mr. Conroy expressed concerns about the amount of interest that the WPCA would be collecting. Mr. Hamilton said that while the City bills the interest and collects the funds, those funds are segregated from the general funds. Mr. Conroy said that he would like to have a more extensive report on the WPCA. Mr. Hamilton explained that the WPCA billing is handled by the City, including the payments to OMI. All the WPCA payments are recorded in the City's reporting system. Mr. Conroy asked whether Oak Hills also was set up like this. Mr. Hamilton said that it was not and that they keep their own books. Mr. Kydes asked who was authorizing payments for the WPCA items. Mr. Gilden said that DPW oversees this. Only the accounting is segregated.

Approve the Minutes of the Following Committee Meeting: November 18, 2010

**** MR. CONROY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2010.**

Ms. King asked whether or not the Tax Relief issue was to be followed up at this meeting and point out that it was not reflected in the agenda. Mr. Kydes said that he had contacted Mr. Wilms of the BET about this and discovered that presenting a recommendation to the Council would have to come from the BET. Mr. Kydes said that he wanted the Committee to find ways to fund the tax relief and would be speaking to Mr. Wilms about this.

Mr. Kydes said that he was pleased with the Questions and Answers About Senior Citizen and Disabled Tax Relief pamphlet, but also wanted media coverage and newspaper articles about this so that people would be aware of the issue.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR NOVEMBER 18, 2010 PASSED WITH FOUR IN FAVOR (KYDES, CONROY, HEMPSTEAD, AND KING) AND ONE ABSTENTION (STRANITI).**

Authorize the Purchasing Agent to issue purchase orders to ePlus Technology for the supply, engineering, installation and training for a storage area network system for the City of Norwalk and Board of Education per RFP #2917 response and quotation 21174384 for an amount not to exceed \$125,000.00, accounts [BOE: 09105010-5777-C0112, \$60,000 and City 09070600-5777-C0375, \$65,000]

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE ITEM.**

Ms. DelVecchio came forward and said that she had included the general overview of the system in the information packet. The Board of Education and the City IT department had decided to

pool resources to purchase the Storage Area Network System for the City and the Board of Education Data Center. This system provides much more flexibility than the current system. This item has been included in both the Capital budget for both the BOE and the City, and therefore no special appropriation is needed.

Mr. Kydes had several questions about how the RFP was handled. Ms. DeVecchio reviewed the bid process with the Committee. Ms. King asked if the City had gone to the leading companies in this area. Ms. DeVecchio said that research has been done on the leaders for this type of technology.

Mr. Conroy asked about virtual storage and virtual machines. Ms. DeVecchio reviewed the technical aspects of the system.

**** THE MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE PURCHASE ORDERS TO EPLUS TECHNOLOGY FOR THE SUPPLY, ENGINEERING, INSTALLATION AND TRAINING FOR A STORAGE AREA NETWORK SYSTEM FOR THE CITY OF NORWALK AND BOARD OF EDUCATION PER RFP #2917 RESPONSE AND QUOTATION 21174384 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$125,000, ACCOUNT [BOE: 09105010-5777-C0112, \$60,000 AND CITY 09070600-5777-C0375, \$65,000] PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discuss Restructuring Oak Hills Park Authority Loan Agreement

Mr. Hamilton then introduced Mr. Bob Barron to the Committee as the new Budget Director. Mr. Hamilton said that Mr. Barron had been working on the Oak Hills Park accounts. Mr. Hamilton also explained that the Oak Hills Park Authority had come to the City and requested a modification to their loan. He then gave a brief overview history of the park for the Committee. Mr. Hamilton explained that this was a first draft presentation and a basic discussion for feedback.

The members of the Park Authority present: Mr. Andronaco, the Chairman of Park Authority Board, Mr. Grillo, the Golf Professional Director and Mr. Englert, an independent accountant for the Authority, came forward and introduced themselves to the Committee. Mr. Barron then explained that an escrow account that had been established be used to become current through the fiscal year. He indicated that the key facts were included in the back up material in a memo from him to the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Mr. Kydes asked about the loan payments, which Mr. Barron reviewed. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Authority was not looking for loan forgiveness or reduction. They are simply looking for a restructuring. Discussion regarding the details of the repayment followed.

Mr. Grillo then said that about 3 years ago, the DEP had instituted new requirements regarding water diversions, which no one expected. This was followed by two years with rainy summers and last year's heat wave. The weather has affected the number of rounds of golf being played.

Mr. Grillo then reviewed the economic steps that are being taken to reduce costs, which includes salary freezes, reduction of Authority contribution to retirement, reductions in staff, and purchasing the golf carts. Also steps have been taken to reduce the amount of water used for sprinkling, which now has to be purchased rather than pumped from the ponds. All of the work is done in-house. The first priority is the repayment of the loan. Mr. Grillo pointed out while all these cost saving measures are important, the Authority has no control over the weather.

Ms. King said that she was not a big fan of extending the loan for the cart paths and irrigation systems. She said that she believes that golf has lost a lot of appeal and that this extension would be putting the debt on the children. Mr. Grillo said that the PGA is aware of that golf has lost appeal and that there was a new program called First Tee. This is an outreach for the school students with good results. He added that the PGA would provide the statistics during the next few weeks. Ms. King said that she would like to know that there were some aggressive plans for revenue increases. Mr. Barron pointed out that the five year forecast was not calling for aggressive growth. Discussion followed.

The discussion then moved to the staffing and management duties. Ms. King then asked about a driving range that had been discussed a few years earlier. Mr. Grillo reviewed the research that the Authority had done on this subject and some of the reasons why it was ultimately decided not to build a driving range. It was also stated that when the course was originally constructed, there was a driving range just down the road in Darien.

Mr. Hempstead asked about the repayment of the funds into the escrow account. Mr. Barron then explained how that would be done and pointed out that the extension of the loan period would result in the City receiving more money because of the extended period with additional interest.

Mr. Hamilton said that the plan was to begin drafting a proposal for the next meeting. Mr. Kydes requested worst case scenario and best case scenario be prepared for the Committee.

Other Business

Mr. Hamilton said that there was an issue with the February scheduled meeting. The budget is not due to the Council until February 14th. In order to allow the Finance/Claim Committee to have their regularly scheduled meeting on February 10th, Mr. Hamilton will be submitting the budget a week early so it can be included on the February agenda. A second meeting could be scheduled for February 17th if needed. The cap needs to be set by the full Council by Feb. 22nd. A public hearing following the full Council decision will be scheduled later in the process. Mr. Kydes said that he would like to schedule a Finance/Claims public hearing on the 17th in the Community Room or the Council Chambers. Mr. Hamilton clarified that the agenda for the February 10th regularly scheduled meeting will contain normal business along with his initial presentation. The meeting on the 17th will be a Special meeting with a public hearing and followed by the Committee's vote for the recommendation. This was acceptable to all.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. KING MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services