

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2009**

- ATTENDANCE:** Friedrich Wilms, Chair; Mayor Richard A. Moccia; Leo Mellow, James Feigenbaum, Michael Lyons
- STAFF:** Ellen Wink, City Clerk; Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Ossie Lewis, Director of Management and Budgets.
- OTHERS:** Kathryn Hebert, DPW; Dr. Lynn Moore, West Rocks Principal; Karen Lyons, Republican Registrar of Voters; Stuart Wells, Democratic Registrar of Voters; Alexis Cherichetti, Conservation And Aquifer Protection

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wilms called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Wink called the roll. There was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 4, 2009 – Special Meeting

- ** MR. LYONS MOVED THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2009.
** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2009 AS
SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A)

List of Resolutions
Advertised Items – 2

Report on Special Appropriations

Justification/Back Up material

1. RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$5,900 be and the same is hereby transferred from Increased Estimated Revenues to the Planning and Zoning Department to cover the cost of Legal Notices for the Conservation Commission.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the proposal and explained that the City would now be charging the applicants for the legal notices, so that the additional funding will be a wash. Ms. Cherichetti, the Conservation officer, said that most of the legal notices were associated with the wetlands and conservation actions. These are centered around the Aquifer Protection and Inland Wetlands regulations. The Aquifer Agency sets the fees and wants a five year registration fee of \$500 per facility along with an annual inspection fee. When the Department issues an inland wetland permit, a legal notice must be published in The Hour. The notifications for these legal notices were originally billed directly to the applicant, but it has proved too cumbersome. Now the legal notices will be added directly to the wetland and aquifer applications.

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$5,900 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM INCREASED ESTIMATED REVENUES TO THE PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT TO COVER THE COST OF LEGAL NOTICES FOR THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

#2 RESOLVED, that a sum not to exceed \$20,196 be and the same is hereby transferred from Contingency to the Registrar of Voters to cover the cost associated with the mandatory re-canvas and recount of the November 2009 elections.

**** MR. WILMS MOVED THE ITEM.**

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the situation and said that Finance was recommending approval of a special appropriation for \$5,000 to the Part time Wage Account. He reviewed the reasons for this transfer as outlined in the backup material. Mr. Hamilton said that there was a need to reprint some ballots because of the untimely death of Atty. Slapin, which was not anticipated. He also reviewed the reason that extra funds were needed because of the recounts.

Mr. Hamilton then reviewed the information in the backup packet with the Board. He said that the Finance Department recommends that the Registrar of Voters Office work within the constraints of its approved Temporary Wage Account budget for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Mr. Wells said that the Registrars had not planned on the recount. He explained that the re-canvassing starts in January and that last spring they were able to start a recount in the spring. However, this year, there may be a City wide primary for both parties and Mr. Wells and Ms. Doyle Lyons would not be participate in a re-canvassing. Based on past

history, he said that the Registrars were expecting twice as many voters and that the State mandates that the Registrars do this re-canvassing and the City is obligated to pay for it.

Ms. Lyons said that the re-canvassing after the election was mandated by Section 9 of the CSG. She then said that it could be done in a number of ways, such as National Change of Address, which is approved by the State. A card could be sent to each and every voter, but would cost \$46,000 simply for postage. It can be done by house to house, or telephone. Ms. Lyons said that the Registrars have always tried to be cost effective. She said that they were diligent in saving funds from the recount and the election for the canvas. She said that last year \$10,000 had been turned back to the City.

There are some outstanding wages that have not been paid and she reviewed the details of these cases. Ms. Lyons said that they were still trying to update the files.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO APPROVE THE \$5,000 FOR THE PART TIME WAGE ACCOUNT (Acct 011210-5140).**

Mr. Mellow asked about the re-canvassing and the canvas. Mr. Wells reviewed the process and Ms. Doyle said that it was mandated by the State. Mr. Hamilton said that what was not in the budget was the part time, supplemental staff funding. Mr. Hamilton then requested that the Mayor amend the original resolution.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED THE FOLLOWING AMENDED RESOLUTION:**

RESOLVED, THAT A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$5,000 BE AND THE SAME IS HEREBY TRANSFERRED FROM CONTINGENCY TO THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS TO COVER THE COST ASSOCIATED THE PART TIME WAGE ACCOUNT (Acct 011210-5140).

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

TRANSFER AGENDA (Section B)

There were no transfers to discuss at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS (Section C)

RESOLUTION, requesting a special Parking Authority Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$500,000 to pay for a change in the method of operation at the Webster Street Parking Lot.

Mr. Hamilton said that Ms. Hebert was present to review the situation. Ms. Hebert explained that the basic plan is to remove the cashiers' booths and install a "pay and display" system with a kiosk where the motorist enters the number from the parking space and deposits the appropriate amount of money. The Parking Authority will have a drop in labor costs and Ms. Hebert proposed to have customer service representatives, known as ambassadors, at the site. If the percentage assumptions of those who do not pay do not come to pass, the ambassadors could be scaled back.

Mr. Hamilton said that the violations are not included. Based on the experience at Haviland deck and North Water Street, Ms. Hebert said it is known that there will be between 12%-15% percent will attempt to park and not pay. Ms. Hebert said that she did not know what the actual figure of parking violations for Webster Street, since the attendants have been on site. The Mayor said that he had spoken to the Parking Authority about this. There were some concerns about the ability to pay the bonds if the violation funds are not collected. Mr. Hamilton then reviewed the bond repayment schedule and pointed out that it would only be for a five year bond.

Mr. Wilms reminded everyone that the Parking Authority has other revenue resources. Ms. Hebert said that there was a full plan with all the revenue and debt service itemized and that the Parking Authority does have the ability to pay the bonds. Mr. Hamilton said that he had asked the Parking Authority to maintain this type of spreadsheet to help with determine with capital projects.

The Mayor said that while no one likes to pay for parking, and the fees have been held in check, the parking garages have been making enough to cover the cost. He said that he wished all the departments would be able to generate enough funds to cover their costs.

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:**

**RESOLUTION, REQUESTING A SPECIAL PARKING AUTHORITY
CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMONG OF \$500,000 TO PAY FOR A
CHANGE IN THE METHOD OF OPERATION AT THE WEBSTER STREET
PARKING LOT.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY,**

#2 – Update on the Board of Estimate and Taxation/Board of Education's Joint Service Study Committee.

Mr. Hamilton said that he was not able to attend the last Joint Session of the BET/BOE. Mr. Mellow said that the discussion had continued about the BOE recycling program and that seven schools are using the pilot program. Preliminary estimates show the potential of significant savings of \$92.50/ton.

Mr. Mellow reported that the BOE was in the process of reviewing the copying contracts. There was a discussion by the BOE/BET group about reducing the current cost of nearly \$800,000 for copiers for the District. Mr. Hamilton said that he believed that there was an RFP out for copiers services. He added that the City does not have the same per copy costs. Mr. Foley is investigating this issue and Mr. Hamilton felt that the City may have more time on its contracts. Mr. Hamilton said that the City may not be able to consolidate with the BOE this year, without buying out a contract, but perhaps in the future.

Mr. Wilms said that under the current system of recycling, it would take four years to reach each of the schools. Mr. Wilms said that the BET had challenged the BOE to move the program forward by having a meeting with all the school principals. Mr. Alvord will be meeting with the principals in the near future when Dr. Papallo has his monthly meeting with the principals.

Mr. Wilms said that the new members from the BOE and the Council felt that they should accelerate the program.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mr. Hamilton then distributed an update on the fund balance. He announced that there was some good news. The draft audit has been received and the current number of \$29,000 is bit higher than expected. He then reviewed how this would affect the projected numbers. The City is anticipating that the Governor will cut approximately \$500,000 of municipal aid. The Governor has not actually announced which grants would be cut. The ECS grant accounts, which account for about half of the municipal grants statewide, is not expected to be reduced. Until it is actually announced, it will not be possible to know what grants will be cut. The State committee assigned to determine this should announce their decision within two weeks. There are too many factors to actually know what will happen.

The City has been anticipating a shortfall in property taxes and the real estate conveyance tax, however the numbers are slightly better than projected.

Currently, the Police and Fire Departments are doing okay in terms of overtime.

The salt usage for DPW has been factored in the figures because last year, the City ran over budget. Mr. Hamilton said that the new type of salt being used is better than the old salt/sand mix, but it is more expensive.

The Mayor said that while this is slightly better, and that the good news is that it is not as bad as expected, the situation is still bad. Mr. Hamilton said that he was comfortable

with the 24 million shortfall, and felt that the budget will be tight, but possible. The Mayor reminded everyone that DPW was down about 14 people for staff and this would affect snow removal.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

