

**CITY OF NORWALK  
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 8, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Carvin Hilliard, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; Amanda Brown;  
Douglas Sutton; Mike Geake, Doug Hempstead

STAFF: Frederic Gilden; Comptroller; Thomas Hamilton, Finance  
Director; Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector

Mr. Hilliard called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

He reminded everyone that the Finance/Claims meetings will now begin at 7:30 p.m.

**CLAIMS COMMITTEE: RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT;  
REVIEW AND APPROVE CLAIMS AS REQUIRED FOR CLAIMS REPORT  
DATED: JANUARY 8, 2009**

Ms. Biagiarelli explained:

**Sewer Use adjustment \$12,000; and  
Mr. Shower Door - Motor Vehicles Account \$17,000 abatement**

\*\* DOUG HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO APPROVE.  
\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED JANUARY 8, 2009  
RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS**

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that tax collections are ahead of last year. Sewer use collections also are ahead.

She reported that there will be a dip after February, 2009. They are planning ahead for the dip and looking at the following:

- Permits
- State Marshals  
(Assist the City with past due business personal property tax.)
- Collection Agencies
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- Garnishment of Wages. (This includes payments such as Child Support and Alimony.)

The tax bills were sent out late and at end of December. While this mailing was within the guidelines, residents are accustomed to receiving their bill in mid-December. Mr. Hamilton expanded on this matter the Software firm/vendor that is used was the source of the delay.

The redemption period for the July 2008 tax sale expires on January 21, 2009. Eight properties were sold. Only three have redeemed. Five properties are expected to change ownership on January 21, 2009. All parties involved in the five remaining properties have been contacted. The City website will be kept up to date on information relating to the tax sale.

Ms. Biagiarelli mentioned that Bank of American's participation in the bank tax collection program has ended. The bank pulled out of the program one week before it began. There are a number of banks where taxpayers may pay their bill. This lessens the number of taxpayers who come to City Hall to pay their bill, which is good for the City. Banks in the program are Fairfield County Bank, Webster Bank, Patriot National Bank, Norwalk Bank & Trust, TD Bank, and HSBC Bank USA. The taxpayer does not have to be a regular customer of the bank, and there is no cost to the taxpayer.

#### **MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORT DATED DECEMBER 31, 2008 – RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS**

Ms. Biagiarelli explained that as of now, and in spite of the economy, the collection of taxes is ahead of last year.

Mr. Hempstead asked for clarification on the Sewer Bill reduction. Ms. Biagiarelli explained that adjustments take place all year long as business needs and their usage changes.

#### **OPERATING CAP SCHEDULE AND DISCUSS**

Mr. Hamilton spoke on the Budget and began by saying that it has been challenging because of the economic conditions we are experiencing. While state aid will not be cut, there will not be an increase in aid either.

With the decline in real estate transactions, there has been a reduction in recording fees for mortgage filings and deed filings.

He pointed out that building permits are holding up. He anticipates this could be a problem in 2010.

Earned interest income is very good for now at 4 ¼%. That rate is expected to go lower.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the impact on the Budget will be felt through 2011. He said the Parks and Recreation department has decreased their budget by \$17,000. He reported that the Pension in 2010 will not be good.

There will be no new positions posted. An austerity program of cutting jobs, services and certain programs is in the works, he reported.

Mr. Hamilton stated that single family homeowners will benefit the most on the re-valuation. The goal is to get as close to market value as possible based on sales. The mill rate is up 3.8%.

The re-valuation process is complex. The firm hired to perform this task is working on tweaking the Model.

Mr. Hamilton said that the Operating Budget will be presented to the Board of Estimate on February 9 and submitted to the Council on February 10.

There is an expectation of a 2% increase. Ms. Brown asked what that translates into in dollars. Mr. Hamilton said \$292 or roughly \$300.

Through 2011 there will be an impact on the City budget.

**RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION SPECIAL  
APPROPRIATIONS FROM JANUARY 5, 2009**

- A) CONTINGENCY TO THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS TO COVER THE COST OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EXPENSES.**
- B) THE SEVERANCE FOR THE FORMER DEMOCRATIC REGISTRAR OF VOTERS (ACCOUNT NO. 01-1210-5130 & 01-1220-5110).**

**THE REQUEST IS FOR \$51,952 FOR THE ABOVE NAMED EXPENSES.**

There was an increase in voter registration for the presidential election. This required hiring part-time staff in the weeks leading up to the election. Additional poll workers were hired to work on election day.

There was much discussion about the severance payment made to the former Registrar.

The generous amount of unused sick days and unused vacation days amounted to months of pay that she received upon resignation. Many expressed their opinions about this payment.

- \*\* MR. HAMILTON MOVED TO RECEIVE THE SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS FROM JANUARY 5, 2009.
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: DECEMBER 11, 2008**

- \*\* MR. HILLIARD MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING: DECEMBER 11, 2008.
- \*\* MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. GEAKE)
  
- \*\* MS. BROWN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.
- \*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Hohlweck  
Telesco Secretarial Services