

**CITY OF NORWALK**  
**FINANCE CLAIMS COMMITTEE**  
**JULY 9, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Carvin Hilliard, Chair; Richard Bonenfant; Anna Duleep; Amanda Brown (7:42 p.m.); Douglas Hempstead (8:12 p.m.)

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Gerald Foley, Purchasing Director; Fred Gilden, Comptroller; Oswald Lewis, Director of management and Budgets

GUESTS: Carol Goodchild; Steven Serasis, Common Council

Mr. Hilliard called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

**\*\* MR. HILLIARD MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

- 1. CLAIMS COMMITTEE: RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT; REVIEW AND APPROVE CLAIMS AS REQUIRED FOR CLAIMS REPORT DATED: JULY 9, 2009**

Ms. Biagiarelli explained that there were special requests that needed to be voted upon.

- 2. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED JULY 9, 2009 – RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS**
- 3. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR’S REPORT DATED JUNE 30, 2009 - RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS**

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that collections were slightly down from the previous year, but that was what they expected. She added that they were up in collections for sewer use. Tax bills were delivered during the third week in June and residents will have until August 3<sup>rd</sup> to pay.

Ms. Brown joined the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

Ms. Brown asked if there was a way to send multiple bills in one statement. Ms. Biagiarelli said that they are looking at ways to link addresses, but they are having problems with the system. Tax collections are a little slow.

A tax sale is being planned for next July. Ms. Biagiarelli said that they want to begin with at least 100 properties. She explained the criteria used to place a property on the list. She added that once they start publicizing the sale, collections will creep up. Ms. Biagiarelli said that she will report further as time goes on.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**\*\* MR. BONENFANT MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

- 4. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, RICHARD A. MOCCIA TO EXECUTE AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY'S EXISTING AGREEMENT WITH RICOH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED TWO (2) YEARS FOR CONTINUE MAILROOM SERVICES, FOR A TOTAL TWO (2) YEAR AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$129,519.00. ACCT. 011362-5259**

Mr. Foley explained the item. He said that they are working with the Board of Education to consolidate services. He said that the plan is to centralize the mailing effort and they are looking at Ricoh to work with them to create mail routes. This plan may take less than a year, but they are requesting additional time.

Mr. Bonenfant recommended that Mr. Foley explain this item to the Common Council since this is a sole source vendor. Mr. Hilliard commented that this is in the best interest of the City and this is the best way to go.

Mr. Foley explained that the Board of Education has 20 meters and City Hall has five. The plan is to eliminate the meters at the outer buildings and the mail will be metered at a lower rate. They are looking for a firm to pre-sort the mail and then deliver it to the Post Office.

Ms. Brown said that it did not make practical sense. She said that it is hard to work in the business capacity without a postage meter. Mr. Foley said that this will be restructured to make it the least disruptive. He added that they expect that the procedure will save time and the cost savings will be significant. Ms. Brown requested a cost analysis of the savings. Mr. Foley said that the vendor will provide a monthly report.

Ms. Duleep asked if they have to hand deliver mail to the Parking Authority and the Historical Commission. She said that the Historical Commission now has an assistant that could get the mail. Mr. Foley said that Ms. Gunn comes to City hall to pick up the mail once a week and the delivery person goes in that direction 1- 2 times a week anyway. The delivery person also delivers mail to the Police Station.

Mr. Bonenfant asked if it was possible to separate the Board of Education's mail from the City's mail. Mr. Foley said that they are not able to separate every department. There will be one account for the City and one for the Board of Education.

Ms. Brown asked if the vendor will be ok if they are not awarded the contract when this goes out to bid. Mr. Foley said that they will be allowed to participate when this goes out to RFP.

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

## **5. REPORT ON FEES IN LIEU OF PARKING**

Mr. Gilden explained that they took the balance from July 1, 2001. There is \$291,000 in the account. He said that from time to time, there have been 5, 6 or 7 large payments of revenue. Expenditures have been used for maintenance and to outfit the Parking Authority space at The Maritime Garage. The money is used to maintain the parking spaces.

Mr. Hempstead joined the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Ms. Brown said that it is difficult to know who paid for parking spaces. She said that she sees over the last eight years that five spaces have been paid for. She asked who dictated that those payments should be made and who received payment. Mr. Gilden said that Planning and Zoning received the funds and the Finance department processed those payments. He said that the purpose of the account is to maintain the parking facility.

Mr. Serasis said that it seemed like there were a lot more tenants than five. He said that he is confused because in the last eight years, there were more than five businesses there. He said that it seems unusual and the figure does not seem right. Mr. Gilden said that is what was collected from Planning and Zoning. Mr. Serasis told Mr. Gilden that he understands that they only collect the money, but this does not make sense. Mr. Gilden will ask Planning and Zoning for clarification.

Ms. Brown asked about an expenditure for 24b & 30 Monroe Street dated November 24, 2008, because there was no description. Mr. Gilden said that he believed that was the train station, but will confirm. Mr. Serasis said that it was strange that only two restaurants were listed in eight years.

Mr. Hempstead explained that there have been fees in lieu of parking uptown since the 1980's. This was expanded to SoNo and anyone pre 2001 or 2002 was grandfathered in. Anyone who converted a retail establishment to a restaurant would be required to have additional parking. Zoning has been resistant to allow conversion from retail to restaurant. Mr. Hempstead said that only a change in use would have to pay.

Ms. Goodchild said that her establishment was a deli, but since they have a liquor license, they are required to have more parking. She said that she would like to know which account her money went to. Mr. Gilden said that the money is deposited into one account and there is interest applied each month.

Mr. Hilliard said that he will invite a representative from Planning and Zoning to attend the next meeting to answer questions and clarify the issue.

Mr. Bonenfant said that he believed it was a one-time payment and it stayed with the property. Mr. Hempstead said that it costs approximately \$20,000 to build one parking space and that space should be attached to the property.

Ms. Goodchild said that her new attorney told her that the law says that the customer cannot be charged an additional \$20,000 if the space is less than 45 sq. ft. ; however, the City says you have to pay an additional \$20,000 if you are 1 sq. ft. over 45 sq. ft. Mr. Hempstead asked Mr. Gilden where the lease money goes. He said that it is separate for this account. Mr. Hempstead requested that the Finance department get an accounting from the Parking Authority in order to better understand the whole picture.

Mr. Serasis asked where the money was spent. Mr. Gilden said that \$340,000 was spent on capital improvements over the last eight years.

Ms. Brown asked Ms. Goodchild if she would forward information about parking. Ms. Goodchild said that he discussed this with the Zoning inspector. Mr. Hempstead told Ms. Goodchild that if she is in a lawsuit with the City, then they would have to back out of this. Ms. Goodchild said that she was not in a lawsuit with the City.

**\*\* MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED THE FOLLOWING ITEM:**

**6. RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION APPROPRIATIONS FROM JULY 6, 2009**

Mr. Lewis explained the four appropriations as presented in the backup. He explained that the first one was approved by the Board of Estimate and Taxation to cover a projected deficit in social security as a result of severance payments.

Mr. Lewis explained that the second one was used to pay the common area maintenance charges for the Norwalk Museum. He said that Plaza Realty did a year end reconciliation and this appropriation is to cover the deficit in the account. Mr. Lewis said that he did not know if an additional transfer will be needed for August.

The third transfer is for \$71,573 to the street lighting account. This is a result of a settlement between the Third Taxing District and the City.

**7. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

- JUNE 11, 2009

The following correction was made to the minutes:

Page 1 – correct spelling of Ms. Goodchild’s name.

**\*\* MS. DULEEP MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi

Telesco Secretarial Services

