

**NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 9, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Bruce Kimmel, Chair: John Igneri; Travis Simms; Jerry Petrini; Douglas Hempstead (7:53); David McCarthy (7:53).

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Frederic Gilden, Comptroller, Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Kathryn Hebert, NPA Executive Director; Lisa Burns, WPCA Operations Manager; Karen Kelsey, Purchasing Assistant; Shannon O'Toole-Giandurco, Common Council; Hal Alvord, Director of Public Works; Thomas E. Kulhawik, Chief of Police.

OTHERS: Ernest DesRochers and John McKenna, Oak Hills Park Authority

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A woman, resident of Fillow Street, spoke about her concerns about Oak Hills Park Authority (OHPA). She said she did not want the city to bail the Park out of debt. She said the park was mismanaged and a waste of tax payer money and outdoor space. She said club served just a small number of golfers rather than the whole community. She said she thought the Park's request for \$15,000 from the city to fund a feasibility study of the course was outrageous and should not be granted. She mentioned that recently trees had been cut down in the Park and the scenery ruined. She provided photos of the downed trees.

Paul Cantor, of Fillow Street, spoke strongly against the OHPA, and said the club had been severely mismanaged and that the City should not bail out a bankrupt business. He said the club was not making enough money, and only served a small portion of the public. He spoke against the proposed driving range and \$15,000 feasibility study.

**APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH
12, 2015**

**** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 12.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. CLAIMS COMMITTEE: RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT; REVIEW AND APPROVE CLAIMS AS REQUIRED FOR CLAIMS REPORT DATE: APRIL 9, 2015

- ** MR. KIMMEL MOVED THAT THE CLAIMS COMMITTEE RECEIVE THE MONTHLY CLAIMS REPORT AND APPROVE CLAIMS REPORT AS REQUIRED FOR THE REPORT DATED: APRIL 9, 2015.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED APRIL 9, 2015 RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS

5. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS-RECEIVE REPORTS AND DISCUSS MARCH 31, 2015

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that tax 97.93% of the current tax levy, slightly up from last year. She says the department is now working on tax enforcement, including wage garnishments, liens, and door to door enforcements. She said on April 15, the tax office would be participating in "Senior Citizens Connection Day," from 9-11am, and the office would present information on various income based tax relief programs for seniors and disabled persons. Mr. Kimmel asked if the seniors needed to provide 1040 forms, noting he heard it might be a problem for some seniors who do not file taxes due to low income. Mr. Hamilton said the tax assessor uses 1040 for income variation and was not sure what was done in the case of no 1040. It was agreed the Tax Assessor's office would look into the issue and check and see the procedures of other towns.

6. RECEIVE OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2015

7. DISCUSSION OF OAK HILLS AUTHORITY FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE CITY

Mr. Kimmel noted as Mr. Hempstead and Mr. McCarthy were still participating in a town spelling bee, discussion of Oak Hills would be delayed until their arrival.

8. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH 332 WILSON AVENUE LLC, C/O STANLEY M. SELIGSON PROPERTIES, TO LEASE APPROXIMATELY 1.9 ACRES OF LAND WITH IMPROVMENTS LOCATED AT 332 WILSON AVENUE FOR PURPOSES OF A SCHOOL BUS DEPOT BASED UPON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN THE ATTACHED TERM SHEET. ACCOUNT# TBD BOARD OF EDUCATION ACCOUNT.

Mr. Hamilton said that the contract with the school bus company expired June 30, 2015. He said cost it was determined if the city leased the parking lot, instead of the bus company, approximately \$100,000 annually. He said purchasing assistant Karen Kelsey had been working hard on new lease. The lease agreement would be for 15 years, with two options for 5 year renewals, at 332 Wilson Avenue, the place where the buses are currently held. He said they had investigated other options for bus parking, but because the amount of space required and zoning, the Wilson Avenue location was still the best. Taxes and upkeep would be paid for by the bus company. Mr. Hamilton said there was an option for a 25 year lease at a reduced rate but he did not recommend it. Mr. Petrini agreed.

**** MR. PETRINI MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH 332 WILSON AVENUE LLC, C/O STANLEY M. SELIGSON PROPERTIES, TO LEASE APPROXIMATELY 1.9 ACRES OF LAND WITH IMPROVMENTS LOCATED AT 332 WILSON AVENUE FOR PURPOSES OF A SCHOOL BUS DEPOT BASED UPON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OUTLINED IN THE ATTACHED TERM SHEET. ACCOUNT# TBD BOARD OF EDUCATION ACCOUNT.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

9. APPROVE FY 2015-16 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET.

Ms. Hebert presented the 2015-2016 Parking Authority operating budget. She said the budget shows an increase of .98% in expenses compared to the current fiscal year forecast and 5.76% overall compared to the approved operating budget for fiscal year 2015. The approved budget reflects technology and program upgrades and parking activity demands. She said the Parking Authority is currently looking toward meeting future parking demands. Mr. Petrini asked about the increase in service contracts line item of 1,600%. Ms. Hebert said it was due to the consolidation of the equipment service and service contract line items. Mr. Kimmel asked about the wait lists for the SoNo and East Norwalk train stations. Ms. Hebert said the SoNo train station has about 200 people on the waitlist. The East Norwalk Railroad Station is oversold by about 49% with a very small waitlist.

**** MR. IGNERI MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2015-16 PARKING AUTHORITY BUDGET.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. APPROVE FY 2015-16 WPCA BUDGET

Ms. Burns presented the WPCA 2015-16 budget which she said was up 2.25% from last year and included a \$15 increase for a single family residence. Mr. Kimmel said he thought the current flat rate of \$300 per household no matter whether it was a family of 7 or just a single person might not be a fair policy. Mr. H said disadvantages to a consumption based system included

decreased efficiency and said the amount collected might not be to the City's advantage. Ms. Burns said consumption rates had actually gone down in recent years. Mr. Kimmel said a non-consumption based system did not incentivize conservation and wa, in particular, hard on seniors living alone. Mr. Petrini said perhaps tax relief could be given to seniors. Mr. Kimmel agreed.

**** MR. SIMMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2015-16 WPCA BUDGET.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Hempstead, Mr. McCarthy, and Ms. O'Toole-Giandurco arrived at the meeting (7:53)
Mr. Kimmel said now items 6&7 should be discussed.

6. RECEIVE OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 28, 2015

7. DISCUSSION OF OAK HILLS AUTHORITY FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO THE CITY

Mr. DesRochers presented a packet with a full proposal from the OHPA for plans going forward. He presented the February financial statements and said YTD revenues were a head of budget by approximately 7% as compared to last year. Mr. Hempstead asked if the Park had drawn down it's lite of credit. Mr. DesRochers replied the course had drawn down about \$19,900 for February, but should be able to make up for it in the coming months as the club opened.

Mr. Kimmel said he thought it would be best if this month the committee listened to the OHPA presentation from the Park's perspective, and at the next meeting consider the City's perspective, including forgiveness of debt of the restaurant.

Mr. DesRochers said the course had implemented a new computerized booking system, planned to spend more in advertising the club through the Hour and other venues, and use the 1.5 million state grant for long needed repairs. He said it had be a tough winter but revenue was beginning to come in. He said if the city forgave the debt on the restaurant the Park could invest in a driving range and Golf School to make some real income. He said the Park would either partner with the city on the investment or look to private financing. He said the driving range in Stamford grossed over \$800,000 annually. He said if the city could grant the Park \$15,000 to the National Golf Association for a feasibility study it would ensure the best practices going forward. Mr. Kimmel asked if the city did not forgive the debt, if the OHPA would be able to invest in a driving range. Mr. DesRochers it would be impossible and imagined the proposed school and range would cost about \$3 million. He said again the Park would partner with the city or look to private investors if the restaurant debt was forgiven. He said, although he was not there in 1998 when the restaurant was approved, he believed politics played a role. He said the decision had been financially disastrous, the restaurant had been located in the wrong place, and now really was just a catering facility, not geared toward golfers. Mr. Igneri asked, if the financing was in place,

when would a range be ready? Mr. DesRochers said by next April. He said the payment on a \$3 million loan would be about \$190,000 and he believed the range could make \$400-500,000 annually and could net about \$125,000 in the first year after expenses. Mr. Hempstead said he believed that the committee understood that bad financial decisions were made in the past and now the focus needed to be going forward. He noted \$600,000 had been invested in the trail. He said the range might be a good investment and he was not sure what other options there were. Mr. DesRochers said the city could help or he could turn in the keys, and he understood it was a political year with elections coming up. Mr. Petrini asked how much the Park had drawn down from its total line of credit. Mr. DesRochers said \$80,000 out of \$100,000. Mr. Petrini said he expected the Park to come and ask for more money and was surprised after the mistakes in the past the Park was still in business. He said the fact it was a political year was irrelevant and he wanted to do what was best for the city. Mr. Kimmel said next month the committee would send a formal invite the Mayor to the meeting to discuss the OHPA. Mr. Hamilton said he would talk to the Mayor but that the Mayor needed to hear from the OHPA directly. He said investment in a feasibility study, independent of the OHPA might be a good idea. Mr. Hamilton said he thought he process had been backwards and the Park should have come to the Mayor first. Mr. DesRochers said he had sent the Mayor a copy of the OHPA proposal. Mr. Kimmel said as the Park had to present monthly to the committee he had thought it was best to initiate a broad discussion within the Committee. He said he was open to discussing debt forgiveness, but the matter needed to be analyzed thoroughly.

13. RECEIVE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION APPROPRIATIONS DATED: APRIL 6, 2015.

Mr. Kimmel noted that as there were several people waiting to discuss Item 13 it should be addressed before 11 and 12.

Mr. Hamilton said that \$9,501 was owed by the Seaport Association to the Parks Department for repairs to the field after the Oyster Festival. He said the approximately \$21,000,000 police budge was over by about \$250,000 due to resolved contract negotiations and overtime. He said the Public Works Department required \$99,408 to cover anticipated end of year deficits due primarily to severance packages for retirees and snow removal.

11. AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH HOOKER AND HOLCOMBE, INC. TO PERFORM THE CITY'S PENSION AND OPEB ACTUARIAL VALUATIONS FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY, 1 2015 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$296,000. ACCOUNT # VARIOUS ACCOUNT # PENSION FUNDS AND 711342-5246.

**** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR HARRY W. RILLING TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH HOOKER AND HOLCOMBE, INC. TO PERFORM THE CITY'S PENSION AND OPEB ACTUARIAL VALUATIONS**

FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY, 1 2015 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$296,000. ACCOUNT # VARIOUS ACCOUNT # PENSION FUNDS AND 711342-5246.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

12.AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MCGLADREY, LLP TO PERFORM THE CITY'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY, 1 2014 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2019 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$475,000. ACCOUNT# 011310-5253.

Mr. Hamilton said four firms had been interviewed for the audit. He said as the City has been very satisfied with the McGladrey in the past and the pricing, of \$95,000 per year for each of the 5 years, was the lowest of all the bidders

**** MR. KIMMEL MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE A CONTRACT WITH MCGLADREY, LLP TO PERFORM THE CITY'S ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT AUDIT FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD BEGINNING JULY, 1 2014 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2019 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$475,000. ACCOUNT# 011310-5253.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Lund
Telesco Secretarial Services