

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
JULY 6, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: James Clark, Chairman; Mayor Harry Rilling, Gregory Burnett
Anne Yang-Dwyer, James Feigenbaum.

STAFF: Robert Barron, Director Management & Budgets;
Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Donna King, City Clerk.

OTHER: Representatives of agenda items, as noted during item discussions:
Lawrence Riley, Assistant Fire Chief; Michael Barbis, BOE;
Michael Stewart, Tax Assessor; Bill O'Brien, Assistant Assessor.

Call to Order

Chairman Clark called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and asked City Clerk King to call the roll. Members were in attendance as indicated above, and there was a quorum present.

Approval of Minutes

- ** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF JUNE 8, 2015 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Special Appropriations Agenda - None

Transfer Agenda

BUILDING MANAGEMENT:

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>		<u>Amount</u>
01-3055-5241	Electric	01-3055-5244	Gas	\$7,100
01-4075-5241	Electric	01-4072-5244	Gas	10,050
01-4075-5241	Electric	01-4073-5246	Heating Fuel	5,650
				\$22,800

Mr. Barron referred to supporting documentation and explained that the transfer is to cover a shortfall in the utility accounts at various City Buildings and Finance recommends approval.

- ** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFERS AS PRESENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AMOUNTS AND ACCOUNT DETAILS AS OUTLINED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Building Management

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>		<u>Amount</u>
01-4074-5269	Other Repairs & Mtce.	01-4071-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	\$1,170
01-4077-5267	Plumbing/Htg. & Elect. Svcs.	01-4071-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	1,143
01-4072-5263	Furn./Office Mach. Repairs	01-4071-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	500
01-4073-5269	Other Rep. & Mtce. Svcs.	01-4071-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	1,137
01-4074-5267	Plumbing/Htg. & Elect. Svcs.	01-4471-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	442
01-4072-5298	Other Contractual Services	01-4471-5561	Bldg. Renovations/Repairs	1,128
				\$5,520

Mr. Barron referred to the supporting documents explained that this represents balances available from various repair and service accounts to cover the purchase of 18 chairs for the Common Council Chambers. There was discussion on the reasons for the \$400 per chair price and justifications for the replacement. Mayor Rilling described the condition of these original chairs that were originally purchased in 1987, and stated that he agreed with the need for an industrial type of boardroom chair that can withstand another long term use and expected lifespan.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFERS AS PRESENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AMOUNTS AND ACCOUNT DETAILS AS OUTLINED.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

FIRE DEPT.:

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>		<u>Amount</u>
01-3120-5251	Medical/Dental & Veterinary	01-3140-5258	Physical & Other Prof. Services	\$31,700

Mr. Barron referred to the supporting memo explained this transfer is to cover the Entry Level Test Project.. There was discussion on testing and Assistant Chief Reilly came forward and explained the recruitment process that was led by a consultant to improve the hiring diversity. He reviewed the process of test scoring and assessment with the emphasis on increasing the number of interviews and fielded questions and comments from the members. There was discussion on the expected outcome, and Assistant Chief Reilly indicated that cost of test waivers is expected to offset the increased cost of recruitment.

**** MS. YANG-DWYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET TRANSFER AS PRESENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AMOUNTS AND ACCOUNT DETAILS AS OUTLINED.**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH THREE VOTES IN FAVOR, (BURNETT, CLARK, YANG-DWYER) NONE OPPOSED, AND ONE ABSTENTION (FEIGENBAUM).**

Discussion of Contract Negotiations with the Board of Education

Mr. Clark noted that in attendance was Board of Education member, Mike Barbis, Chairman of the Negotiations Committee, and that this item was requested to be done in executive session.

- ** **MR. BURNETT MOVED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION OF CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting went into executive session at 7:50 p.m. and was reconvened into public session at 8:18 p.m. There was no action taken.

Discussion of Valuation Process by the Tax Assessor

Mr. Clark welcomed Mr. Michael Stewart, Tax Assessor, and Mr. Bill O'Brien, Assistant Assessor, and stated that they were asked to give an overview of the valuation process. Mr. Stewart distributed a copy of the presentation used for the public forums on the valuation process and preliminary valuation parameters from October 1, 2013. He noted that the booklet is available to the public and copies are available at a copy charge per page. There was discussion on having this available as a PDF format posted on the city's website, and Mr. Stewart stated that the file is rather voluminous and is a cumbersome process to scan into a PDF. Mr. Clark noted that this is a rather simple electronic file task and asked it to be made available as a service to taxpayers.

There was further discussion on the presentation and a review of the list of certified valuation companies. Mr. Stewart reviewed the revaluation process phases that include data evaluation, collection/verification, sales analysis, model development & application, field review, informal hearings, and assessment finalization.

Mr. O'Brien explained that utilizing the sales data, valuation models are developed in compliance with Connecticut state statutes and the field reviews verified appropriate application of models to confirm data and value consistency as conducted by certified appraisal staff members. He explained that the revaluation is mandated by the State of Connecticut, performed every 5 years with inspections by every 10th year, and in Connecticut, real property is assessed at 70% of market value.

Mr. Stewart reviewed the practices done in 2008 that resulted in updates to the model of multiple regressions and calibrated sales adjusted cost approach. He outlined that the benefits of revaluation corrects assessment inequities, adjusts value for market shifts, and verifies that all new construction has been captured to achieve state mandated assessment ratios.

There was discussion on the coefficient of dispersion and the statistical deviation. Mr. Stewart explained that statistics are generated and filed with State of Connecticut are ratio testing standards to show that the evaluation is less arbitrary and in compliance with sales cost adjusted approach for assessed values. Mr. O'Brien reviewed the statutory ratio testing standards and explained the level of assessment is a prescribed range of 63%-77% and coefficient of dispersion that must be 15% or less price related differential.

Mr. Stewart referred to the printout of fair market valuations, and there as discussion on how neighborhoods are segmented and classified within districts and zones.

Mr. Clark thanked Mr. Stewart and Mr. O'Brien and noted that this was an important review for the BET's oversight to have a better understanding of the complex process.

Proposed Fund Balance Policy Revision

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the re-lined version included in the agenda packet and explained the proposed revisions. Mr. Barron noted that Norwalk is the only City in the state that has achieved a triple A ranking across all three rating agencies.

Mr. Clark thanked the Finance team for the stellar job, and noted how much the City appreciates their hard work and dedication in achieving the bond rating.

**** MS. YANG-DWYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED FUND
BALANCE POLICY REVISION AS AMENDED WITH CHANGES NOTED.
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Discussion of Outside Agency Grant Recipient Guideline

Mr. Barron reviewed the draft included in the agenda packet and explained the proposed guidelines. Mr. Burnett stated that there is no mention of the Ad-Hoc Committee's work and asked if there was any reference as to how this is shared with the sub-committee.

Mr. Barron explained that there is nothing official as the committee is not required by charter and is not report to the Common Council. There was discussion on the scope of the review process for outside agency grant requests.

Mr. Clark explained that the committee was established to take the burden of the BET to review and evaluate each agency presentation. He suggested that there should be another point added to the guidelines to reflect the language on the review process of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Mr. Barron agreed to rewrite another version to incorporate this language, and bring back to the next meeting for further discussion.

Other Business

Mr. Barron reported that the Oak Hills financial reports are in line and all is predicted to be on or close to target. He explained that there was a slow start due to the long winter season, but rounds have now caught up. He noted that the credit line payments have been made as scheduled.

Mr. Barron referred to the Key Revenue Drivers and noted that the historical comparison and projection for 2014-15 year end as of July 2, 2015.

Other Business

Mr. Clark noted that he has designated Ms. Yang-Dwyer as the BET representative for Board of Education contract negotiations for the school year 2015-16.

Additional Information – The following reports were submitted for information:

Summary of Special Appropriation - FY 2014-15

Status of Contingency — FY 2014-15

Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status — May 2015
- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report — FY 2014-15
- Year-to-date City Operating Budget Report - FY 20 14-15
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Budget Report - FY 2014-15
- Tax Collector's Narrative — May 2015
- Tax Collector's Report — May 2015
- Key Revenue Report— 2015 Salary accounts
- Police
- Fire
- Public Works

Adjournment

**** MS. YANG-DWYER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Knox;

Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk

Board of Estimate & Taxation

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