

**CITY OF NORWALK
ORDINANCE COMMITTEE
MAY 17, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Eloisa Melendez, Chair; Michael Corsello; Douglas Hempstead;
Bruce Kimmel; Thomas Livingston; Travis Simms

STAFF: Brian McCann, Corporation Counsel

OTHERS: Richard Bonenfant, Steve Serasis, Common Council members;
Bruce Chimento, Director, Public Works;
Carl Brophy, Municipal Tax Services

ROLL CALL

Ms. Melendez called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

There was no public hearing held this evening.

PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION

There was no public hearing held this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present this evening who wished to comment.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES – April 19, 2016

**** MR. SIMMS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OLD BUSINESS

**** MS. MELENDEZ MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD AN ITEM TO
THE AGENDA
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Municipal Tax Services

Mr. Carl Brophy described the services provided by his company, Municipal Tax Services. He said that his company is based out of Shelton and locates and identifies motor vehicle and business properties that should be on the grand list. They get a listing on the license plates and once they know who the owner is, they find out where they are living. If they do not live in town, they will re-check. Once they identify who should be contacted, they work with the Tax Accessor's office. They send a letter on the Tax Accessor's letterhead, but the contact information is for Municipal Tax Services.

Mr. Brophy said that they correspond with the property owners and do all of the investigation. When the investigation is done, they send the file to the Tax Accessor's office and they will generate bills. He said that if there are any questions on a file, they work with the Tax Accessor's office. Mr. Brophy said that he gets paid a per vehicle percentage of what the City collects, along with a one-time fee of \$50.00. He said that he only gets paid, once the City collects.

Mr. Kimmel asked if a resident could be liable for property tax in Norwalk if their car is registered in another town. Mr. Brophy said that the property tax could be considered delinquent. He noted that the resident could apply for reimbursement from another town, if they paid taxes in that town and should have paid taxes in Norwalk. The property tax should be paid to the town where the car most frequently leaves from and remains.

Mr. Brophy reviewed the millions of dollars added to the grand list of other municipalities where they work.

Mr. Hempstead asked for information about the company.

Mr. Brody said that if a person owns a business in Norwalk, and their employee takes a car, owned by the business home to another town, then the car is taxed in the town where the car is kept. Mr. Hempstead said that did not make sense.

In response to Mr. Bonenfant's question, Mr. Brody said that they only get paid, if they discover the delinquent tax.

Mr. Kimmel said that this came up during discussions about beach stickers. Residents are always fee, unless they are delinquent in their taxes. The issue is whether or not the ordinance needs to change.

Mr. Hempstead asked how they canvass this. Mr. Brody said that they use public access and do not go on private property. Their cars are equipped with a veriplate system. It takes a picture of the license plate and vehicle simultaneously. They operate between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

Mr. Kimmel asked for a ballpark estimate in additional revenue. Mr. Brody said that they could generate about \$25-30 million in assessments. Mr. Serasis noted that everywhere they go, they assess millions for the town. Mr. Hempstead said that it used to be that if you owned property in Norwalk, you were entitled to beach passes. Mr. Serasis said that the provision he put forth was

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that if you owned property and paid taxes, you would be entitled to two beach passes; any additional cars would have to be registered in Norwalk.

Mr. Corsello said that this is not a new tax; it is money that the City is entitled to collect. He asked if there is anything the Ordinance Committee needs to do. Mr. Serasis said that this company gives validity to his hunch about taxes. Mr. McCann said that this presentation was for information purposes only.

Mr. Kimmel said that he would like to continue discussing this item next month. Mr. Mocciaie and Mr. Stewart will be invited to attend that meeting to get their point of view. He said that he will bring this item to the Finance Committee for discussion. Mr. Hempstead reiterated that he would like more information about the company.

Extra Police Work

Mr. McCann explained that after the last meeting, he took the ideas presented by the Committee and met with Mr. Chimento and the Mayor. He wanted to create an Ordinance that draws a distinction between when a Police Officer is required and when it is a traffic directional situation. He explained the distinction between the category of roads. The Committee members discussed the road categories.

Mr. Kimmel asked what would be the problem granting right of first refusal for the Police Officers for all roads if it is for safety reasons. Mr. McCann said that it would depend on if it was linked directly to public safety.

Mr. Livingston asked Mr. Chimento for an example of where he would use Police. Mr. Chimento said that for example, he would use Police on Washington Street. Mr. Hempstead said that he would want Police Officers at the hospital or schools when there is any major work being done. He added that it is important to have Police Officers if major lines are being run.

Mr. Simms said that he is happy to have Police Officers on site, and asked if a Police Officer can leave the site, if there is an emergency. He asked about the safety at a construction site, if the Police Officer has to leave to respond to an emergency.

Mr. Kimmel said that drivers do not slow down for flag men, but do slow down for Police Officers. He said that it is a safety issue, to not have the right folks in place. Sgt. Orr said that it would behoove the City to utilize the most qualified traffic control candidates who have the authority and are accountable to the Police Chief. He said that the vendors' profits outweigh the public safety by skimping on traffic control.

Ms. Melendez asked Sgt. Orr about Mr. Simms' comment about when a Police officer has to leave the site. Sgt. Orr said that it is a valid concern. He described it as basic triage. If something happens and it is an emergency, they quickly assess the situation. He said that it happens occasionally where they leave temporarily and return to the job, with no bad impact.

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They could be away from the site for no more than 20 minutes, 90 seconds or until a Police unit arrives at the scene. He said that he does not recall any accidents happening when an Officer had to leave a site.

Mr. Corsello asked about collections. Mr. McCann said that he was told an RFP was created for a collection agency. He said that the Finance Department told him that the reader should focus on the 60 – 90 day collectables. He suggested that this Committee look into requiring a surety guaranteeing that the City will get paid for the Police work. Mr. Corsello said that he would rather see something other than a surety, perhaps a cash bond. Mr. Kimmel asked about other towns. Sgt. Orr said that other towns require the vendors to pre-pay for traffic control.

The Committee discussed how a determination is made regarding traffic control. The Police Chief in conjunction with the Director of Public Works can make the decision. Mr. McCann said that the purpose of the draft is to draw up identifiable criteria of when to use Police Officers. He said that he was concerned about a blanket approach which could be subject to constitutional challenge.

Sgt. Orr said to call the Police department if there is no traffic control at a construction site. He added that there is an agreement, where if the Police learn of a site and determine that there is insufficient traffic control, or no traffic control, they can shut down that site. Mr. Hempstead asked for a complete package of information. Ms. Melendez said that she wants to keep the City as safe as possible. She said that this is a work in progress. Mr. Chimento and the Police Chief will meet within the next few days. Mr. Kimmel said next month they will discuss possible action.

NEW BUSINESS

Chapter 15-Animals and Fowl

This item will be discussed at next month's meeting. Mr. Bonenfant said that he was on the Common Council when the Ordinance was passed. They did not want it to be breed specific. He noted that the Police wrote the Ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services