NORWALK PARKING AUTHORITY

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PARKING AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE AND TELECONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 17 , 2020

ATTENDANCE: Michael Harden, Chairman
Jud Aley
Tom Vetter

ABSENT: Eric Rains, Vice Chairman

STAFF: Jessica Casey, Chief or Economic and Community Development
Vanessa Valadares, DPW Principal Engineer

OTHERS: Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking

DISCUSSION OPERATING BUDGET WORKSHOP FISCAL YEAR 2022

Mr. Harden called the meeting to order at 4:00PM

Mr. Harden said the meeting will be a budget workshop to discuss the budget request for next fiscal year.

Ms. Casey said the city is in a unique place this year for a few reasons including the Covid-19 pandemic and there is also a new CFO who has been on board for the past year and a half or so and he has been thinking about the budget process a little bit differently, so the operating and capital budgets will be done together as opposed to other years and will be also be done earlier.

Mr. Harden said the budget increased substantially for 2020 to 2021 from $5.5 million dollars to $ 7.1 million dollars but is reduced going into 2022 and asked where the Parking Authority currently is with this year's budget due to Covid-19.

Mr. Manousos reported and said that the revenue side is way off in 2020 compared to 2021 due to decreased ticket issuance and the expansion of the courtesy card program due to Covid-19. He said for fiscal year 2022 based on assumptions the demand will increase once the vaccine for Covid-19 will be available and are hoping to be at 95% pre-Covid in fiscal year 2022 which will be reflected in the operations budget. Mr. Harden added that the assumption won't be an impact for the 2022 budget and if there were to be more impact from Covid-19 we would deal with that the same way as it was handled this year by cutting back and reducing where needed. Mr. Manousos said the revenue will be down just under 2.5% budget to budget. He said the projections assume no rate change.

Ms. Casey asked what revenue is received through the art program. Mr. Manousos said there is a curator for the Maritime Garage art gallery and when the art work is sold the Parking Authority receives a small percentage.

Mr. Harden said on the personnel/benefits line he would like to include the person that is in the position and go out five years. Ms. Casey said the $650,862 number is a little high and that there are three numbers that are missing from this budget that is her responsibility to provide Mr. Manousos and Mr. Legesse. She said the first is the personnel/benefits number and this year we had an early retirement incentive so a number of employees had left and we are looking to hire folks, and in some cases the employees that retired were at the highest paid bracket and we plan on backfilling their positions with folks who will come in at a lower grade. Ms. Casey said what Mr. Harden is referring to is what usually ends up happening is that we normally go through an annual budget exercise such as this and look at the line item and decide what that line should look like, but it probably is in the best interest of the Parking Authority as well as the city to be able to look at what that number is or at least the employees that are receiving the supplemental income from the Parking Authority and decide five years at a time as to what the Parking Authority thinks those resources should look like. The reason for that is that it would be unfortunate and extremely disheartening if we were to go through the budget exercise and the Parking Authority decided to zero out that line item or to reduce it to the extent that we have city staff that are working on Parking Authority projects so the city would have to fill the salary gap but will also reallocate the work. She said the second reason is from the Parking Authority standpoint it is understood what resources are allocated to the Parking Authority and what that line item looks like as far as an expense goes moving forward. She also said last year when the TMP budget was proposed it included a Traffic Engineer position that was added to the roster but this year we will be hiring a TMP Director, an Assistant

TMP Director and Parking Director but will not be requesting the Traffic Engineer position. She said the other two numbers that she will be providing to Mr. Manousos and Mr. Legesse are the city administered expenses and the debt service and the schedule is now being calculated by the Comptroller office and she will have the numbers to Mr. Manousos and Mr. Legesse as soon as possible.

Mr. Aley said the current rate at Webster Lot is a flat $3.00 after 6:00PM and he finds that predatory and to be more consumer friendly suggested making the rate $1.00/hour. Mr. Vetter asked what the usage is like in that lot after 6:00PM. Mr. Legesse said pre-Covid the lot was busy from the movie theater and restaurant crowds but since Covid-19 has been pretty much empty after 6:00PM. Mr. Harden asked what the current rate structure is at Webster Lot. Mr. Legesse said it is $1.00/hr. until 6:00PM. and a flat rate of $3.00/hour after 6:00PM. Mr. Harden said we need to look at that carefully because a large percentage of people would probably stay three hours or beyond so be changing it $1.00/hour may end up charging people more than the $3.00 flat fee. Mr. Aley suggested $1.00 per hour and max out at $3.00 after 6:00PM which would encourage people to park in the lot. Mr. Manousos suggested doing an analysis to reflect the proposed change and discuss it at the next budget workshop.

Mr. Harden asked if all of the meter revenue over the past year and what that number would look like if all of the meters were $1.00/hour. Mr. Manousos said “yes” they can do that analysis but pointed out that they are in two different districts and two different economic developments which the current rates reflect. Mr. Harden said he has been building a narrative around simplification and requested the analysis be done where all meters are $1.00/per and another analysis at .50 cents/hour which would not change in the Wall Street area. Mr. Aley said he understands the idea of simplification but by making this change would not create turnover for on street parking and would create more traffic congestion because people will be circling looking for on street parking.

Mr. Aley said currently in the Wall Street area enforcement starts at 9:00AM and suggested the same in the South Norwalk area which currently starts at 8:00AM. Ms. Casey said the reason they had discussed doing it in Wall Street and not in SONO is because the Wall Street area does not have the residential density that SONO has and Mr. Manousos and Mr. Legesse had pointed out that there may be some unintended consequences with people parking overnight versus having to move it earlier. Mr. Manousos said he will do an analysis on what that impact will be.

Ms. Casey said that she thinks the monthly revenue projections are very optimistic but can be flexible moving forward. Mr. Harden agreed and suggested forwarding Mr. Manousos and Mr. Legesse the current negations with Mr. Oz to include it in the projections.

Mr. Manousos reported on the highlights on the expense side and said last year due to Covid-19 the had deferred the purchase of a vehicle to keep expenses down, but will need to get back to the rolling stock replacement plan which every year we usually replace a vehicle. Mr. Harden asked if the vehicles are repaired at the city garage. Mr. Legesse said “no” and that we use an outside vendor. Mr. Harden asked how many vehicles will need to be replaced per the replacement plan. Mr. Legesse said one.

Mr. Manousos said the building property repair and maintenance is used to perform work on all of the facilities and the one that will fluctuate the most depending on the financial situation. He said they have included $590,000 as a placeholder for this line.

Mr. Manousos said that $270,000 has been budgeted for snow removal and was based on historical trends.

Mr. Manousos said the signage line in down because there were monies left over from last year so additional monies are not needed. Mr. Aley said $77,000 was budgeted in fiscal year 2020 and was increased to $100,000 in fiscal year 2021 and asked if that can be reduced. Mr. Manousos said the money is used for sign replacement/installation. Mr. Harden asked if the number will be affected once they start to work on the bridge project. Ms. Valadares said when there is any major construction being done in any of the garages a lot of signage is needed to direct people and unfortunately most of the time the signs cannot be recycled because they are specific to the project. She recommended keeping the budget number where it is if possible because there is a major project scheduled for the summer at the Maritime Garage and may be needed and possibly the North Water Lot.

Mr. Manousos said that $135,000 has been included for capital reserve replacement is for future infrastructure improvements.

Mr. Manousos said that $100,000 has been included for parking programs. Mr. Harden said that includes the pricing for the new contract that Mr. Rains and Ms. Casey and her team are implementing and as long as Mr. Rains is involved in the process and the project is moving forward that the money should be left in the budget so the program can continue in future years.

Mr. Manousos said the total net operating budget request for fiscal year is $7,138,392.

Mr. Vetter left the meeting at 5:00PM.

Ms. Casey discussed the capital budget request and said that she had met with Mr. Harden and Ms. Valadares on the capital budget.

Ms. Valadares said the capital projects for the parking garages comes from the Desmond report but this year have decided to push the maintenance to fiscal year 2022-23 because there are still over $1 million dollars left from last fiscal year that has not yet been spent due to delays. She said there will be no major impact to the maintenance of the garages and the next project will be the calking of on the stairwells at the South Norwalk Railroad Station and possibly replace one of the elevators but there will be funds available for any critical repairs that may need to be done.

Ms. Valadares said a request for $200,000 has been included for the revenue control equipment because we may need to implement some touchless payment systems due to Covid-19.

Ms. Valadares said a request for $250,000 has been included for parking wayfinding signage because it will need to be done throughout the city especially during and after the Walk Bridge Project has been completed. She said with the new Director of Transportation coming on board one of their focuses will be to work on wayfinding for the Parking Authority.

**** MR. HARDEN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd