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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 23, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Eric Rains, Chairman
Jud Aley
Tom Vetter

STAFF James Travers, Director, TMP
Garrett Bolella, Asst. Director, TMP
James Emery, Assistant Parking Director, TMP

OTHERS: Stathis Manousos, LAZ Parking
Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rains called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT, LIMITED TO THREE MINUTES PER SPEAKER

There were no public comments this evening.

2. DISCUSSION AND ACTION RELATED TO MINUTES FROM THE PARKING AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2022.

**** MR. VETTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.**

**** MR. ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORT

Mr. Manousos presented and said there is a new format for the operating report and took the large operating report and scaled it back as requested, but it is still a work in progress. He reported on the financial summary and said revenues are down slightly due to the transient revenue, but the revenues are still favorable to budget year to date. He said the expenses were a little higher for the month due to a few onetime expenses such as the cost of the audit that has been ongoing, the THA consulting fees and snow removal expenses, but year to date the expenses are favorable to budget which is reflected in the fund balance. Mr. Travers asked what the budget was for the month. Mr. Manousos said \$514,000. Mr. Travers asked if any upticks are being seen for people procuring permits. Mr. Manousos said they are still recovering but are still below pre-covid levels but are better than last year.

Mr. Manousos said a variance report will now be included as part of the report and will include variances that were at a magnitude of at least 20% and \$5,000 compared to budget. Mr. Vetter said he thinks the format is much better but if it is done monthly there will be spikes and valleys that are not so much reality. Mr. Emery said this is still a work in progress and if the Parking Authority has any questions or changes, they would like to see to email him and they will continue to work on those changes.

Mr. Manousos reported on the comparison to pre-covid levels on both the revenue and expense side and said things are slowly beginning to rebound. Mr. Rains asked why the current expenses are outpacing the expenses from February of last year. Mr. Emery said there are certain things in the winter months such as snow removal expenses which were higher this month as well as the audit and THA expenses and the expenses in January compared to pre-covid levels were much better. Mr. Rains requested that the previous month be included on the report. Mr. Travers said that he and Mr. Emery should have a conversation with the Maritime Aquarium to discuss their attendance.

Mr. Manousos reported on the tickets issued versus demand report. Mr. Rains said it seems that there are a lot of qualifiers that need to be added to the report. Mr. Aley said this is just one way of looking at ticketing and for him the important thing for this report is they can see trends over the years, and he finds the report valuable. Mr. Rains said he would feel better about the report if it were tightened up because we do not know what is not included. Mr. Manousos said if the tickets that were issued for nonpayment can be included in or footnoted, but it would not factor in people that park and do not pay but there maybe something that can be added to the report to put it into context.

Mr. Emery suggested brainstorming this further before the next Parking Authority meeting to come up with a report that still provides the information that the Parking Authority is looking for in and more accurate light. Mr. Travers suggested taking the report a step further and look at the tickets that are being issued and sort them by how they are being issued, and look at a way to address the violators and find an outreach method thorough the local business to remind their patrons to pay because he agrees with Mr. Aley and he would like to see the revenue come from the parking fee and not from the tickets and requested that Mr. Emery and Mr. Legesse look at what the type of tickets are being issued and begin to look at methodologies to address those because he thinks the merchants will appreciate us giving the information on how their customers cannot get ticketed, and could turn this negative into a positive by looking at ways to try and get people to pay. Mr. Manousos said he agrees but asked the Parking Authority to remember that we are just coming off a year with no ticketing due to covid and for a long time and had a curtesy card program that was in full effect so there non-compliance and that is in large part why we are seeing some of the increase in ticketing and shared a table on the parking ticket issuance in other communities and from a citation to space ratio Norwalk is on the low end.

Mr. Aley requested that a one-page summary of the courtesly card program be included on the report.

4. ENGINEERING AND PROJECT REPORT

Ms. Valadares reported and said due to weather improvements last week they brought back Cappasso to the site and mobilized yesterday and will begin the power washing again at the railroad station so the work should resume tomorrow and will have a progress report next month. Mr. Travers asked for a status update on the glass for the SONO Railroad Station. Ms. Valadares said the order has been placed but she does not yet have a delivery date.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Discuss and vote- Budget FY2023

Mr. Emery presented an overview of the budget and said not much has changed since it was presented last month and are in the position to have a good fund balance at the end of next fiscal year which will have to keep up on the maintenance on the facilities and especially the garages. Mr. Manousos said overall they have compared budget to budget and revenue is up and expenses are flat and the monthly and transient revenue are stable budget to budget but are still approximately at 87% compared to pre-covid levels and compared to the 2022 budget expect to see more activity in meter revenue and an increase in compliance compared to the previous budget and are looking at a healthy fund balance. Mr. Travers asked in the past if condition assessments have been paid out of the operating or capital funds. Mr. Manousos said they were always in the operating budget, but the repairs always came out of the capital budget. Mr. Travers asked if in this year's budget request if funds are being requested for a conditions assessment. Mr. Manousos said "yes" it is.

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET.**

**** MR. VETTER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b) Discuss- 15-minute parking spaces

Mr. Emery said they currently have 15-minute parking spaces that are mostly used in the morning hours but in the later hours during peak restaurant times those spaces are not being used and are premium spots and staff is suggesting removing all of the 15-minute parking spaces and provide the option to select the 15-minute option and be able to collect the revenue in the later hours when all of the 15-minute parking spaces are empty. He explained that when someone goes to the paystation there would be two options to either select parking or select to pay for a parking voucher which would also give us the ability to control that by zones or areas etc. and he thinks it is an exciting option and is a special program and if it is done right can help every business and patron that comes to Norwalk. Mr. Travers said this would be offered in the paystation environment only and this needs to be looked at because to stay in the single space environment they will need to make a considerable investment to these meters because their communications technology will expire by the end of the year and will not be supported. He said staff would like to propose to expand the paystation model and with that will be able to provide the businesses with a real big value and can monitor it to see how it is working. Mr. Rains said the operating costs for the single space meters is substantial so he would be interested in pursuing the single meter versus paystations further with whatever materials back up the conversation and he supports the idea of every space being a 10–15-minute free parking space and communicating this to the consumer would be important and by having the paystation only there would be no transaction fee so would be the most inexpensive way to do it. Mr. Aley and Mr. Vetter also agreed that staff should pursue the option of paystations rather than single spaced meters. Mr. Travers said this can be an opportunity to begin to offer more parking offerings to businesses and there is no other municipality in Connecticut that is doing this. Mr. Aley asked if it is being done anywhere else in the United States. Mr. Travers said "yes" and that he would provide Mr. Aley with some of the data.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a) Areas to move to Pay by Cell only

Mr. Emery said the Parking Authority had voted to remove some of the single and double space meters in the areas that were not making any money and were losing revenue because of the monthly fees for the equipment, and he still thinks that's a great idea, but signage would be needed, and staff obtained pricing for the signage but is expensive we would loss the savings by doing that. He said Park Mobile is generous enough to provide free signage but that can be now because there are too many options to pay available so suggested consolidating some of the ways customers can pay for their transactions. Mr. Rains said this could be an opportunity to see what other configurations can look like. Mr. Travers said staff will present some options at the next meeting.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN

**** MR. VETTER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR ALEY SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd