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**PARKING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL VIDEOCONFERENCE
AND TELECONFERENCE
JANUARY 22, 2025**

- | | |
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| ATTENDANCE: | Eric Rains, Chairman
Matthew Seebeck, Vice Chairman
Jud Aley
Peter Fullam |
| STAFF | James Travers, Director, TMP.
Bryan Lutz, Asst. Parking Director, TMP |
| OTHERS: | Rocky Legesse, LAZ Parking
Louis Henriques, LAZ Parking |

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Rains called the roll and those listed in the attendance were present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting: November 20, 2024

**** MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.**

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation this evening.

V. REPORTS

A. Engineering and Project Report

1. Update: TMP2023-01 YDG Exterior Repairs and Improvement

Mr. Lutz said the exterior repairs and improvements project at the Yankee Doodle Garage began last summer and is 95% complete, and there are a few items that need to be addressed in the spring before it is 100% complete. He said the repairs went very well and drains were added to help with the water issue and are functioning very well.

2. Update: NPA2024-02 Aesthetic Enhancements at YDG

Mr. Lutz said the next phase at the Yankee Doodle Garage is the aesthetic enhancement project which includes the painting of the concrete ribs, new lighting, and other façade enhancements. The project was put out to bid in late December and opened earlier today and only received one bid and staff will be analyzing the bid to see how they can move forward. Mr. Travers said the bid will be analyzed to be sure they are compliant with all the bid requirements, and staff will make a recommendation to the Parking Authority at the next meeting.

3. Update: NPA2025-01 Repairs and Improvements at Haviland Parking Deck

Mr. Lutz provided an update on the Haviland Deck project and said last year they had committed to doing concrete and structural repairs, adding a stairwell for pedestrian access to Washington Street, and an aesthetic upgrade to the walkway from Haviland Deck to Washington Street as well as clear entry gates to the deck. The bid package has been completed, and he is working closely with the purchasing department to get the project out to bid and his goal is to have it out to bid by the February meeting.

Mr. Rains said the improvements will be great and the component to all of this is the user experience and to make it as seamless as it could possibly be. Mr. Travers said this is the year they would like to go “back to basics” and do a lot of the housekeeping and complete some of the projects that have been on the wish list.

B. Financial and Operating Report-LAZ

Mr. Legesse reported on the financial summary and said they had finished strong for December on meter revenue, monthly revenue, and transient except for violation revenue. He said parking revenue was up 1.1% for the month compared to budget but was offset by the loss of \$5300 in revenue from the vending machines, and Lobster Craft, as well as the delay on the westbound concession area but the payment was made in January which will be seen on the January financial summary.

Mr. Fullam joined the meeting the 6:10 PM.

Mr. Legesse reported on the financial statement and said that meter revenue was under budget which is mainly due to aggressive budgeting that was made for December. He said certain locations are outperforming for transient revenue which includes the Maritime Garage, the train station garage, the East Norwalk parking lots, and Webster Lot which was offset by minor losses at Haviland Deck and the North Water Street lots. He said the revenue performance was high for the month for the Yankee Doodle Garage due to the storage fee for McMahon Ford as well as the two-month payment from the YMCA lot. He said there was a major decline in revenue for parking violations due to increased compliance and the improved signage of the facilities.

Mr. Legesse reported on the expenses and said they were under budget which was mainly due to payroll expenses, and snow expenses, and are under budget on operating expenses but will be using the budget for repairs and maintenance as they are in the process of acquiring pricing for replacing the gates at the train station garage and the Maritime Garage.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discuss and Vote: FY 2025-2026 Rate Proposal

Mr. Lutz said in November staff had presented the rate proposal to the Parking Authority which had not been discussed in the past eight years. The proposal includes slight increases

as well as separating the sales tax that was imposed in 2020 for all the transient rates. He said staff heard feedback from the Parking Authority regarding even dollar amounts for the rates in which they had worked to create those, and he has set a goal to present a plan to the Parking Authority in February on the future conditions assessment. He said regular assessments are essential best practices for maintaining the safety, functionality, and longevity of infrastructure assets, and by systematically evaluating the current state of the facilities they can help identify potential issues early on allowing for timely intervention that will prevent minor problems from escalating into major costly repairs. The budget proposal that will be presented does include the rate changes.

Mr. Aley said it has been many years said there has been a rate change and given the inflation rate, particularly over the last few years he thinks this is necessary to have enough income to maintain all the infrastructure, so he supports this 100%.

Mr. Rains noted that the Parking Authority has been absorbing the sales tax since the state put it in place and it is a good element to include in the rates so that the usage tax is not burdened by the Parking Authority.

**** MR. SEEBECK MOVED TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 RATE PROPOSAL AS SUBMITTED BY STAFF.**

**** MR. FULLAM SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

B. Discuss and Vote: FY 2025-2026 Budget

Mr. Henriques presented and said they are proposing \$7,035,383 for the 2026 total system revenue which is a 2% increase, and \$6,674,396 for expenses which is an increase of 1.78% which will leave a fund balance of \$360,987 at a 7.88% increase and provided an overview of the budget detail.

Mr. Seebeck said since the rate increases were just adopted, he asked if a parallel has been run as to how the rate change would affect the revenue line. Mr. Travers said based on prior discussions they did include the rate increase as part of the overall budget and determination and if the rate increases were not approved this evening they would have reallocated the reduction.

Mr. Seebeck asked what the SONO train station day rate increase would mean for passes based on prior performance. Mr. Legesse said the increase was factored in but that a portion of the parking lot being lost was very conservative even with rate increases and the revenue that is coming from the overflow lot is reduced and that is going to translate as more people use the monthly parking at the garage, and is going to reduce the number of space in the garage so the increase that is being factored into the overflow lot is due to high demand and reduced capacity from what they had. He said there would be some construction due to the testing of the ground so when they prepared the budget, they did factor in revenue that will be lost.

Mr. Seebeck asked what the monthly rates to what the potential maximum would be based on the fixed number of parking spaces. Mr. Legesse said that they are capping the number of monthly parkers at 657 for the 2026 budget at the SNRR garage.

Mr. Seebeck said the violations are going down to budget but not to forecast and asked why that would go back up versus the trend that is being seen this year. Mr. Legesse said they wanted to give a buffer between the forecasted number and what was budgeted for in 2026. Mr. Seebeck said he is cautious about the revenue stream and cautioned that they take a look at that, especially given the commentary. Mr. Legesse said they will dig deeper to see if the 2024 number or the forecasted number needs to be reduced.

Mr. Seebeck asked what the personnel issues were this year and how that would change in the next fiscal year. Mr. Legesse said there were some positions that they had some difficulty filling so current staff were covering these hours. Mr. Seebeck asked if it would be necessary for all the positions to be filled, and how the current staffing relates to the staffing structure proposed as part of the new contract. He requested a summary statement on the current staff filling positions to understand how that is working and how it relates to the proposal for continued operations.

Mr. Seebeck said the request for \$145,000 for two vehicles seems surprising even in today's pricing and asked if they are taking full advantage of every potential buying option and if the LPR systems are being harvested from other equipment and being moved to new vehicles. Mr. Legesse said they got the pricing from McMahon Ford using the city's buying power, so it is a reduced cost of approximately \$47,000 for the vehicle and the rest of the expenses are for the new camera and tablets. Mr. Seebeck said that other municipalities have gone to other vehicle providers to get the proper vehicles for their service needs and reiterated that he wants to be sure they are getting the best they can afford and in looking at this budget that is a significant expense. Mr. Travers said they are required to abide by the city's procurement process and if when they get the procurement back and that number is less there will be a variance that will be reported but wanted to make sure they had the higher dollar amount that was going to be representative of the potential cost. Mr. Fullam asked how long the vehicles that are being replaced have been in use. Mr. Legesse said since 2018.

Mr. Seebeck asked about liability insurance. Mr. Legesse said it is a percentage of revenue that is used to calculate the liability insurance.

Mr. Aley asked what is being budgeted for parking spaces at the East Norwalk Railroad Station. Mr. Legesse said there are currently 210 parking spaces, and they will be keeping it flat especially since they have lost some parking spaces on the New Haven bound side so until they receive a final number on how many spaces, they will be getting back they will be keeping it flat. Mr. Aley asked how many transient parking spaces there are. Mr. Legesse said they are averaging 20-25.

Mr. Aley said that New York City began congestion pricing a few weeks ago and would be surprised if they didn't see a big uptick in parking at the East Norwalk at the SONO train station lots. Mr. Lutz said that the garage has seen an increase at the SONO train station since the congestion pricing went up. Mr. Travers said they had a conversation with CTDOT today regarding the information on ridership increases and he and Mr. Lutz discussed presenting a chart to the Parking Authority because they think they will be able to show a trend line that is directly affecting the congestion pricing.

Mr. Lutz presented the capital budget and said they would be requesting a bond of \$1.7 million to continue the essential concrete repairs at the Yankee Doodle Garage. This request follows the conditions assessment that was conducted a few years ago and going forward a conditions assessment will be done every two years to track all the progress that is being made and address any issues and prioritize them immediately. Since the initial assessment they have made progress in addressing some of the identified issues, however, continued investment is crucial to ensure the safety and longevity of the facility. The requested bond will be utilized to address the remaining concrete repairs as well as waterproofing at the Yankee Doodle Garage.

Mr. Travers said the city has made some changes to the zoning regulations that reduced parking requirements and eliminated parking requirements in some areas and is anticipating an increase in demand at the Yankee Doodle Garage, and if the garage is at capacity there will be limited opportunity to move people around to do the concrete repair work. It was identified in the conditions assessment, and they are very committed to making sure the garage is not only attractive but also structurally solid and feel the budget number is respectful to get the interior concrete repairs done

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

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

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update Regulation change

Mr. Lutz shared photos and provided an update on the regulation change and said all the signs on West Avenue and in SONO have been updated and there are now standards that will be followed to keep the streets looking sharp. He said they plan to go live with the free 15-minute option citywide on January 30, 2025, and there will be a press release done, messaging on the social media platforms, and staff will be distributing flyers and posters to all the businesses on West Avenue and in SONO. He said they will also be organizing a public meeting and holding an open forum to get feedback from the public and to present some solutions that may be appealing to them. The engagement will help staff to better understand the parking issues the public may have and tailor solutions around that.

Mr. Travers commented on Mr. Lutz and the team for all the work they have done to move this forward.

B. Update SNRR Restroom Renovation

Mr. Lutz shared photos and provided an update on the restroom renovation at the SNRR and said they began on January 6, 2025, and are hoping to reopen early next week. Mr. Rains said it was a dramatic difference from where it was and thanked Mr. Lutz for all the effort that was put into it. Mr. Fullam agreed and said that staff are an asset to the city.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. FULLAM MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. SEEBECK SECONDED THE MOTION.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd