

**CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CAPITAL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE
January 26, 2022**

PRESENT: Steve Ferguson, Chair; Brian Baxendale; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Louis Schulman

STAFF: Bryan Baker

OTHERS: Joyce Liu; Anthony Carr; Neil Rennie; Robert Stowers; Ken Hughes; Vanessa Valadares; Chris Torre; Ralph Kolb

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ferguson called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. Baker called the roll. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately.

III. DEPARTMENT REVIEWS

a. Information Technology

Joyce Liu began the presentation with the first request which was for Technology for various departments. The first item under this was for technology for the police department for technology for 10 police cars which included laptops, software licenses, etc. The next item was for the license for Microsoft Office for City employees. The current license would not be supported in 2023. The next item is for Fire Department technology for the fire trucks. She explained what new technology they would need. The next project was for cyber security including a firm testing the city's security. They also need backup storage and to improve their cloud applications.

There was a discussion about cyber attacks since more people are working from home. Ms. Liu also said that the city has a network provider that prevents those attacks. There was then a discussion about how the department would pay for certain items if they did not receive Capital Budget funding this year. Ms. Liu said that there were other funds that the department could draw from.

The next item was for refreshing the servers for the Police Department and the IT department. They were usually refreshed every 5 years.

The next item was for the laptop and desktop refresh of every department. Ms. Liu explained why the funding request had increased. She explained that they did reuse parts from the older equipment.

The next item was for the public access computers at the various libraries around the city. With these computers, they also try to reuse the parts.

There was a discussion about the equipment used in the Police Department vehicles and whether they could use the equipment in new vehicles. Ms. Liu said that they could not reuse them because of the amount of wear and tear they go through.

It seemed to Mr. Ferguson that the departments were all working together, especially with the IT department. There was a discussion about whether some of the items should be in the operating budget, rather than the Capital Budget. Ms. Liu agreed and would speak with Finance to see how that could be transitioned. There was a discussion about how many people worked in her department and their functions. There was also a discussion about the City's website and that it is sometimes difficult for users. Ms. Liu said that she had people working on the website.

b. Department of Public Works and Recreation & Parks

Anthony Carr began the presentation by noting that there were several different divisions that would present their Capital Budget requests. He then introduced each of them. There was a discussion about how the presentation would be handled. It was also noted that each person should speak to how it related to the POCD.

Neil Rennie, of Guardian Services, spoke about City Hall maintenance. His first request was for the Concert Hall stairs and the patio which were original to the building from the 1930s. There was some necessary maintenance to keep it safe. The next item was for City Hall first floor carpeting which dated back to 1985. The next item was for the first floor bathrooms to be renovated. Mr. Carr noted which POCD code these projects aligned with.

The next item was for various City buildings, when there are unexpected projects. The next item was for replacing smoke detectors at the Police Headquarters. There was also a request for locker room upgrade design. The construction would possibly occur in 2024. Mr. Rennie noted that many of these projects came from the various departments and his department managed them.

The next item was for the Public Works salt shed roof which was built in 1997.

The next building was an upgrade to HVAC at Nathaniel Ely. They would like to combine heating and A/C systems and get rid of the steam heat. There was a discussion about whether the school would be renovated in 2027 and whether this project should wait. Mr. Rennie had not been advised of that. Some of these systems could be used in a new building.

The next item was for energy projects which would include some with LED bulbs. Mr. Rennie discussed the lighting in the City Hall parking lot, which is now obsolete.

It was noted that one project, for the branch library, would be done under their project and not his budget. Another project for the main library would be pushed into a later year because it was unclear when the expansion of the library would be done.

The next item was for the parking lot at Ben Franklin to be repaved. Another item that would be moved to a later year would be electrical surveys. The next item was asbestos and lead abatement when it was found unexpectedly as they did renovations to projects. Another item was to renovate the roof of the Roosevelt Center. The request was for design services to make the repair. There was a discussion about the cost of roofing material. The next item was for security upgrades for the Health Department.

The next presenter was Robert Stowers, the director of Recreation and Parks, who recently joined the department. The first item was for Devon's Place playground. Some of the equipment had to be replaced. Another request was for Flax Hill Park which also needed replacement equipment. The next item was for the replacement of their box truck which had been replaced in 2006. There were also a few other pieces of equipment that had to be replaced which Mr. Stowers described.

The next request was for Calf Pasture Beach to reconfigure parking and pedestrian walkways. Ken Hughes gave an explanation of the new design of these walkways. Vanessa Valadares explained the new parking lot lanes. Green infrastructure would be implemented as well. There was also a discussion about a skate park and they were shown a design. There was a discussion about projects at Shady Beach.

The next request was for tennis and basketball courts at several parks around the city. Mr. Stowers noted that some funding for Cranbury Park would be returned since they had received a \$5 million grant. There was a discussion about the Gallaher Mansion because of the repairs there.

The next request was for funding at Veterans Park. Mr. Stowers said the docks are in poor condition and need to be replaced. A drainage study would be done. There was a discussion about the Welcome Center at Veterans park. Mr. Hughes said the docks are on the opposite side of the park. There was a discussion about the docks and who would have access to rent them. They were looking for grants to mitigate the cost of replacing the docks. Once they are repaired, they would look at the fees.

The next items were maintaining the fields at schools throughout the city. The next item was for tree plantings throughout the city. This was an ongoing project. There was a discussion about the need for tree plantings since the city was losing its green canopy. This department replaced trees at the schools and the parks. Ms. Valadares said she would speak to this during

her presentation. The next item was for maintaining the fencing and backstops. The next request was for Oyster Shell Park. The next request was for replacing sidewalks at schools and parks. The next item was for Irving Freese park.

Mr. Carr explained which items and presenters would be next.

The next presenter was Chris Torre for fleet and operations. Mr. Torre said that he would send Ms. Langalis' request for trees on Butler to the Tree Commission. Mr. Torre then discussed the fleet replacement which included heavy duty plow trucks. Three of them were purchased in 1995. He said they would try to replace 1-2 trucks every year so that they would not need to replace all trucks at once. The next item was for a sweeper which Mr. Torre said goes out every day. There are requirements to clean the streets 4 times a year. A sign truck and dump truck would be replaced. Mr. Torre said that he had a spreadsheet of the department's fleet replacement schedule which he would share with the commissioners next year.

The next item was for the scale to weigh debris. It had been denied in the prior year. He said that the department needs the scale and it is a priority. The next item was for the salt shed door which is original to the shed. The door protects the salt.

There was a discussion about alternatives to salt which is corroding the fire trucks. They have tried other products but because of the climate in New England, salt works best.

Mr. Carr introduced Ralph Kolb, the environmental engineer for the Water Pollution Control Authority. Mr. Kolb described the WPCA. He noted that the department is in design for a project at Belle Island. They are also requesting funds for their Master Plan.

There was a discussion about the construction phase of the Belle Island project and its impact on the community. Mr. Kolb said there would be coordination with the neighbors.

There was also a discussion about the treatment plant. Mr. Kolb noted that since many developments are using more efficient fixtures that flow has gone down. He discussed flow data and what they would be working on in their Master Plan. There was a discussion about large developments working with WPCA to confirm that there was capacity at the waste treatment system.

At this point, there was a break and the commissioners returned at 7:46 pm.

Vanessa Valadares began the Capital Funding requests. The first request was for funding for bridge repairs. The city now has to do inspections of bridges under 20 ft. The state inspects bridges higher than 20 ft. They had an inspector review those bridges. However, since there was a problem with the Rowayton Bridge, there would be a delay in the design of the other priority bridges. They would like to work on the design of 2 bridges. There were 27 bridges that will need repairs. Rowayton is now the top priority due to the storm. There was a discussion

about using federal funding on the smaller bridges but Ms. Valadares said they would like to use those funds on the larger bridges.

The next item was for structural engineer fees because they no longer have one on staff.

The next item was for the Webster St. bridge. It has been through the design phase and is eligible for a 80/20 share with the state. Norwalk would have to pay 20% of the cost.

The next item was for repaving roads which are on a maintenance program. She explained why the department was requesting more funding than usual. The cost of construction has seen an increase of at least 25%. She noted that they spend whatever funding they receive. She also noted that the sidewalk program goes with the repaving roads. She said that this request does not put in new sidewalks. This funding is to maintain the existing sidewalks. There was a discussion about the sidewalk maintenance schedule. The next item was maintenance of footpaths which don't meet ADA standards. Ms. Langalis said they make a big difference especially near the Rowayton Elementary School.

The next item was for general drainage. She explained that they inspected the drainage to confirm that there is no damage to pipes on roads that they would like to repair. That is done before the roads are repaved.

The next item was for the storm water management plan. Because they had not received any funding, they had to now start working on items that DEEP had recommended the city improves.

Another item was for tree planting. She explained how many trees they planted last year and they will plant as many as they can with the funds they receive.

Another item was for underground utility which the city is doing with the state. The next item was for some projects where the city may need a matching grant. This is where the funding would come from but that this is not a high priority.

The next item was for a small capital reserve for critical infrastructure which came about because of what happened to the Rowayton Bridge.

There was a discussion about the 5G wiring but Ms. Valadares said they do not need a permit. She said they asked these companies to let them know where they are, especially if there is road maintenance going on. Ms. Langalis said that she noticed a lot of trash from these trucks.

The next item was for funding projects which the state would not fund fully but the city thought it would be good for it. She thought it was important to have these funds since there were many state projects going on in the city.

The next item was for Elizabeth Street which is a new project. A new project was for underground utility in some areas of the city. There would be a study and design.

Another item was for green infrastructure. She noted that there are several projects with green infrastructure but that the city should implement more.

There was a discussion about a 2 year moratorium on repairing roads. Ms. Valadares noted that it was usually due to an emergency that they would put aside the moratorium.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Langalis made a Motion to Adjourn.

Mr. Schulman seconded.

Steve Ferguson; Brian Baxendale; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Louis Schulman approved.

No one opposed.

No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero