CITY OF NORWALK
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
January 25, 2022

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

STAFF: Michelle Andrzejewski

OTHERS: Chief Thomas Kulhawik; Deputy Susan Zecca; Chief Gino Gatto; Lunda Asmani; Ryan Harold; Bill Hodel; Rob Pennington;

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Ferguson called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Andrzejewski called the roll. It should be noted that this meeting was held on Zoom.com with all participants calling in, separately. Ms. Andrzejewski noted that the Fair Rent and Housing Department would not be on the call that evening.

III. DEPARTMENT REVIEWS

a. Police Department & Combined Dispatch

Chief Thomas Kulhawik said that the first request was for replacement of police department vehicles. Deputy Susan Zecca noted that there were 10 vehicles and would be hybrid Ford Explorers. She explained that this was part of a maintenance plan

The next request was for a 3-D crime scene scanner. This would replace what the police department was currently using since it was too old to be repaired.

The next item was for the replacement of the housing for the marine vehicle. They are looking for sites for it.

There was a discussion about the air handlers at Police Headquarters but Chief Kulhawik noted that this was being handled by the Building and Facilities Manager, Alan Lo.

There was also a discussion about the Welcome Center which would also house the boats for the Fire Department and the Police Department. Chief Kulhawik said it would be a multi-purpose center.

There was a discussion about using electric vehicles but Chief Kulhawik was asked why there are no fully electric vehicles that would be appropriate for their purposes. It is difficult to charge them when they are used 24 hours a day.

b. Fire Department

Chief Gino Gatto gave a brief summary of the Fire Department employees, buildings, vehicles, etc. There was a discussion as to what types of calls they handle.

Chief Gatto said that he had discussed his priorities with the Finance Department. He said that the first request was vehicle replacement which was on a schedule. They then shared their screen to show the committee the Apparatus Replacement Plan. It was recommended to replace front line apparatus vehicles every 10 years. It then becomes a reserve vehicle. Then after 20 years, they are retired. He showed them pictures of rust on many of the vehicles. Since they had been denied funding for 1 vehicle last year, they are now requesting funding for 2 vehicles this year.

There was then a discussion about how these requests adhere to the Plan of Conservation and Development. It was noted that the newer vehicles have better exhaust systems than the ones that are 20 years old. There was a discussion about the rust on the vehicles and how it is changing in the newer vehicles.

There was then a discussion about refurbishing one of their vehicles. They explained why it was so important to keep it in working condition. Chief Gatto also noted that, rather than asking for $1 million in a few years, they thought that this would save the city money by asking for less money and keeping it in service.

The next item was for general maintenance, although last year it had been denied. Chief Gatto explained two projects that they would like to complete. He said that as they were now hiring more female personnel, they needed gender neutral bathrooms and a locker room for women. As they renovate fire houses, they are adding these rooms. Now they would like to add them to other fire houses that are not being renovated.

The next item was for Station 4 renovation on Westport Avenue. They explained that they would like to redistribute resources, especially for those in Cranbury. These renovations are necessary in order to move companies, etc. around the city. Another part of the request was to upgrade lighting to LED.

The next item was the vehicle replacement plan. These are vehicles that are cars, etc. which are usually retired after 12 years. They would like to replace 3 vehicles in the next 4 years.

The next item was for a roof replacement that is over 54 years old. They had asked for funding last year but had not received all of it. Since they received part of it last year, they had to get another estimate and the price of the roof had gone up.

The last item was for a grant for a new boat, which they had been awarded. Since it is a matching grant, the city does have to provide some funds. There was a discussion as to what would be done with the old boat. Chief Gatto noted that the Fire Department needed these items. There was a discussion about the grant and whether it was time sensitive. Chief Gatto said that they had to use it within 3 years and that they are in the 2nd year. There was also a discussion about the radio system which is becoming a state system. Many neighboring towns will be on the same system so that the towns can talk to each other. It is a priority.

d. Board of Education

Lunda Asmani, the Chief Financial Officer for the Board of Education, introduced his team after which they all introduced themselves. He then was reminded that their requests should align with the POCD. Mr. Asmani then shared his screen with the committee members.

The first request was for the West Rocks MS. However, Mr. Asmani noted that there was a late addition to their priority list, enhancement to school securities. Ryan Harold spoke on this topic. Many upgrades were necessary because there are blind spots and the cameras are analog. More cameras would be added to all of the schools. Because of a recent incident at Norwalk High School, it exposed their "blind spots." There was no way to communicate between schools. He recommended upgrading from analog to digital. On digital they will be able to communicate with first responders as well. He also discussed the doors and that they should be alarmed. Many are older buildings. He also noted that many of the schools did not have fences which would secure the perimeters. There was also a discussion about whether Mr. Harold had spoken with surrounding towns and their security.

The next item was about the air conditioning program which Bill Hodel explained. He noted that it had started several years ago. This year's funding would be spent at Wolf Pit School. There would be window air conditioners and interior spaces would get a split system. He then noted which schools had already received air conditioning.

Rob Pennington explained that the high school has an International Baccalaureate program and would like to expand it to the middle school. He explained that this funding was for books to expand the program to 9th and 10th grade.

Ralph Valenzisi said he would speak about the Chromebooks and how it was a refresh program. Due to COVID, they had to be replaced from kindergarten to 12th grade. Before that it was a refresh for high school. Teachers also needed white boards to teach interactly. These boards have touch screens. He explained that internal wiring had to be upgraded to 10 GIG. Mr. Valenzisi noted that the district is making sure that children always have access, through public and private funding.

There was a discussion about whether they would have money to maintain all of these new devices. There was also a discussion about what is done with the older devices.

Mr. Hodel discussed several Capital Budget items. The next item was for capital repairs and replacement which was for repairs that were not anticipated. The next item was for funding for the fuel tank replacement. Although none of them are leaking, Mr. Hodel said that it was time for them to be removed. The last item was for the replacement of district vehicles, one of them was a box truck. Mr. Hodel said that their trucks serve the entire district.

Mr. Asmani asked for their support when they processed these requests.

There was a discussion about whether any funding would be spent on schools/buildings that would be demolished in a year or so. Mr. Hodel said that they were cognizant of that fact.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Schulman made a Motion to Adjourn.
Mr. Baxendale seconded.
Steve Ferguson; Brian Baxendale; Tammy Langalis; Jacquen Jordan-Byron; Louis Schulman approved.
No one opposed.
No one abstained.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Palmentiero