CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 3, 2026
HELD VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

ATTENDEES: Ed Abrams (Chair), Mayor Barbara C. Smyth, Joseph Andrasko, Troy Jellerette, Artie Kassimis, Anne Yang, Kendrick Constant.

STAFF: Lamond Daniels, Mario F. Coppola, Jeff Spahr, Richard McQuaid, Diana Paladino, Stuart Wells, Edward McCabe, Mark Conte, Timothy Reardon, James Walsh, Melissa Evans, Michael Docimo, Sharon Torres, Tom Ellis, Kim Kinsella, Jared Schmitt, Marsha Elbourne (City Clerk).

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Abrams called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM and welcomed everyone to the March 3, 2026, Special Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation. He noted that the meeting was the first of several sessions scheduled for the purpose of reviewing and deliberating on the City's proposed budget.

Mr. Abrams explained that the Board would be meeting multiple times during the week to conduct detailed discussions with City departments regarding their respective budgets. These meetings would allow Board members to review the major financial drivers affecting the City's proposed budget and ask questions regarding departmental needs and expenditures.

Mr. Abrams then asked Ms. Elbourne to conduct the roll call.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Elbourne conducted the roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present.

Mr. Abrams began the meeting with housekeeping remarks. He explained that these sessions were intended to allow the Board to have detailed discussions with City staff regarding the proposed budget and its major financial drivers.

He noted that for members of the public listening in, public comment would not be taken during these budget deliberation sessions, as the meetings were structured as working sessions between the Board and City staff. Mr. Abrams stated that a formal public hearing would be held later in the month, during which residents would have an opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed budget.

Mr. Abrams outlined the structure for the evening's meeting. The Board would begin with opening remarks from Mayor Smyth, followed by a presentation from Mr. Schmitt regarding the primary drivers of the proposed budget. After those remarks, the Board would move into departmental budget discussions.

Mr. Abrams recognized Mayor Smyth for opening remarks.
Mayor Smyth thanked Mr. Abrams and the members of the Board for the time and diligence they bring to the budget review process. She acknowledged that the upcoming meetings would require careful analysis and thoughtful discussion as the Board reviewed the proposed budget and departmental spending.

Mayor Smyth stated that the Board would be meeting with each department over the coming days to review the proposed budget line by line. She noted that the work involved in reviewing the City's finances is challenging and often requires difficult decisions.

She acknowledged that the initial budget numbers were striking and that the proposed budget was not the budget anyone had hoped to present. However, she emphasized that she welcomed the Board's responsibility to carefully review the proposal, scrutinize expenditures, and identify savings wherever possible.

At the same time, Mayor Smyth stressed the importance of balancing cost containment with strategic investments that support the City's long-term financial stability and continued growth. Mayor Smyth outlined several key drivers of the proposed budget.

The first major driver she discussed was healthcare costs, which have increased significantly. She explained that the City must also invest in rebuilding the Internal Service Fund, which covers employee healthcare costs, workers' compensation, and related obligations. Strengthening this fund would help position the City for greater financial stability and predictability in future years while also ensuring that the City maintains a healthy fund balance.

The second driver she discussed involved collective bargaining agreements. She explained that the City negotiated with six unions simultaneously last year, which resulted in several contracts being finalized at the same time. Moving forward, the City plans to stagger contract negotiations so that multiple agreements do not expire simultaneously, allowing for improved financial planning.

The third driver she highlighted was the revaluation phase-in, which is currently in its third year. Mayor Smyth noted that the City is also looking ahead to the next revaluation cycle and expects that property values will reflect a more normalized real estate market. Mayor Smyth also emphasized the importance of growing the City's grand list, noting that increases in assessed value have helped offset tax burdens for residents. She stated that the administration continues to review the City's efficiency study and intends to prioritize investments that will strengthen the City's financial future.

Mayor Smyth concluded her remarks by encouraging the Board to continue asking difficult questions, identifying efficiencies, and working collaboratively with the administration throughout the budget review process.

Mr. Abrams thanked Mayor Smyth and recognized Mr. Schmitt for his presentation.

Mr. Schmitt explained that he had previously shared several of the presentation materials with the Common Councilduring earlier budget discussions. At that time, the materials did not yet include finalized financial figures. The purpose of the presentation was to provide a clearer understanding of the specific financial drivers behind the proposed budget.

Mr. Schmitt began by reviewing a chart illustrating the largest increases within the proposed budget, noting that approximately a dozen accounts accounted for the majority of the overall increase.

These accounts included employee healthcare costs, Internal Service Fund contributions, and other mandatory financial obligations. Mr. Schmitt emphasized the importance of the Internal Service Fund, which covers employee healthcare costs, workers' compensation, and other related liabilities.

He explained that at the end of the previous fiscal year the Internal Service Fund had a negative balance of approximately $2 million. Credit rating agencies view the Internal Service Fund as part of the City's overall financial position, and therefore restoring the fund to a positive balance is important to maintaining the City's strong credit rating.

Mr. Schmitt then reviewed a slide showing the specific dollar amounts associated with the largest increases. He explained that the first major category was wages and salaries, which showed a net increase of approximately $2.9 million, which he described as roughly $3 million. However, he clarified that the total increase in wages and salaries was actually closer to $6 million, but the administration had implemented a $3 million salary lapse to offset part of the increase.

Mr. Schmitt explained that the salary lapse assumes that departments will experience turnover or delays in filling positions during the fiscal year, resulting in savings. He then discussed the remaining major increases, many of which were related to the Internal Service Fund, including employee healthcare costs and workers' compensation obligations.

Mr. Schmitt also discussed increases in debt service, noting that the City has used bond premiums as part of a phased strategy to manage those costs.
He explained that when the major drivers were combined, they accounted for nearly all of the increase in the proposed budget. When wages and Internal Service Fund contributions were excluded, the remaining increases totaled approximately $553,000, representing roughly 0.2 percent of the overall budget.

Mr. Schmitt also reviewed a comparison between the Mayor's proposed budget and the increase approved by the Common Council. The Common Council approved a total budget increase of approximately 7.54 percent, compared to the Mayor's proposed increase of 7.04 percent. Additionally, the Common Council recommended increasing the Board of Education appropriation from 4 percent to approximately 4.91 percent, although that recommendation had not yet been finalized.

Mr. Schmitt then reviewed the projected impact on the median tax bill, comparing projections developed in Spring 2024 with projections under the current proposal. The analysis showed that projected tax bills under the current proposal were higher than earlier projections. For example, the projected median tax bill for District 1 was approximately $498 higher, representing an increase of approximately 6.24 percent compared to earlier projections.

Mr. Schmitt acknowledged that the increases were significant but noted that the earlier projections had anticipated increases due to the multi-year revaluation phase-in process.

Mr. Abrams thanked Mr. Schmitt for the presentation. He then made a few remarks before moving into the departmental budget reviews. On behalf of all the Board of Estimate and Taxation, he thanked the department heads and their teams for all the hard work they had done to prepare for these budget reviews, noting they were aware of the energy and effort that this required to pull together, and thanked them for all that effort. That said, he needed to be very clear that the majority of the Board of Estimate and Taxation was very uncomfortable with the recommended budget and the caps set by the City Council. He explained that it was not because they did not see the need for the services that were intended to be provided, rather their issue and concern was with the heavy burden that this budget put upon the taxpayers of Norwalk. Asking taxpayers to absorb tax increases in the range of 11 to almost 18 percent, on top of the increases they had absorbed over the last two years and would be required to absorb next year in the final year of the phase-in, was something that they really should avoid. He noted they understood statements like this would cause concern among various constituents who would advocate for investments in the services they believed needed to be funded. He then requested each department o provide an alternate budget scenario that reduces their plan spend by 10% and lay out the impact & risks associated with these reductions.

III. BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION - BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

A. Mayor/Chief of Staff
Mr. Ellis moved to the Chief of Staff budget, noting it encompasses City Clerk, communications, customer service, and related areas. Starting with the Chief of Staff section and scrolling to the total, he highlighted an increase of just under $87,000 year over year, or 7.1%, with most in salaries. For fiscal 2026 actuals, he pointed out significant salary savings in communications due to not hiring a webmaster yet, though close to doing so. He returned to the top and turned it over to Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels reviewed the budget with overall changes primarily personnel-related, including normal step progressions. Discussions with the City Clerk and others tied mostly to IT services, Civic Plus, and software expenses, which are high but under statutory requirements for public notices and reports. He offered to respond to questions on line items.

Ms. Yang noted that 10 years ago, there was no Chief of Staff position, and the department is now $1.3 million. She asked if, looking at all they do, they could come in flat year over year. Mr. Daniels responded that by his review of the current budget, as ordinance employees, they are entitled to NASA steps and increases, a driver with step increases reflected in the budget. That line item also includes front desk reception (admin two), executive assistant, and FOIA coordinator, plus a bump from two others receiving severance.

Ms. Yang went back to Mr. Ellis, suggesting the department grew with positions from other departments like the Mayor's. She asked to identify within the department what was new or changed. Ms. Yang noted the $1.3 million that did not exist 10 years ago for Chief of Staff was partly in other departments, seeking the baseline.

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Mr. Ellis knew the webmaster position was a new addition a few years ago, with Customer Service Center longstanding. The reorg happened a couple years before his arrival. He noted always having a City Clerk as a mandated position, and communications longstanding. In terms of new headcount, webmaster is the only recent approval in the last 3-4 years, asking if that addressed her question.

Ms. Yang clarified asking if items comprising the $1.3 million were in other departments. Mr. Abrams helped clarify, asking what of current Chief of Staff expense is net new versus existing but in other departments, like City Clerk likely existing elsewhere. When saying the department grew to $1.3 million, really City Clerk expense was historically budgeted but in different lines.

Mr. Jellerette followed up, thanking Mr. Daniels for past work running departments under budget. Following Ms. Yang, he asked if anything in the budget could be reduced.

Mr. Daniels noted six years' experience with the process and reviewing the Chief of Staff budget. They looked at potentially decreasing public notices (line 5231), which are pricey, learning they may not need to publicize everything as formerly practiced, seeing significant reduction possible. Software expenses are pricey, with Civic Plus for uploads and FOIA management system a new purchase to digitize/modernize per efficiency study encouraging away from paper.

Mr. Daniels offered a deeper dive, addressing Ms. Yang's point with historical examples like assistant to the mayor becoming Chief of Staff under reorg, positions existing with changed titles, supporting Mr. Ellis and Mr. Schmitt to review Chief of Staff origins.

Mr. Ellis noted that the agenda for the evening included General Government, encompassing the Mayor, Chief of Staff, Corporation Counsel, and others, followed by the Fire Department and Police Department. He shared his screen to walk through the column headers and assessments.

Mr. Ellis explained the column headers: the first column indicates the division and department; the second is the account number; the third is a brief description of the account; followed by actuals for fiscal years 2024 and 2025 for historical context; fiscal 2026 approved and revised budgets; actuals as of February 26; encumbrances, described as open purchase orders similar to uncashed checks; remaining balance for the year; fiscal 2027 request from departments; the request versus the revised budget from last year, noting that salary calculations are handled by the budget team based on steps and negotiated increases; and the percentage increase. On the far right, the CFO/Mayor adjustments, differences, and percentages.

For the Mayor's department total, Mr. Ellis highlighted a $196,000 request, just under $7,000 above the fiscal 2026 revised budget, or a 3.5% increase, primarily in salaries due to cost of living increases, with other lines remaining flat. He discussed the salary adjustment line, recalling last year's 10% lapse across salary lines to challenge departments to come in under budget, equating to about $1,800 for the Mayor's office.

Mr. Jellerette questioned the actual of $200,000 exceeding the revised budget of $178,000. Mr. Ellis explained it was due to the severance payment for the previous Mayor for unused sick and vacation time, with plans to cover it through transfers from other salary accounts with vacancies, such as the webmaster in communications and the strategy and policy position.

Mr. Jellerette clarified if "severance" implied layoff. Mr. Ellis noted it was a departure payout. Mr. Abrams described it as owed compensation. Mr. Coppola, Corporation Counsel, explained that per collective bargaining agreements and for ordinance employees following NASA benefits, retirees receive unused sick time up to 90 days, unused vacation, and one day per year served as severance, typically paid within 30 days of leaving.

Mr. Abrams sought clarification on the salary adjustment, noting FY26 reductions and FY27 restorations. Mr. Ellis explained a different approach for FY27 with a lump sum salary lapse near contingency at the bottom of accounts, not allocated to departments, for cleaner accounting, though it skews percentages.

B. Strategy and Policy
Mr. Ellis moved to Strategy and Policy, noting an 11.3% increase but significant savings due to a recent hire not spending all salary funds. He mentioned transfers reducing the revised budget, such as from other contractual services for Civic Plus modules.

Mr. Abrams inquired about the training and education expense. Mr. Daniels explained it included the citywide language line for real-time translation, national equity index scoring, ADA compliance training, and handling hostile residents, with plans to continue periodic trainings.

Mr. Jellerette noted the $7,200 request with zero actuals and suggested starting in July of the new fiscal year. Mr. Daniels indicated the new hire was getting footing and was open to considering it. Mr. Schmitt noted efforts to avoid rollovers, preferring funds go to fund balance. Mr. Abrams suggested considering options between rollover or fund balance. Mr. Jellerette emphasized reviewing actuals and potential unspent funds.

C. Corporation Counsel
Mr. Ellis introduced Corporation Counsel with Mr. Coppola and Mr. Spahr. Mr. Coppola described the budget as straightforward for a small department handling complex issues, smaller than comparable cities, managing with limited resources and outside professionals. He noted contractual wages, increases in Westlaw due to AI addition, and professional services covering outside counsel, experts, and revaluation appeals costs, reduced but potentially needing more if cases go to trial.

Mr. Schmitt highlighted the $87,500 increase mostly in salaries, praising departments for reductions in flexible lines.

Ms. Yang asked if the budget allocated for selling excess assets like Fillow Street to alleviate budget issues. Mr. Coppola noted a limited list of properties, always seeking revenue opportunities, with Fillow Street valued roughly at $250,000 as a single lot or $500,000 if subdivided, but challenges with septic, ledge, elevations, no sewer hookup, and need for deed restriction against religious use to avoid RLUIPA issues. He estimated 6 months to a year timeline, including RFP for broker and zoning for subdivision. Mr. Abrams suggested tabling for departmental budget review, noting relevance to revenue sources but respecting time.

Mr. Abrams asked about other professional services split between outside counsel and experts. Mr. Coppola estimated 50-50, fluctuating with litigation needs, noting his retainer from professional services saves on salary, with minimal increases over five years.

Mr. Jellerette asked about Lockwood property purchase. Mr. Schmitt confirmed it was bought. Mr. Abrams redirected as off-topic.

Mr. Coppola offered to discuss properties further individually.

D. Town Clerk
Mr. Ellis introduced Town Clerk with Mr. McQuaid. He noted a 6.1% increase, primarily $36,000 of $47,000 in salaries, with a part-time salaries bump. He recalled a long-term disability case requiring backfill, now resolved.

Mr. McQuaid confirmed resolution and challenges filling spots. He highlighted uncertain election costs due to state mandates without funding, and his staff's average 14-year tenure.

E. Registrar
Mr. Ellis jumped to Registrar of Voters with Ms. Paladino and Mr. Wells, noting previous contingency requests for early voting now incorporated based on trends. He explained the increase from approved to revised budgets.

Ms. Paladino prepared comments with Mr. Wells, incorporating 14-day state-mandated early voting costs for supplies, staffing, training, primary, and potential audit. She noted the legislative session likely maintaining the requirement, budgeting responsibly assuming 14 days plus 6 for primary. Despite expansions, they previously sought special appropriations but now incorporate based on data. She emphasized unfunded mandates, small grant insufficient for 20+ days, efforts to minimize staffing without compliance gaps, and considering virtual training.

Mr. Wells added unknowns like cybersecurity from international events potentially requiring more police or security, citizenship checks without lists or guidance, and higher voter turnout for governor's election around 30,000.

Mr. Andrasko questioned wages and salary temporary line, noting lumpiness. Mr. Wells explained it covered poll workers including early voting. Ms. Paladino detailed concerns with new tabulators, centralized system, and protocol omitting envelopes requiring new ballot log and signature, necessitating more training and staffing. Mr. Wells noted potential savings on Election Day without envelopes but uncertainty on new processes.

Ms. Yang questioned the fiscal 2027 request of $690,000 versus CFO/Mayor $927,000. Mr. Ellis clarified the original request predated including early voting trends. Ms. Yang suggested early voting might reduce Election Day staffing, observing low voter turnout but high staffing of workers, recalling historical volunteers. She calculated $50 per vote, suggesting consolidation, fewer polling spots, City Hall voting, and League of Women Voters volunteers. Mr. Wells clarified the budget covered the entire department, not just elections, and $50 per vote for lowest turnout year.

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Ms. Yang emphasized absolute dollars exceeding other departments for limited events in the digital age. Mr. Wells noted 25 early voting days plus two election days. Mr. Abrams framed as optimizing staffing by voter volume across days, marking as open item for efficiencies. Ms. Paladino agreed to review, noting long hours, chain of command, bipartisan requirements, and exploring civic service stipends. She emphasized compliance, success, districts, polling locations per charter, police presence, and unfunded tabulator maintenance.

F. Fire

Mr. Ellis introduced Fire Department with Chief McCabe, Assistant Chief Conti, and Mr. Reardon. He noted a $25.1 million recommendation, $1.7 million or 7.4% increase, including a headcount ask.

Chief McCabe explained most budget for contractual wages, with variances from clerical cleanup like closing or splitting lines. Examples included moving shipping costs, new IT hardware line at $10,000, breaking up uniforms and PPE, and promotional exams every three years increasing training.

Mr. Jellerette asked total firefighters. Chief McCabe stated 151 sworn, increased by one last year for rescue company. Mr. Jellerette asked retirements. Chief McCabe averaged three per year. Mr. Jellerette asked equipment adequacy. Chief McCabe affirmed protective gear, hose, tools in good shape.

Mr. Schmitt noted post-Mayor's budget discussions reconciled anomalies from chief transition, removing three proposed training captains tied to delayed Station 4 renovation, reducing training increase to 3.6% and total to 5.6%, about $674,000 less, pending benefits impact. Mr. Abrams marked fire budget as open item for reconciliation.

Mr. Jellerette asked impact of new apartment buildings. Chief McCabe explained modifications like maneuverable ladder trucks, larger hose for high-rises, but stress from call volume increases like EMS, gas, smoke odors, up significantly last five years. Mr. Ellis noted inspectors busy during construction for code compliance and builder communication.

Mr. Abrams asked final questions. None.

G. Police
Mr. Ellis introduced Police with Chief Walsh and Mr. Docimo. He noted a $32.2 million recommendation, $1.6 million or 5.4% increase.

Chief Walsh overviewed: request minus Board of Education security overtime and contractual increases $2,000 less; $2.1 million in-kind to Board of Education; six items over 10% increase; 11 increases, 10 decreases; 87.1% salary-related; overtime 12.76% of salaries below neighbors; 4% line items increased. Calls rose from 48,000 in 2001 to 83,000 in 2024 and 79,000 in 2025 at same staffing. Goal to add school resource officers to trim security overtime. Only new initiative $82,000 translation service in Axon body cams, in 90-day test.

Mr. Abrams asked force size. Chief Walsh stated 183 sworn, 35 civilians including dispatch for police/fire, administration, records.

Mr. Jellerette asked comparison last three years. Chief Walsh steady at 183 since 2022. Mr. Jellerette asked retirements/resignations. Chief Walsh 4-6 annually. Mr. Jellerette asked equipment adequacy. Chief Walsh affirmed, recent upgrades like firearms, 65 new officers in four years equipped and trained.

Mr. Jellerette asked removing $2.1 million Board of Education support impact. Mr. Docimo clarified $686,000 security overtime plus $1.4 million contractual increases; removing yields flat or $2,000 under; removing all four items 7.5-7.8% under, with limited controllable increases. Police funded security last three years via efficiencies/rollovers, now requested in budget.

Mr. Abrams asked vehicle costs FY27 vs FY26. Chief Walsh noted handled in capital, recent fleet intake reducing request. Mr. Abrams clarified past operating expenses for technology. Mr. Docimo explained major purchases/upfits in capital; past redirects for dash cams/modems from operational; no significant budgeted here, would redirect/transfer if needed; maintenance in special services.

Mr. Constant questioned wages/salary premium line lumpiness. Chief Walsh explained shift differentials (11% midnights, 9% 3-11 PM) and holidays rise with salaries from retroactive/contractual increases.

Mr. Jellerette confirmed training/protection/equipment comfort. Chief Walsh affirmed, choices for best training, annual third-department recertification with 60 hours including de-escalation, implicit bias, car stops, wellness.

Mr. Kassimis asked calls doubling 2020-2025, critical headcount point. Chief Walsh prioritized more school resource officers to geographically place, reducing rotations/security overtime, major priority.

H. Personnel
Mr. Ellis noted Sharon Torres on another call, jumping to Personnel (Human Resources) with her permission. He highlighted $920,000 total, $69,000 or 8.2% increase, $48,000 in salaries, $3,400 in training/education.

Ms. Torres presented her first budget, reviewing department four months, desiring initiatives but understanding crunch, requesting basic cost of living to maintain current operations, no upgrades/changes/capital.

Mr. Abrams asked wages/salary regular increase due to full staffing. Ms. Torres clarified not fully staffed, reposting benefits manager/specialist role without luck, needing manager-level, hoping by July 1st, no savings anticipated; if longer, overtime likely.

Mr. Abrams asked applicant pool. Ms. Torres averaged 15-20, insufficient; reviewed priors without qualified candidates.

Mr. Abrams questioned employee wellness awards increase. Ms. Torres explained initiatives like holiday events for engagement/morale, taken from other lines previously; planned health/wellness activities, open enrollment education with incentives, free benefits like library cards, on-site events for DPW/garages, Excel/computer classes for career growth.

Mr. Jellerette asked if common line item. Mr. Schmitt clarified for HR. Mr. Abrams confirmed citywide employees. Ms. Torres affirmed 700 people included.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Abrams thanked department heads, coordinating requests through Mr. Schmitt and Mr. Ellis, appreciating effort, budget knowledge, question responses for taxpayer spending. He asked Mr. Schmitt or Mayor Smyth for closing remarks.

Mr. Schmitt clarified 10% savings recommendation, seeking off-limits areas like pension contribution reduction or staffing, noting $82 million city salaries, fixed costs like debt service/benefits/contracts limiting options, dramatic hits elsewhere if untouched.

Mr. Abrams responded ask for 10% departmental budgets with risks, open to creative solutions not risking AAA rating.

Mr. Kassimis recalled Board of Education self-insured healthcare, asking option. Mr. Schmitt noted exploring self-insured/high-deductible, schools' high-deductible increases higher than HMO; market unpredictable; self-insurance requires internal service fund increase for fluctuations, short-term costlier but explorable.

Mayor Smyth added insurance experience, Connecticut Partnership Plan solid for city, national increases; Board of Education Cigna over 18%, riskier.

Ms. Yang commented on the 10% budget increase, noting a need to focus on the grand list and making sure we have all the new development and all the properties accurately valued on the City's growGrand List. She noted that the phase-in set the City's four-year budget with a 3% increase so there should not have been any surprises – that expenses should have been managed to the 3% budgeted increase. She also noted that the budget issues relate to controllable increases and this largely a self-made crisis. She noted that the large increase is primarily due to healthcare and benefit cost increases and that rising healthcare costs are hitting everyone. And everyone has to deal with these rising costs within their own budgets and where some might have to forego healthcare altogether. The individual cannot turn around and ask for a raise. Therefore the City should not be doing it either and needs management it within their budget and make the appropriate trade-offs.

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Mr. Schmitt welcomed grand list suggestions/discussions.

Ms. Yang recommended an independent committee comprised of certain departments, Common Council, finance, BET, valuation experts/volunteers. Most likely the 80-20 rule will apply. Real estate; for example 127 Fillow Street, 1.56 acres owned since 2014, $580,000 in 2008, now ~$1 million; sell reduces debt $1 million ($40,000 savings), adds to rolls ($25,000), $60,000 annual savings; sell quickly in six months.

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Mayor Smyth agreed, discussing with law department, challenges per Mr. Coppola, 12-month process but instructed action; continue addressing; some self-made but 14% health increase surprise not anticipated in phase-in; proper internal service funding would help, agreeing Mr. Schmitt's approach. Thanked Mr. Schmitt, Mr. Ellis, Ms. Groves, finance staff for work; thanked departments for best efforts; tough but continue discussions to help taxpayers.

Mr. Abrams agreed, challenge to explore options aggressively, no commitments yet but look at decisions benefiting city.

Mr. Ellis noted tomorrow Board of Education first, then Economic and Community Development (planning/zoning, code enforcement, PMP, Arts/Historical Commissions), hour each.

Mr. Abrams noted potential 7 PM business meeting, might start then listen to recording, confirm morning.

Mr. Andrasko asked documents shared in advance. Mr. Ellis confirmed, checking BET mail group receipt; Mr. Andrasko no; Mr. Ellis to send individually to Gmail until BET email, including screen shares; others confirmed receipt; apologized. Mr. Andrasko thanked.

Mr. Abrams asked anything else before motion to adjourn.

**** MR. KASSIMIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
****THE MOTION PASSED. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.**

The meeting adjourned at

approximately 8:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Baldwin Recording

Secretary