

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 23, 2026  
VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

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

**STAFF:** Marsha Elbourne (City Clerk), Tom Ellis, Jared Schmitt, Vanessa Valadares, Brian Bidolli, Chief Walsh, Chief McCabe.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Abrams called the special meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation to order and welcomed everyone.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Ms. Elbourne called the roll and a quorum was established.

Mayor Barbara C. Smyth provided opening remarks on the capital budget process. She stated that the board was embarking on the next phase of the budget process with the capital budget and thanked the Planning and Zoning Commission, the BET, and the City Council for their partnership. She noted that this year the board was taking the second step in getting debt service back on track by scaling back projects while continuing to invest in infrastructure. She explained that the items included were critical safety needs or strategic investments that would generate future revenue. The recommended capital budget was \$68,100,999, which was \$1,733,000 greater than the finance department's recommendation. She detailed the additions including \$400,000 in grant funding for Cranberry Park that required a local match, \$250,000 to renovate the sailing school building at Calf Pasture Beach, \$250,000 to repair the historic glass conservatory at Lockwood Matthews Mansion, \$30,000 for targeted capital improvements at City Hall, and \$350,000 to construct a three-season pavilion at Calf Pasture Beach that would be fully covered by the restaurant tenant and therefore revenue-neutral. She emphasized that the broader capital plan prioritized maintenance of beaches, parks, green spaces, athletic fields, school facilities, environmental and sustainability goals through tree planting and drainage projects, historic preservation, and infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, curbs, and crosswalks.

**III. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The board entered executive session to discuss the client privileged communication dated March 9, 2026 re: Police Rescue Vehicle.

Upon returning to open session, Mr. Abrams stated that during executive session there were no motions and no votes of any type taken. It was purely a discussion that required a level of confidentiality that the executive session rules provide for.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Mr. Abrams requested a motion for the sole source purchase order.

**\*\*MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO AUTHORIZE MAYOR BARBARA C. SMYTH TO EXECUTE A SOLE SOURCE PURCHASE ORDER ON BEHALF OF THE NORWALK POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE PURCHASE OF ONE ARMORED RESCUE VEHICLE FOR A TOTAL NOT TO EXCEED \$361,000 AGAINST ACCOUNT NUMBER 09213610-5777C0638.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE AUTHORIZATION WAS APPROVED.**

#### V. APPROVE 2027 CAPITAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL

Mr. Abrams then requested a motion for discussion of the capital budget. Mr. Jellerette moved the item for discussion. Mr. Ellis provided an overview of the capital budget totals, stating that the Mayor's recommendation was \$68,100,999, with \$48,875,999 for the City and Board of Education side and \$19,225,000 for the Enterprise Funds.

**\*\*MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO DISCUSS: APPROVE THE 2027 CAPITAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL AS PRESENTED BY THE MAYOR WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPLORE A POTENTIAL REDUCTION IN THE ARTS INVENTORY EXPENSE AND TO OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CYBERSECURITY CAPITAL AND OPERATING EXPENSES.**

Mr. Abrams asked Mr. Schmitt and Mayor Barbara C. Smyth how the board was planning to address capital overruns related to the new Norwalk High School project within the overall capital budget. Mr. Schmitt explained that those costs were included in the Mayor's proposal and that the additional costs were anticipated to be eligible for the 80 percent reimbursement, with the 20 percent city share to be borne by the city.

Ms. Yang asked about the \$500,000 for the ADA transition plan and the \$268,000 for the art inventory. Ms. Yang also asked about the \$500,000 MLK Corridor Mobility Supplemental Funding and whether it was grant funded or city funded. Mr. Bidolli responded that it was the city's portion required to secure a \$14 million RAISE grant from USDOT for safety and operational improvements along MLK from North Main to Wilson Avenue and that approval would keep the project eligible to proceed.

Mr. Andrasko asked whether the \$6.6 million for the high school represented the 20 percent expected responsibility of the city. Mr. Schmitt confirmed that it reflected the city's share after an offset adjustment and that the statutory amount was 20 percent, but a buffer had been included for conservatism.

Mr. Jellerette asked about the timing of the environmental study for the high school project and why it had come late in the process. Mr. Schmitt explained that the work was intentionally sequenced for the current phase of the project and had not been ripe earlier. Mr. Jellerette also asked about the athletic fields line item totaling \$6,004,000 over five years and how many fields were artificial versus grass, and about the current annual debt service payment. Mr. Schmitt responded that the \$48.1 million debt service was being paid, with \$5 million offset by bond premium for a net of \$43 million, and that the City and Board of Education portion was just short of \$49 million.

Ms. Yang asked whether the \$375,000 allocated for technology, of which \$85,000 was for fiber extension, was sufficient for cybersecurity. Mr. Schmitt stated that this was one year of the capital plan and that a base cybersecurity infrastructure was already in place, offering to provide more information. Mayor Barbara C. Smyth added that discussions on cybersecurity and AI had been ongoing over recent weeks. Mr. Abrams noted that cybersecurity needed to be considered in the context of both capital and operating expense.

Mr. Abrams stated that the board's recommendations for the transmittal letter would be to explore whether the arts inventory expense could be reduced and to obtain a better understanding of both the capital and operating expenses associated with cybersecurity.

Mr. Abrams requested a motion to approve the 2027 capital funding recommendation letter to City Council.

**\*\*MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO APPROVE THE 2027 CAPITAL FUNDING RECOMMENDATION LETTER TO CITY COUNCIL AS PRESENTED BY THE MAYOR WITH RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPLORE A POTENTIAL REDUCTION IN THE ARTS INVENTORY EXPENSE AND TO OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CYBERSECURITY CAPITAL AND OPERATING EXPENSES.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE LETTER WAS APPROVED.**

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\*MR. KASSIMIS MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

**\*\*THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Courtney Baldwin  
Recording Secretary

