

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 3, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; Edwin Camacho; James Feigenbaum;
Laoise King; Anne Yang Dwyer; James Paige (7:43 p.m.)

STAFF: Robert Barron, Director of Finance; Lunda Asmani, Director of
Management and Budgets; Irene Dixon, Assistant City Clerk

OTHERS: Ernest DesRochers, Chair, Oak Hills Park Authority;
Jerry Crowley, Vice Chair, Oak Hills Park Authority;
Shelly Guyer, Executive Director, Oak Hills Park Authority

Mr. Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and Ms. Dixon called the Roll. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

September 6, 2016 – Regular Meeting

The following corrections were made to the minutes:

Page 1: Mr. Asmani's title should read: Director of Management and Budgets and correct spelling of surplus.

Page 8: Under Oak Hills Financial Status, Mr. Barron expanded his statement.

**** MR. CAMACHO MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS
CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MS. YANG DWYER)**

SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA

**** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING
RESOLUTION:**

Mr. Asmani reviewed the item and said that the reimbursement is from the State for Police overtime worked on State cases.

**RESOLVED, THAT A \$15,490 SPECIAL APPROPRIATION BE MADE
TO INCREASE THE BUDGETS FOR BOTH POLICE OVERTIME**

**EXPENSES ACCOUNT #013035-5120 AND POLICE STATE
REIMBURSEMENT REVENUE ACCOUNT 013010-4180 FOR
PAYMENTS RECEIVED IN AUGUST OF 2016**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MR. CAMACHO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING
APPROPRIATION:**

Mr. Asmani reviewed the item and said that this is a federal reimbursement.

**RESOLVED, THAT A \$28,108 SPECIAL APPROPRIATION BE MADE
TO INCREASE THE BUDGETS FOR BOTH POLICE OVERTIME
EXPENSE ACCOUNT 013035-5120 AND POLICE FEDERAL
REIMBURSEMENT REVENUE ACCOUNT 013010-42202 FOR
PAYMENTS RECEIVED IN AUGUST OF 2016**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

TRANSFER AGENDA

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/FIRE DEPARTMENT

From	To	Amount
01-0600-5269 Other Repair-Maintenance	01-3160-5234 Subscription-Tax, Law	\$10.000

Mr. Barron explained the item. The transfer is from IT to the Fire Department.

**** MS. YANG DWYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

OTHER BUSINESS

Oak Hills Park Financial Discussion

Mr. Barron explained that he sent an e-mail to the Oak Hills Park Authority that detailed their performance last year and asked about their plans for this year. He noted that there was more income this year, but their operating profit was less than last year.

Mr. DesRochers said that more was spent on salaries because they stayed open longer this year. He said that they manage expenses all the time. Going forward they will be increasing rates for golf carts and golf fees. He said that they have a great supervisor, but that comes at a price.

Mr. DesRochers said that maintenance expenses were high, because of deferred maintenance to the property. They upgraded their systems, where people can log into their website and as a result, they can capture data. Mr. Guyer said that July and August were very hot months, and to maintain the course, they had to use a lot of products. Over the summer they employed interns and added staff for a bag drop.

Mr. DesRochers said that customer service and the condition of the golf course are key. They will begin renovations shortly and will open the Great Lawn in the spring. They also hope to have a nice garden area. He said that they are trying to dramatically change the golf course, but that takes money.

Mr. Barron said that people have said that their golf experience has greatly improved. He said that when the course goes to nine holes, they will not be able to sustain the additional \$27,000 in personnel fees. Mr. DesRochers said that the additional costs were for seasonal staff.

Mr. DesRochers said that they could spend an additional \$50,000 on the Superintendent's house. He said that if it is a choice of building the fund balance or fixing the Superintendent's home, he would choose the home.

Mr. Paige joined the meeting at 7:43 p.m.

Ms. Yang Dwyer asked about the expenses for the Christmas party. Mr. DesRochers explained that this is a small business where they try to find small ways to thank their staff for their hard work. In addition, the party was a team building exercise. Ms. Yang Dwyer said that she looks forward to seeing improved financial profitability.

Mr. DesRochers said that more rounds equal more maintenance and more people working. Ms. Yang Dwyer said that she understood, but there should have been an increase in operating income.

Mr. DesRochers said that the Superintendent was living in the home with three children and there were rats crawling in the sub-basement. A lot of the maintenance to the home was deferred over the years and it now needs about \$100,000 worth of work. Mr. Burnett asked Mr. DesRochers if he has a list of work they want to do to the Superintendent's house. Mr. DesRochers said that Mr. Crowley has a list and is trying to get real bid numbers. He will send a copy of the list to Mr. Barron.

Ms. Yang Dwyer said that the goal is for Oak Hills Park Authority to put more in the fund balance to be able to pay for capital items. She asked if the City should own a golf course that loses money. Mr. Barron said that it is not unusual to have a feature of a city cost the city money; however, revenues should cover expenses.

Mr. Asmani said that it is not uncommon for municipal golf courses to lose money; they are a public good and add to the quality of life for the residents. Mr. Feigenbaum said that there would be a riot if Oak Hills was closed. It is part of the vitality of the City. Ms. Yang Dwyer asked what percentage of the population does it serve. Mr. Feigenbaum said that it is part of what draws people to the City. Ms. Yang Dwyer asked if there are 80,000 people in the City, what percentage use the parks and what percentage use Oak Hills. Mr. Camacho said that he has not visited The Maritime Aquarium since his children were small, but South Norwalk was revitalized when it opened and made Norwalk more of a destination. Ms. Yang Dwyer said that she was asking the question as a member of the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

Mr. Burnett said that he wants to hear from Oak Hills and learn what they plan to do. Mr. Feigenbaum said that a certain amount of patience is needed because they are struggling with the restaurant.

Mr. Burnett said that they will have some patience and keep an eye on the numbers.

**** MS. YANG DWYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING:**

B) RESOLUTION, AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR, HARRY W. RILLING, TO EXECUTE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTS TO SECURE THE REPAYMENT OF A LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$300,000) FROM THE CITY OF NORWALK TO THE SIXTH TAXING DISTRICT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PAYING CAPITAL EXPENSES RELATED TO THE RENOVATION OF THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNITY CENTER FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016-2017.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**** MS. YANG DWYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS:**

C) RESOLUTION, AUTHORIZING CAPITAL APPROPRIATION REDUCTIONS OF ACCT# 0915-7100-5777-C0119 AND ACCT# 0916-7100-5777-C0119 BY \$20,000 AND \$70,000 RESPECTIVELY.

D) RESOLUTION, AUTHORIZING A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$90,000 TO THE

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS TO RENOVATE THE PUBLIC
WORKS SPACE AT CITY HALL (ACCT. #0917-7100-5777-C0119).**

Mr. Barron explained that Public Works requested \$120,000 for an office remodel and to remove some storage tanks. Only the storage tank removal was approved. A purchase order came through for furniture. Mr. Burnett asked how something was approved by a committee that was not approved in the capital plan.

Mr. Barron said that the department head thought that since they had a surplus they could spend that money on something else. He said that a process has been put into place to make sure this does not happen again. Mr. Barron said that his only objection was the way this process was handled. He said that the remodel was absolutely necessary.

Ms. Yang Dwyer asked if there is a way to reward people for creating surpluses and added that she would not be opposed to creating a bonus pool. Mr. Barron said that any surplus goes back to the operating budget.

Mr. Burnett said that it is important to let the department know that the Board of Estimate and Taxation has concerns about how this money was spent. Mr. Barron said that he believes every Common Council member will know what is expected for approvals and so with the purchasing department. Mr. Asmani said that by the time it gets on the agenda it will pass checks and balances.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. Additional Information (Section D)

Key Revenue Report – 2016

Mr. Barron reviewed the Key Revenue Drivers. He said that he expected building permits to be higher. He said that next month, he will be able to report back on this and that it is something to keep their eyes on.

**** MR. FEIGENBAUM MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Norwalk
Board of Estimate and Taxation
October 3, 2016
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