

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024**

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone and/or Zoom, or a recording in the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at norwalkct.gov/meetings

Members of the public may call in to participate. Callers will not be able to see the meeting participants. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, dial *9 on the phone and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section.

All speakers must state their name and address. Comments must be on a topic on the agenda, and are limited to three minutes. Anyone disrupting the orderly conduct of the meeting, including by using threatening, hateful, or sexually-explicit language, will be removed. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to provide "live comments" may also use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called by the host of the meeting during the public comment section.

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be included into the record, they must be submitted by 12:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. Please email (Tom Ellis) at (Tellis@norwalkct.gov) with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Ed Abrams, Chair; Kendrick Constant; Artie Kassimis Troy Jellerette; Anne Yang; Ed Camacho (6:34 p. m.)

STAFF: Irene Dixon, City Clerk; Thomas Ellis, Director of Budgets and Management; Joyce Liu, Director of Technology; Jaret Schmitt, Chief Financial Officer; Jessica Vonashek, Chief of Economic and Community Development

OTHERS: Alan Dutton, Oak Hills Park Authority

Mr. Abrams called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

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Ms. Dixon called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 5, 2024 – Regular Meeting

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED**

**** MOTION PASSED WITH ONE (1) ABSTENTION (MR. ABRAMS)**

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO THE AGENDA**

1. REQUESTING a Special Capital Appropriation in the amount of \$100,000 for the purchase of a replacement boat for the Harbormaster to manage and oversee the operation of the Norwalk Harbor, Norwalk Islands and a portion of the Long Island Sound.
2. REQUESTING a reduction in the amount of \$100,000 to the appropriation in account # 0925-3760-5777-C0704 (Arts & Culture Plan).

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. Camacho joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

**** MS. YANG MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

- 1. REQUESTING A SPECIAL CAPITAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000 FOR THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT BOAT FOR THE HARBORMASTER TO MANAGE AND OVERSEE THE OPERATION OF THE NORWALK HARBOR, NORWALK ISLANDS AND A PORTION OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND.**
- 2. REQUESTING A REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$100,000 TO THE APPROPRIATION IN ACCOUNT # 0925-3760-5777-C0704 (ARTS & CULTURE PLAN).**

Ms. Vonashek reviewed the requests and noted the vessel was over 20 years old. The value of the vessel is \$6 -\$8,000, but the cost to fix the motor would be \$8,000. She explained they received three quotes and worked closely with the Harbor Master, Assistant Harbor Master and the Harbor Management Commission to find the vessel. The lowest quote was the most suitable. In addition, they asked for a quote from a local marina for services.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. **SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA** (Section A) None

3. **Transfer Agenda** (Section B)

**** MR. CONSTANT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TRANSFER AGENDA**

Mr. Ellis introduced the following requests.

Ms. Dixon reviewed the request from Legislative to Other Professional Services.

Ms. Liu reviewed the request from Information Technology.

FISCAL YEAR 2024-25:

LEGISLATIVE:

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>		<u>Amount</u>
01-9600-5900	Contingency	01-0210-5258	Other Professional Services	\$21,000

This transfer is to cover the Invoice for the ArcBridge redistricting Consultants.

Finance recommends approval.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY:

<u>From</u>		<u>To</u>		<u>Amount</u>
01-9600-5900	Contingency	01-1370-5741	IT Hardware	\$78,729

This transfer is to cover Common Council Room Audio/Video Upgrade.

Finance recommends approval.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

4. **Other Business** (Section C)

Mr. Schmitt gave an update on the status of the construction on the South Norwalk Elementary School and the new Norwalk High School.

Mr. Schmitt reported that the steel is starting to go up at the South Norwalk Elementary School. There is not a lot to report on the physical progress at the new Norwalk High School.

Mr. Schmitt shared his screen and showed the cash flow for both schools. The South Norwalk Elementary School is scheduled to open September 2025 and the new Norwalk High School is scheduled to open in September 2027.

Ms. Yang requested an update of the expenses at each meeting. She also requested to see the original expenditure and the revised expenditure budget.

Mr. Schmitt explained that Norwalk High School was always \$239 million. The City had to appropriate the full amount so they could enter into the contract. He noted there are discussions about the cost going up by about 10%. In order to get the funding, Legislative language will

have to be updated. Ms. Yang asked how long it takes to get the reimbursement. Mr. Schmit said it takes between 60 – 90 days. He added that he has already submitted and received reimbursements. Ms. Yang asked for periodic update on the reimbursements.

Mr. Jellerette asked if both schools were on budget. Mr. Schmitt said the South Norwalk Elementary School is on budget; however, the new Norwalk High School may need an additional \$10 million. Ms. Yang asked for an actual to budget comparison and expenditures vs. reimbursements. She said she wants to understand they are in line with the expected budget.

Mr. Schmitt reviewed the recent bond sale and said the City did very well. The final rate for bonds was 3.37%.

Mr. Jellerette congratulated Mr. Schmitt and the entire team for maintaining the City's AAA bond rating. Mr. Schmitt said it was a team effort and expressed his thanks to the team. Mr. Ellis also expressed his thanks to Mr. Lindsey.

Mr. Ellis announced a joint public session on September 23, 2024 at 6:00 with the City and Board of Education. During this public session, they will discuss the upcoming budget season. The goal is to get the public involved early on the process.

5. **Additional Information** (Section D)

Financial reports

- Tax Collector's Narrative – July, 2024
- Tax Collector's Report – July, 2024
- Oak Hills Park Financials – July, 2024

Mr. Dutton reviewed his report as follows:

Oak Hills Park Authority
July 2024 Financial Commentary

Operations Updates:

- Golf revenue rounds, cart rounds, and Discount ID cards performed above budget for the first month of FY25.
- Tee Time utilization remains very high, with above average golf cart rentals due to high number of rounds and high temperatures.
- We are in our fourth year (of five) in our cart fleet lease and are seeing some expected wear and tear. However, the lithium batteries are holding up better than the standard batteries in previous leases.

YTD Financial Highlights:

- FY25 YTD net operating income was over budget by \$46k and we ended July with a \$899k cash balance which includes \$60k in the capital reserve bank account.
 - Revenue was over-budget by \$48k thanks to strong golf rounds.
 - Expenses were over-budget by \$2k.
- OHPA made \$17k in repayments to the City for the first month of the fiscal year.
- OHPA plans on making substantial capital improvements to our bunkers in FY25, but in the first month we made expenditures for equipment and some improvements to structures.

Other:

- As part of our initiative of investing and diversifying excess cash, we now have money spread out among three banks in various types of interest-bearing accounts.
- The year-end financial audit fieldwork took place in July without incident. Controller is at the beginning stages of working on the Audit Report now.

Mr. Jellerette asked for an update on the recent appraisal issues. Mr. Ellis said the members of the Board will receive a narrative.

Ms. Yang requested a quarterly report of where they are with the Grand List. Mr. Schmitt will discuss this request with Mr. Gorman. He noted there are a lot of moving parts on a daily basis.

Mr. Jellerette said he would like to get a feel for the way things are settled or disapproved; there should be some reason why some people get taxes reduced. Mr. Camacho added that coming up with a value is not an exact science.

The remaining agenda items are for informational purposes,

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2023-24
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2023-24
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – FY 2023-24

- Police Wages FY 2023-24
- Fire Wages FY 2023-24
- Public Works Wages – FY 2023-24
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report FY 2023-24
- Year-to-date Budget Expenditure Report by Division -2023-24
- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report August 2024-25
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – August 2024-25
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – August 2024-25
- Police Wages August FY 2024-25
- Fire Wages August FY 2024-25
- Operations & Public Works Wages – August 2024-25
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure August FY 2024-25
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report by Division 2024-25

**** MR. CAMACHO MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business,
 and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
 Telesco Secretarial Services