

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
REGULAR METING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
MARCH 7, 2022**

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at www.norwalkct.org/meetings Departmental Review:

Members of the public can call in and listen to a meeting. They will not be able to speak or see any of the meeting participants. Each meeting will use a unique Meeting/Webinar ID. Please find the information using the link above.

Members of the public who wish to view the meeting, but are not participating, can view a live stream on the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. This stream is delayed by approximately 20 seconds. Please find the information using the link above. The meeting recording and minutes will be posted on the City of Norwalk website within seven (7) days after the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chair; Harry Rilling, Mayor; Ed Abrams;
James Frayer; Troy Jellerette; Artie Kassimis

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial
Officer; Irene Dixon, City Clerk; Thomas Ellis, Director of
Management and Budgets

OTHERS: Michael DePalma, Oak Hills Park Authority

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES February 7, 2022 – Regular Meeting

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

2. SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS AGENDA (Section A)

There were no special appropriations requested this evening.

3. **TRANSFER AGENDA** (Section B)

There were no transfers requested this evening.

4. **OTHER BUSINESS** (Section C)

Additional Information (Section D)

Financial reports

- Oak Hills Financial Status – January

Mr. DePalma gave a summary of their year to date financials. He said this is their off season, but they have a sufficient cash balance. They sold all 50 season passes. A formal opening of the restaurant will take place on March 17th.

Mr. Frayer asked how the booking system works. Mr. DePalma said golfers can book through the booking system or through the website. Mr. Frayer said he understood that Oak Hills gives rounds of golf away for this service, but the City does not get money for those rounds. He noted that this is a barter deal and Oak Hills should not be doing barter deals. All revenues and expenses should be reported.

Mr. Camacho said he believed that this is the way business is done with these services. The booking system books four rounds and keeps one for themselves. Mr. DePalma said he agreed with eliminating barter rounds, but this is the only option. He said he was concerned because the booking system gave out discounted rates and that is a problem that he just learned about last night.

Mr. Frayer told Mr. DePalma that Oak Hills could not keep those additional rounds, because they are revenue rounds and the City should be compensated. Mr. DePalma said he was told the barter rounds were discussed during their negotiations. Mr. Camacho said it was critical to know if this was discussed at that time.

Mr. Frayer said he could not believe this is how all booking systems work. He said he knows there are several different companies that offer this service. He noted this is not a complicated system and suggested putting it out to a tech company under an RFP. Mr. Camacho said he was not sure this is within the purview of the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Mr. DePalma said he could ask for numbers. He reiterated that this was discussed during negotiations. Mr. Camacho said he would be surprised if they discussed a system that keeps rounds and sells them. If that system was in place, the information should be available.

Mayor Rilling said he believed Mr. Burnett was part of the discussion and the prior CFO is no longer with the City of Norwalk. He said he assumed the agreement would have been reduced to writing. The issue is the rounds being played and the City is not being compensated. The Authority has the right to enter into an agreement, but the City should be getting per round costs. Mr. DePalma said it is \$2.00 per revenue generating round.

Mr. Camacho asked if there was a copy of the agreement between the City and the Oak Hills Park Authority. Mr. DePalma said he will e-mail the attorney.

Mr. Jellerette said he wanted to be sure the City is being compensated for the number of golf rounds. He asked for a break down of the number of rounds played each month. He asked if there was a agreement with Golf Now and if they could provide a copy of that agreement to the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

- Tax Collector's Narrative – January 2021
- Tax Collector's Report – January 2021

Ms. Biagiarelli reviewed her reports and said things are going very well. They are at a 97.87% collection rate and they are in the delinquent/enforcement part of the year. Collections are where they need to be.

The redemption period for the tax sale ends in April. Ms. Biagiarelli said they started with 248 properties and most of the tax for the properties was paid.

Mayor Rilling acknowledged Ms. Biagiarelli and her team.

The remainder of the agenda items were for informational purposes.

- Year-to-date Capital Budget Report – FY 2021-22
- Year-to-date Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2021-22
- Year-to-date Operating Revenue Report – FY 2021-22
- Police Wages
- Fire Wages
- Public Works Wages
- Year-to-date BOE Operating Expenditure Report – FY 2021-22

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

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 7, 2022
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

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ATTENDANCE: Edwin Camacho, Chair; Harry Rilling, Mayor; Ed Abrams;
James Frayer; Troy Jellerette

STAFF: Anthony Carr, Chief of Operations and Public Works; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer; Deanna D'Amore, Director of Health; Lamond Daniels, Chief of Community Services; Irene Dixon, City Clerk; Thomas Ellis, Director of Management and Budgets; Robert Stowers, Director of Recreation and Parks; David Walenczyk, Director of Youth Services

Mr. Camacho called the special meeting to order at 5:39 p.m.

1. DEPARTMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW.

Mr. Daniels said he was in agreement with the recommended budget.

A. Community Service

Mr. Walenczyk explained they had a part time Care Coordinator and requested funding to make that a full time position. That request was denied; however, they zeroed out that account to add to the full time salary. They need the part time funding restored.

B. Health

Mr. Dachowitz explained there was a decrease in the Health Laboratory budget. They are moving people to put them into the right department.

The Epidemiologist was a grant funded position under Covid. The Health Department wants to transition that position to a full time position effective July 1, 2022.

Mr. Jellerette asked for an update on the Equity program. Mr. Daniels said they received a grant as well as a donation to fund this program. They are working with Common Councilmember Johnson to move forward on this program.

C. Library

D. Youth Services

E. Human Relations

F. Department of Public Works

Mr. Camacho noted that the requested amount is slightly less than what was approved. He asked if Mr. Carr wanted to discuss, in particular any that were not included in the recommendation. Mr. Carr said they were able to find .05% reductions and described how they arrived at those reductions.

Mr. Carr reviewed the reductions and Mr. Camacho suggested giving the list to Mr. Dachowitz and Mr. Ellis so they could work out the numbers. Mr. Carr noted that he already sent a copy to Mr. Dachowitz. Mr. Frayer commended Mr. Carr and said this was a great example of people working together. Mr. Carr thanked the department heads for doing an incredible job. He also thanked Mayor Rilling, Mr. Dachowitz and Mr. Ellis for allowing them to provide input into their budget.

G. Recreation and Parks

Mr. Stowers explained that his request for three maintainers was rejected. He said that there was a mathematical error which reduced what he had in the account. If that reduction stays, he will have to lay off a staff person. Mr. Dachowitz said that he understood that the Common Council increased the budget to help hire two people in Recreation and Parks. Mr. Camacho said the Common Council put that additional funding into contingency while the Board of Estimate and Taxation deliberates. He noted that the Common Council can recommend, but they do not have line item authority.

City of Norwalk

Board of Estimate and Taxation

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Budget Review

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Mr. Dachowitz said he understood that originally, Recreation and Parks was looking for three new people, but under the guidelines, the three positions were denied. Mr. Camacho said that one position was cut in error. Mr. Stowers said that the reason they need these positions is that they can't prep the fields and get a lot of complaints from the leagues and the parents. He gave an overview of the field maintenance required for the synthetic turf fields.

Mr. Jellerette asked why the positions were denied. Mr. Dachowitz said the decision was based on the Mayor's guidelines

Mr. Stowers discussed adding an electrician position. He said they currently spend an average of \$130,000 a year on electrical work. He asked for a budget transfer of \$102,362 to pay for this position, including benefits. Mr. Dachowitz asked for an analysis. Mayor Rilling suggested keeping this position as an open item and noted there are increased costs each year. The Board agreed to keep this on as an open item.

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services