

**CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 22, 2020**

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

STAFF: Harry Dachowitz, CFO; Angela Fogel, Director of Management and Budgets; Donna King, City Clerk

To allow public access, anyone may access the meeting by telephone and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube Channel. Additional instructions for public access have been attached to the backup materials for this meeting.

Telephone Access (Listening Only) Dial: (646) 558-8656 Enter Webinar ID: 925 5669 7247

For those who wish to view, a live stream will be available on the City of Norwalk CT YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRcAj0a6fNzo2prQ6LhSjVA>

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. King called the Roll as reflected above. A Quorum was present.

1. SET THE CAPITAL BUDGET CAP FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-21

Ms. King read the following Resolution:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION OF THE CITY OF NORWALK THAT: THE CAPITAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021, WHICH WILL BE TRANSMITTED ON MAY 20, 2020, HAS A TOTAL OF \$153,832,356 LESS \$24,830,400 IN REVENUE RESULTING IN AN AMOUNT OF \$129,001,956 TO BE BONDED

Mayor Rilling thanked the members of the Board of Estimate and Taxation for their service. He thanked Mr. Dachowitz and Ms. Fogel.

Mayor Rilling explained that the capital budget was challenging. He said they tried to put together what are the most important issues for the next fiscal year. He said they created a budget that will serve the City of Norwalk well. In addition, they added items that were critically important.

The State of Connecticut is offering to reimburse the City of Norwalk 80% for a new Norwalk High School. Mayor Rilling said he feels this is a critical need for Norwalk. The old Norwalk High School is tired and it is not prudent to invest money into that school.

Mayor Rilling said that the good news is that this project will be looked upon by the State as an economic stimulus project. Because of the current situation, some projects are coming in under their original estimates. He said that he feels strongly that if the State is going to reimburse the City 80%, this is a project that needs to move forward.

Mayor Rilling reviewed other budget items and said he felt comfortable that this is a budget they residents could live with. He added that decisions will be made about what can be done and what can't be done.

Mr. Dachowitz said this was a team effort. He said they had to make the budget stretch as much as they could and had to prioritize each item.

Mr. Jellerette asked about the interest rates for bonding. Mr. Dachowitz said the rates are very low. He added that the municipal markets have come back. Norwalk is one of the strongest municipalities in the State of Connecticut if not the country.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE (MR. ABRAMS;
MS. BROWN; MR. CAMACHO; MR. FRAYER; MR. JELLERETTE; MAYOR
RILLING)**

**** MS. BROWN MOVED TO ADJOURN**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the special meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

**BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
PUBLIC HEARING
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The Public may participate by registering in advance at:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IAFfUCwfSSyP1yhwsGOkAw

For those who wish to view but are not participating, a live stream will be available on the City of Norwalk CT YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRcAj0a6fNzo2prQ6LhSjVA>

Mr. Camacho called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ms. King called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

PUBLIC HEARING

**BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION PROPOSED TENTATIVE OPERATING
BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021**

Mayor Rilling explained that these are very challenging times and these are uncharted waters. He said they created a budget that accomplished several things. He said he wanted to keep the tax levy as low as they could while keeping the City's services at a level people expect and deserve. He wanted to have a buffer that allowed the City to have funds in place. He wanted to be sure they could cover what had to be covered and keep the tax levy as low as possible.

Mayor Rilling described the steps taken to reduce the budget including taking out request for extra positions that would not fund themselves.

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Mayor Rilling said they are in a time where they have the opportunity to analyze the City government. He asked his Cabinet to look at things they are able to do effectively and also look at an after-action report.

The budget in place went through several iterations. Mayor Rilling thanked Mr. Dachowitz, Ms. Fogel, Mr. Burnett and Mr. Camacho for creating a fair budget. Mr. Dachowitz added that Mayor Rilling laid out his objectives. He said that before February 25th, the Common Council established the operating budget cap. The departments then made their presentations and there were small changes. He said they were able to accommodate those requests. The Grand List came in significantly higher. Mr. Dachowitz expressed this appreciation for the support during this process.

Mr. Camacho gave instructions on how to participate in the public hearing.

Public hearing comments are not verbatim and represent a summarization of statements unless otherwise noted.

Ms. Diane Lauricella noted that today was Earth Day and was pleased that the weather was accommodating. She asked the Board to review her comments since 2014/2015. She asked that there be serious consideration to removing the part time grants position and moving it to the Finance Department as a full-time position. She said it is not efficient for the department staff to do all the requirements necessary to apply for grants. If this position was placed in the Finance Department, they could have a better accounting of the grants. Ms. Lauricella said the City has missed out on grant opportunities.

Under the Department of Public Works, Ms. Lauricella said they can optimize the recycling program. Going forward she would like to see more active innovation working with the citizens on this topic.

Under Recreation and Parks, Ms. Lauricella said she hopes to work with the Director because they do not have a consistent recycling program in the parks.

Under Building Management, Ms. Lauricella said she would like to work with the Mayor on how to optimize green building design.

Ms. Lauricella said that under the Board of Education, she sent an e-mail stating that they should not get any more funding until they show an effort in their waste disposal program. She said that the time has come for the City to take over City trash and recycling for the Board of Education. The Board of Education needs to pay attention on their energy management. Ms. Lauricella said she has offered solutions, but to no avail. In addition, she said she has requested that the Mayor's Office create a sustainability Committee and said she would like to talk to him after this meeting about that proposal.

Ms. Lauricella said that with a properly recycling and re-use program, the City and the Board of Education can realize savings.

There were no other members of the public who wished to speak.

The public hearing was closed and the meeting unanimously adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services