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Please find the information using the link above. 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](mailto:tellis@norwalkct.gov) with the subject line "Public Comment" to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025  
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE: Mayor Harry Rilling; Ed Camacho; Kendrick Constant; Troy Jellerette;  
Artie Kassimis; Anne Yang

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Agnes Cawai; Assistant of Management and Budgets; Sharon Conners, Purchasing; Irene Dixon, City Clerk; Paul Ellis, Director of Management and Budgets; Paul Gorman, Tax Assessor; Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; Joyce Liu, Director of IT; Jared Schmitt, Chief Financial Officer

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

In the Chair's absence, Mr. Camacho called the special meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Mayor Rilling gave opening remarks and expressed his thanks to the department heads and the members of the of the Board of Estimate and Taxation for listening to his mandate to come in between a 2 – 2 ½% increase.

## **II. ROLL CALL**

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

## **III. BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION - OPERATING BUDGET REVIEW**

### **A. CFO**

Mr. Ellis shared his screen and introduced the proposed budget along with previous actuals.

Mr. Schmitt expressed his thanks to the members of the Finance Division and explained that a lot of the increases are due to salaries. He said the salary freeze that was in place last year will not be in place next year. Otherwise it is a fairly flat budget.

Mr. Schmitt reviewed the CFO's budget and said that office is absorbing the 1% decrease in salary. All departments know they are expected to find savings. He explained they selected a new auditor and the contract will be for five years. This will go to the Common Council for approval.

Mr. Camacho asked about the salary adjustment. Mr. Schmitt explained that one of the mandates was a 1% increase in each of their budgets. For the Finance Division it has been rolled into his budget. He said they looked at turnover savings and trends and thought the 1% savings was a reasonable amount. He said some departments may have difficulty doing this because they have tighter budgets.

### **B. Tax Assessor & Revaluation**

Mr. Ellis introduced the Tax Assessor's 2026 recommended operating budget.

Mr. Gorman explained there were very few changes in the budget request; however, their only increase was in office supplies and materials. He added that they cut down on a lot of expenses. On the Revaluation budget, they cut everything out except for a small contingency amount.

### C. Tax Collector

Mr. Ellis introduced the Tax Collector's budget and said Ms. Biagiarelli came in under 3%.

Ms. Biagiarelli reviewed her budget and said staffing has not increased. Her annual budget fluctuates between tax sale and non tax sale years. All of the expenses are built into the tax sale. She added that they also collect a lot of fees and in addition 86 – 87% of the budget comes from property taxes.

Ms. Biagiarelli explained the Tax Collector's office held a tax sale this year and collected close to \$7 million. The next tax sale is scheduled for 2026 unless they do a mini tax sale from Zoning fees.

Ms. Yang asked about non tax revenue of \$1.6 million in interest and penalties. Ms. Biagiarelli explained that is from the collection of back taxes. Ms. Yang acknowledged the amount of work done by Ms. Biagiarelli and her groups and expressed her appreciation.

Mr. Ellis commented that the vast majority of municipalities contract out tax sales.

Ms. Biagiarelli explained they have some new comers on staff and sent them for training. She appreciates being allowed to spend money on education.

### D. Accounting & Treasury

Mr. Ellis introduced the Accounting and Treasury budget. Ms. Lam explained that a lot of the budget is in wages and salaries. The freeze last year gave them an opportunity to assess what they needed and would like to reinstate a position next year. Ms. Yang expressed her thanks to Ms. Lam.

### E. Management & Budgets

Mr. Ellis explained this budget is coming in at 10.1% and reviewed the requests. He said the biggest line item is in IT software. The first year purchase is capitalized and the \$26,000 comes out of the capital and operating budget. He said it will go up 3% each year over the three year contract.

### F. Purchasing & Central Services

Mr. Ellis introduced the Purchasing and Central Services budget. Ms. Conners explained that most of the changes year over year are salaries. She said they are fully staffed.

Central Services splits the cost of the mail room services with the Board of Education and they expect some changes in the next contract. She explained that the mail room services are outsourced and they issue a joint RFP with the Board of Education.

Ms. Yang asked about the Total Expense contract. Ms. Connors explained that the vendor is Cannon and the contract is approximately \$86,000. Ms. Yang asked about the telephones and asked if they could reduce costs by eliminating desk phones and having people use their mobile phones. Ms. Connors said it could be an opportunity to work with IT. She noted that she uses a desk phone.

Ms. Yang suggested having one purchasing office for the City and the Board of Education. Ms. Connors said she did not know what the potential gain would be and they would need support from the Board of Education since they support all of the schools. She said they could look at it with both CFOs.

#### G. Information Technology

Ms. Ellis introduced the Information Technology budget. He explained the total is 11% against last year and the largest increase is in the salary line item areas.

Ms. Liu explained the increase in the salary line was because two positions were frozen last year. She said Cisco changed their license agreement and going forward there will be an increase on the telephone sets.

Ms. Yang asked about cyber security. Ms. Liu said they put \$85,000 into the budget. Mr. Ellis added that last time they looked at this it was \$300,000 in the private sector.

Ms. Yang thanked Ms. Liu for all she does in handling IT.

#### GIS

Ms. Liu explained they reduced travel costs for seminars and they make their own infrastructure.

Mr. Ellis explained tomorrow's meeting will be with grant recipients.

#### IV. ADJOURNMENT

**\*\* MAYOR RILLING MOVED TO ADJOURN**  
**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

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

City of Norwalk  
Board Of Estimate and Taxation  
Special Meeting  
March 18, 2025  
Via Teleconference  
Page 4

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi  
Telesco Secretarial Services