CITY OF NORWALK
BOARD OF ESTIMATE & TAXATION
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 5, 2025

ATTENDANCE: Ed Abrams, Chair; Mayor Harry Rilling; Kendrick Constant, Troy Jellerette, Ed Camacho

OTHERS Irene Dixon, Tom Ellis, David Westmoreland, Jared Schmitt, Agnes Cawai; Sabrina Godeski, Alexis Cherichetti, Tom Livingston, Garrett Bolella, Jim Travers; William Ireland, Code Enforcement.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Abrams called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. A quorum was present. He explained that this meeting was a workshop and there would not be any public comment.

Mr. Ellis greeted everyone and then gave a brief overview of a department spreadsheet. He noted that they would be reviewing Economic Development. He indicated where the three year analysis was located on the sheet and where the percentages were.

Mayor Rilling said that he knows that the department heads have worked very diligently to bring their budgets in to the perimeter that he had requested them to do. He thanked the BET for all their hard work on the budget.

- **Code Enforcement**

Mr. Ireland greeted the members of the Board and said that this past year had been very successful. He noted that a majority of the revenue was from the construction of two new schools. He expects to tap the $5 million mark by June. He said that he was working on finding a good candidate as an inspector. This budget is basically pro forma.

Mr. Ireland was asked about filling the Deputy Director position and the inspector position. He explained that it would be important to have a Deputy Director that can take over if Mr. Ireland is not able to continue on. Mr. Ireland said that he will continue as long as possible, but the City must plan ahead.

- **Art Commission**

Ms. Godeski greeted the Board Members. She said that the only large change was the request for Special Events. She said that the group had sponsored their first event which was well attended. The Arts Commission would like to host more events on a monthly schedule. They would like to have the ability to provide snack and such for the attendees. Other than that, the budget has remained basically flat while the Commission has become more active.

- **EDC**

Mr. Ellis then spoke about ECD Chief position which is currently vacant. The salary will be adjusted accordingly when the new candidate is hired.

Mr. Schmitt said that they had taken the 1% reduction from the department from the Chief's salary. Mr. Ellis said that the department was down 21%.

Mr. Abrams asked where they were in the hiring process for the new ECD chief. Mayor Rilling said that they were moving forward in the process and looking forward to hiring someone soon.

- **Planning and Zoning**.

Mr. Ellis said that Ms. Cherichetti would be speaking about Planning and Zoning. She said that there were now two dedicated staff members just doing code enforcement. There was a request for $6,000 for the Norwalk Watershed Committee staff member. The City had pledged in the past to support this.

Mr. Abrams asked how many employees were in the department. Ms. Cherichetti said that it covered 13 employees, most of which were new hires.

- **Conservations Commission**

Mr. Ellis said that they had combined Conservation Department with Planning and Zoning and it was included in the Planning and Zoning accounts.

- **TMP**

Mr. Travers said that he and Garrett were present to answer questions. He said that they reviewed the line items and noted where they were expecting increases in the line items. He said that they had been working on the Complete Street legislation, which has been completed. It has always been the intent for the City to have a Vision Zero policy and they have secured some grant funding. There would be some training and education expenses that involved a fiber network for the traffic signals around the City. Some of the training will involve the training for maintaining the new system.

Mr. Abrams asked about the $15,000 increase in professional service. Mr. Travers said that part of that money was about the Walk Bridge and another portion was for Vision Zero that will help with traffic management.

Mr. Jellerette asked about the traffic signal. Mr. Travers said that the signal system was an aging system that were about 40 or 50 years old. These present a challenge for repairs. The City has introduced adaptive signal technology on West Avenue by the mall and this has worked well. The goal is to wrap around to Van Zant and other streets for signals. Discussion followed about whether the signals would be a Capital Budget item rather than the Operational budget.

Mr. Jellerette asked for clarification on the Walk Bridge items, which Mr. Travers reviewed with him. He then asked about the salary adjustments. Mr. Ellis said that there was an ARPA funded position that was added mid-year.

- **Business Development and Tourism**

Ms. Godeski said that there had not been many changes and the major line items were for advertising and some agency contractual obligation. There are some small changes because there are now three people in the department.

Mr. Abrams asked for clarification on the agency fees. Ms. Godeski gave a brief overview of the various aspects of the contract which includes marketing for the City.

- **Historical Commission**

Mr. Ellis said that there was an 18.2% increase in the budget and Mr. Westmoreland was present to answer questions about these project.

Mr. Westmoreland said that they manage 10 historic City owned buildings and four historic cemeteries. He gave a brief overview of the various buildings, such as the Lockwood Mathews Mansion, the Historical Society. He said that they spend about $10,000 to repair cemetery stones and maintain historical objects. These costs have been moved over to the Operational budget. He said that there was a number of HVAC repairs to be done at the Museum and the lower floor of the Health Department where the museum artifacts are stored.

Mr. Westmoreland said that last year, the City hired a curator to help manage the Museum’s artifact and collections. They are also anticipating an increase with the Lockwood Mathews Mansion due to all the new systems. No one knows what those costs might be right now. Facilities is also looking at taking over the management of the building.

Mr. Jellerette asked what the timeline was for the completion of the Mansion. Mr. Westmoreland said that they expect to start moving back into the building in April and should be open again in May or June.

Mr. Abrams thanked the Department heads for their hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. JELLERETTE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted.

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services