

CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE CLAIMS COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 14, 2023
BY Zoom Virtual Teleconference:

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ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; James Frayer; John Lopez; Douglas Sutton;
Dajuan Wiggins; Heather Dunn

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer;
Paul Gorman, Interim Tax Assessor; Chitsamay Lam, Comptroller; Joyce
Liu, IT Director; Thomas Szabo, Waste and Recycling Program Manager

OTHERS: Alan Dutton, Oak Hills Park Authority

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Burnett called the Roll as indicated above. A Quorum was present.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present who wished to comment this evening.

4. APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

November 9, 2023- Regular Meeting

Corrections to the minutes were submitted, including the correction to the spelling of Mr. Camacho's name.

**** MR. FRAYER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (MS. DUNN AND MR. FRAYER)**

5. CLAIMS COMMITTEE: December 2023

6. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS DATED DECEMBER 2023 – Receive Report and discuss.

7. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS DATED NOVEMBER 2023– RECEIVE REPORT AND DISCUSS.

Ms. Biagiarelli described her role in participating in the Finance Claims Committee meetings. She said she will send a two page narrative to the members of the Committee next month describing why she attends these meetings. She described the tax refund (claims) process saying that any refunds over \$10,000 require Committee and full Common Council approval.

**** MR. BURNETT MOVED TO APPROVE THE CLAIMS REPORT THAT**
INCLUDES FOUR ITEMS OVER THE \$10,000 THRESHOLD
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

This item will be moved forward to the next full meeting of the Common Council on January 9, 2024.

City of Norwalk
Finance Claims Committee
December 14, 2023
By Zoom Virtual Teleconference
Page 2

Ms. Biagiarelli explained that each month she presents a narrative on the actions of the Tax Collector's office. She reviewed the fiscal year to date tax collection and said they are where they need to be for this time of year. They are still working on their new tax collection system.

Ms. Biagiarelli said that a few months ago she was asked to include a flyer on the elderly tax relief program. She said the flyer will be sent to everyone who gets a real estate bill. Ms. Biagiarelli reported that they are working on the tax sale scheduled for July 2024. So far they have collected close to \$500,000.

Mr. Burnett thanked Ms. Biagiarelli and Mr. Gorman for getting the elderly tax relief program communication out. This is another step forward in bringing information to the residents.

In response to Mr. Frayer's question, Mr. Gorman gave an overview of the criteria for the elderly tax relief program. The pamphlet will be on the Tax Collector and Tax Assessor's websites. Ms. Biagiarelli added that it is funded entirely by the City.

8. TAX ASSESSOR UPDATE ON THE REVALUATION PROCESS.

Mr. Gorman reported that the notice of new assessments were mailed. He described the charge of the Tax Assessor's office. He said that formal hearings on the revaluation are being scheduled.

Mr. Frayer asked for an overview of how they arrived at the revaluation calculations. Mr. Gorman said that the residential amounts went up 35% give or take. It is a little murkier with commercial properties at around 10 – 15%. Mr. Frayer asked if any abatements are starting to disappear. Mr. Gorman said the mall is going into year four. He described the tax abatement structure.

Mr. Gorman walked the Committee members through the revaluation appeal process. He suggested people call the 800 number on the letter to make an appointment and urged people to do their research to determine if the value of their property is accurate for October 1, 2023.

9. RECEIVED OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR OCTOBER 2023.

Mr. Dutton reviewed the Oak Hills Park Authority's report that was included in the meeting packet. He added that Dry Dock's last day will be on January 7, 2024; they are up to date on their lease payments. A committee was created to find a new concessionaire and an RFP went out. They hope to have a recommendation by their January 18th meeting. Two candidates run municipal golf course restaurants.

Mr. Burnett asked Mr. Dutton if they are looking for a vendor to provide the same type of service. Mr. Dutton said there are no real changes. Mr. Frayer asked Mr. Dutton to describe his

background. Mr. Dutton said he has a lot of experience managing private clubs in New York City.

**** MR. LOPEZ MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO AUTHORIZE A SINGLE SOURCE PURCHASE ORDER TO AMCS GROUP INC. FOR A SOFTWARE PLATFORM TO MANAGE THE TRUCK SCALES AND CUSTOMER ACCOUNTS AT THE CITY TRANSFER STATION AND YARD WASTE SITE; PRICING NOT TO EXCEED \$72,900.00, WITH AN OPTION TO EXTEND THIS SERVICE FOR ONE EXTRA YEAR. ACCOUNT NO. 01-4042-5299 AND 01-1370-5742.**

Ms. Liu and Mr. Szabo reviewed the request.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

This item will be moved forward to the next full meeting of the Common Council on January 9, 2024.

11. UPDATE ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 2025 OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET CYCLE.

Mr. Dachowitz gave an update and said the proforma was sent to all departments and meetings are taking place. He described the operating and capital budget processes.

Mr. Frayer pointed out that he saw the news today that the CFO will not be with the City after the holidays; he asked about plans going forward. He added that the staff is very good and that Mr. Dachowitz has been a strong leader. He said he has trepidation about what is happening. Mr. Burnett said that is a question to ask the Mayor and his team. It will be addressed with the Mayor to determine what the plan is so there is no lapse in the budget process.

Mr. Dachowitz explained he accepted another position and his last day with the City will be December 31st. He said the team is excellent and at the same time, he is working on a transition Agreement with the City.

Mr. Burnett thanked Mr. Dachowitz for his expertise over the past five years and wished him well. Mr. Dachowitz said it has been a pleasure and privilege to serve the City of Norwalk.

12. ADJOURNMENT.

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

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services