

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 8, 2022
BY ZOOM VIRTUAL TELECONFERENCE**

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.

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 provide "live comments" will need to register in advance and use the Zoom meeting platform. All participants will be muted upon entering the meeting. To speak, click the "raise your hand indicator" and you will be called on by the host of the meeting during the public comment section. 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.

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 read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Chitsamay Lam at clam@norwalkct.org to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Gregory Burnett, Chair; Nora Niedzielski Eichner; Jenn McMurrer.
Diana Revolut 7:04 p.m.

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer;
Bill Ford, Tax Accessor

OTHERS: Joseph Andrasko, 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. He noted there was not a Quorum present this evening.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

Ms. Revolus joined the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

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

October 13, 2022 – Regular Meeting

November 9, 2022- Special Joint Finance and Claims and Board of Education Finance Committee Meeting

The approval of the minutes was deferred to next month's meeting.

5. CLAIMS COMMITTEE: November 2022 and December 2022

Ms. Biagiarelli said there were no claims requests this evening.

6. NARRATIVE ON TAX COLLECTIONS dated December 5, 2022 – Receive Report and discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that tax collections are on track. The prior year's collection took a hit due to credits that had to be taken out of current collections. She noted that the City budgets for this.

7. MONTHLY TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS dated October 2022 and November 2022– Receive Report and discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli reported that a collection agency is doing a mailing. The costs are born by the delinquent tax payer. The first mailing will go out tomorrow and they expect it will generate a lot of questions.

Another issue is that normally at this time the tax bills are at the printer, but they will go out later due to issues with the software. They hope the bills will go out possibly before the Christmas holiday. Mr. Burnett asked if this would impact the due date. Ms. Biagiarelli explained that by law the taxes are due on January 1st and payable by February 1st. The bills were already issued in June, so technically the residents have their bill, but Norwalk allows residents to pay their taxes in installments. Ms. Biagiarelli said they like to bill early, but by law they are supposed to have the bills out by the end of the month.

8. RECEIVED OAK HILLS AUTHORITY MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2022 AND OCTOBER 2022.

Mr. Andrasko gave an overview of the Oak Hill Park Authority financials. He said their financials continue to be strong. They were a little over budget in the first four months of the year. Golf rounds and park rental are up. They are focusing on contract work and capital improvements. Their operating income was above budget.

Mr. Andrasko reported that they are having difficulties finding staff. They completed their audit and provided 1% back to the city the amount is around \$15,000 to \$20,000. They are going into their quiet period. Mr. Burnett asked when the Committee would get a copy of the audit. Mr. Andrasko said he will send it out today to Mr. Dachowitz' office.

Mr. Burnett asked for an update on the restaurant. Mr. Andrasko said he had nothing to add to the story that was recently published. It is ongoing contract negotiations.

Mr. Burnett said he looked forward to receiving the audit report. It appears the Park is in a good financial situation despite the situation with the restaurant.

9. REPORT OF THE TAX ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Mr. Ford reported that a number of things happened in the last two years. The State updated the elderly financial amount and next month he will be able to provide those numbers.

There have been a number of computer updates going on. They continue to move ahead. The Department of Motor Vehicles missed 500 vehicles, but due to the City's delays, they were able to add them to the supplemental bill. They are moving ahead with QDS in February and next month will come back with the numbers and the public notice for the revaluation for 2023.

Ms. Niedzielski Eichner asked how they will get the revaluation information out to the residents. Mr. Ford said that in addition to the press releases they send updates to the residents. They also provide information to Customer Service and to the Police for when the people are in the field. Mr. Burnett asked if they would be providing educational sessions. Mr. Ford said that an education session is part of the plan. Mr. Dachowitz added that when they created the RFP, the communication program was an important factor in choosing a firm.

10. CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS DISCUSSION.

Mr. Dachowitz gave an overview of the operating budget process and said the budget packets were sent to the department heads in October. Mayor Rilling proposed a 3 ½% increase by department. The end of the process results in the Mayor and CFO's budget. In the end, the Board of Estimate can shift the numbers, they are expected to come in under the cap. Mr.

Dachowitz described the capital budget process. He said there are some expenses that cannot be controlled or kept to a 3 ½% increase. They use the rainy-day fund to moderate the mill rate increase.

Mr. Dachowitz said he expects a very tough economic environment, and they are trying to keep costs low.

Mr. Burnett reminded the Committee members that their next meeting on January 12, 2023, will be a joint meeting with the Board of Education.

Mr. Dachowitz was asked if he would have the numbers from the Board of Education for the next meeting. He noted the Board of Education is focusing on their strategic priorities and where they want to spend their money. Mr. Burnett requested that before the next joint meeting that Mr. Dachowitz provide at least a range.

Mr. Dachowitz said he spent time with Mr. Lo and Mr. Giuliano. The delays will inflate the numbers and the numbers they are working with will have to change. He said he is not sure the reimbursement amounts will inflate along with the costs. He noted that the State will not reimburse the City for the pool at the proposed new Norwalk High School. The gross cost of a construction project will go up. Another issue is that the State holds an 11% retainage fee. When building a \$200 million dollar high school, the 11% will have to be laid out and they will not get that money back. Mr. Dachowitz said he did not know if the reimbursement will match the increase.

Mr. Dachowitz said he is focusing on being sure the capital projects are financed, but noted they need to keep an eye toward the future.

Mr. Burnett said they will keep this item as a standing update.

11. ADJOURNMENT.

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services