

**CITY OF NORWALK
FINANCE/CLAIMS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
JULY 13, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Greg Burnett, Chair; Nora Niedzielski-Eichner, John Kydes,
Jenn McMurrer, Diana Revolus

STAFF: Lisa Biagiarelli, Tax Collector; Alan Dutton, Oak Hills Authority;
Paul Gorman, Deputy Tax Assessor; Henry Dachowitz, Chief Financial Officer;
Joyce Liu, Director IT; Norwalk Public Schools IT: Ralph Valenzisi, Dave Hopp.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Burnett called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., and called the roll. He acknowledged the above members in attendance, and stated that a quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no one in attendance or emails received for public participation.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

June 8, 2023 – Regular Meeting

- ** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF JUNE 8, 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Claims Committee: Receive the Monthly Claims Report

Review and approve claims as required for Claims Report.

Ms. Biagiarelli reported as there was one special request that required approval as it was above the \$10,000 threshold. There was a duplicate tax payment in the amount of \$12,000 and a refund is due to the home owner as the escrow company also paid.

- ** MS. NIEDZIELSKI-EICHNER MOVED TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL
REQUEST REFUND TO THE TAXPAYER HOMEOWNER AS PRESENTED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

City of Norwalk
Finance Claims Committee
July 13, 2023

Narrative on Tax Collections dated July 10, 2023 – Receive Report and Discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli presented the report and noted there were two spreadsheets reflecting FY 2023 closing and beginning collections on new tax levy starting July, with advanced payments of 2% in June. She asked to focus on end of June 2023 and referred to the narrative as contained in the agenda packet, with excerpts highlighted as follows:

As of the end of June 2023, with the twelve-month fiscal year having been completed, we had collected in excess of \$359 million against our \$365 million adjusted levy, or 98.51%. Advance collections on the 2022 grand list, or payments processed by our office in June 2023, we processed approximately \$7.4 million in payments, or 1.97% of our \$379 million new adjusted levy during the month of June, 2023.

Software conversion has resulted in numerous challenges with tax bill format changes, now separated by the type of tax: real estate and sewer use, motor vehicle, and business personal property, issues with tax credits, motor vehicle values, and escrow coding. Tax bills went out later than target schedule, yet things are going well. Office is fully staffed; the newly formatted tax bills have been well received, and to acknowledge the lateness of the mailing and to give taxpayers a full 30 days to pay their tax bills without penalty. We now ask for everyone's help in communicating that message to taxpayers.

Questions and comments were fielded relative to motor vehicle value assessments and issues with inaccurate tax bills. Mr. Gorman provided an explanation of the issues on how this is being addressed. There was discussion on alerting tax payers with communication measures on the possible errors. Mr. Dachowitz clarified how the values are assessed and the involved process and measures that are taken to ensure there is no systemic issue with the accuracy of the bills.

There was further discussion and it was agreed to take no action as the estimated number of errors is approximately 5%

Monthly Tax Collector's Reports - Receive Report and discuss.

Ms. Biagiarelli referred to the reports and spreadsheets as contained in the agenda packet. There were no further questions.

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE TAX COLLECTOR'S REPORTS AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Receive Oak Hills Authority Monthly Financial Statements for May 2023.

Mr. Alan Dutton presented the Oak Hills Authority financial statements as contained in the agenda packet and highlighted revenues and expenses.

Operations Updates:

- Total golf rounds are 14% over budget for the first 11 months of FY23. Beginning of the year and April rounds helped this overage grow so high.
- OHPA has made capital improvements on several structures and grounds year-to-date, including the tennis facility.
- Discount ID card sales are back fully in-line with budget.

YTD Financial Highlights:

- FY23 YTD net operating income was over budget by \$346k and we ended May with a \$578k cash balance which includes \$28k in the capital reserve bank account.
 - Revenue was over-budget by 251k thanks to strong golf and cart rounds.
 - Expenses were \$95k lower than budget due to lower than expected wages as a result of being understaffed and park maintenance.
- OHPA made \$105k in repayments to the City for the first 11 months of this fiscal year. The annual 1% of gross golf revenue additional debt payment was made in November.

Other:

- Our FY2024 fiscal budget is completed with presentation to the Authority and approval to take place in the June meeting.
- Our FY2023 financial audit will begin at the end of July.

There was discussion about the City debt repayments and Ms. Lam provided a summary of the current \$1.8 in Receivables. Mr. Dutton fielded questions and comments about the general good financial position and plans for Capital Improvements.

Tax Assessor update on the Revaluation process

Mr. Gorman provided an update on the revaluation process and noted that is tracking well in line with expectations, referred to the spreadsheet that provides an overview of the progress of the 2023 revaluation:

Residential inspections are at 81.5% complete and targeted for a July 31 completion.

Commercial is at 59.8% complete and is targeted to be complete by 8/31/2023.

The first wave of data mailers has been sent out to the property owners. These mailers will allow for increased data collection from owners that were not home at the time of the first visit attempt. They will be able to either complete the data mailer and return with changes or call Vision to request an inspection. In response to questions on what else can be done to improve communication, Mr. Gorman reviewed the update on letters and email notices to homeowners has been positive to date. Mailers will be going out in waves over the remainder of the summer, so that we may capture as much information as possible.

CFO FY23 Financial Updates

Mr. Dachowitz provided a preliminary update of the tentative year end as an early view of positive general trend. He summarized actual revenues versus the budget of \$410 million at \$402.7 that is short \$7.4 million in revenue that is expected to shrink as more revenues are actualized. Looking at expenditures, there is a favorable expense below budget of \$16.7 million.

The Board of Education is seeing a positive year end and is expecting carryovers to be reflected as the FY2023 year end is being finalized. \$7Million ARPA funds and rainy day draw down of \$4 million were used by various departments to offset shortfalls in the current year. The City is preparing the presentation to the rating agencies and the full report should be available next month.

Along with this is the sale of bonds of \$70 million, which provides flexibility of how they show the final numbers. Ms. Lam added that this represent the preliminary year end and over the next 60 days of cash receivables and accounts payable.

11. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to issue purchase orders to Whalley Computer Associates, for the supply of 1200 HP Chromebooks, an amount not to exceed \$362,400, Account No. 09245010-5777-C0112 (budgeted 2023/2024 IT Capital item).

Mr. Dave Hopp, Norwalk Public Schools Information & Technology, presented the item and provided the rationale for the request to purchase 1200 Chromebooks from 2023-2024 Capital budgeted funds. He explained these devices are to replace no longer serviceable units and out of Google's update cycle. Units are only upgradeable for about five years. Most software run on these devices requires the latest upgrade. Most of these units will be given to students in first and second grade, and they will keep the same device throughout elementary school.

Mr. Ralph Valenzisi fielded questions and comments on the recycling of slightly used units and explained that they are developing a plan for repurposing Chromebooks into the community to non-profit agencies.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AND TO FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY 25, 2023.**

AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE PURCHASE ORDERS TO WHALLEY COMPUTER ASSOCIATES, FOR THE SUPPLY OF 1200 HP CHROMEBOOKS, AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$362,400, ACCOUNT NO. 09245010-5777-C0112 (BUDGETED 2023/2024 IT CAPITAL ITEM).

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

12. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to issue a purchase order to Total Communication, in an amount not to exceed \$126,679.45 for purchase Pure Storage Flash Array with 36 Months 24/7 Support and storage installation. Pure State Contract Pricing Applied: Contract #20PSX0108A Account No. 09241370 5777 C0375.

Ms. Lu presented the item and fielded questions and comments.

City's current network system is outdated and requires an upgrade. Given the crucial nature of network services to the city's daily operations, IT has decided to build a new parallel network system to ensure business continuity. As part of the infrastructure upgrade plan, we are incorporating a secondary Internet Service Provider (ISP) to guarantee a smooth transition to the new network system.

Through this approach, we will thoroughly test the new system while the old system remains operational, allowing us to strategically migrate departments and services to the new infrastructure. Our primary goal is to minimize disruptions to city operations throughout the transition process.

After conducting an open bid for this project, Cablevision Lightpath emerged as the winner. Lightpath, a subdivision of Cablevision, they specialize in delivering high-bandwidth, scalable fiber optic internet access.

The Bid Evaluation Committee has carefully reviewed the proposals and has recommended Cablevision Lightpath LLC as the most suitable choice for this project. The key factors influencing this decision were their technical expertise, competitive pricing, and their ability to execute the project within the required timeframe.

We are confident that selecting Cablevision Lightpath will ensure the successful implementation of the new parallel network system, allowing us to provide enhanced services and a more reliable network infrastructure to support the city's operations.

Ms. Niedzielski-Eichner spoke in support of providing adequate support for storage and the importance of servicing the technology needs of the City. Ms. Liu noted that IT is developing an infrastructure upgrade plan and she will provide this to the Committee very soon.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AND TO FORWARD ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY 25, 2023.**

AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO TOTAL COMMUNICATION, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$126,679.45 FOR PURCHASE PURE STORAGE FLASH ARRAY WITH 36 MONTHS 24/7 SUPPORT AND STORAGE INSTALLATION. PURE STATE CONTRACT PRICING APPLIED: CONTRACT #20PSX0108A ACCOUNT NO. 09241370 5777 C0375.

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

13. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to issue a purchase order to Schneider Electric, in an amount not to exceed \$37,063.00 for UPS Battery Replacement for Data Center.
Account No. 09231370 5777 C0375.

Ms. Lu presented the item and reviewed the technology improvements for the data center.

**** MS. MCMURRER MOVED TO APPROVE THE ITEM AND TO FORWARD
ON TO THE COMMON COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY 25, 2023.**

**AUTHORIZE THE PURCHASING AGENT TO ISSUE A PURCHASE ORDER TO
SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$37,063.00 FOR UPS
BATTERY REPLACEMENT FOR DATA CENTER.**

ACCOUNT NO. 09231370 5777 C0375

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. REVOLUS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
M. Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services