

FINAL

**THIRD TAXING DISTRICT**

of the City of Norwalk

Special Meeting

March 18, 2014

**ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners: Charles Yost, Chair; David Brown, Debora Goldstein, Dr. Michael Intrieri, Treasurer

**STAFF:** James Smith, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Assistant General Manager; Atty. John Bove, Matt Allred, Accountant

**OTHERS:** Dawn Lund, Utility Financial Solutions (via telephone conference call)

**CALL TO ORDER.**

Commissioner Yost called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT.**

There was no one present from the public.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

**• Maplewood - Strategy in Negotiations.**

The Commissioners, Mr. Smith, Mr. Scofield, and Atty. Bove entered into Executive Session at 7:01 p.m. They returned to public session at 7:29 p.m.

**JUMAR NEWSLETTER.**

Commissioner Brown said that there were numerous newsletters with substance done over a number of years, but the Jumar newsletter was not satisfactory and he was not pleased with the newsletter. Commissioner Goldstein said that her concern about the content was that if the TTD was going to go through the effort to produce it, it should have useful information. It should promote the items that people don't know, like how the rain gardens fit in with the Norwalk POCD (Plan of Conservation and Development). Discussion followed about how the information should be submitted to Jumar for inclusion in the newsletter and how frequently it should be done. It was the consensus of the Commission that Jumar should email the commissioners a week before the newsletter comes out for content approval. Mr. Smith pointed out that the old newsletters used to spotlight the local businesses. Commissioner Yost suggested a Project column, and a Community Corner. Commissioner Goldstein commented that EnergyStar puts out a newsletter with tips on energy conservation.

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT NEED.**

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FINAL

Mr. Smith said that there were some key positions in the TTD that need to be filled. He said that there would be an advertisement for a line foreman position in the near future. The second important position that needs to be filled would be for an executive assistant. The position would cover items like putting together the agenda package, RFPs for vendors, Strategic planning or working on the operating budget. Mr. Smith said that he was not sure if it would be a full time position.

Mr. Smith said that the line foreman's position was a well paid position. Bringing an executive assistant in would add additional overhead to the department. Both positions will have to be supported through our existing rate structures. He then listed a number of tasks that the line foreman would oversee that he is currently overseeing, such as the tear down of the Bento property structure and the construction of a consolidated materials storage facility. Mr. Smith said he would like to have someone hired for this position within the next 45 days. Mr. Smith said that he would like someone hired as an Executive Assistant within the next 90 days. Discussion followed about the various needs for the District.

Commissioner Yost said that there had been previous discussion about a succession plan, which would involve a long term strategic plan. Mr. Smith said that he had spoken with Mr. Timothy Bloggett who does this type of work. He said that he would like to get the operating budget in place before July 1st. A strategic plan would help with goals and objectives and how to get there in 5 or 10 years. Both Commissioner Yost and Dr. Intieri said that they would prefer a 3 to 5 year plan. Mr. Smith said that there were some short term goals that he would like to see completed before working on the long term strategies. Once that is done, the strategic plan would help moving this to the next level. Discussion followed.

### **RFP PROCESS AND CALENDAR.**

Commission Yost said that there would be an upcoming meeting to discuss the RFP process. Commissioner Goldstein informed the Commissioners that she had downloaded several RFP plans from neighboring towns. Dr. Intieri said that he had spoken with the head of the Stamford Ferguson Library about this and he was willing to meet with the Commissioners to discuss the RFP process.

### **RATE STUDY - FINAL RATE DESIGN AND PCA CALCULATION.**

*Ms. Dawn Lund joined the meeting via conference call at 8:15 p.m.*

Mr. Smith introduced Ms. Lund of Utility Financial Services, LLC, and said that Ms. Lund would give the Commissioners an overview of the final rate design and ppa calculation. Ms. Lund said that there had been some discussion regarding moving the rate design closer to cost of service. Right now, it is a revenue neutral design, but in the future, there may be different rate adjustments. She then reviewed the details of revenue neutral design included in the study.

FINAL

Ms. Lund then spoke about the fuel adjustment costs. If this is used as a budget adjustment mechanism, then the kilowatt hour rate is inflated artificially while the fuel cost adjustment remains low. However, an annual review of the rates will be necessary. Discussion about this followed.

Commissioner Brown asked how Ms. Lund came up with the assumptions for the rate designs. Mr. Allred then reviewed the details of how the budget had been balanced in the past. Mr. Smith said that it was important to increase the base rates rather than adjusting the fuel adjustment cost. He pointed out that the base rate goes up and down over time due to inflation or additional revenue/expenses are incurred in the operation of the utility.

Commissioner Yost asked Ms. Lund if she would write up a narrative that would explain the change in philosophy for the customers in simple English. Discussion followed.

Mr. Smith said that one decision that needed to be made was when the new costs would go into effect. Commissioner Brown suggested July 1, 2014. Commissioner Goldstein said that it would be good, particularly if there was an operating budget in place at that time.

The discussion then moved to the security lighting. This would include the sodium lights at the beach, Vet's Park, and parking lots. Ms. Lund said that the fact that the Commission was not changing the rates, but the methodology. The new formula would be moving all the costs up into the base rate. The administration will be working on the new rate design and plugging in figures to see the projections.

Commissioner Brown asked whether there would have to be a public hearing on the rate change. Mr. Smith said that those regulations were for private utilities, such as CL&P. Since this is a revenue neutral formula, there is no rate change. Discussion followed.

*Ms. Lund left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.*

Mr. Smith said that he would do a narrative and present it to the Commission. This will be brought up for a vote on the next agenda.

**ADJOURNMENT.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER BROWN SECONDED**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services