

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT

January 9, 2012

ATTENDANCE: Commissioners: Paul Kokias, Chair; David Brown,
Charles Yost

STAFF: George Leary, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Assist.
Gen. Mgr.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Kokias called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Kokias stated that the order of the agenda would be changed to have public comments first then to move up item 8 to after item 5.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Diane Cece, 37 Homestead Place, Norwalk stated that she was here to discuss the bids and noted that she had not seen a notice in the local papers. Mr. Leary replied that the notice did run, and Ms. Cece asked if and how this is verified. Mr. Leary replied that there is usually a tear-sheet, but he had not yet received one. Ms. Cece then asked what happens if it is determined that a legal notice was not advertised, if the RFPs have to go back to bid, and Mr. Leary replied that that would be the case.

Mr. Kokias asked if there were others who wished to make public comments and hearing none, proceeded with the order of the agenda.

Commission Organization

Mr. Kokias stated that this item was to formally vote on the election of a Chairman. Mr. Brown stated that he would be supporting Mr. Kokias as Chairman and noted that this was a most important time for the Commissioners as there is much going on with the District's plans. He added that Mr. Kokias has the perfect background as a local businessman and he was pleased to recommend him as the chair.

FINAL

- ** MR. BROWN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF MR. PAUL KOKIAS AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE THIRD TAXING DISTRICT.
- ** MR. YOST SECONDED.
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MINUTES OF MEETING

Mr. Brown asked about the word “likely” in the last sentence of and there was a discussion of the reimbursement process. Mr. Leary clarified that although the procedures are reliable, it is not certain until reimbursement is actually received. It was agreed to leave the minutes as prepared by Mr. Leary.

Ms. Cece asked about the date of the minutes on the agenda, and requested that they be labeled as a Special Meeting, and Mr. Leary noted that it was a typo. She asked about approval of the December 5 minutes of the last regular meeting, and Mr. Leary replied that they would be added to the agenda for approval next month.

- ** MR. BROWN MOTIONED TO APPROVE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DECEMBER 14, 2011 AS SUBMITTED.
- ** MR. YOST SECONDED.
- ** MOTION PASSED WITH TWO VOTES IN FAVOR, NONE OPPOSED AND ONE ABSTENTION (KOKIAS).

Annual Meeting Preparation

Library Budget

Mr. Stanley Siegel, President of the Library Board of Trustees presented the budget proposal and stated that there is no increase in the budget despite a significant increase in services and programs provided by the library. He added that in view of tight budgets they are seeking other means of supplementing their budget through local business sponsorships. Mr. Yost asked about Kindle and Nook computer book availability, and Mr. Siegel replied that at this time it is not available due to limited usage by the population segment that is served. He added that the interest level is at minimum based upon the small segment that uses this technology and noted that the users usually purchase items rather than rent as it provides greater usage options.

Mr. Siegel mentioned programs that are now available at the Marvin along with new family programs, and he reviewed his articles that are published in the Norwalk Citizen that highlight the East Norwalk Library program schedule.

Mr. Brown asked about grants and a representative from the Library Board (name not given) stated that they do not qualify for grants since the library is not a municipal designation and is only an association library. She explained further that since they are not ADA compliant it makes them ineligible according to state statutes. Mr. Brown asked about grants from the private sector and Mr. Siegel replied that they have applied for a grant from AT&T for technology along with a sponsorship from a Danbury based firm, but that in general the neighborhood association is not broad enough for qualification for grant subsidies. It was noted that the Library audit was completed, and was 100% clean. Mr. Brown asked how he could obtain a copy, and Mr. Leary replied that it was available upon request.

Mr. Siegel thanked the Commissioners for their continued financial support from the District and added that he looks forward to continued growth of library programs and services in the upcoming year.

District Budget

Mr. Scofield presented a draft of the 2012-13 District Budget and answered questions from the Commissioners on areas where the proposed increases were inconsistent with this year's budget and projected actual expenditures. Mr. Brown asked about the high increase over this year to Parks Grounds Keeping, and Mr. Scofield replied that this year's actual is down due to the cancellation of one of the concerts. Mr. Yost asked about the actual levels of prior years and Mr. Leary noted that the maintenance spending is weather sensitive. Regarding the Holiday Events, Mr. Scofield explained that rental fees for the Show Mobile have gone up from the Parks & Recreation Department.

A discussion ensued regarding how to trim costs for the Annual Meeting and Mr. Yost suggested that the post cards announcing the meeting was

an unnecessary expense. Mr. Scofield replied that notification was included in the bills, and public notices in the Hour were done this year to avoid the postage expense. Mr. Kokias stated that he felt the post cards were better as readership of the newspapers is lower and many residents no longer subscribe. Mr. Brown asked if the verbatim transcript was required, and Mr. Scofield stated that it is very expensive, and it was decided last year to use alternative ways to have a recording on file.

Mr. Brown stated that it was decided last year that it should go out one week prior to the next annual meeting, rather than just a day or so to be an effective and timely reminder.

Ms. Cece asked to make a comment and was recognized by the Chairman. She stated that she felt it was important to keep the post card mailing. , it was an important part of the meeting notification, and noted that many people do not read the public notice section of the newspapers.

Regarding the Firehouse Building Expense and Maintenance, a discussion ensued on the safety of the stairs, and it was decided that Mr. Johnson would do to a determination of the safety conditions. Ms. Cece stated that it presents a hazard and someone could fall and sue the District, and Mr. Bove recommended that repairs be made to avoid a potential liability claim. Mr. Scofield asked Mr. Johnson to examine the conditions and report if it was a hazard. Regarding the Library Building Expenses, Mr. Scofield noted that the numbers are up last year due to installation of the security alarm system along with plumbing repair of the bathrooms due to rust damages.

- ** MR. YOST MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2012-13.**
- ** MR. KOKIAS SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Health Insurance Renewal

Agent Michael Imbrogno, of Benefit Planning Services presented the proposal and summarized that the major change is recommended from

CBIA Oxford to Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield for the medical insurance for February 1, 2012-January 31, 2013. He explained that the change should be a positive one for those employees that are enrolled, as no more referrals will be needed to see a specialist, and the deductible for “out of network” providers will be lowered. Mr. Brown asked for an explanation of the levels of deductible and Mr. Imbrogno explained that based on usage the costs are relatively the same with the coverage deductible options reflected reimbursement from the district. He added that enrollment forms need to be filled out and new membership cards need to be issued to employees.

- ** MR. BROWN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL PER THE PROPOSAL FOR \$175,228 FOR 2012-13.**
- ** MR. YOST SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Christmas Tree Lighting Review

Mr. Scofield asked for feedback from the Commissioners and Mr. Brown commented that it would have been nice to have employees attend since they were acknowledged. Ms. Cece added that she agreed that they should have been in attendance as she would have liked to acknowledge the crew for their service. She added that she found it odd that a small tree is lit rather than the large tree, and would like an analysis of how this could be changed. Mr. Leary replied that it would cost at least three times more as the tree is huge and would be a higher maintenance expense to hang the lights along with the electricity. Mr. Johnson stated that the cherry picker vehicle does not reach that high and it would be very difficult to trim the tree and expensive to light it. Ms. Cece added that there needs to be a better marketing plan with signage and ads to increase the attendance.

Meter Reading System Replacement

Mr. Scofield explained that as presented in the supporting documents, the hand-held meter reading computers purchased last year are malfunctioning and the manufacturer, Radix, refuses or is unable to correct the problem. Mr. Leary reviewed the proposals considered and explained that Radix is only willing to take back units and sell more expensive units at a small discount, while the Itron system includes one unit that can do remote reads and 20 meters for remote reads with conversion. Mr. Johnson demonstrated the meter readers and it was agreed that the replacement proposal from Alexander's was the best option.

- ** **MR. KOKIAS MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT SYSTEM FROM ALEXANDER'S, INC. INCLUDING 3 JUNIPER SYSTEMS ALLEGRO HAND-HELD UNITS, SOFTWARE, CONVERSION & TRAINING AT A COST OF \$3500 INCLUDING TRADE- IN OF DEFECTIVE RADIX UNITS.**
- ** **MR. BROWN SECONDED.**
- ** **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

General Manager's Report

Mr. Leary stated that the report was included in the packet was self explanatory, and there were no issues to report with the Financial Statements.

He referred to the section on Substation Development, and stated that as asked during public comments, the bids for the engineering and possible construction of the Fitch St. Substation were received and were rather extensive in volume with a great amount of data. He added that the accepted proposals are in two forms, design, bid, build and turnkey; and he reviewed the differences and stated that most of the bids received were turnkey options that include all costs in the initial bid. He explained that the next step is for Joe Cristino, as the potential engineer and liaison to evaluate the proposals, negotiate with the most promising bidders and make a recommendation for the contract award.

Mr. Yost asked about the timing schedule and Mr. Leary replied that he will review the timing of the contract after refining the finance plan. He mentioned a few options of bonding or piggybacking on a city of Norwalk issuance or municipal lease, adding that the TTD will need to

put as much equity out of the rate stabilization fund to come up with the best financing plan. He added that he will meet with bankers soon and that a preliminary plan would be discussed at next month's meeting.

Mr. Leary added that they have directed the accountant, Mat Allred to become familiar with the accounting and documentation necessary to be able to recover our eligible costs on the Fitch St. Substation project construction and operation. He will contact CMEEC and, if necessary, ISO to assure maximum recovery of costs, and set up procedures and accounts to document our eligible expenses.

Substation Development

Interconnection Studies, Engineering Team, Site Work

Mr. Leary stated that there was a two hour conference call and a report issued from RLC for the task forces is in progress. He added that they need the ISO certification before the go ahead can be approved. He stated that the Engineering Team work is moving along nicely, and the Site Council application is in draft. Mr. Yost asked if anything could pose a monkey wrench in the process, and Mr. Leary replied that the studies have showed nothing of great concern. He added that electro-magnetic fields have high readings from the train platform but nothing involving the district. He added that the studies are extensive and include an analysis of noise level, ecological, wetlands, and environmental data.

Norden Data Center

Mr. Leary stated that there is no activity and the silence is suspect with CL&P. Mr. Brown asked if CL&P can offer low rates that we cannot complete with, and Mr. Leary replied that he has researched rates published for Stamford, and we can be competitive.

Other Items

Mr. Yost asked if the district should participate in the Energy Expo that is held at Taylor Farms Park and stated that he felt that it would be an opportunity to showcase the district's efforts with energy conservation. It was agreed that more information on the details should be reviewed.

Mr. Kokias asked about installing a car-charging station at the new substation. A discussion ensued regarding the charging process and potential usage, and the difficulties with locating it at a front parking space the East Norwalk Train Station. It was agreed that with limited usage, and the time it takes to charge, it should be reviewed at a later date with more information

Ms. Cece stated that the CFL coupon was difficult to redeem and was disappointed in the program, an asked if there were fulfillment numbers yet. Mr. Leary replied that the company can't keep up with the demands of fulfillment, so it is perceived to be a success. Ms. Cece asked to have a follow-up report of the outcome and evaluation of the program.

Mr. Kokias noted that the next meeting will be held February 6, 2012.

Adjournment

**** MR. BROWN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. KOKIAS SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services