

THIRD TAXING DISTRICT
of the City of Norwalk
Commission Meeting
January 7, 2019

- ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners: Debora Goldstein; Pamela Parkington;
Treasurer: Johnnie Mae Weldon
- STAFF:** Kevin Barber, General Manager; Ron Scofield, Asst. General Manager;
Mike Adams, General Line Foreman
- OTHERS:** Peter Johnson, CMEEC Ratepayer Representative
Richard McQuaid, Town Clerk, City of Norwalk
Mayor Harry Rilling, City of Norwalk
Steve Kleppin, Director Planning & Zoning, City of Norwalk
Kathryn Hebert, Administrative Svcs. Mgr., City of Norwalk
Lisa Burns, Principal Engineer, City of Norwalk
Laoise King, City of Norwalk
Harold Cobin, Nancy on Norwalk Photographer
- PUBLIC:** Diane Cece, Greg Fieber, Diana Carpio, Henry Carpio

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairperson Commissioner Goldstein called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Goldstein asked who from the public was attending the meeting to speak on any issues. Diane Cece of Olmstead Place came forward with two items that she wanted to bring up in terms of the evening's agenda.

- 1) Ms. Cece was disappointed in the amount of notice that the public received regarding the open Commission seat within the District. There was some informal information that was released that probably went to a very limited group of residents. She believes the formal notice went out on Friday, December 28, 2018. With the weekend and the holiday combined, there were only a couple of business days allowing for anyone who had any interest to respond.
- 2) She came to the meeting to hear the presentation on the East Avenue projects and states for the record that in general she is completely in favor of undergrounding utilities wherever there is an opportunity. She added a caveat that she states this knowing full well that she is not aware of all the pros and cons of being able to go underground within

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the City. She would like to hear that as well, so she can make a better-informed decision, but in general she is in favor of the undergrounding.

APPOINTMENT AND SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Goldstein opened the floor for nominations.

**** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON NOMINATED JOHNNIE MAE WELDON, WHO IS CURRENTLY THE TREASURER.**

Commissioner Parkington went on to say that she was elected by the good citizens of the Third Taxing District as Treasurer. She has been to almost every meeting and is on board with everything that is taking place. Commissioner Parkington would like her to join the Commission with a voting right.

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN SECONDED THE NOMINATION.**

Commissioner Goldstein also wanted to state that she found Johnnie Mae Weldon to be engaged and thoughtful. She has had extensive involvement in the community. She has been present at meetings and is participatory as she can possibly be without a formal vote. She has also been endorsed by the ratepayers of East Norwalk by having already been elected as Treasurer. Commissioner Goldstein pointed out that should Ms. Weldon agree to stand for this election and is appointed, this may in fact be the first time in the Commission's history where all three Commission seats are held by women.

Commissioner Goldstein asked Johnnie Mae Weldon if she would agree to her appointment. Ms. Weldon replied, "yes."

The vote was taken. **THE VOTE PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Goldstein asked Richard McQuaid, Town Clerk of the City of Norwalk to please Swear in Ms. Weldon into her newly appointed position.

Before beginning, Mr. McQuaid thanked Mr. David Brown for his contributions to the City of Norwalk, not just in the Third Taxing District, but his overall community involvement and he wishes him well in his future endeavors.

At this time, Mr. McQuaid read the oath to Johnnie Mae Weldon. She replied, "I will."

Ms. Weldon thanked everyone in attendance and the Commission for giving her the opportunity to take the Commission position.

ELECTION OF NEW CHAIRPERSON

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Commissioner Goldstein said with Commissioner Brown's departure, a new Chairperson will need to be elected to serve until the next regular election day or until the ByLaws are instituted and duly passed. As of now, it would be until the November 2019 election.

**** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON NOMINATED JOHNNIE MAE WELDON AS CHAIRPERSON UNTIL THE NEXT ELECTION.**

Commissioner Goldstein asked Commissioner Weldon if she would stand as Chairperson if elected. She replied that she would.

**** COMMISSIONER WELDON SECONDED.**

**** TWO IN FAVOR (COMMISSIONERS PARKINGTON AND WELDON)**

**** ONE OPPOSED (COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN)**

**** THE MOTION PASSED 2 TO 1.**

CITY OF NORWALK PRESENTATION – EAST AVENUE PROJECTS

Mr. Barber reminded the Commission that he and Mr. Scofield met with Mayor Rilling and his staff on November 28, 2018 to discuss the projects affecting East Avenue and the City's desire to have the utilities relocated underground. At that time, Mayor Rilling also made an inquiry about the property at 215 East Avenue. Mr. Barber suggested to Mayor Rilling that he and his staff attend a Commission meeting and make their presentation in order for the Commission to understand what the City is proposing.

Laoise King stated that she would like the Commission to consider this presentation as "opening the door" to a discussion about the two topics. The City is not making a formal proposal at this time.

Mayor Rilling introduced the City of Norwalk staff that were in attendance. The purpose of the presentation is to talk about the East Avenue corridor and what the City would like to see happen, but he also understands that there are some challenges to underground utilities that Messrs. Barber and Scofield had explained to them in their previous meeting. There are two main topics – one is the undergrounding of the utilities along the East Avenue corridor and the other is aligning the entrance to the Metro North commuter lot with Fort Point Street.

Mayor Rilling called on Lisa Burns to explain some of the things that are happening along East Avenue and hopefully will receive good feedback from the Commission.

Lisa Burns presented the renderings of East Avenue showing the five projects being considered from the I-95 thruway bridge down to Winfield Street. Each of the projects has an opportunity where the City can make street improvements from curb-to-curb and sidewalk, trying to implement a complete street solution, improving the pedestrian mobility, improving access to the train station and trying to unify the East Avenue corridor. The five projects include:

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- Project #102-331 – Installation of a “diverging diamond interchange” near the I-95 ramps from Hendricks Avenue to St. John Street, which would eliminate risky left-hand turns drivers take to get onto the highway.
- Myrtle Avenue Traffic Signal Replacement - The City has applied for a signal replacement at Myrtle Avenue through a grant application. It looks very promising that the City will receive the grant and also conduct some other ADA improvements. The City should have an answer on the grant sometime in February.
- Project #102-297 (2 components) East Avenue Road Reconstruction – Myrtle Street to Fort Point Street and then Van Zant Street to Winfield Street. This is the same project that has been around since the late 1990’s. It appears it is finally going to move forward in conjunction with the Walk Bridge project. This is a City project, which is City designed and the construction funding is provided through a grant that the City is receiving.
- Walk Bridge Project (Metro North Railroad Bridge) – In conjunction with the Walk Bridge Project, the East Avenue railroad bridge will be made wider (4 lanes).

Ms. King indicated that Third Taxing District already has some undergrounding in this area that is not part of the service to ratepayers, but part of the distribution system.

Ms. King continued showing the different renderings of the East Avenue corridor, both ground level and aerial, explaining the different projects taking place along the way and describing what the new look will be. One item the City has requested with the projects is that when the railroad bridge is demolished, they would like to salvage some of the brownstone from the bridge in order to be used as a facing on some of the different wall structures.

As part of Project #102-297 in the area of Myrtle Street to Fort Point Street, the City would like to align the entrance of the railroad station parking lot with Fort Point Street. In order to do so, the City is asking Third Taxing District to entertain the idea of giving them rights to 215 East Avenue, which would probably include demolishing the house on the property. One major concern for Third Taxing District is easement/access to their substation.

Funding of Projects

There is different funding for each piece of the project.

- Project #102-331 is a participating cost with the DOT.
- Myrtle Street Traffic Signal – funded through a grant that the City applied for through Westcog.
- Project #102-297 – 100% City paid. The City has already funded \$1 million for undergrounding for this project. There is a request for upcoming capital budget for more funding to further support the construction of this project.
- Walk Bridge (Railroad Bridge) – 100% reimbursable from the DOT.

Ms. King indicated that any of the construction needed for any of the side streets off of East Avenue that would be affected by the undergrounding would be fully funded by the City as part of the Project #102-297.

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Mr. Barber asked if the gap on East Avenue (between St. John Street and Myrtle Avenue) is going to be part of the undergrounding or is it going to remain above ground. Ms. Burns indicated that they will work with the State to extend Project #102-331 down to St. John Street.

Steve Kleppin talked about the grant that was received in 2017 to conduct a TOD study of the area. The study should begin very shortly. He went on to explain what area it will encompass and what they expect to gain from the study.

Ms. Cece asked the Commission what the process would be for giving up 215 East Avenue and whether or not there are other alternatives. Commissioner Goldstein replied and said that the process is TBD. She believes she heard Ms. Burns say that the City is not interested in acquiring the property and that Third Taxing District would retain ownership. There are concerns about the condition of the house. This subject is scheduled to be discussed under Strategic Planning which is expected to begin again later in the month.

Commissioner Goldstein said that believes she can speak on behalf of the Commission saying that the Commission hears what is being asked about the property at 215 East Avenue and that the process be made visible to the public.

Mayor Rilling stated that he realizes this is the first time the Commission is seeing/hearing this presentation, but just wanted to open the discussion on the subject.

The Commission thanked the Mayor and his staff for attending the meeting and giving their presentation on the East Avenue projects.

MINUTES OF MEETING

December 3, 2018 Regular Meeting

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2018 REGULAR MEETING
** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Commissioner Goldstein asked if there had been any update from Atty. Studer about the rinks. Mr. Barber said there has not been an update.

Commissioner Goldstein asked about the CMEEC investigation update and keeping the Commission apprised as more information becomes available. This item will be added to the February meeting.

December 19, 2018 Special Meeting

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Correction to be made on page 1, Resignation of Commissioner Brown, first paragraph, second line – Commission Brown should be Commissioner Brown.

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2018 SPECIAL MEETING AS AMENDED.**

**** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Mr. Barber reviewed the Financial Highlights with the Commission. Total Income was \$4,225,244, an increase of 3.96% over last year. Total Expense was \$4,091,175, an increase of 0.54% over last year. Other Income is \$294,844, a decrease of 22%. Net Income Before Rate Stabilization was \$428,912, an increase of 15%. \$50,206 was added to the Rate Stabilization Fund. The Total Net Income for the first five months of the year is \$479,119, an increase of 1% over the previous year.

Cash Balances continue to be in good shape. The Outstanding Principal Balance with CMEEC continues to decrease with a current balance of \$3,106,330. Current Fiscal Year Capital Additions to date is \$520,150.

Mr. Barber reviewed the P&L for November 2018 and stated that the sales for this year were about 9% higher than last year. However, Total Income for the month of November 2018 indicates an increase of only 1.53%. This is due to lowering the PCA.

When looking at the Purchased Power expense, there was a 7% increase in kWh purchased, but paid 5% less because the billable rate had been lowered back in July.

Overall, the Net Income is \$174,547.45 compared to last year of \$59,919.51. A very large increase of 191.3%, but most of it is due to timing of expenses.

KPI's – Mr. Barber reviewed the KPI's with the Commission. Everything is in line and consistent with all the items.

PCA – Mr. Barber reviewed the current PCA and the forecast with the Commission. The current balance in the Rate Stabilization Fund is \$4,035,998. Based on the latest forecast that CMEEC has provided, at the end of this fiscal year it will drop to about \$3,476,591.87. At the end of fiscal year 2020, we are projecting it to be \$2,819,908.66 which falls into the target number. If the forecast that is in place pans out, consideration will need to be given to making a change in a year or two, but these numbers are subject to change at any given time.

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND ADD AN AGENDA ITEM, HOUSEKEEPING AS #8A.**

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**** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Outage on December 30, 2018 – Occurred at the Rowan Street Substation, Circuit 8 and affected 471 customers. The outage occurred approximately 9:30 a.m. Line crew was sent out to investigate. They were able to find the problem which was in the underground system and powered restored by 11:00 a.m. The cause is yet to be determined. Once Mr. Barber has more information, he will pass it along to the Commission.

February 11, 2019 Commission Meeting – The District Budget will be presented to the Commission. It will be one of the major agenda items that will need to be accomplished that evening, as Commission approval will be required before it can be presented at the Annual Meeting in March. Over the next few weeks, staff will be compiling all the information, which is mostly done in-house and will include budget requests received from the library, firehouse and cemetery.

Mr. Barber is looking to change the format of the budget to make it easier for everyone to understand. He is also working on a presentation to make it easier at the Annual Meeting, which will be simpler and cleaner. He is looking to show just the proposed budget compared to previous year with a percent change.

Commissioner Parkington asked if there was a way that the Commission would be able to see a year-to-date report on the District Budget (Budget vs. Actual). Mr. Barber replied that this can be done and will work on providing it to the Commission.

PROJECT SUMMARY

T3 Update – Repairs will be made by ABB the week of January 28, 2019.

Rowan Street Facility – Site work has begun and building permit has been issued.

Library Solar – Batteries have been installed. The system should go live within the next few weeks.

Radio Read Meters – Have been waiting on inventory, which has just arrived.

A-Base Meters – Discussion on how to handle the A-Base replacements took place. This type of project can become a financial burden to the owner(s). TTD is looking for a way to help assist the owner(s). This item should be added to Strategic Planning or a future agenda for further discussion.

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**** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND ADD AN AGENDA ITEM, JANUARY 28, 2019 COMMISSION MEETING AS #8B.**

**** COMMISSIONER GOLDSTEIN SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

HOUSEKEEPING

Mr. Barber said now that a new Commissioner is in place, we have a vacant seat in the Treasurer's position. The process for filling the Treasurer's position is the exact same process the Commission went through to fill the vacancy on the Commission because it is an elected position. The Commission will have to find an appropriate person to fill the position.

Mr. Barber suggested doing another announcement similar to the one for filling the empty Commission seat, i.e., email blast and social media outlets. Commissioner Parkington stated that the position must be filled by a Democrat and it cannot be filled by someone that has switched their party in less than 90 days. Each candidate will have to be vetted by Stuart Wells, Registrar for the Democrats. She has already started to get the word out about the open position. Commissioner Parkington said that there is one ratepayer who is interested in the position. The position will need to be advertised and responses sent to Ron Scofield, District Clerk.

Commissioner Goldstein added that emails for the Commission do not appear anywhere and would like to see them added to the website. Mr. Barber suggested that a "click here" button be put on the Bios page of the website for ratepayers to email the full Commission.

Other items that need to be taken care of due to the appointment of Ms. Weldon include:

- Letterhead
- Commission Nameplates
- Banking Signatures
- Trust Account
- Business Cards
- Website (in conjunction with Greyskye) – including Commissioner email links on the Bios page.
- Appointment of Representatives to CMEEC Board (This item has been slated to be put on the next Commission Meeting.)

Staff will begin moving forward on updating all necessary documents.

JANUARY 28, 2019 COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Parkington informed the Commission that she will not be able to attend the January 28, 2019 meeting which has been scheduled to begin the Strategic Planning process. The Commission agreed to move this meeting to February 4, 2019 as a Special Meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

- ** COMMISSIONER PARKINGTON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COMMISSIONER WELDON SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Tenney
Executive Assistant
Third Taxing District