FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 3, 2022, 6:30 P.M.
MINUTES

1. Call to Order

A. Chairman Liam Sweeney called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Attendees – Mayor Shari Cantor, Deputy Mayor Liam Sweeney, Councilors Adrienne Billings-Smith, Leon Davidoff, Mary Fay and Ben Wenograd, Town Manager Matthew Hart, Director of Human Resources Rick Ledwith, Director of Finance Peter Privitera, Town Assessor Joseph Dakers and Director of Information Technology Jared Morin.

2. Business Items

A. Approval of December 13, 2021 Minutes – Minutes approved.

B. October 1, 2021 Revaluation Update – Mr. Hart mentioned the PowerPoint presentation was available on CityView and will be made available to the public. The revaluation needs to be done every five years, a requirement by state statute. The updated grand list would form the basis of next fiscal year's taxation. Mr. Dakers reported a total of 22,474 parcels of real estate in town separated by about 21,200 residential parcels and another 800 or so commercial parcels. Three revaluation consultants were used to help with the assessment. Data collection was completed in September 2021, the notices went out on November 18, 2021, and the conferences started around November 22 and ended December 30, 2021. Any interior inspections were done virtually by assessment staff. The residential property values increased by 13.9% or about $832M, including condos and multifamilies. There are 5 basic neighborhoods; 10,000; 30,000; 40,000; 50,000; and 70,000. Neighborhood 10,000 experienced the largest increase at just shy of 25%. This is primarily the Elmwood section of town with a lot of entry-level housing. Neighborhood 30,000 saw an approximately 15% increase. Neighborhood 70,000 barely hit a 10% increase. This neighborhood consists of several larger properties. The single-family home prices increased by almost 13% at $361,000, but this does not include the data from November or December. Condo values are sluggish but they have their own particular challenges. For example, some renovations are made to a particular condo and these changes are not known until the condo lists for sale.

The commercial values have jumped 7%, including industrial apartments and retail and mixed-use; industrials are up 20%, retail is up 3.75%. There is one remaining conference for Commercial, scheduled for January 7. There are 14 property owners with approximately 25 parcels of real estate remaining to be discussed before all conferences are completed. The skilled nursing, assisted living and continuing care facilities and retirement communities are having several issues including reimbursement from Medicare and issues revolving around the pandemic. They all have high vacancies now, so income is down. Patrons are opting for in-home services. The supplemental motor vehicle list has been completed and was sent out in December. This is up 32% or about $19M. The vehicle count is up because the Motor

Vehicle Department was closed down last year. Cars were unable to be registered then and are now showing up on the list. The regular motor vehicle list shows 44,000 vehicles, of which 6,000 came through unpriced, so the staff has to manually price those using the NADA Pricing Guide. The cars on the list are up 12% in price due to several factors; chip shortage, car demand and car lot shortages. The Business Personal Property list is up 11% or about $20M. The Real Property is forecasted to increase about 11% or about $600M, which does not include motor vehicles or personal property.

Counselor Wenograd inquired when the final numbers would be available for budget purposes. Mr. Dakers stated he hoped the tentative numbers would be available by January 31. At that point, the assessment notices would be sent out and those who wanted to appeal the assessments would have the option of going before the Board of Assessments. Once that process has been completed, the numbers would be finalized and made available.

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

A. Financial Services – Mr. Privitera reported on the latest projection, which shows a positive variance of roughly 189, 500 with an estimate of $300,000. These are conservative numbers. Overall, taxes are on track to collect at the same rate as the prior year, some FEMA reimbursement money came in and the building permits and conveyance taxes are doing very well (about $416,000 over budget). The only stagnated area is investment income, with no place to invest money providing a decent return without taking a risk. Regarding expenditures, one of the largest changes was Fire. It is up about $1.2M but this is a conservative estimate as they recently hired 10 firefighter-paramedics. In addition, several retirements are hitting Fire and Police. Police is up a little over $500,000. To date, there is approximately $456,000 in retirement payouts; 14 employees, of which 6 are police and 4 are fire. An area being closely watched is Leisure and Social Services’ relocation expenses related to the three flooded buildings. At this point, around $275,000 to $285,000 has been expended but there are still 8 families needing relocation. There has been a slight saving in non-public school transportation because of fewer buses and there is a projected surplus here as well. Finally, there will be a bond sale of approximately $15M of general obligation bonds. The sale will take place in early February.

B. Town Clerk – Mr. Hart reported the Town Clerk was unavailable but her written report was submitted.

C. Information Technology – Mr. Morin submitted a written report.

D. Human Resources – Mr. Ledwith had no formal report but provided a quick update on the Equity and Diversity training. The initial training has been finalized with all non-public safety staff. Work has begun with Fire and Police chiefs regarding scheduling to begin the initial training for the public safety staff during the first quarter of 2022. In addition, recruiting efforts continue for the Equity Officer position.

E. Town Manager – Mr. Hart spoke briefly about the American Rescue Plan funding. Recently the Town Council appropriated $6.3M and there was a proposal before this committee of $14.6M in terms of Rescue Plan funded projects and initiatives, leaving a balance of $8.3M. The projects and initiatives remaining will be discussed at the next meeting.

5. Future Agenda Items – 4E

6. Executive Session

A. Executive Session pursuant to section 1-200(6)(B) of the General Statutes to discuss pending litigation, to wit: 1050 Farmington LLC v. Town of West Hartford, Docket No. HHB-CV-20-6061748-S (property addresses: 1050 Farmington Avenue, 1058 Farmington Avenue, 3 Grennan Road, and 4 Arlington Road) – Counselor Davidoff moved to ratify the settlement of the tax appeal with the fair market value for each property based on the 2019 Grand List being $537,500 with an aggregate value of $2,150,000. Counselor Fay seconded. Motion passed without objection.

7. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

/axb