

**MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES
SIXTH TAXING DISTRICT, City of Norwalk
January 14, 2009**

**Rowayton Community Center
33 Highland Avenue
8:00 p.m.**

ATTENDEES: Commissioners Ed Kweskin and Tammy Langalis, Treasurer Andy Conroy, District Administrator Jack Robson, Property Manager and Fire Marshal Ed Carlson and District Clerk Andrea Woodworth.

Commissioner Ed Kweskin called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m. Mr. Kweskin welcomed members of the public attending the meeting and announced that Mr. Barbis and Mr. Carlson could not be there.

A motion to approve the minutes of the December meeting was made and tabled for discussion at the February meeting. Mrs. Langalis had not seen the minutes and could not vote on the approval. There was also some confusion about the date specified for the third of the Budget Meetings of the District. The minutes of the December 10, 2008 meeting reflect the decision to hold the third budget meeting on February 9. The date was changed to February 11 at 6:30 p.m., immediately preceding the monthly meeting date.

ROWAYTON LIBRARY PRESENTATION.

A presentation of the request by the Rowayton Library Board for funding from the Sixth Taxing District Commission for the Fiscal Year 2009-2010 was made by Library Board Co-President Ellen Arsenault. Mrs. Arsenault thanked the Commission for allowing the Library Board to present their budget for the next fiscal year. She noted that the library has been able to maximize hours and staff and circulate more books with less money than they had been able to do in the past. In answer to a question from Ed Kweskin, Mrs. Arsenault said that they are proud to report that they were able to do this through the effects of their renovation and from more complete tracking and the efficiency of the staff.

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Some of the highlights of the 2007-08 review were:

- 1) They completed the renovation of the Library and reopened the beautiful building to strong community appreciation.
- 2) They expanded their electronic catalog and introduced additional electronic resources such as books for an iPod and other MP3 players, along with online guided study classes for both academic and professional qualifications.
- 3) They developed year-round enrichment programs for residents of all ages including new musical activities, broader sets of author talks featuring local writers and community based programs. Examples include *MoneyTalk for Women* and Health Talks jointly presented with Norwalk Hospital.
- 4) They enriched their collection with particular emphasis on new fiction and travel books as well as DVD's.
- 5) They currently have over 3,150 patrons, or over 75% of the total Rowayton residents. Circulation has increased significantly with over 20,000 items circulated in just the first four months of the current fiscal year. Since July, they have offered over 130 programs, which have been attended by more than 3,400 people.

The Sixth Taxing District currently funds 68% of the Library's operating budget which covers the basic expenses associated with keeping the Library open. The Library relies on community donations to augment its budget for books, supplies, technology upgrades, and programming. For the Fiscal Year 2009-2010, the Library is asking for \$165,000 from the Sixth Taxing District which represents about 66 % of the budget whereas the Commission contributed about 68% last year.

They are not proposing to do more next year than they are now, but this budget amount for the year will just allow the Library to continue to maintain what they are doing now. They hope that the Commission will understand the importance of the library to the Community, especially in these tough economic times. During times such as these, the Library is utilized even more than during normal times.

Mr. Kweskin congratulated Mrs. Arsenault and the rest of the Library Board for their very professional presentation and asked if there were any questions. Mr. Conroy said that the Commission hoped to see the Library used even more. However, given the state of the economy and how that might affect the collection of tax revenues, the Commission may not have the funds to allocate as much as they would like. Mr. Conroy asked the Library Board to send him a copy of their Engagement Letter with their auditors. There followed some discussion about the audit they recently finished. It was noted that when they would go to different foundations to ask for funds, the foundations always wanted to see that they had successful audits. There will also be some increase in personnel funds as some employees are just now starting to qualify for pensions. There is also some unexpected overtime needed in some instances. All of this is just the cost of doing business.

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Mr. Kweskin again thanked the Library Board, assuring them that the Commissioners understand the need and will do as much as they can, depending on our projected revenues. He said that all budget requests are put in at the requested amount and are looked at along with all the other requests. Rowayton's part of Norwalk's property tax is now 9%. They have to balance the needs of the Community as well as the need to raise our property taxes to cover needs or to reduce the amount of the funds that they promise to give each request. He assured everyone that the Library is very high on the list of worthy applicants.

Mrs. Langalis asked if the Library had ever considered extending the Saturday hours, perhaps 10 – 1. And would the board consider shaving a few hours on early weekdays in order to expand the Saturday hours for the same cost. Cynthia Johnson, Director of the Rowayton Library, assured her that they would like to get to that at some point. However, it takes getting the information about the changed hours out to the public. And, the staffing issue is oftentimes a problem as it is hard to find people willing to work on the weekends. It was noted that Sunday is potentially the biggest day for a Library and ours isn't open. Cynthia noted that and said they consider it a goal, but it is not really practical at this time.

Mr. Kweskin again thanked the library representatives for a very impressive presentation and told them they were welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Conroy didn't have the regular monthly budget report as they are now concentrating on the audits and the budget building process for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. He asked that any further budgetary requests be forwarded to him. In response to a question about Farm Creek, he responded that it already is in the budget.

He said that he has read the railroad lease, a very complicated document. There isn't really anything new in it. Basically, we can't do any major maintenance without the approval of the DOT. We are authorized to do some minor things on our own. The goal of everyone is that a good commuting experience is ensured. There are no requirements by the DOT re: staffing. We have guards starting at 5:30 a.m. and one side is staffed until 9 p.m. Ms. Langalis noted that she could get a SWERPA report that would compare our operations with other stations. Basically, major structural repairs need to be approved. Day-to-day more mundane things don't have to be cleared first. Regarding manning at the station, we told DOT that we wouldn't change it. That was about 10 years ago. The DOT looks at a 5 year audit. The DOT would want to see a copy of our audit. By having two guards on in the morning on the westbound side, we increase our daily collections. One guard does a bank run and they keep double coverage until the one guard comes back from the bank. The guards are not

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eligible for any benefits. Ours is a relatively typical operation. Mr. Conroy found nothing in the list that lists any requirements for manning the station. We are accumulating a bit of capital each year. At the present time, we are going month-to-month re: a lease. We extended the lease six months ago. The DOT took a long time to get back to Tammy to approve the month-to-month arrangement. Tammy will call them again in a couple of months. She feels that the attitudes have improved at the DOT.

Andy will let the Commissioners know how the audit is proceeding as it goes along. Ed sees nothing unusual re: manning the train station.

SUPER GOALS: Mr. Conroy spoke to the separation of responsibilities. They've decided that the auditors should work for the Commissioners rather than the Treasurer. However, the Treasurer can fire the auditors. So, we needed to do another Letter of Engagement with the current auditing firm. They were told to provide the bill to Ed. We got an invoice for 2007 as well as one for June 2008. Mr. Kweskin asked if this was for work that was already done. Mr. Conroy understood that the \$1550 fee for Sandy Davies would be covered in the fee for the single audit. We might want to approve the \$1550 but would need to talk further about the \$3000 fee. Going forward, we could agree to a certain fee, somewhere around \$3000 for the single audit. Is the \$7000 fee for a single audit that already has been done or work that is to be done. (Mr. Kweskin's question). Mr. Conroy thinks the \$7000 fee should have been \$3000 - \$4000. We don't approve that. Ed will look into it further.

REPORT OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR – Jack Robson

Pinkney Seawall Survey:

The as-built survey has been completed and sent to the DEP in Hartford.

Cost: \$1,900.00

(Mr. Conroy interjected that that is a cost overrun and that we are going to take it from the new capital account).

A complete Zoning & Topographical Survey of Pinkney Park: which includes work that we have already done and paid for on the survey. The additional work needed will cost, per estimate from William Seymour & Associates: **\$3,100.00** and encompass the entire park. (Mr. Kweskin asked if this was needed). Mr. Robson responded that if we were to do anything with the park, every time we make plans we will have the survey that will show where all the water lines are, etc. if, for instance, we do an irrigation system.

Public Parking Lot:

In our efforts to solve the problem of on-going charges for this property from the Water

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Company, Andy Conroy has found out that the shut off valve for the water that serviced the Ambler House was only shut off at the location of the house. The valve at the main line was not shut off. A. J. Penna is looking into this problem and will present an estimate for uncovering the main and shutting off the valve, thus eliminating further charges to us for this property. (Mr. Conroy said that if you don't remove the lateral into your property, the Water Company still bills you for the access to the water, even though you are not using the water. To stop that, you have to go into the ground and cut off the connection to the lateral and then the DPW needs to come out and do an inspection. We never did that. That is only something that you should do temporarily during construction and then reconnect the water line at a later time. We never reconnected it. Since we already have a water meter, Mr. Conroy asked Mr. Robson to look into the possibility of hooking up the water connection that we already have in the street directly to our new meter).

While work to shut off the water is being done, I think it would be wise for us to sever our connection to 140 Rowayton Avenue and the use of their water line. When A. J. Penna opens up the area to the main water service and shuts off the valve causing us constant billing, he can then make a direct connection to the landscaped areas at the Public Parking lot. The meter presently being used can be relocated to a more serviceable spot on the property. A. J. Penna and East Coast Irrigation can work together on the correction and solve this problem of billing.

A. J. Penna estimate: (pending)
East Coast Irrigation estimate: **\$850.00**

This East Coast Irrigation estimate is their price for hooking up our landscaping water meter to the existing water main if we choose to open the ground to sever the lateral from the main. We currently get water from 140 Rowayton Avenue which is owned by Kevin Conroy. He charges us for our water use and Andy feels that the bills that we receive from him often times need further study. That is the background for the above East Coast Irrigation estimate.

Regarding the water bill at Pinkney Park, we will have a report within a couple of weeks. They are looking at bills and records of water use over a number of years . We may get a refund, since the water use listed on the bills seems to be way out of line.

Zoning & Topographical Survey of entire CC property:

Estimate from William Seymour & Associates: **\$8,500.00**

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RR Parking Lot Guard Shack

Mike Hazzard has repaired a hole left in the sheetrock wall when a replacement heater was installed in the west side guard shack. He is presently installing a door pump to keep the west side guard shack door from blowing open in high winds.

White Bridge Lights

The two lights on the White Bridge were reported to be malfunctioning. I called CL&P and spoke to our Account Executive, Dominic Serbo. He had a crew go to the site and attempt to fix the problem. What they found was that the lights on the bridge were on the Darien side. So CL&P did not fix the problem, but in turn, Mr. Serbo is attempting to resolve this himself by contacting who does service these lights. I have not heard back from him as yet regarding the outcome. (Ed Carlson said that there are no lines going to that bridge and Andy has never seen a separate bill. Ed C. said that Weisenbach is having an electrician go out to look at it. The light measured only 96 volts, and we wanted CL&P to look at it because there should be 120 volts.

PROPERTY MANAGER REPORT – Ed Carlson January 2009

Community Center:

1. Snow plowing was done on Dec. 19, 20 and 31st.
2. The plastic speed bump has been installed in the driveway near the Library. It is slowing cars, but also some are driving around it on the grass in order to avoid it. (Cynthia Johnson suggested putting large rocks on the grass to prevent that).
3. A large branch came down from a windstorm.

Bayley Beach

1. The entrance road and part of the lot were plowed on Dec. 19 and 20th.

Pinkney Park:

1. The driveway was plowed on Dec. 19, 20, and 31.
2. The number of holiday lights is limited to what the present electrical circuits can allow for. Any increase results in tripping of breakers. Additional circuits should be considered.

(Andy asked if the electrical work that SOS is looking at would correct that problem. Ed's not sure. He thinks it would cost \$750 for extra lights for holiday lights and for the River Ramble, etc.

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REPORT OF THE FIRE MARSHAL – December 2009
Ed Carlson

<u>Type of Activity</u>	<u>#</u>	<u># Man Hours</u>
Blasting Permit(s)	***	***
Blasting Site Inspection(s)	***	***
Building Inspection(s)	2	3
Clerical (office) work		22
Fire Marshal Conferences	***	***
Career Development Training	***	***
Investigation(s)	***	***
Meetings: District Monthly	1	2
FNHCFMA	1	2
(Other)		
Temporary structure permit	1	1
(Other)		
(Other)		
Total Man Hours:		30

Expenses:

Remarks to the Commissioners:

Met with Congressman Elect Jim Himes and area Fire Chiefs to discuss needs for fire service. Cong. Elect Himes was asking what can he do in Washington to help out with funding here. We definitely don't want to lose any money. We get grant money every year, which he promised to look into.

(The Common Council is looking into having the Norwalk FD take over the maintenance work for the Rowayton FD. Mr. Carlson said he is definitely in favor of that. It would save RFD quite a lot in travel and gas charges that they pay now for someone to service their equipment)

Respectfully submitted,
Ed Carlson

Mr. Kweskin asked Ed about the status of the new fire truck purchase. Mr. Carlson said that they had an estimate from Marion last week. It was for \$498K. The committee is going over the estimate line by line. The good news is that this estimate includes all the 2009 mandated requirements which are worth about \$8K. Marion has sold quite a few trucks in Norwalk.

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Fortunately, from a Fire Marshal's perspective, the last month has been very quiet. Ed hopes that the cold weather will not create any more problems.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Tammy didn't have anything further.

Mr. Barbis was not present.

Communications and Report of the District Clerk:

1. Everything has been very quiet right now. I have cleared a total of three rebated railroad permits. There are 45 people on the wait list.
2. The Underground teen program will begin this month on Friday, January 23.
3. There will be an informational meeting with the Tax Assessor on January 20 at 6:30 here in the Community Center. Local publicity outlets have been alerted. Even though Frank Fay will be out of town, he says The Hour will have a Mr. Koch here with a photographer. The RCA will put it on their web site and will send out an e-mail blast.
4. A fruit basket was sent to Tom Myslinski, one of the railroad guards who has been out sick for some time after post-surgical complications.
5. Copies of the updated Sixth Taxing District Employee Benefit Plans Summary are in your folders. Please let me know if you feel the information needs any correction.

Andy Conroy said that he'd gotten to the bottom of a mystery that involved a \$50K check that we had received in error. It was to go to the First District and he has sent it on to them.

OLD BUSINESS

As previously discussed, the third budget meeting set for February 9 has been moved to February 11 at 6:30 p.m. so as not to conflict with the RCA Annual Meeting and to precede directly the regular monthly Commissioners' Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

The District Clerk will contact Catherine Rapfogel for an Amended Engagement letter.

Mr. Kweskin was approached by a couple of residents of East Beach to discuss a pole light which was shining directly into their homes. The light is there to illuminate the small park. The Bell Island Association has approved removal of the light if there is no objection from the Commissioners. It was determined that there is no objection from the Commissioners. Ed will write the letter authorizing removal of the light.

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On the subject of the revaluation, Frank Fay asked if the Commissioners would support the idea of postponing implementation of the revaluation. Mr. Fay said that there is historical precedent in that it was done in 1982. What might have been close to the right value in October 2008 is certainly not the case today, considering the collapse of the housing market and the economy in general. Ed Kweskin said that “personally” he thought it would be a good idea. Ed and Tammy said that Frank could say that the Commissioners of the Sixth Taxing District would be in favor of a postponement of the implementation of the revaluation.

Mr. Kweskin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Langalis. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Woodworth
Clerk, 6th Taxing District