

**SECOND TAXING DISTRICT ELECTORS
ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING
March 20, 2012**

Electors Present:	Mary E. Burgess Al Ayme Mary A. Geake Sherelle Harris César Ramirez Frank Zullo, Esq. Michael K. Geake Jim Delgrecco Guy Moseley Ariel Lawrence Brandy Sprenkle Doug Sprenkle Carvin Hilliard David Williams Travis Simms Joe B. Newell Darlene Young Valerie Lyons Yoland Laco	Jim Clark Audie Morgan Alexander Christofor Tom Soltes Thursa Merritt Donnie Sellers Kurt Schaaf Deanean Clark Shelly Clark Phaedrel Bowman Ernest Dumas Darlene Young Georgiana Rucker Sandra Stokes Sherwood Taylor Jacqueline Roberson Robert Burgess Robert Koch
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Non-Electors:	Berdella White Corrine Weston Helen Marshall Darnell Richardson Shawn Wong Won	Warren Penna Debora Goldstein Anne Farrow Natasha White
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Also Present:	John M. Hiscock Kevin Barber Gwendolyn Gonzalez	General Manager Director of Administration & Customer Service Assistant District Clerk
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Call to Order:

Mary E. Burgess called the Second Taxing District Electors' Meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20, 2012. The meeting was held at SNEW, One State Street, South Norwalk, Connecticut.

Legal Call:

Mrs. Burgess: "I am Mimi Burgess and I will call the Annual Budget Meeting of the Electors of the Taxing District to order March 20, 2012 at 8:05 p.m. and ask the Assistant District Clerk to read the notice of the meeting [directed to Ms. Gonzalez]."

Unidentified Participant: "Can you speak up we can't hear back here please?"

Ms. Gonzalez read the following legal notice for the record:

The legal voters of the Second Taxing District, 164 Water Street, PO Box 468, Norwalk, Connecticut 06856, Legal Notice, Notice and Warning to Electors of the Second Taxing District of the City of Norwalk.

The legal voters of the Second Taxing District of the City of Norwalk are hereby notified and warned that the Annual Budget Meeting of the Electors of the Second Taxing District will be held at South Norwalk Electric and Water, One State Street, Norwalk, Connecticut on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. for the following purpose:

- 1. To Approve the Proposed 2012-2013 Budget of the Second Taxing District, City of Norwalk as approved and recommended by the District Commissioners.*
- 2. To Modify the 2011-2012 Budget of the Second Taxing District, City of Norwalk as approved and recommended by the District Commissioners to provide for improved street lighting.*
- 3. To Receive and Ratify the Choice of Auditors of the District Commissioners for a firm to perform Auditing Services for the Second Taxing District, City of Norwalk for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2012.*

In accordance with Section 1-81 of the District Charter, you are hereby notified that copies of the entire District Budget of the Second Taxing District of the City of Norwalk will be available for inspection by the public effective March 14, 2012. A copy may be obtained from the District Clerk at the office of the Second Taxing District, 164 Water Street, Norwalk, Connecticut.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2012

Attest:

*Gwendolyn Gonzalez
Assistant District Clerk*

Mrs. Burgess: "Thank you." "And before we start I would like to say that the majority of the Commissioners were interested in making cuts in the budget in response to our having had to have rate increases. So I wanted to get that on the record and Mr. Hiscock will now present the budget and answer questions and if you comment or have questions would you state your name and address for the record please?" Thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "The document that we are going to start with is the Proposed Budget 2012-2013. I think you have all been given copies on the way in. We are going to start off on page one and we are going to start with the General Fund Budget, which is the government form, it is not the water utility, it is not the electric utility it is general government. Ok?"

Unidentified Participant: "Mr. Hiscock, where would you like us to make the comments, right after you finished or during the process?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Normally, what we do is if Electors have questions as we go through the process; raise your hand and I will answer the questions. I am going to deal with the technical aspects of the budget, the numbers and the issues. When you are commenting about what we should or shouldn't do. I think that will be at the end of the District Budget section, not the utility section. Ok? So I am going to go down through District issues. In the overall terms of the General Fund, first column, there are no operating revenues of the District, there is no income for the District; there would be income if the Commissioners and the Electors approved a District tax that would be the revenue. Nobody remembers if we have ever done a tax, so that it is always zero for that item, in the other revenue column, section further down, you will see interest income of \$3,650.00. As you all know, interest rates have dropped dramatically, there is virtually no interest in any kind of an investment that we are permitted, as a government form to do, and if you will look, if you have the opportunity we will go to a section that is clearer in a minute. We used to get substantially higher interest. The General Fund has a running balance of around a million dollars, you would think there would be significantly more interest in that, there obviously isn't. Ok. Total revenue \$3,650. As we move down into the expenses under Operating Expenses, there is a line that's entitled Purchased – Water & Electric and because all of the budgets are laid out side-by-side it's listed that way. In this particular case, the \$122,000 is purchased electricity for lighting the street lights. We move down a little bit further and you will see a line that says Street Lighting Expense, \$84,000. So you add the two together and right now street lighting is costing a little over \$200,000 a year. Flip the page, top of the page, the Administrative & General Expense, \$128,250 will explain that in a moment because we are going to go to a detailed sheet, we are just doing the overview. Community Service projects in the budget \$20,420 for a total operating expenses of \$354,670. There are no other expenses so we get to \$354,670 and the net revenue is a loss of \$351,020. So how do we deal with that? We move down to the Opening Balance Reserve Fund that's the amount of money the District has in cash in the District Budget. Ok? Return to Reserve Fund is \$52,035. That's unspent money from prior years' budgets that gets returned as this is a running balance. So the adjusted opening balance of the Reserve Fund is \$1,011,309. Now, as we

just saw we have a negative \$351,000. How do we deal with that? We transfer from the Water Fund \$83,000, we transfer from the Electric Fund \$83,000 and we transfer from the Electric Fund, the cost of street lighting \$206,000. So the total transfers from the Electric and the Water Fund to cover District expenses is \$372,000. The closing balance in the Reserve Fund then becomes \$1,012,289 and you wonder why we do it this way? We attempt to end close to where we started. In other words, we attempt to not take money out of the District Reserve Fund or operations of any sort; we pay those from the utilities. So that is the overview of the budget. We are going to get into a little bit more detail in a minute. Does anybody have any questions about the overview portion? Ok, we move to page 3, this is the detail for the General Fund Budget. Revenue, we said it was \$3,650 in interest...two different accounts...it is the amount \$3,500 in one and \$150 in another. Now, expenses, Commissioners Salaries \$22,750 and if you look at the layout you will see in left most column, the budget we are talking about, in the next column to the right, you will see the Revised Budget for 2011-2012. You will also see the 2011-2012 Original Budget and these are for comparison purposes and the 2010-2011 Budget. Ok?

Unidentified Participant: "Mr. Hiscock, if I may ask a question, in 2010-11, are those the actual numbers or were those budgeted numbers and not actual?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Those are the budgeted numbers."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok so they are not...so they haven't been corrected to be...to give us the actual numbers?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No, but I can tell there is an error in this. Ok, if you look at the information, and I'll explain where the errors are as we go through. Ok? "

Unidentified Participant: "Are you still on page 3."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah. I am still on page 3 and this section is displayed incorrectly that's the 2010-2011 Budget for Community Service Projects. That's a duplication of the Current Proposed Budget, so we are going to ignore that for now."

Unidentified Participant: "Oh beautiful. Ignore everything on that page now?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No, no..."

Unidentified Participant: "The whole thing?"

Mr. Hiscock: "The little box right down here."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok"

Unidentified Participant: [Inaudible]

Mr. Hiscock: "That's the same as the box over here and that's the mistake. Ok?"

Unidentified Participant: "So before you go down, if I may, where it says the first box Revenue and it says Total Revenue, 2010-2011 which is last year, correct?"

Mr. Hiscock: "It's the....yes, the prior year we are now in 2011/2012."

Unidentified Participant: "So we \$23,000 on interest?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct. We budgeted \$23,000."

Unidentified Participant: "So you don't know if you made that?"

Mr. Hiscock: "We did not make it."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok. So again, we are just looking at budgeted numbers not what actually you made."

Mr. Hiscock: "That is correct."

Unidentified Participant: "How come you do it that way?" "Why don't you give us actual numbers so that we can see what happened with revenue and with the budget numbers?"

Mr. Hiscock: "We have that information further on in the report."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok"

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok. This is so that you can see the changes to the budget from year-to-year and obviously we have an error in it."

Unidentified Participant: "It would be great to be able to see the changes on the actual."

Mr. Hiscock: "You'll actually see those in the audit but that's ok."

Unidentified Participant: "Yeah but you know we don't go that deep."

[Laughter]

Mr. Hiscock: "Alright so let me go back to the budget since I have explained the error. If you look at the expenses under Operations, you have Commissioners' salary \$22,750 it has been the same

for quite a few years that is approved by the Electors. The Clerk's salary is \$2,500; the Treasurer's salary is \$2,000. We budget \$26,000 for Meetings and Printing that includes all of the clerical things with respect to meetings examples, legal ads for meetings, they are in the \$400 to \$500 range for every meeting, we have a meeting every month, we have Electors meetings, that's one of the expenses. We need to create the minutes and transcribe the minutes from the transcript of the meeting; that is an expense. So we have those kinds of clerical expenses under Meetings and Printing. Legal, we put \$40,000 in the budget because it varies widely from year-to-year depending on what happens so we don't want to come back to the Electors every time we end up with a defense of something or we end up getting involved in an issue that takes a lot of legal time. We almost never spend \$40,000, never at that except in the rare occasions but we put it in the budget so we don't have to keep dragging the Electors back every time a legal matter comes up. The Auditors, we put \$30,000 into the budget. I believe the, I will talk about that a little bit later, that is slightly over what its cost us in recent years and insurance is \$5,000. Most of the insurance bill and this is liability type insurance most of the bills are related to the utilities. In the utilities is where you see all of the money for insurance. So the total operation is \$128,250. We move down to Community Service Project. Community Beautification let me explain what those are. That is generally in-kind services. That is members of our staff who perform tree pruning, cutting of grass, taking care of plantings, in these various locations. Bill Peters Art Park is part of the West Avenue interchange to 95 and 7; it is on the right-hand side between the two bridges. There is some cutesy little stuff they call art, the metal stuff that is all painted and the grass there has been cut by us for quite a few years and we do clean the area up of debris and rubbish. Madison Avenue is, and there is zero in Bill Peters Art Park, prior years it was \$5,400. Ok. So that was an item that District Commissioners cut out. It is not really in South Norwalk although it's technically inside the Second Taxing District it is not what you would think of as South Norwalk. It is a highway interchange. Next item is Madison Avenue. Madison Avenue is the triangular portion of land south of Washington Street, east of I think its Madison Avenue is the triangular portion of land south of Washington Street, East of Madison Avenue, right and the railroad tracks. It's between Klaff's and the railroad tracks and south of Washington Street, ok? We budgeted \$3,960 and that has been pretty consistent, it goes up and down a little bit, please in this area ignore the last column, it is a mistake. Now, Heritage Wall, I think everybody knows where Heritage Wall is, I don't have to explain it? Anybody not know where it is? Ok. Heritage Wall, it is not within the Second Taxing District, it is actually within the First Taxing District. That was cut out of the budget. As you can see we used to spend, used to budget \$10,400 and the budget this year has zero. Yes mam?"

Unidentified Participant: "Why did we have it in the beginning?"

Mr. Hiscock: "This goes back a long time ago in history when Heritage Wall was first envisioned and started off with one or two plaques. The individual who created Heritage Wall, who I believe was former Mayor Tommy O'Connor. Former Mayor O'Connor came to the Second Taxing District and asked them to maintain it. I am only going to give you third hand information as to why he did this other than he indicated that the First Taxing District turned him down and he believed that the

Parks & Rec Department of the City was overloaded with work due to their cutting of ball fields in the summertime and obviously people playing ball, they need the grass cut. He felt the Second District would do a better job." That was a decision made by the District Commissioners way back in 80's late 80's maybe early 90's, I don't remember when the wall was created but it was within that general timeframe. That is how it happened. Ok? Does that answer your question?"

Unidentified Participant: "I still want to know did Otha Brown have anything to do with Heritage Wall?"

Mr. Hiscock: "He was a District Commissioner at the time Mr. O'Connor or former Mayor O'Connor asked the Second Taxing District. He was Chairman at that point in time so and at that point in time the District Commission only had three commissioners. So two out of three, and I would have to go back and do some research to figure out what the vote was but he was the Chairman at that point and time."

Unidentified Participant: "Can I ask a quick question?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes mam"

Unidentified Participant: "On the Community Beautification, I don't see anything in South Norwalk directly for any beautification in South Norwalk."

Mr. Hiscock: "We are going to get there in a minute."

Unidentified Participant: "Oh, because I am looking at these areas I didn't see anything that says south, in our area basically for beautification, West Avenue, ok go ahead."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah. West Avenue, to give you an idea where West Avenue is, it's as you come south into South Norwalk along West Avenue once you cross over or under the highway bridges and you have the down ramp from Route 7 and then there is an area to the right, just before the Shell Station. That used to be overgrown; it looked kind of shabby, no one took care of it and probably somewhere in the range of seven to eight years ago the District took it on as a project, cleaned it up, removed the trees and the underbrush a hundred feet or so up the sloop. We got a Beautify America grant for some plantings, which still exist today and we maintain that sloop, we weed it, we take care of the trees. I think the premise at that time was it was the entrance to South Norwalk and it was decided that that would be an appropriate project."

Unidentified Participant: "Question."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes mam?"

Unidentified Participant: "Are you saying this is the budgeted numbers?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct."

Unidentified Participant: "So it is kind of hard to see what we actually do spend on because it can be put back and forth so..."

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct."

Unidentified Participant: "In your recollection do you spend \$10,400, all of it on the Heritage Wall."

Mr. Hiscock: "Without my looking through the information I couldn't answer that for you. Hang on one second, Kevin [directed to Mr. Barber] you happen to have a quick idea?"

Mr. Barber: "For the breakdown of each individual line item, that is not included in this document"

Unidentified Participant: "That is not included in here."

Mr. Barber: "It is in the audit."

Unidentified Participant: "So there is not anywhere in here where you actually see what you spent."

Mr. Barber: "There is on page 5 where it does have the summary of the Community Service Project, it will give you the actual for the Fiscal Year Ending June, 2011 and in that timeframe we budgeted \$61,000 and we spent \$36,000."

Unidentified Participant: "But you couldn't tell me how much was actually, of the \$10,400, actually went to the Heritage Wall. You can't tell me?"

Mr. Barber: "Not right here. No, I cannot."

Mr. Hiscock: "He would have to bring the audit to you to do that."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok."

Mr. Hiscock: "So we went over what West Avenue is. The next is Miscellaneous Projects – we haven't spent a lot in Miscellaneous Projects recently, we haven't had many requests, we put \$3,000 in incase we get a request, we haven't had many."

Unidentified Participant: "So miscellaneous when you get a request could be in reference to this

beautification that is what it would be under?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes it would. If somebody identified an area that they felt needed to be cleaned up, that's where it would come from."

Unidentified Participant: "And how would you do that if you wanted to put a request in?"

Mr. Hiscock: "District Commissioners at a Commission Meeting. Let's see, where am I? Ok, Holiday Lights – we used to light the lights at Heritage Wall and the District offices, we had taken out of here the Heritage Wall lights, because we are not maintaining it so we are not going to maintain lighting. This is holiday lighting, not lighting of the area. Lighting of the area is done in the First Taxing District's budget as part of the First Taxing District's lighting requirements. It is in CL&P's service territory. The City and the First Taxing District, in an arrangement that has been under discussion lately, pays for the lighting in that area. I am only talking about holiday lighting. Other Community Service Projects – assist Clean & Green, that was something that we used to do a lot of, this Clean & Green was, until this year trucking and manpower and drivers when there were South Norwalk cleanups. There haven't been any South Norwalk clean-ups in quite some time. So that is another area that is on here that we haven't spent the money because Clean & Green did not come to us or the neighborhoods have not come to us to ask us and asked us provide the trucking. I believe the way it worked was we provided trucking with drivers because obviously our drivers have to drive vehicles we own. I believe the City provided free space in the Transfer Station and there was no charge with that and I believe somebody coordinated and it used to be Clean & Green, the individual who was heavily involved with Clean & Green years ago lived in the District he no longer does and that might be the reason why we are not as active in that area. So that was dropped out of the budget."

Unidentified Participant: "But, excuse me."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes."

Ernest Dumas: "On that clean up. This was actually done by the City of Norwalk and they no longer do the bulky waste. This is one of the reasons why it has been cut out. Until this money you have here that \$5,000 or so, is that still lingering and is still there? Look, can it still be utilized?"

Mr. Hiscock: "The Commissioners have taken it out of the budget for this year. In prior years it was in the budget but not spent."

Ernest Dumas: "For this year."

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct."

Unidentified Participant: "When does the fiscal year start since we are approving this budget?"

Mr. Hiscock: "The Fiscal Year starts for the budget we are talking about is July 1."

Unidentified Participant: "So is that money still in this current budget since you have it here?"

Mr. Hiscock: "It is. It is in the current year's budget. It is not in the budget we are discussing."

Unidentified Participant: "Right, but currently there should be \$5,500 in your coffers for projects."

Mr. Hiscock: "In the current year's budget."

Unidentified Participant: "Right and you have to use it by June 30th."

Mr. Hiscock: "Next item is the SoNo Arts Celebration - \$1,500 it's to pay for the lighting used during the SoNo Arts Celebration and we have been doing that for 10 to 15 years, I believe and it also includes the labor for our staff to create temporary electric drops for the temporary electric services to feed the various areas where they need electric and it is an upset limit, they do not necessarily use it every year. The arrangement is that if they go over the \$1,500 we get a check from the SoNo Arts Celebration and we reconcile with them after the event every year and if it is less than the \$1,500, we just pay less. That is all. Ok? Summer Youth Employment Program – The amount in the budget this year is \$4,950 in the last year it was \$15,500 and the year prior to that, even though it doesn't show it on this sheet, was \$10,500. So it was \$10,500 for 4, 5, 6 years. I don't know exactly how long. Last year it was up to \$15,500 and then this year it has been moved to \$4,950.

Carvin Hilliard: "I have a question here John."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes"

Carvin Hilliard: "Yeah...I would like to say you know, I understand when times are tough, you have to, I understand budgets, I have some experience in making out budgets, but this is the one program that deals with young people, with human beings, you are talking about human beings here and our kids and I think that is something that, I hope you would reconsider it because I am very protective when it comes to young people. I would like to think that and I have worked with the Summer Youth Program and I have seen how important it is to the young people that are given the opportunity and I just wish that you would reconsider that and find some money some place and add money to that program, the Summer Youth employment Program, because I think it is crucial, especially during times like we have been experiencing the last three or four years that kids have the opportunity. That we shouldn't be decreasing the opportunity I think, if anything, we should be increasing the opportunity for our young people to go out and have a job that is very important to some of them, otherwise they wouldn't have the opportunity to do so."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Would you entertain any comments besides, right now?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah. I want to try and do something here and I know everybody wants to comment on this and I think we need to come back to it and have open comment. I tried to say that originally the protocol we are trying to set is to go through the information and then as soon as we are through the District Budget, which is a few more minutes, then open it up for comment about the whole thing. I believe that is what the Chairman would like us to do. Ok, so please hold your comments, we will get right back to it."

Unidentified Participant: "But you will take clarifying questions?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, that is what I am trying to do. Clarify the issues; give you information about what happened in the past thank you."

Unidentified Participant: "Can you ask a question?"

Mr. Hiscock: "If it is a clarifying question, yes." [Laughter]

Unidentified Participant: "Well, Miscellaneous Project, is that a clarification question?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Well, I haven't gotten there yet. I haven't gotten there yet." [Laughter]

Unidentified Participant: "Well he asked about the Summer Youth Program that's below, further down."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah, but Miscellaneous is just above it."

Unidentified Participant: "No, but here is Miscellaneous here for \$3,000 on beautification."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah. Oh, you want, I think we kind of mentioned what that was. It was for cleaning up areas if somebody identified something and came to the Commission."

Unidentified Participant: "Oh yeah wait, the identified areas." [Laughter]

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, alright now Miscellaneous, yes mam?"

Unidentified Participant: "I may not be in clarification but I am looking at the Youth Programs and I go back to Heritage Wall where you took \$10,400 out and then the Clean & Green with the \$5,000 and I was wondering why is it only \$4,000 each?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Why is, what only \$4,000? The...?"

Unidentified Participant: "The Summer Youth Program only has \$4,950."

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct."

Unidentified Participant: "But you have \$10,000 taken from the Heritage Wall and \$5,000 taken from the Clean & Green."

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct."

Unidentified Participant: "So I am wondering why?"

Mr. Hiscock: "That is what the Commission decided. And you will get to the comment in a few minutes to comment about that issue. I think that is where you are headed. Miscellaneous Community Service Projects – previously budgeted \$7,500, some years we used all of it, some years we used a very small amount of it. This year is budgeted at zero."

Unidentified Participant: "Can you define or tell us what the difference between Miscellaneous \$3,000 and Miscellaneous Community Projects?"

Mr. Hiscock: "One, yeah. The Miscellaneous Projects is under the heading of Community Beautification, it is in-kind services. It is our crew going out and cleaning up an area or modifying something or if somebody talked to the Commission, the Commission decided we should clean something up."

Unidentified Participant: "So you said in-kind. In-kind means that it's free."

Mr. Hiscock: "In-kind means we don't send money to anybody. It is simply something that our staff does; either the water utility staff or electric staff would do the work. Money does not change hands."

Unidentified Participant: "Would that be a request too sir? Would you still have to send in a request for that? That's under; there is no change of money under the Miscellaneous Community and going back to Miscellaneous Projects. One you state you have to identify, send a letter this one here you don't have to do anything. It's a difference, you said, between the two. You have already distinguished that."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, one is in-kind and Miscellaneous Community Service Projects at the bottom, ok under other is actual cash grants. Actual cash leaves our hands. I don't mean our hands, leaves the District's hands. Ok, yes sir?"

Unidentified Participant: "So you said that the electric workers and the water workers they go out and do the work?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Right."

Unidentified Participant: "What you mean is they get overtime?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Not, no, no, not necessarily. Not necessarily, we probably would not do this on overtime it would be during the day. Ok, what would happen is if somebody would identify a project we list it as work to be done with a work order and they would fit it in at some point."

Unidentified Participant: "So no more money is being spent whatsoever on that."

Mr. Hiscock: "Right. The only time that the money would have been spent is if we were doing an Assist Clean & Green for the community clean ups because obviously the people who do the clean ups do it on weekends."

Unidentified Participant: "That's true."

Mr. Hiscock: "They all work otherwise."

Unidentified Participant: "That's true."

Mr. Hiscock: "So that had to be done and that is overtime, yes."

Unidentified Participant: "And that was very outstanding of your staff. They did excellent work within a set time, outstanding; I have to admit to that. It was an outstanding program. Really, one of the best. It was great."

Mr. Hiscock: "And that makes up the total Community Service projects for the budget that has been passed by the Commission and you are dealing with."

Unidentified Participant: "Can I ask for an example of what a Miscellaneous Community Project would have been? You said on some years you spent very little but what type of thing might have incurred that cost?"

Mr. Hiscock: "There is an annual Thanksgiving dinner that requests funds through the City. It is done through the SONIC Program. We deal directly with David Shockley and David then administers those funds for that Community Thanksgiving Dinner."

Unidentified Participant: "So that being said, you are no longer going to allow them the Thanksgiving dinner?" Where is the dinner?"

Mr. Hiscock: "There would be no way to fund it at a zero. Yes, you are correct."

Unidentified Participant: "This budget is final though? You said this is final?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Well no, it is not final because we are here to talk about it today."

Unidentified Participant: "Oh, ok."

Commissioner Ramirez: "That is when the comments are going to come, right after this."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah, the comments will come shortly, but to answer your specific question, yes that is absolutely correct with a zero budget, there would be no funds for that. We have given money to the senior center at one point to take care of individuals, and I don't have all the details in front of me but those are the types of things, cash to somebody else."

Unidentified Participant: "I have a question?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes mam."

Unidentified Participant: "Have you used the \$7,500 in the past?"

Mr. Hiscock: "We have probably three years or so ago maybe two years ago, yes we did because we got to a limit and we ran out of funds. Normally we do not. Normally we do not use that much. Ok, but in one year in the last, I'd say one year out of the last five yes we did."

Unidentified Participant: "So that money could roll over to this year?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No, no these are annual budgets. We only get to approve a budget for a year."

Unidentified Participant: "I have another clarifying question."

Mr. Hiscock: "Sure."

Unidentified Participant: "So back to Beautification and Community Service, so there's only actually \$10,210 of cash or is that cash for material for your beautification? Your budget, so you only have \$10,000, I am trying clarify; I am confused about the in-kind."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah, ok."

Unidentified Participant: "You have only \$10,210 in cash budgeted for Community Service?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Well you are talking about in this budget now the...?"

Unidentified Participant: "Or whatever."

Mr. Hiscock: "There is about \$11,000 and change if you add it all up. It is labor and supplies, grass seed, fertilizer, weed killer."

Unidentified Participant: "So not for the workers. It is for supplies, the money is for the supplies?"

Mr. Hiscock: "It is for both, both for the workers and supplies. We have a pretty complex accounting system and we don't do a lot of default accounting so when our crews are out working in the field they are filling out times slips and if they work three hours on a project, it is three hours and it works right through the accounting system."

Unidentified Participant: "So they are paid to do in-house service? The workers are paid to do basically volunteer work?"

Mr. Hiscock: "During their regular work week, as part of their 40 hour work week, yes. It's not that they are given money, they are on our payroll."

Unidentified Participant: "So, we are paying you to send them out to go do the work?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Your, just like if somebody goes out and fixes a street light. They go out and they charge their time to that street light."

Unidentified Participant: "I am just trying to understand."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah, I know. I am just trying to go through the process. So it's exactly the same as any other task that we do in either the water or the electric company. It's work that they do during the normal work week and they are on the payroll and they are paid. They, this is not extra money at all. This is strictly off of the payroll."

Unidentified Participant: "So you are just allocating how their work hours are spent?"

Mr. Hiscock: "That is correct."

Unidentified Participant: "Thank you."

Unidentified Participant: "So it is not really in-kind cause in-kind you do it for free? I am just saying, no like, because if I volunteer in-kind, then there is no money."

Mr. Hiscock: "If you volunteer in-kind, yes there's no money involved. We live in Connecticut and our employees cannot volunteer their services."

Unidentified Participant: "I am just trying to understand because you used the word in-kind. I am just trying to understand, ok"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah, Ok, in-kind in this is where we are providing services that are paid through our normal payroll."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok, ok."

Mr. Hiscock: "Are we all clear? I am sorry. Alright. So."

Unidentified Participant: "One more thing?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes?"

Unidentified Participant: "Would it be fair to say that what you are doing is putting a valuation on the labor hours put into these separate items here in your budget?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes because..."

Unidentified Participant: "Your guys are paid at the rate that they are paid."

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct. So that..."

Unidentified Participant: "And so you are just putting it into different columns to total up their weekly pay, justifiably."

Mr. Hiscock: "Right. Yeah and to clarify that, if they are not working on this they're out changing street lights or they're out working at one of our other facilities. It's just the allocation of the labor."

Unidentified Participant: "Thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, so that's total Community Service Projects \$20,420 and you can compare it to last year at \$60,400."

Unidentified Participant: "Budgeted."

Mr. Hiscock: "Budgeted not spent."

Unidentified Participant: "We're going to come back to this maybe later you say?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes we will. I am three lines away from being done and getting your comments or

the Commissioners who are here getting your comments I am only presenting. This is not my budget. We present it but the Commissioners approve it. Street lighting – purchased electricity, we talked about it before \$422,000; street light operations is \$13,300, street light maintenance is \$70,700. Purchased electricity is pretty obvious, street lighting operations would be if we were out on street light patrol to see where we should be changing bulbs and we all know that has been an issue recently and street lighting maintenance is any repairs that we make to the street lighting systems including changing bulbs. The bigger, the biggest numbers is when we have an ornamental light hit and damaged and we get a lot of trucking damage to ornamental lights and they are astronomically expensive. A damaged street light that is knocked over and not repairable because it is cast iron and fractured, runs about \$4,500 to replace that individual street light so it is pretty pricey and as we flip the page, total expenses \$354,670 we went over them. And we are back to the same numbers we talked about the minus \$351,020 now we have a capital item for the upcoming budget.”

Unidentified Participant: “The lady here has a question?”

Mr. Hiscock: “Oh sorry.”

Unidentified Participant: “So under street lights there has never been anything budgeted for street light operations or anything like maintenance or anything?”

Mr. Hiscock: “No, that is incorrect and I will explain why. We moved it to this section of the budget. It used to be inside of the Electric Budget and we have now moved it into the District Budget. We moved it into the District Budget specifically because as we talked to the City, we talked to the SoNo Alliance, we dealt with the Common Council, we talked to our legal counsel, it was pretty clear in interpretation that street lighting was a District expense and counsel is here if we need counsel to explain it in more detail, but in essence it very specifically indicates that it is to be done by a tax. “

Unidentified Participant: “To be done by a tax?”

Mr. Hiscock: “A tax, a tax on the Second District. Ok? We have always zeroed that tax out by the Electric Budget contributing amount equal to the cost of street lighting. So this is simply a movement of this item from one budget to the next, from the Electric Budget to the District budget.”

Unidentified Participant: “So, so, again explain why, because I am not, because of the recent issue that just came up about street lighting, that has caused \$206,000, I am not understanding that?”

Mr. Hiscock: “No, no it has caused us to move it from, the same amount from the Electric Budget and put it in the District Budget.”

Ernie Dumas: "Why, why is this today, why is this, at next year's budget, why?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Why because..."

Unidentified Participant: "I think that is what she is asking."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, and it was because it was the research that was done and the issue with respect to street lighting and to let everybody know very specifically what street lighting costs in the District Budget because it is the District's responsibility."

Unidentified Participant: "Has it always been the District's responsibility?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No, however, the money is the same; the amount of money spent is the same either way."

Unidentified Participant: "It just got moved."

Mr. Hiscock: "Right, it just got moved."

Unidentified Participant: "So it has no effect on us."

Mr. Hiscock: "It is a zero effect item. It just takes it out of the Electric Budget and sticks it into the District Budget and on the transfer side it takes the money out of the Electric Budget and moves it to the District to pay for it. It's just accounting for it in the correct place based on the law but the amount of money spent is identical. Now it..."

Unidentified Participant: "So, go ahead, go head."

Mr. Hiscock: "It becomes very pertinent when you look on page 4, the Capital Appropriations for street lighting of \$20,000 that is for new lighting. New lighting, where there is no existing lighting. Example, if there is a pole without a light on it and there are probably 40 or 50 of them in South Norwalk and various locations and there is a desire to put a light on it and we go through the process, it is a new light and a Capital Expenditure. So, by moving all of this to the District Budget, you can get a better idea of what Street Lighting costs. That is the goal here. To have an understanding of what it is going to cost because we believe that it is going to escalate significantly moving forward."

Unidentified Participant: "Well, why, why is that?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Because we have had requests for new lights, we are getting many, many more ornamental lights and the ornamental lights are very subjected to damage and unless the police are called or somebody reports somebody damaging a light, most of them are hit and run, most of

them are truckers turning corners and knocking light poles over and keeping ongoing. They may not even know they hit them, a truck is a pretty big items compared to a street light. We have a lot of damage to ornamental street lights. So we believe as the ornamental street lights expand through the District, and they are, the cost is going to be greater."

Unidentified Participant: "Who is requesting it? Is it residential people who are requesting it?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Excuse me..."

Mr. Hiscock: "Actually it's the City of Norwalk."

Commissioner Burgess: "Excuse me, would you state your name for the record when you speak please."

Mr. Hiscock: "I think I answered your questions?" "You seem puzzled."

Daisy Franklin: "From 82 South Main. As my question concerning the Electric Budget and you already had the money in the Electric Budget for the lights and if you had lights, bulbs missing stuff like that it was money already in there to replace them? So now, when you come over to the District it seems as though you are going to have so much more. This money was already planned for lights, so it should be no extra money that you should have to add, right?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Correct, right that is absolutely correct. It is a zero issue. Ok, it is not any more money; it is simply moving it from one section of the Budget to another so that you can see the costs because again I said that we believe that the cost of street lighting is going to expand, significantly. So you need to know that."

Daisy Franklin: "Ok, if you have to replace light bulbs, you already have the money in place already from the Electric Budget transferred over to the District Budget. You already had that."

Mr. Hiscock: "Well yes. It comes out of the electric. One way or the other, one way or another every penny spent on street lighting comes out of electric revenues at the moment. Ok?" At the moment, so we are moving it into the Budget to make it clearer exactly what the issue is for the District moving it into the District. Joe?"

Joe Newell: "I think people are confused about what the District is, what the electric is, what the water department is. I think if you can clear it up. What is the water department specifically, what is electric department? The two of them is the District."

Mr. Hiscock: "The way the Charter is written, we have three funds. The General Government Fund, we have the Water fund, we have the Electric Fund. Under the Charter, and actually under the State Statutes, all of revenue collected from water rates has to be spent in the water utility, all

of the revenue from electric rates has to be spent in the electric utility and all of that happens in the budget and it has to do with bonding, it has to do with a lot of issues related to that but at the very end, when you come down, and you have a positive fund balance, the Charter allows transfers at the very bottom of the budget but you have to first satisfy the electric revenue expenses, the capital budget for the electric, the same for the water, the same for the General Fund and at the very bottom of the budget you can move money back and forth and that's why you will see, on page 4, the last box, right there Transfers from the Water Fund to the District, from the Electric Fund to the District, from the Electric Fund for Street Lighting. So this is where all the transfers occur. They can only occur if all of the other debt and expenses had been satisfied and the budget item in the Charter is probably about three and one-half pages long explaining that procedure. But that is a quick explanation of how it is done. That's the differences, Joe."

Debra Goldstein: "Osborn Avenue. I'm just unclear as to whether there is a statutory requirement for the ornamental lighting or whether you have some discretion? It seems like that is the biggest concern and they are also the items at the biggest risk. For safety purposes, whether you are required to continue to go down that road."

Mr. Hiscock: "We are required by the 1913 Special Act, which created the City of Norwalk out of Norwalk, South Norwalk and East Norwalk, we are required in the Second Taxing District to pay for lighting in the Second Taxing District. Ok, at the direction and control of the City Council. Pretty soon I think we are going to publish that opinion and put it on our website so that everybody can read it because there is a lot of confusion about what the Charter says. And then the City, in their Ordinance Procedure, has modified how they deal with street lighting through the Ordinance Procedure and the ordinances are things in the City that the City can change, just like the Second District has an ordinance procedure, it can change its. So, I think I explained that to you."

Debra Goldstein: "Well, again, it is not clear the use and replacement of these ornamental lights. They specifically instructed you or you were specifically instructed by the City of Norwalk to maintain ornamental lights at those particular locations."

Mr. Hiscock: "Wow, you really need to read at the opinion and look into the law and all of that, but to put it in simple terms, absolutely."

Debra Goldstein: "Ok."

Mr. Hiscock: "The Charter of both the District and the City and the Ordinance of the City makes it absolutely clear that the street lighting in the Second Taxing District that exists in the Second Taxing District is to be paid for in the Second Taxing District."

Debra Goldstein: "I get that. What I am asking."

Mr. Hiscock: "And at the direction for wattage, location and type are the other words that sit in

the Charter.”

Attorney Zullo: “Of the City Council.”

Mr. Hiscock: “Of the City Council. The City Council determines for the entire City.”

Debra Goldstein: “Understood. The specific ornamental poles that you are concerned about that seem to be at risk from these turning trucks. This is all one individual ordinance instruction at some point can you pinpoint the date when that was passed?”

Mr. Hiscock: “I cannot.”

Debra Goldstein: “We can deal with the Council if that is what’s holding them up.”

Mr. Hiscock: “Nothing’s holding anything up. It’s simply the accounting for the money.”

Debra Goldstein: “Alright.”

Mr. Hiscock: “Are there? Yes mam.”

Yoland Leaco: “39 [inaudible]. So I just had a question about the ornamental expense, it seems to be so expensive. So, is it the City that’s telling you have to put ornamentals up?”

Mr. Hiscock: “Yes, now I want to make it very clear so you understand that we have received a lot of donations of ornamental lights from the City to us. We are generally not paying for the initial installation. Usually what happens in a redevelopment project they decide the type of lighting they install it. That is a non-cash contribution to us once they are installed, we maintain them. Ok. A State highway project, if they decide they want the utilities underground and they want a certain kind of lighting, the State pays for it. And this all has to do with the monies that the City receives either from the State, Federal Government or redevelopment received. That is how most of the underground lighting got in place. So, when the City goes into an area and decides they want ornamental lights, generally first cost is on them. There’s no rule that says that but since they are getting a grant from the State or from whomever, that’s the way it works out. And there’s a statute that talks about municipal expenses are always included in the grant and is considered a municipal expense and that really gets into some pretty detailed explanation of the rules and laws but that is what it works out as.”

Yoland Laco: “There are municipal expenses which are in that grant or did you recheck it? Are they giving the municipality more money to maintain it? It seems so expensive to maintain you know if it gets hit.”

John Hiscock: “Generally those kinds of projects are one-time grant for construction.”

Yoland Laco: "And so then it is up to us to maintain them."

Unidentified Participant: "It's up to us."

Attorney Zullo: "It's up to us, yes."

John Hiscock: "It's up to us from there on out. Yes."

Yoland Laco: "Ok. So then my question is, ok I will think about that. Next question is if the truck does hit it shouldn't that truck be responsible?"

John Hiscock: "Sure if you can find them. If you can find them we have instances where there have been police reports and we find the truck driver and the owner and it's a simple insurance claim. We have other instances where the insurance company refuses to pay for them; we have had to hire attorneys to collect. But generally there are significant numbers that are hit and run. We have no idea. The police will call us at night and say there's a street light down at such and such a location. We dispatch a crew, we pick it up. We check with them the next day if there is a report. If there isn't the District pays."

Unidentified Participant: "Don't we have insurance on it. Can we make a claim with our insurance and our insurance carrier?"

John Hiscock: "The cost of insurance for street lighting would be very expensive. "

Attorney Zullo: "Astronomical."

Mr. Hiscock: "It's not a covered item. And like anything else in insurance, you only cover the catastrophic losses, you don't cover the little, routine things. Yes sir?"

Audie Morgan: "I live on [inaudible] Street. I was wondering only if it is ornamental lights do we have an actual amount in South Norwalk?"

John Hiscock: "I don't specifically know. We track them, we have a database, we do it in our records have that information but I don't have it with me here this evening. There are lights; there are several thousand lights in South Norwalk in the District."

Audie Morgan: "Do you know how many lights are actually..."

John Hiscock: "No, lights in general. If I had to guess 300, 400; somewhere in that range. Every light on Washington Street, every light on North Water Street, South Main Street all the way down to Hanford. I am just trying, off of the top of my head; remember neighborhoods and ornamentals

come in various types. Because West Avenue has the new high ornamentals versus South Norwalk, the business area with restaurants, are the smaller ornamentals. Yes sir."

Sherwood Taylor: "I am sorry, Sherwood Taylor, South Main Street. I just find that it is a little confusing. I am having a difficult time understanding. We are spending so much time on the ornamental lighting when in some places, like where I live on South Main Street, we have no lighting. I mean, so we are allocating special monies for special lights. We are in a high crime area and we have dim lighting or no lighting at all. And, that just, I am sorry, but that just confuses the heck out of me. I am sorry, I am sorry sir."

John Hiscock: "It's ok. I just wanted to indicate to you that the \$20,000 that's listed for Capital Improvements is for putting lights in those areas and we are currently working with the SoNo Alliance and the police liaison and we are trying to get moving forward on that but the second item on this budget this evening, by the way, is modifying the current budget to put money in for street lighting for this year. The budget we are talking about is for next year." So both years will have money in it."

Ernest Dumas: "Ernie Dumas, South Main Street. I would like to know when you have a light that is out or you have a problem with a light itself, isn't there an indicator that will monitor, that will register back to you to let you know that that particular light is out?"

John Hiscock: "No."

Ernest Dumas: "Or there's a problem with that light?"

John Hiscock: "No, we have to do what's called street light patrol. We go out at night and we just drive the District and we make notes and that is how we do it. Ok. We make notes. We are internally changing that process a little bit to make it more effective and we're probably going to do it more often until we get a better feel for how often we should do it. I think for a while we are going to do it monthly."

Unidentified Participant: "So when they patrol, is that, are they on their job at that time?"

Mr. Hiscock: "They are working for us; they're on the payroll and are getting paid overtime."

Unidentified Participant: "Overtime to go check out the lights?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, they have to by State law. It's outside their regular shift."

Unidentified Participant: "Is that something, he mentioned, Mr. Dumas, that is, that something you are thinking of doing something computerized, I mean we are in a different century. Those lights would automatically send a message. I know it sounds like I was spaced, I don't mean to

sound that way but that is the future. Instead of someone going out on patrol in this century there's no way that it is monitored that that could happen in the future."

Mr. Hiscock: "We don't currently monitor the street lighting that way. We currently monitor all of your electric meters that way. We don't go out and read meters anymore it's all done by radio waves."

Unidentified Participant: "Right. So..."

Mr. Hiscock: "We have 6,600 customers in the electric system and we have several thousand lights. It would be a pretty expensive project for us to go out and monitor every single light with that type of technology. We would have to do an installation on every single light and when you do installation on lighting, you are in a bucket truck, you have police protection and it's not like when you go out and change a meter. Just walk out and one man changes it. This is a more difficult thing. But yes we do go out and do street lighting patrol. Fuses can fail in the base of the light, the ballast in the light can fail, the photo cell in the light can fail and the bulb can fail. There are four components in a street light that can fail. Yes sir?"

Unidentified Participant: "I don't mean to be rude but can we get back to the youth. We are spending a lot of time on lights."

Mr. Hiscock: "I am only responding to questions."

Unidentified Participant: "Alright, can we get back to the youth?"

Unidentified Participant: "Are there comments now?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok we are now down to my explanation if there are no more questions on the District Budget and I believe the Chairman will open it for comment."

Commissioner Ramirez: "All in favor?"

Electors simultaneously: "Aye"

Commissioner Burgess: "You have to say opposed."

[No opposed]

Commissioner Ramirez: "My name is César Ramirez. I am here as an elector. These comments are going to be as an elector. First, I want to say thank you to everybody responding here today and secondly, we are going to go on to page 3. My problem is with the reference to the agreements that was service projects. I am very discouraged and I feel very, should I not say, the

word betrayed but I really feel very discontent. In a way that this budget has demonstrated specific to the Electors. I believe the Commissioners have a responsibility but as an elector I will highly recommend it that perhaps the Commission should consider to put back as it was before. If you do feel to eliminate the out of District projects, that would be up to you folks. When it's pertaining to the City or our District, the South Norwalk District, everything that has been here for the past few years I do believe that the Commissioners have a responsibility. I do believe you have the responsibility towards the community. Everything that will be spent here it will go back to the community. I believe one of the most important is the youth program, which I just really feel very bad and really at the bottom of my heart, I was very concerned and deeply disturbed this program has really almost zero. To believe also the \$25,000 that I cannot see here for the assistance for those who go through hardships in respect to electric assistance. Those folks at this point have no way to pay for electricity and refer to the assistance of the State and the local assistance and that is \$25,000."

Unidentified Participant: "What page is that on?"

Unidentified Participant: "Where do they have that on?"

Mr. Hiscock: "That is in the Electric Budget. We need to go over that now. Ok, we are talking District Budget, the \$25,000 is part of the electric budget and we will get to that."

Commissioner Ramirez: "We are making it very simple here folks. The only two items that I have no problem and it is up to everyone is to eliminate will be the two items that are outside the District. That is somebody else's responsibility. But I do believe that every other items that has been specific to us as a community service project shall be and must be back to what we had in the past years. It must. Especially the youth program what I have seen, personal, firsthand how the children have really gone through all this beauty of being assisted, families are very happy, children are no longer hanging out on the corner of the streets because this project has made a huge difference in the lives of a lot of children as well as the families themselves. For those meals that are actually given to the homeless, the Thanksgiving Dinner. If only you folks go and see how this homeless, and not just the homeless, but all the people really that go through a hard times and the dedication of adult folks who really make no money at all, to serve and to assist those folks. I am very proud to see that we still have people in our community to provide these services, their free time and to comply and I believe it should be continued all along. I as an elector would to make it clear and requesting for the Commission again to accept, to not accept this budget and to reconsider it and bring it back to put everything as it was in the previous years. I strongly believe folks that this organization is one of the unique in South Norwalk, in the City of Norwalk and it must comply also to assist for those in need. I thank you."

Sherwood Taylor: "Yes, how are you. My name is Sherwood Taylor. I am a lifelong Norwalk resident. I have worked with the youth program, big basketball. I currently volunteer my time at George Washington Carver. The main reason why I am here tonight is with the youth program,

with the monies that were allocated have been cut to a third. Is that my first job experience was based on a job that was presented through NEON that was many years ago and it was since then cut back and we had to go private through the City. That was where I learned how to work, that was how I learned how to conduct myself in a business environment, that's where everything starts. Times have changed drastically since then and as I was talking to our friend David, he said something that we both agreed upon is that if you take this money away from them. You are not taking the money away from them. They are going to go out there and get that money one way or another. Mr. Ramirez and Lieutenant Won will be seeing those kids. You are in a tough time. You are limiting these kids, how, can they go out and earn a living. A lot of these kids, you are putting them under a gun. You are literally forcing them to go out there. This money is not just for...some people think this is just for them to go out and buy jewelry and school supplies. The parents are dependent upon some of this money to actually put food and clothes on their younger brothers' and sisters' back. I beg of you, I plead with you, please, please, please do not cut this money this drastically in one sweep. Please, if it is possible to bend. And, I thank you for this time. But please reconsider, that's too big of a cut at one time sir and Commissioners."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes."

Sandra Stokes: "My name is Sandra Stokes. With all due respect to the Commissioners or whoever has come up with this budget I am appalled at how you could allocate \$5,760 for West Avenue and \$4,950 for a Youth Program. I just don't understand where the human touch has gone away. It's missing right now and how do you place a value on a street over the value of children and their lives. I don't understand it. Like Sherman, I started my first job with the youth employment program too and the values and just everything that I learned from that program has helped shaped me into working. It is just much more than just a job or getting a paycheck. It's a lot that you get out of a job and I am just appalled and honestly I don't understand it. That's why I say, with all due respect, I don't understand how you can allocate more money for something that you...for a West Avenue over our children, our future, when we have all of these issues going on in South Norwalk alone, today. It's like you don't even have to turn on the news. You walk out...I mean I live in South Norwalk, was raised here; was bred here. I have children that are affected by the issues that are occurring here and to see money go to a street over issues, something that can affect issues that we are having today is just horrible and I don't understand it."

Commissioner Burgess: "Thank you, yes, in the back."

Jackie Roberson: "Hi my name is Jackie Roberson and I am a South Norwalk resident and am also a school social worker at the high school level and I am very concerned about the Summer Youth Employment Program. Within about two or three days of the program actually opening up for kids to apply there are 150 applications that were submitted. I stayed many days after school with the kids filling out the application and going through the process because these kids desperately want to do something and to do something constructive. My mother used to say when I was a little girl, an idle mind is a devil's workshop. I really do believe that. I do believe that it is important for us

to invest in our youth and give them something positive to do and productive to do over the summer because if you don't pay now, you will pay later and that is the God's honest truth. I have been around long enough, 56 years, and I have seen it happen. I am a product of the Summer Youth Employment Program from the City of Stamford. I grew up in Stamford and there was a similar program when I was growing up and that program also helped to shape me. I am a productive, contributing member of society, I am a tax payer and I have invested my 56 years of living in helping other young people. To see a program be cut that drastically at the risk of being repetitive and being redundant, just outrages me and I am just here in support of that and anything that I need to do as a tax payer as a resident of South Norwalk. I am not involved in the political process as much as I need to be however, this was an issue that I feel was very important and feel strongly about it and am here in support of that issue and that issue alone."

Ernie Dumas: "Yes, me, I don't want to stand while I talk because of the simple reason, my name is Ernie Dumas again of South Main Street and the \$1,500 that is, comes from you guys, comes through redevelopment to Ernie Dumas and I supply and I cook all of these turkeys and the dinners for all of these people. This program was started some years ago, with myself, Darlene Young and Berdella White, over here. Ok, this had started a long time ago and when it started, we used to take flyers and put them on door steps and mailboxes for people to buy the goods and bring them to us and let us cook. Even some of your Commissioners helped us on this deal. They benefited. We would have never come to you to ask you for a dime if it wasn't for one of your Commissioners that helped us. Personally, I took \$500 to \$600 from my wife and children to supply the food that we couldn't get to put on the table to feed. Now, it was only what 75 to 100 people. Right now it is up to almost 225 people on Thanksgiving that we feed and you want to take \$1,500 away. Also, it has grown so large that we even give away coats and sweaters on Thanksgiving. So, whoever has hardened their heart, I am going to pray for them. Thank you."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes, for a moment I would like counsel, Frank Zullo to explain what his opinion is governing charitable contributions and projects such as these."

Attorney Zullo: "Well I was asked by the District to give a legal opinion of what the Charter would allow the District to donate by way of charitable contributions and it is clear in the Charter, certainly in the Public Acts and the Special Acts from 1870 to 1913, that the District could make no charitable contributions at all. All their money that they generated had to be for the maintenance of the District and its properties West Avenue, is an obligation they have, its properties that had to be maintained within the District and the Charter of 1913, when we joined the City of Norwalk. Keep in mind, there were many municipalities in Norwalk. The City of Norwalk joined the old City of Norwalk in 1913. The old City of South Norwalk joined the City of Norwalk in 1913 and while this wasn't called the City of East Norwalk, let me just say for clarification, East Norwalk, the City of East Norwalk joined the City of Norwalk in 1913, Rowayton joined the City of Norwalk in 1921. Each of them are separate Districts however and while they are a part of the City of Norwalk, they are governed, to a great degree, by Commissioners from each of the Districts. They are geographic locations on the ground and that is where we are now,

we are the Second District, the City of Norwalk. Our fore fathers were very wise, when they joined the City of Norwalk in the First District, the First District kept the water company, because the water company generated money for the District and as you generated money, you reduced the requirement for taxes from people in that District because it was a profitable resource generator. The Second District maintained a water and electrical company and they also generated money to handle the costs of the District and keep taxes down, and on the political course, as taxes go up your propensity to get re-elected as a Commissioner goes down and as taxes go down, your propensity to get re-elected go up. So having these municipal resources that generated money for the District was very important. And so while they agreed to join the City of Norwalk, these Districts maintained certain proprietary interests. East Norwalk maintains an electrical company, Rowayton just has some nice recreational facilities but the taxes in Rowayton are about 4 or 5 mills more than most of the area of the City because they don't have any revenue producing resources to take care of the District. So, the Special Acts from 1870 to 1913 that govern the old City of South Norwalk had no provision for the revenues to be used for anything but the maintenance and operation of the District and the delivery of quality water and quality electricity to the members of the District, to the constituency. That was it, no matter how good the fund, how much of a need for the City to contribute to the City wide program for youth. None of that was allowed. The statues though look upon us as a municipality and we are a municipality, and the General Statutes does allow a little flexibility in terms of certain areas and let me just read that section in the statutes for you that relates to municipal municipalities and technically I can argue that we are a municipality. I can argue the First District is a municipality as is the Rowayton and East Norwalk. *'Powers: any municipality shall have the power to do any of the following in addition to all of the powers granted to municipalities under the Constitution and General Statutes.'* This is exactly from the Statutes. *'Finances and Appropriations: make appropriations to military organizations, hospitals, healthcare facilities, public health, nursing organizations, non-profit museums and libraries and organizations providing drug abuse and dependency programs and **any other private organization providing a public function.**'* So the one area where you have some flexibility to do some of the things you are talking about is; if it is a private organization and all the examples given were of non-profit, private organizations performing a public function and even there, keep in mind the Charter says no, the old Public Acts say no. I am going and I am stretching out to give the Commission some flexibility to say that if it a public function, they can consider some contributions. Now, in light of this opinion and in light of the reaction to the last rate increase that this Commission had to impose. The Commission acted very conservatively, I believe, I am just into this for the first time tonight, but they acted very conservatively in eliminating, I guess, some of the items you didn't feel were directly involved with the maintenance of the District or the delivery of quality water and quality electricity in hopes of keeping the rates more reasonable and that was their activity. So in terms of the things you are talking about, I guess if it is a private organization performing a public function, you can with some degree of flexibility, very conservatively and very carefully allocate some money in that regard. I will say this, as I say in my letter, *'accordingly, a quasi-municipal corporation such as the Second Taxing District, has limited authority by virtue of the Connecticut General Statutes to make appropriations to a restricted group of organizations performing a public function, which, as set forth in the statute, appear to be*

not for profit organizations. However, any contribution should be limited, conservative, and restricted, in keeping with the mission of the District to provide wholesome water and adequate electricity, and to an established public community organization performing a public function within the District. As public funds are utilized to make the contribution, the organization in receipt of the funds must and should account to the District, its Commissioners, and the Electors as to the expenditure of funds.' So it's just not giving someone, you know, \$15,000 or \$10,000, they are public funds and I think the Commission has an obligation to make sure it is spent properly. So, that was my opinion and I think that might have been the catalyst together with the rate increase last year that has induced the Commission to act a little more conservatively this year. But as to tonight, having said all of that and having heard all that you have heard. This is a hearing on the budget. You are the Electors of the Second Taxing District. You are the constituents of this District. This budget is before you tonight for three purposes, either one of three purposes. To accept, reject or comment. You either reject the budget, you approve the budget or you comment. If you don't approve the budget based on your comments, the Commission goes back and has another meeting and may or may not adjust the budget in accordance with your comments, then they would have another public hearing such as this on the new budget whether it is amended or not and if that one isn't adjusted then they will go back again depending upon the sense of the meeting and amend the budget perhaps again and then again this process keeps up until we get to July 1, I guess, and then there is another period and if we don't get a budget by then, then we have to go back to the budget of the previous year. But, that is the explanation that I am setting forth to you this evening relative to my opinion, which I have condensed a great deal and what will happen tonight depending on your actions here. You actions here tonight will either accept this budget or reject the budget, and if you reject it, it goes back to the Commission for further consideration. Once they give it that additional consideration, it will then come back to you again to accept or reject or comment."

Commissioner Ramirez: "This is for the Chair and a question for the counsel. May I allow?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Correct me if I am wrong. While we found here that this donations that are given, are given to a non-profit organization, is that correct? Meaning the youth program the money is going to, an organization that is non-profit. The other process, I mean the \$25,000 to assist, for electric assistance, is given to a non-profit organization for the sole purpose only to assist the public within the District itself, correct?"

Attorney Zullo: "I don't know what you mean in terms of bringing in the electrical, we are talking about the general..."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Ok."

Attorney Zullo: "Whatever."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Also, the money that is \$7,000 to the general functions for the Community Services is also given to a non-profit organization. So, legally, with my understanding and a little flexibility of the municipality process, we are covered under the umbrella of the law. Is that correct?"

Attorney Zullo: "Well, let me say this as a lawyer..."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Being reasonable..."

Attorney Zullo: "Yes, I want to be reasonable. Just because you give money to a non-profit, doesn't mean that you now bent the law. You would like to think that it was a non-profit that was somehow connected with the District and somehow connected with the welfare of the District and, hopefully with the delivery of the water and the delivery of electricity. Yes, local projects that affect local individuals, you could make that argument. There could be someone on the outside that says hey you are using the money improperly, someone might bring a lawsuit; I doubt that they, will but they could then we would find out who was right and who was wrong."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Correct me if I am wrong. I think it would be a question to the person who actually administered the youth program. Would you be so kindly to address the Chair and this local counsel and approximately what is the percentage of the youth that we serve that belongs to our District?"

Darlene Young: "I can tell, Darlene Young"

Commissioner Ramirez: "This money that has been utilized is money that has been given to this organization is going back to...?"

Darlene Young: "It fluctuates from year-to-year. We've actually been doing a Summer Youth Employment Program in the District since 1998. "

Attorney Zullo: "Well, throughout the whole City, right?"

Darlene Young: "Well, no. In 1998 specifically within this area and so 100% of those young people in this program came from South Norwalk community because part of the funding...all of the funding for that program was from the government. It was specific to the South Norwalk community so you looking we started at 33 kids and we got up to about 100 kids in about 2001. In 2005, when the City actually got involved and contributed funding to the program we had about 250 kids. I would say that of those 250 kids, 70% were from the South Norwalk community and I think at that time SNEW was probably contributing about \$10,500. That \$10,500 provided employment for nine kids. The \$15,000 that we are talking about now provides employment for 13 kids in the South Norwalk community. We average 500 applicants a year, we interview all

those kids and the majority of those young people come from the 06854 District, community, from this area. So, that \$15,000 funds 13 kids so three years ago we had 200 kids the year before that when the economy started to go down we had 175 and last year we were about at that same number. But again, the majority of those young people come from this District so we provided that information as it was requested and we can do the same again. I mean we have to make sure that we are doing things correctly, but I assure you 13 kids easily come from our District and from our area. With this number, you are looking at about 4.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “Along the same line and with respect to the Chair and the counsel, I do believe that as far as my knowledge goes and if anybody else believes otherwise, please correct me if I am wrong but I do believe that every dollar that is given, that is provided as a donation or assistance to the community is remaining in the District, the Second Taxing District. So, it is going back to the community and coming back again somehow again to the South Norwalk community.”

Darlene Young: “And if I could say as well, I mean it is a win/win for everyone because we have quite a few business in South Norwalk, as well, who take young people to work. So, it is going around and I think it is just a worthwhile project. We have young people who work at the library, young people that work at the local summer camps, on Water Street, Washington Street, so it is staying in this community. So to say that we can’t find 13 young people who could possibly work in this community where this money is coming from, I mean that is an easy thing to do.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “It is a little fraction of the budget folks. That is actually, we are asking the Commissioners within the flexibility of the law, as long as legal, and I would not suggest, entertain in any shape or form, anything that is not covered within the umbrella folks. Everything has to precisely be as the law requires and I do believe, counsel can correct me if I am wrong, I do believe being from what you just stated, it is a reasonable donation. This could be recovered by the District, meaning by SNEW. Thank you.”

Commissioner Burgess: “Thank you. Are there comments from other people? Yes, go ahead.”

Audie Morgan: “I just wanted to make one observation while I was sitting here. When we were talking about the pieces of metal, I think which you referred to; you considered the art over there on West Avenue a little bit further up where you said it was the on exchange. I think that was the way you referred to it. It was like the exchange?”

Mr. Hiscock: “Yes, it is part of the highway interchange.”

Audie Morgan: “Right the highway interchange, .excuse me. That piece of West Avenue is that not pretty much considered the same thing? Because I remember when I was younger, years ago, I remember they were always maintained by the yellow trucks, and not the SNEW trucks. [Laughter] No, no those were the State truck or orange trucks that maintained that piece. So now it appears that we have taken on once again, something that is out of District because, as you said,

that is the entry way into SoNo and it makes it looks nice, so we will take on something that really is not ours."

Mr. Hiscock: "That is correct."

Unidentified Participant: "So I am correct in that assumption?"

Mr. Hiscock: "You are correct."

Audie Morgan: "So, we are going to take money away from kids because we are going to reach out beyond us, because we are in tough economic times, we are going to reach out and go somewhere else but we are not going to help our own. You are saying you have to uplift, you know the community, keep it in. I guarantee that if a kid could reach in his pocket and go ahead and by himself a bottle of pop, or buy himself a bottle of water, he would feel a lot better about himself. When you have a kid that is going to Staples, or he is going to Wal-Mart to buy his own school supplies, as I did, you feel a little bit better about yourself, when you are able to do those things with your own money. Thank you"

Commissioner Burgess: "Thank you. Yes?"

Carvin Hilliard: "I was going to say about what Attorney Zullo said about the legalities, while we spent \$15,500 so previously, last year I believe, so that is already been established, the legal aspect of it..."

Attorney Zullo: "I wasn't asked for an opinion last year."

Carvin Hilliard: "Ok, ok [laughter] No, but I am stating that we already did it and it was ok then. We didn't get sued for it, the Second Taxing District. We shouldn't get sued for it now. I just think that we have to invest in kids. I respect, I know the Commissioners are faced with a tough time, but I just think, we have to invest with kids. I really believe that."

Attorney Zullo: "Let me say this, Mr. Council President, if \$4,900 is legal than something a little higher is legal too.

Carvin Hilliard: "Ok, ok that is what I am saying."

Attorney Zullo: "Someone might take the position that the Second District is paying twice for the summer jobs, once when you pay taxes to the total City of Norwalk that has a total City project of 150 youngsters and then just the Second District is adding another \$5,000 to that program, but these people are the Commissioners, excuse me are the Electors of the Second District. They are your constituency, and your voters and your rate payers. If you want to do it at a reasonable length, at a reasonable amount, then God bless you, do it and let's see if the Commissioners react,

they will have to react to the feeling of the consensus of the meeting and perhaps amend the budget."

Daisy Franklin: "Can we do that?"

Carvin Hilliard: "Thank you. Appreciate it."

Attorney Zullo: "You can't do it tonight."

Daisy Franklin: "No, I know we can't do it tonight."

Attorney Zullo: "Tonight all you can do is approve, reject and comment, but if you reject the budget then they can go back and reconsider based on the consensus of the meeting."

Daisy Franklin: "How do we go about getting a consensus? I am not trying to take away from the meeting, but I am just trying to state that it is 9:30 and I want to come and say that I reject the budget."

Attorney Zullo: "We haven't done the electric and the water yet."

Daisy Franklin: "Right."

Jim Delgreco: "41 Elmwood Avenue. Let me ask, as a group, with this budget, \$350,000. Are we debating one item, one line item on this? Does anybody object to any other line item besides the Summer Youth Program? "

Unidentified Participant: "I do. We haven't gotten there yet."

Jim Delgreco: "Can I ask what that line item is?"

Unidentified Participant: "They chopped the electrical assistance for people who can't afford their electricity."

Jim Delgreco: "Is that an item in question because we are going to be here all night. Right I am trying to do right now if find out which items are in question."

[Inaudible]

Jim Delgreco: "So there are two line items?"

[Inaudible]

John Hiscock: "You are going to have to use the gavel to bring them back to order."

[Gavel]

Commissioner Burgess: "In back."

Jim Delgreco: "Wait a minute. I asked a question and I would like my question answered. Could you tell me César, I am sorry could you tell me specifically the line items in the budget that are in question?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "To the Chair, may I as an elector."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes."

Commissioner Ramirez: "As an elector, ok, I am very discontent, I believe these Items I am going to mention right now should go back to the Commission but it's up to every one of you to agree with me or not to agree. On page 3, I refer to Community Service Project the first one is the Youth Employment Program, then...I am starting right from the bottom, the Miscellaneous Community Services, which is \$7,500, the Summer Youth Employment Program is \$15,500."

Commissioner Burgess: "Was"

Commissioner Ramirez: "Was, that is what I was talking about that should go back in. Ok? The SoNo Arts Celebration, the Assist Clean & Green."

Unidentified Participant: "No, that's it. Summer Youth."

Commissioner Ramirez: "And the Miscellaneous Projects, \$3,000."

Jim Delgreco: "Those are all the same though."

Attorney Zullo: "Those are the same, there is no change."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Ok then it will be the Miscellaneous Community Projects at \$7,500, the Summer Youth Program and the \$25,000 for the...?"

Jim Delgreco: "But that is not in this budget."

Attorney Zullo: "That is not this budget."

Commissioner Burgess: "That's not this budget."

Unidentified Participant: "I want the electric assist in."

Mr. Hiscock: "We will get to that shortly when we get to the Electric Fund."

Commissioner Ramirez: "It is in the budget folks."

Jim Delgreco: "There are three separate budgets. All we are talking about right now is the District Budget. That is it. We will never get done if we continue to go down this road. All I want to add is there any other one, besides those two, in this budget that you want to add?"

Unidentified Participant: "Three, three items."

Unidentified Participant: "I don't even know if you can change this, but your Operations is \$128,250, that's your budget. It's been the same, but if you are going to page 5 you spent about \$90,000. So, I mean, even if you budget \$100,000 you have about \$30,000 right there. So, you can do your lights and give more money to Community Service."

Unidentified Participant: "But on this page 3 he is just asking us a question, and maybe I am confused but only, right here, you see right above it, Total Operations they have \$128,250, on page 3. I am on page 3. I'm up here, but what I understand is just right now on this page here, what items here do we want to reject?"

Unidentified Participant: "Can't we reject \$40,000, maybe \$30,000."

Unidentified Participant: "Yeah...ok"

Unidentified Participant: "The Meetings and Printing, if you go to page 5, they spend about \$10,000, so slash that."

Unidentified Participant: "You can't change it. No, you can just reject it. You can't change it."

Unidentified Participant: "I am just suggesting so that they hear me."

Commissioner Burgess: "Excuse me. [Gavel] We can't go line item by line item to reject it. You can either vote down the budget or approve the budget but we can't start voting on line items, it is the whole package."

Attorney Zullo: "And the gentleman in the back is simply asking if there is a consensus as to other items on this budget only not the water or the electricity. It seems to relate to two items, Summer Youth and Miscellaneous Community Projects. So now if that is the feeling of this group, then we can get on to another budget and worry about how we are going to handle that at the end of the meeting you are going to accept or reject and then the Commissioners can decide at another

meeting depending on what you vote.”

Unidentified Participant: “Right.”

Unidentified Participant: “Can we vote?”

Robert Burgess: “The Summer Youth Program is the most important program. What I think is that everyone should be part of the problem and everybody should be part of the solution. These issues outweigh the outcome. It is important, as a community we figure out who can bring in additional needs. The administrator for the program, at your office, I think three things should be implemented. Appeal to the federal government for more summer youth money, also appeal to the state government for additional money and also, everybody here can share the pain too. Have a dinner, support the Summer Youth Program. So everybody will be giving a little. I think by that way, we hire more kids than we are hiring now. I don’t think we can just ask for a hand out, we can do more to help ourselves by being part of the solution.”

Unidentified Participant: “Reject the budget.”

Unidentified Participant: “No.”

Unidentified Participant: “You know where that is going.”

Commissioner Burgess: “Thank you. Mr. Newell.”

Joe Newell: “I am concerned about three things. I am concerned about this youth program, I think there should be more money allocated for it. However, it really is remarkable that this budget says that the monies of this District is restricted. Also, thirdly I am concerned about the lighting issue and we had to go into reserves. We had to go into reserves to keep the rate down. But I am concerned that if we keep nitpicking it, would it cost the District to raise the tax? That means a tax on top of a tax that the City charges. The District would have to raise the tax because by mandate, as I understand, we have to operate in a responsible, solvent way and we have to be careful on how you spend your money. Also, if we are not careful we will get caught in this repetition thing by being taxed twice, taxed by the City, for Youth Services and then by the District. So, we are getting taxed two ways. There are other ways we can raise money and in this budget, I am thinking about \$18,000 conservatively, probably could be maybe, I don’t know, maybe it could be switched for the Youth Programs, Miscellaneous Programs, without causing any concerns. But, we have to really think about how we are going to pay for this because we cannot pay, take these resources, and use them for charity.

Darlene Young: “I would like to make a last comment on this because as the Coordinator of the Summer Youth Employment Program and let me be clear. I thank the Second Taxing District Commissioners for your support over the years and Bobby, you are right, I would expect you to

maybe give me the first donation as we leave this meeting. [Laughter] So, if everyone can do that and you know, we do a good job of going after grant funding and we do that every year and so we reach out to about 2,000 businesses and residences in the City of Norwalk. So, if you have some ideas and other folks that we can go and ask for money from, we will gladly do that and I think we have done a fantastic job doing that and let me also say that all of the money that we get for this program goes directly to the young people. I do what I do, I have been doing it since 2005...3, so please know that, that this money goes directly to the young people and as far as the Second Taxing District Commissioners, this not being a charitable organization, I almost disagree, I hope there will be charity in your hearts to care about these young people that you see out on the street six weeks during the summer and we have one young lady who has been in this program and benefited and has been a tremendous asset to this program and in what we are trying to do. Lastly, I am not sure what the total budget it for the Second Taxing District but if anywhere from \$60,000 to \$40,000 is going to put a big dent in a \$1 million budget; then maybe we do have something to look at. That's all we are talking about here because if I look at what you budgeted for last year, you are talking about \$60,400 and that's not actual. We have not seen what you have actually spent and what you are talking about actually spending this year, so if \$40,000, \$50,000 is too much on a \$1 million budget, we do have some issues here.

Commissioner Burgess: "Councilman Geake"

Darlene Young: "And lastly, the other question that I have is how the Summer Youth Employment Program was able to get this money to begin with? And I know there were other programs that were talked about as well. I know at one point the District Commissioners talked about taking kids to play baseball. There was some set aside money specifically for the community and, you can shake your head, but I do remember at one of the other places, during Mr. Martell's time, this is the money that I thought these monies were coming from. If that is not around, that is something else. Also, we are talking about a Charter from the 1900's and this is 2012 and I think at some point things change and as elector's we are looking to make that change we are in our right to do that and I think it has to come down to a vote. Thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "You reminded me of where the other funds were in the \$7,500 and the balance, the year that we spent it all, was the balance on the baseball trip."

Darlene Young: "Right. You forgot about that, right."

Mr. Hiscock: "That was...and I forgot about that."

Commissioner Burgess: "Councilman Geake"

Michael Geake: "I originally raised my hand to expand on Mr. Zullo but I do have to comment on one thing here. Yes, there is charity in my heart and yes I contribute to charities. We are not talking about me contributing. We are talking about the use of public funds raised from electric

customers and water customers. Now, Mr. Zullo is dead right. There are two sources of income right now to this District. There are the water rates; there is the electric rates. We can tax, we never have. Now, yes families count on the money for the youth. Families also have to pay the electric bill. This District raised rates recently, had the Mayor, had the state rep, and had the state senator, everybody all up in arms. They also, went into reserves to keep the rates as low as they were even though they were raised that high. Now, we can spend all the money you want but that money has to come from somewhere. My worry would be, especially in the lower income families, you give the money to this, that and the other thing and then you raise their electric rates and they can't pay their electric bills. They can't pay their water bills. The money has to come from somewhere. Those are the two choices, electric rates, water rates."

Ernie Dumas: "It's not like you say...it's a total of approximately what \$4,500 that we are asking. Maybe \$4,500 here, maybe...."

Unidentified Participant: "\$45,000."

Ernie Dumas: "\$45,000 or something that we are asking about. And is that \$45,000 going to kill anybody around here? Because what I am trying to say here is that I pay my electric bill and my water bill went up just like everybody else's. And I still contribute to our community. My taxes are paid and everything. The reason why we are here tonight is because we had a primary and these people that are bickering tonight and brought us here are the same people that lost and that's why we are here. We are arguing, this gentlemen back here, who is actually talking about feeding somebody. Let's me tell you something. Let's talk about the Commissioner's pay. What they get as Commissioners. What a thousand dollars? A thousand dollars or whatever it is, why don't you cut the Commissioners pay down? Let's add that and cut that. We can cut the Commissioner's pay."

Commissioner Burgess: "I said before, we can't go by line item. Yes."

Thursa Merritt: Thursa Merritt, I live in Shorefront Park and I have an idea. I played the lottery, I lose all the time, I buy a power ball ticket every month and a scratch off ticket. Money for the Summer Youth, money for the electricity and I ask the Commissioners to stick a flyer in with the bills, just like Yankee Gas does, asking for donations."

[Applause]

Commissioner Burgess: "Any other comments?"

Jim Delgreco: "I would just like to clarify one more time that we are not talking about \$45,000, we are talking about two numbers here. We are talking about increasing the Summer Youth Employment Program from about \$5,000 budgeted this year back to the \$15,500 last year. Then we are talking about adding the Miscellaneous Community Projects from zero back to \$7,500, so

not that I can do math, but that is about \$12,000. Does everybody agree with what I just said?"

Unidentified Participant: "Unanimous Yes"

Ernie Dumas: "That is not an exact number because the \$7,500 because I think they said that sometimes they use it all and sometimes they don't."

Jim Delgreco: "More or less? So, I just want to make sure that is all we are talking about here. So, on a budget of about \$350,000 we are asking about taking money, maybe from someplace else, but put it on those two programs for about \$12,000?"

Unidentified Participant: "Yes."

Unidentified Participant: "It's more than \$12,000 though."

Unidentified Participant: "Approximately....yes approximately."

Attorney Zullo: "He's right. He's right."

Jim Delgreco: "Ok, ok I am sorry, \$17."

Mr. Hiscock: "\$17 is correct."

Jim Delgreco: "Anything else on about \$350,000, correct?"

Unidentified Participant: "No."

Unidentified Participant: "Correct."

Jim Delgreco: "If everybody is finished talking I'd like to move onto the next one."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok, yes, thank you."

[Applause]

Jim Delgreco: "Anybody object? I would like to go to bed tonight."

Warren Penna: "How are you doing? I am Warren Penna, a councilman here in town. I just have a quick statement on behalf of two other council members who have another meeting and couldn't be here. Councilman David Watson and Councilman John McNeary from District A and District E and I am a councilman...."

Ernie Dumas: "They are not in our district."

Warren Penna: "I understand, but they are your councilmen and I actually am a councilman that represents District 3."

Ernie Dumas: "No, no"

Unidentified Participant: "Unanimous No."

Warren Penna: "So on behalf of a couple of councilmen, what I would like to say respectfully is if you could reconsider the Summer Youth Employment Program and re-budget the amount of money you have allocated from last year's budget into this year's budget. Thank you."

Commissioner Burgess: "Thank you but it would have been better if you had spoke for yourself."

Warren Penna: "I can speak for myself also as I did. Thank you."

Commissioner Burgess: "I apologize for the other people. Thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "Alright...quickly."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes"

Attorney Zullo: "Very quickly."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, the only other item, I believe, based on what I have heard, indirectly that is controversial is on page 12 in the Electric Budget on the bottom of the page there is a line item that says Customer Assistance Program.

Unidentified Participant: "Yeah...right."

Mr. Hiscock: "It is budgeted this year for zero. Ok."

Commissioner Ramirez: "That is what I was referring to."

Mr. Hiscock: "Last year and the year before and the year before that and probably the year before that, it was budgeted at \$25,000. The item is an amount set aside out of the Electric Budget for customer assistance. We do not manage the customer assistance program, it is managed by NEON under a contract with the District and the rules quickly are: if you qualify for energy assistance, we will provide out of that program an amount equal to one-half of the energy assistance so that you get one and one-half times the State approved energy assistance. For those who are not eligible for energy assistance, you get up to the level of energy assistance. The program is managed and

controlled by NEON. The information all comes back to us. We have all the records, we audit it. We are aware of what it is and the reason the Commission chose to do it that way is because it is the community action agency who has knowledge with respect to all of the low income programs. So that is exactly what we do."

Commissioner Burgess: "May I add something. When we voted on this portion of the Budget the leadership of NEON, we were not aware that it had changed that same evening and some people myself included, reluctant, while NEON was in a state flux to go further with that. I personally hated cutting out that program. That is where we are. I think Mr. Hiscock is right. That is the last red flag."

Unidentified Participant: "What about the street lights?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes, go ahead."

Jim Clark: "Jim Clark, 9 Golden Hill. If this budget is rejected and this money is potentially restored, is there an issue now with because the whole NEON situation? Do we know if that money can be administered in this fiscal year? Can the project happen?"

Commissioner Geake: "Management has changed."

Mr. Hiscock: "We don't believe that, or at least the information that our staff and I have seen appears to us that the monies have been allocated appropriately and we, from a staff perspective to date have had no issue with what we have seen. Ok, I don't know how else to say that other than that way."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes in back."

Unidentified Participant: "I would like to make a statement about the Energy Assistance Program. All of those people are low income people. We have to look at whether they going to be able to get food on their table or pay the energy bill. That money that is administered by the agency is money that is very well spent. I think it should be reconsidered and we should put the \$25,000 back in for the Energy Assistance for poor people to help them warm their house without taking food off the table. I would recommend that."

Commissioner Burgess: "Thank you but as I have told you, we cannot go line item by line item."

Unidentified Participant: "Can we take the vote?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "Chair?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Ok, Councilman Geake."

Michael Geake: "If I may, now I can speak to this from a unique perspective because in the year 2006 when I was a Commissioner, upon my initiative this fund was created. I have heard from multiple people that, oh we are taking money, and people will not be able to pay their electric bill and I was concerned when I heard that too and then I heard that not only does NEON get federal funds for this very purpose but last year, after spending all \$25,000 that they took from the Second Taxing District, they were returned \$106,000 to the federal government unspent. So they are spending our money first and giving back to the federal government, so we might as well just make the check out to the federal government because that is where our money is going."

Unidentified Participant: "Forget it. Put the money back into the youth program then. Put the \$25,000 on the youth program."

Commissioner Burgess: "Daisy?"

Ernie Dumas: "Can I respond? Can I respond??"

Daisy Franklin: "When you deal with SNEW, you are not dealing with a CL&P and Southern New England Gas..."

Ernie Dumas: "Can I respond?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Can I hear her speak."

Attorney Zullo: "One person at a time."

Daisy Franklin: "They help a percentage of people like myself when it comes to your electric bill. You can't put SNEW down as somebody that you can get aid for federal help with. So, SNEW puts the money in so we can get help. So, I will not vote in favor of a budget that will cut the money to help the people who need the help."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes."

Ernie Dumas: "Yes, I'd just like to say, the comments that were made about NEON. I am a long time board member. I would like to say that I think a very efficient person who has taken Joe Mann's place. I know this as a board member. So, what I am saying is that an allegation that was just made, I have never heard before. So, what I am saying is that NEON, I think, can administer the program. People have been happy doing it and people are dependent upon the program. I happen to have to know that, so I am just saying we have someone in place that replaced Mr. Mann and she is very efficient and good at the job from what I have seen. She is from the Department of Social Services. I had a conversation with her this afternoon. What I am saying is that NEON can handle the job. I am confident that NEON can handle the job. I don't know about

this other allegation that we sent money back, I don't know anything about that."

Jim Delgreco: "Can we take a vote?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Is there any other comments?"

Commissioner Harris: "Sherelle Harris. I would like to move, we heard all arguments for and against, and at this point, I just think it is time to take a vote."

Jim Delgreco: "I would like to make one comment before we take a vote, if I may ask a question? As far as the budget, John, everything else is in here, so we are voting on three budgets, right? All at once, how do we do this?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, it would be all at once. Procedurally, you can either adopt the Budget as you have it in your hand. You can reject it and reject it with comment. Now, I think we have heard the comment, so it is a question of acceptance or rejection of the Budget in its entirety."

Jim Delgreco: "And if I may, just make one more comment. Obviously, this is a Budget right that is estimated, because we have seen that the Budget wasn't correct and is not accurate. That money can be moved from item to item, correct?"

Mr. Hiscock: "For the most part, that is correct."

Jim Delgreco; "Ok, because I don't want to do this again, to be honest with you. My recommendation, as you pointed out, is that there is money that can be taken out of other columns and what I have heard right now is that there is about \$17,000, \$25,000 for the other programs depending on how good NEON is, on a budget, John, the total budget of \$1 million, what is it? The whole budget, the entire budget."

Mr. Hiscock: "The entire budget?"

Jim Delgreco: "Yes"

Mr. Hiscock: "\$23 million."

Jim Delgreco: "So, we are debating \$42,000 on how much, \$23 million. I would recommend that we accept the Budget."

Unidentified Participant: "No."

Unidentified Participant: "Let him finish."

Jim Delgreco: "We accept the budget, so we don't have to do this again, with the comment that the \$42,000 is reallocated to the places that we just talked about, depending on how good NEON is."

Unidentified Participant: "That is not even an issue."

Commissioner Burgess: "Quiet please all. One at a time."

[Gavel]

Mr. Hiscock: "I need to clarify my response to Mr. Delgreco. One, we cannot move money from the District to the electric, the electric to water and vice versa indiscriminately, that we cannot do. So that has to stay in line with each other. Two, when we have in the past dealt with the District Budget, we have judged the budget in several ways. Page 3, Expenses, we have Operational Expenses which we consider as an item and we have to stay within it. We have Community Service Projects as an item, which we need to stay in it. Those are the two big headlines, headings and we have Street Lighting that we stay within it. So we are not moving from one of those to another. And that is why I sort of hedged a little bit when I responded the first time, but I want to make it clear to everybody. If in fact, the comment this evening ends up with a rejection, it has to go back to the District Commission, they are going to listen to what was said and come back. If that is what you do."

Unidentified Participant: "Right."

Attorney Zullo: "Because keep in mind that it is the Commission that is going to react. There are only two or three Commissioners here and there are seven Commissioners on the Board..."

Ernie Dumas: "They are all here."

Attorney Zullo: "So, that, what would happen is that your comments would be reported back and they would react accordingly."

Mr. Hiscock: "There are five Commissioners here."

Attorney Zullo: "Oh, I am sorry I didn't see the other two. But still there are seven and there is no meeting of the Commissioners to make a judgment in this regard."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok."

Commissioner Burgess: "Someone has to make a motion."

Attorney Zullo: "There might be someone might have a question, but maybe after this question,

perhaps someone can make a motion to accept or reject and we can go from there.”

Unidentified Participant: “Just one thing I want to make sure makes is that when we do the budget, we don’t forget the Street Lighting. When you reject the budget I want to make sure you make a move on Street Lighting.”

Attorney Zullo: “The next item on the Agenda also deals with an additional \$20,000 for Street Lighting, so that is another item on the Agenda. So, we will get to that item, but right now let’s vote to accept or reject this budget.”

Commissioner Burgess: “Yes.”

Unidentified Participant: “I want to make a motion that we accept the budget with the provision of adding \$42,000.”

Unidentified Participant: “We can’t do that.”

Mr. Hiscock: “You cannot do that.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “It has to be accepted or rejected.”

Unidentified Participant: “I make a motion that we have a vote to accept or reject the budget.”

Attorney Zullo: “Perhaps we can have the name of the person who made the motion.”

Valerie Lyons: “Valerie Lyons, 15 Madison Street, makes a motion to reject this budget.”

Attorney Zullo: “One made it, who seconded that motion?”

Daisy Franklin: “Daisy Franklin.”

Attorney Zullo: “Ok, now there is a motion on the floor. Are there any question or comments relative to the motion on the floor?”

Unidentified Participant: “What is the motion?”

Attorney Zullo: “The motion is to reject the budget as it is presented by Mr. Hiscock.”

Unidentified Participant: “And have it go back to the Commissioners?”

Attorney Zullo: “Well, that is not a part of it. That is automatic according to the Charter. They are rejecting the budget. Ok, but understand all of the numbers you were just talking about is part of

the comment. Now you are moving to reject the budget that's the motion that is before you."

Unidentified Participant: "Yes."

Attorney Zullo: "Alright, all those in favor? In favor of rejecting the budget."

[Electors raised their voter's cards]

Mr. Hiscock: "Blue cards please."

[Mr. Hiscock counted the voter's cards]

Unidentified Participant: "Can we stand up?"

Commissioner Burgess: "No."

Mr. Hiscock: "I have twenty."

Attorney Zullo: "All those opposed to the motion against rejecting the budget."

[Mr. Hiscock counted the voter's cards]

Mr. Hiscock: "Seven and Mimi is eight. Ok. Motion carried, 20 to 8, the budget has been rejected and sent back to the Commission for reconsideration."

Attorney Zullo: "Ok, wait a minute. Everybody was worried about street lights and it's another item on the Agenda here."

Commissioner Burgess: "Yes."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, next item on the Agenda is item number 2 which says to modify the 2011-2012 Budget of the Second Taxing District, the City of Norwalk, it is approved and recommended by the District Commission to provide for approved street lighting. In a nutshell, we are going to take or the Commission has approved to take the \$20,000 out of the District Reserve fund and moving it directly to Street Lighting for improvements to cover the additional lighting we have been discussing with the SoNo Alliance and the City Council. We cannot go forward with that unless we have the money, therefore, if we don't approve this, we have to wait until July 1 and we have not approved the July 1 budget so I am only suggesting to you the purpose of this is to move the Street Lighting process now."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Through the Chair. Can I make a motion? I make a motion to approve."

Jim Delgreco: "I want to ask a question."

Attorney Zullo: "Well, there can be a motion on the floor and questions on the motion, either way but however you would like to handle it."

Commissioner Ramirez: "I would like to make a motion to move the \$20,000 for the lighting, City of South Norwalk."

Commissioner Burgess: "Second?"

Commissioner Harris: "Second."

Attorney Zullo: "Any discussions?"

Commissioner Burgess: "Any discussion."

Jim Delgreco: "So, can I only question the motion or can I question about the...?"

Mr. Hiscock: "I will give an explanation of anything you want with respect to the \$20,000 movement for Street Lighting."

Jim Delgreco: "I don't understand. Where is the \$20,000 coming from?"

Mr. Hiscock: "The District Reserve Fund. That \$1 million that the District carries in its balance."

Jim Delgreco: "So, this is the one we are going to tap because we don't want our rates to go up so much?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No, that is the Electric Reserve."

Jim Delgreco: "Ok, so this is a reserve fund that is very specific to the..."

John Hiscock: "In the District column."

Jim Delgreco: "Ok and so it will reduce, and what is that Reserve Fund now?"

John Hiscock: "Right around a million dollars."

Jim Delgreco: "Ok and so we will be reducing that by \$20,000."

John Hiscock: "\$20,000"

Jim Delgreco: "And is there any other reason for that reserve fund other than to do something like this so, a special case scenario?"

Mr. Hiscock: "We do not use it for anything other than District related expenses. It was as high as \$2.4 million in the 90's when we sold the City Hall building in South Norwalk. It's accumulated over time with interest and some excess payments through the budgetary process. When the South Norwalk Library was renovated we spent \$1.8 million on that renovation. So those are the kinds of projects we use it for not utility things."

Unidentified Participant: "That's good."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes mam?"

Unidentified Participant: "So, this is with regards to the lighting. So \$20,000, how did you come up with that number, because you know the list from SoNo Alliance? I see there are only ten lights left that need to be installed and I was wondering if that was correct."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, we try to estimate the cost of installation of a new light on a utility pole. We are not talking ornamental, we are not talking underground, we are talking on a utility pole. \$750 to \$900 per instance, depending on if it's on a highly traveled street, we need police protection or if it is on a local street. So, we looked at the list and believe that with the \$20,000 we can cover all of the utility poles that do not have lights. Now, with respect to the dimness issue, that comes out of the Operating Budget and is not a capital so there is money available to modify Street Lighting by taking a control head off and putting a larger one on. This is only because we have to capitalize in the accounting system the new installation. So, this is a capital thing as opposed to an operation and maintenance thing and we never had a capital fund for street lighting because we have not constructed brand new street lighting in many, many years."

Unidentified Participant: "So the poles are existing? So the hoods and all that are listed somewhere?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Excuse me?"

Unidentified Participant: "The hoods that you have to put on the poles?"

Mr. Hiscock: "A new street light is a mast arm, the wiring and what's called the cobra head and that's a complete street light installation and the \$20,000 is to cover those that are on the SoNo Alliance list where there are no lights currently. The ones where we are going to up the wattage don't get covered as a capital item because it's a maintenance at that point."

Unidentified Participant: "Right, I've got that. The \$20,000 is for new lights, that is what is proposed."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes."

Unidentified Participant: "I was just curious as to the amount as I never knew what it was and that's the maximum amount it could cost right? You could find some saving within that perhaps?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yeah. It really depends on the time of the installation, how difficult they are. Some poles are more difficult than others, sometimes there is more traffic than others."

Unidentified Participant: "Ok, thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes mam?"

Unidentified Participant: "Well, I am personally glad that you are going to be working on the lights because lights do prevent crime and then, looking at the SoNo list with the lights, I question it because, when I look at Lawrence and Woodward, the corner of it, you have down here watts N/A. I don't know what that means, watts N/ A means?"

Mr. Hiscock: "There is no existing lighting there. That's why it is not applicable. That's the wattage of the existing lights."

Unidentified Participant: "And will lights be put there?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Where N/A is?"

Unidentified Participant: "Yes."

Mr. Hiscock: "It's probable that lights will be put there."

Unidentified Participant: "And, when you determine the wattage, will you be going around doing that?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Members of our staff are going to work with Officer Shawn Wong Won to get the police concerns about the darker areas and we think that is the best way to try and determine the appropriate wattage."

Unidentified Participant: "Thank you."

Commissioner Burgess: "Is there any other comments on that motion?"

Attorney Zullo: "Alright, she has called a question. All those in favor?"

Jim Delgreco: "What is the motion?"

Mr. Hiscock: "The motion is to move \$20,000 from the District Reserve Fund to a Capital Lighting Fund."

Unidentified Participant: "All in favor."

[Unanimous]

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok. Opposed?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "Folks?"

Unidentified Participant: "No."

Attorney Zullo: "Ok so it is unanimous."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok, that is done."

Attorney Zullo: "The last item is picking the Auditors. Don't leave yet."

Mr. Hiscock: "I will take care of it. Ok, item 3 on the Agenda. Is should be a quick one. To receive and ratify the choice of Auditors of the Second Taxing District Commissioners for a firm to perform auditing services for the Second Taxing District, City of Norwalk for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012, the current year that we are in. By Charter, every March, we have to choose the Auditors. We went out and solicited proposals, we had three proposals, and they are on the very last page of your packet, Hope & Hernandez, the current Auditors; O'Connor Davies Munn & Dobbins and BlumShapiro. The prices are listed. These are estimates because they are hourly, but I have to tell you when they estimate something, they do a really good job to get the bill always matches the estimates. Ok...it's the way it is. The Commissioners last week chose the firm of Hope & Hernandez. Here are the rules, with respect to this. The choice of Auditors is that of the Commission. Ok, the Electors get to ratify that choice or reject it. So last week, the Commissioners approved the firm, Hope & Hernandez, who have been our auditors for 10 to 12 years now, and is requesting that the Electors ratify that choice. I can answer any questions about the auditing and the auditing firms."

Unidentified Participant: "Has any fault been found with their work?"

Mr. Hiscock: "No"

Unidentified Participant: "Good hire them."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes."

Jim Delgreco: "The only problem with that is we should get a new auditor in, auditing the old auditor. You never know if there is any problem. I would recommend that at some stage, we change auditors but since we have no money, I don't know if you can really do that."

Commissioner Burgess: "Are there any other comments on the motion?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Will somebody make a motion to ratify the choice of Auditor?"

Unidentified Participant: "We did."

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok"

Attorney Zullo: "Is there a second?"

Unidentified Participant: "Right here."

Attorney Zullo: "All those in favor of the motion to ratify Hope & Hernandez as the Auditors? All those in favor?"

[Electors raised their voter's cards]

Commissioner Harris: "We have a swing vote."

[Mr. Hiscock counted the voter's cards]

Mr. Hiscock: "Ok. Thank you we counted."

Attorney Zullo: "All those opposed"

[Mr. Hiscock counted the voter's cards]

Mr. Hiscock: "Two. Ok."

Attorney Zullo: "Ok, motion is approved and the choice is ratified."

Mr. Hiscock: "Alright, you can ask for an adjournment."

Commissioner Burgess: "Is there a motion to adjourn?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "I motion to adjourn."

Commissioner Harris: "Second."

Attorney Zullo: "All those in favor?"

Unidentified Participant: Unanimous "Aye"

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Attest:

Gwendolyn Gonzalez
Assistant District Clerk

Transcribed by: Lisa Roland