



Fiscal Committee - Board of Representatives

Sean Boeger, Co-Chair

Lindsey Miller, Co-Chair

Committee Report

Date: Monday, October 23, 2023
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: *This meeting was held in the Democratic Caucus Room, 888 Washington Blvd, Stamford, CT, 4th Floor and remotely.*

The Fiscal Committee met as indicated above. In attendance in person were Co-Chair Miller; and Reps. Fedeli, and Morson; in attendance remotely were Co-Chair Boeger, and Committee Member Reps. Garst, Goldberg, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas. Absent was Committee Member Rep. Figueroa. Also in attendance in person were Chief Morris and Assistant Chief Robles, Stamford Fire Department; and Anthony Romano, OPM. Also in attendance remotely were Reps. Adams, Bewkes, de la Cruz, Summerville, and David Watkins; Anita Carpenter, Grants Officer; Chief Shaw, Stamford Police Department; Ralph Blessing, Land Use Bureau Chief; Matt Quinones and Josie Carpanzano, Operations Department; Theresa Drew, Youth Services Bureau; Greg Stackpole and Steven Parenti, Assessor's Office; Ben Barnes, Director of Administration; Tom Cassone, Corporation Counsel; and Chris Kerin, Municipal Valuation Services LLC.

Co-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. F31.269 \$150,000.00	ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); Lathon Wider Site Repurposing; Funds to Hire a Consulting Firm to Analyze and Prepare a Report on the Repurposing of the Lathon Wider Community Center; including Conduct of Public Forums, Surveys, and an Architectural Competition (Source of Funds: 100% Grant Funded; DECD - State) 10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons 10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0	Approved 9-0-0

Ms. Carpenter and Mr. Blessing discussed Item No. 1 with the committee. This grant was awarded in FY19 and never made it through the appropriation process. Work is currently proceeding. The grant was applied for in connection with the South End Neighborhood Study. The facility is being repurposed in accordance with the South End Neighborhood Study to create a campus on the site of Lathon Wider. The goal is to evaluate what the current providers need to improve services for the community and to approach the community as to what is needed and desired. Committee members expressed concern that funds were not used to refurbish the Glenbrook Community Center and the need for community centers throughout Stamford.

A motion to approve Item No. 1 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

2. [F31.270](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); **Approved 8-0-1**
\$54,213.00 Stamford Police Department; Funds to be used to
Purchase an Upgraded X-Ray Scanning System
for the Police Bomb Squad and to contract with a
Vendor to provide Tactical Arrest and Control
Procedures Training for Police Officers (Source of
Funds: 100% Grant Funded; DOJ - Federal)
09/27/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Ms. Carpenter explained that this is an annual grant for the bomb squad and training.

A motion to approve Item No. 2 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Boeger abstaining).

3. [F31.271](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); **Approved 8-0-1**
\$250,000.00 Stamford Police Department; Funds to be used to
Purchase 6 Virtual Reality Training Simulators, 2
Portable Training Facilities, 5 Shooting
Performance Systems and various supplies for
the Stamford Police Academy (Source of Funds:
100% Grant Funded; DOJ - Federal)
09/27/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Ms. Carpenter stated that this is a congressional earmark to support the police academy.

A motion to approve Item No. 3 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Boeger abstaining).

4. [F31.272](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**
\$12,000.00 Port Security; Funds for 12 new Fuel Injectors for
the Fire Department's Vessel (100% Grant
Funded)
09/15/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Ms. Carpenter and Chief Morris explained that Item No. 4 is a competitive award for 12 new fuel injectors for the Fire Department's vessel. This is part of the maintenance program for the boat.

A motion to approve Item No. 4 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

5. [F31.273](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Grants Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**
 \$125,000.00 Youth Services Bureau; Drug Free Communities;
 Funds for Prevention Activities to Reduce Youth
 Use of Alcohol and Marijuana (Source of Funds:
 \$125,000 Grant from CDC with 100% Match
 Requirement)
 10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
 10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Ms. Carpenter stated that this is a 5 year award with an annual budget. The match is from general operating budget and in-kind, so there is no additional appropriation needed for the match.

A motion to approve Item No. 5 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

6. [F31.283](#) REJECTION; Partial Capital Closeout of SUT II **No Action Taken**
 \$1,167,462.30 Projects; SUT II Off-Street Parking - \$279,062.62;
 SUT II – Phase II – Parking Area - \$888,399.68.
 10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
 10/10/23 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
 10/11/23 – No Action Taken by Board of Finance

7. [F31.278](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**
 \$109,020.00 C65200; Citywide Vehicle Replacement &
 Upgrade; Funds to Install GPS Monitors Into 370
 City Fleet Vehicles to Reduce Operating
 Expenses via Route Optimization, Reduced Fuel
 Consumption, Traffic Avoidance Technology,
 Increased Preventive Maintenance Compliance,
 Increase Driver Safety Behaviors, Reduce Engine
 Idling, and Reduce Insurance Cost Up To 35%
 Per Vehicle (Source of Funds: 100% City Bonds).
 10/02/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
 10/10/23 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
 10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Mr. Quinones and Ms. Carpenzano discussed Item 7 with the Committee. Items 7-12 all are funded from the closeout in Item 6. This is a program to create efficiencies in solid waste in terms of costs and safety, and potentially reduce overtime costs. This item relates to GPS monitors necessary for the study in Item 9. The GPS will go into 370 vehicles. The highways Dept currently has GPS and neither UAW or IUOE contracts speak to use of GPS. If there was an issue they would work with the unions to come to a resolution.

A motion to approve Item No. 7 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

8. [F31.274](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by Adding an Appropriation of \$109,020 for the Citywide Vehicle Replacement & Upgrade and Authorizing \$109,020 General Obligation Bonds of the City to Meet Said Appropriation. **Approved 9-0-0**
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 8 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

9. [F31.279](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 8-0-0**
\$170,042.62 C65202; Citywide Equipment Replacement & Upgrade; Route Optimization Will Allow the City to Provide a Data Driven Transparent Analysis of the Efficiency and Safety of our Current Sanitation Routes (Source of Funds: 100% City Bonds).
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/10/23 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

This is linked to Item 7. This is the study which accompanies the GPS installation. This study will be done by a 3rd party specialist selected through the state contract program. Changes as a result of the data collected will probably start in about 6 months.

A motion to approve Item No. 8 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

10. [F31.275](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by Adding an Appropriation of \$170,042.62 for Citywide Equipment Replacement & Upgrade and Authorizing \$170,042.62 General Obligation Bonds of the City to Meet Said Appropriation. **Approved 8-0-0**
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 10 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

11. [F31.280](#)
\$888,399.68

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**
CP3038 - Government Center Renovations;
\$435,543.57 - Replacement and Repair of the
Exterior Concrete and Masonry of the
Government Center Terrace and Approaching
Sidewalks; \$302,424.02 - Necessary
Improvements within Government Parking
Structure; \$150,432.09 -Remodeling the Building
Department Lobby to Create a Dedicated Space
for all Departments Involved in Construction
Permitting with Necessary Technology (Source of
Funds: 100% City Bonds).
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/10/23 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Item No. 11 is the remaining balance of the capital closeout for necessary repairs of the Government Center, including ADA compliance, repairs to the parking structure and creating a dedicated space for permitting on the 7th floor, which is where the majority of the departments with permitting processes reside. This is a result of the current pilot program regarding permitting. The exterior repairs will include an inspection of the pillars and steel beams are then necessary repairs. The appropriation is based on estimates.

A motion to approve Item No. 11 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Boeger, Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

12. [F31.276](#)

RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Approved 8-0-0**
Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by Adding an
Appropriation of \$888,399.68 for the Government
Center Renovations and Authorizing \$888,399.68
General Obligation Bonds of the City to Meet Said
Appropriation.
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 12 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor).

13. [F31.281](#)
\$3,642,938.00 ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Held**
CP5241; Storm Water Pump Stations; Emergency
Power Generators to Power Pumps at Cummings
and Wampanaw Pump Stations Should the Utility
Electrical Supply Fail During a Storm;
Replacement and Upgrade of Pumps and
Electrical Equipment at Cummings, Wampanaw
And Dyke Lane Pump Stations. (Source of Funds:
Federal Grant: \$2,732,203.50; City Bonds:
\$910,734.50).
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/10/23 – Held by [Planning Board](#)
10/11/23 – Held by Board of Finance 5-0-0
10/17/23 – Approved by Planning Board
14. [F31.277](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Held**
Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by Adding an
Appropriation of \$3,642,938 for the Storm Water
Pump Stations and Authorizing \$910,734.50
General Obligation Bonds of the City to Meet Said
Appropriation.
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/11/23 – Held by Board of Finance 5-0-0
15. [F31.282](#)
\$1,000,000.00 ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 7-0-1**
001355; Growing Together Stamford; Establish
Trees in Public Right-Of-Way Planting Locations
in Disadvantaged Downtown Stamford
Neighborhoods; Train Youth to Facilitate the
stewardship of These Trees (Source of Funds:
100% Federal Grant).
10/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
10/10/23 – Approved by [Planning Board](#)
10/11/23 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-0

Ms. McKenna explained that Item No. 15 is a no-match grant to plan trees in underserved census tracts The work will be done by an outside contractor. The tree inventory will be done in the spring and the planning will be in the following fall. Funding for the tree inventory has been approved; this grant is for tree planting. The tree planting contract includes a year of watering and also working with Future Five to support the stewardship of the trees. The application was for 2.5 million, but only 1 million was awarded. They have not determined how many, where or what type of trees will be planted.

A motion to approve Item No. 15 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, Shaw, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Garst abstaining).

16. [F31.252](#) \$860,565.20 ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Held**
 001348: EV Infrastructure Grant; Purchase and Installation of 20 Dual-Port Level 2 Chargers and 2 Dual-Port DC Fast Chargers to be Located at Stamford Government Center [Source of Funds: \$559,367.38 State Grant; \$301,197.82 Bond (City)]
 08/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
 08/07/23 – Approved by Planning Board
 08/10/23 – Held by Board of Finance
 08/14/23 – Held at Steering
 09/14/23 – Held by Board of Finance
 09/27/23 – Recommended to Steering by Committee 8-0-0
 10/11/23 – Held by Board of Finance 5-0-0
17. [F31.251](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 by Adding an Appropriation of \$860,565.20 for the EV Infrastructure Grant Project and Authorizing \$301,197.82 General Obligation Bonds Of The City To Meet Said Appropriation **Held**
 08/03/23 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons
 08/14/23 – Held at Steering
 09/14/23 – Held by Board of Finance
 09/27/23 – Recommended to Steering by Committee 8-0-0
 10/11/23 – Held by Board of Finance 5-0-0
18. [F31.236](#) REVIEW: Methodology for Establishing Valuation of Commercial Properties for Real Estate Tax Purposes and Comparison of Actual Sale Amounts Versus Appraised Value Amounts for the Last 10 Years. **Recommended to Steering 7-0-0**
 06/07/23 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz, Sherwood, Patterson, Bewkes, Stella, Watkins, Tomas, and Figueroa
 06/26/23 – Held by Committee 9-0-0
 07/24/23 – Recommended to Steering 9-0-0
 08/28/28 – Recommended to Steering by Committee 10-0-0
09/27/23 – Recommended to Steering by Committee 8-0-0

Rep. de la Cruz stated that he put this on the agenda due to complaints he gets about taxes. There is a general perception that the residential property owner is carrying more of a burden than the commercial property owner. For example: Baypointe sold for \$50 million but was valued at \$37 million the following year; 41 Alvord was valued at \$36.9 million although it sold in 2016 for \$45 million the Grand List for 2021 is lower than the Grant List for 2011.

The invited guests discussed this item with the Committee.

Mr. Stackpole noted that the 2011 Grand List reflects the market conditions after the 2007 revaluation, which was done at the height of the market, so it doesn't reflect market conditions in 2011; the City has not currently reached that level in the market.

Mr. Kerin, who performed the revaluation for the City, described the process. It is similar to the process for residential properties. Reports are submitted to the State showing that values arrived at during revaluation are close to the sale price of commercial properties. For residential properties they rely on income/expense data as well as nationwide surveys. One of the differences for commercial properties is that they are leased, so the lessor and the lessee both have interests which are considered. Revaluation in Connecticut is done every 5 years. They are not allowed to change the values between revaluation periods. If the revaluation was done in 2017, a sale in 2020 would not be considered to revalue the property. Only a court case which revalues the property or a physical change to the structure would permit an interim revaluation. 112 Southfield was new construction in 2017, so there was no historical income/expense data for that property because it hadn't been leased up yet. The property overperformed. The assessor's office can't reflect the sale price until the 2022 revaluation. The Alford property is subject to a lease signed in the mid-2000s and was sold subject to that lease. The lease rate was higher than what other grocers in the area were paying. The owner of that property appealed because the lease included personal property. In 2022 the value of that property was increased.

Real property is valued every 5 years. The City's vision application shows that the valuation is based on the last assessment.

The assessor's office has not reviewed the assessed price vs. sale price. The State of CT OPM gets a report of all commercial sales with their assessed values and sales price. Because there is a 5 year cycle in which values don't change, it doesn't make sense to compare the prices to values that may be several years old. The Stop & Shop property is unusual because it includes personal property. For 2022, the data is the phased-in assessment. 2021 would reflect the 2017 market value. The comparison to value wouldn't be done in 2018, 2019, or 2020 because the assessed value doesn't change. The assessments are frozen for 5 years unless there is building permit activity. The 2022 assessments were phased in over a 2 year period. This was approved by the Boards. The assessment ratio is supposed to be 70% of the sale price. This is the gauge that assessors throughout the industry use to determine if the assessments are fair and equitable.

The properties are assessed once every 5 years. To judge how correct an appraisal is, you can only look at the sales immediately after that appraisal. Every year you move on from that appraisal date, there are general market moves that have nothing to do with whether the appraisal was correct. It is not right to look at sales vs. taxes on an old assessment. The assessor's office does try to compare sales to prior assessment to see where the outliers are. Is there a general sense of whether the assessments are generally too high or too low? Maybe a pilot study could be done to determine if a revaluation is appropriation? The City would have to have the proper resources to complete that.

There are a number of issues interacting here – revaluation, commercial/industrial and residential properties and how it affects taxes. This year's assessment is phased in.

Mr. Barnes explained that the assessment of property is highly regulated in CT. The impact of development on the grand list could be explored in a future discussion and his office could help provide information that would be helpful to representatives to explain taxes to their constituents. It might also be helpful for the committee to review the standardized tests used to prepare the valuations. The drop in commercial real estate values due to vacancies might also

be useful. Questions to be considered are whether valuations of commercial properties can/should be done more frequently.

A motion to recommit Item No. 18 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Fedeli, Garst, Goldberg, Morson, Pierre-Louis, and Tomas in favor).

19. [F31.267](#) REVIEW; Legal Fees Related to Charter Revision **Held**
Commission.
08/14/23 - Submitted by Reps. Goldberg and
Miller
**09/27/23 – Recommitted to Steering by
Committee 8-0-0**

Co-Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Miller, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).