

MAYOR
DAVID R. MARTIN



**CITY OF STAMFORD
BOARD OF FINANCE**

CHAIRMAN
JOHN J. LOUIZOS
VICE CHAIR
MARY LOU T. RINALDI

BOARD MEMBERS
RICHARD FREEDMAN
DUDLEY N. WILLIAMS
GERALD BOSAK, JR.
SAL GABRIELE

Tel: (203) 977-4699
Fax: (203) 977-5030

May 28, 2014

Randall Skigen, President
Board of Representatives
City of Stamford
Stamford, Connecticut

Dear President Skigen:

During the course of this year's budget review process, the Board of Finance members discussed additional opportunities for cost savings which are viable, but could not be executed through the normal budget process. Therefore, we want to share the following suggestions with the members of the Board of Representatives in the hope that we could work together to strongly consider and put these actions in place:

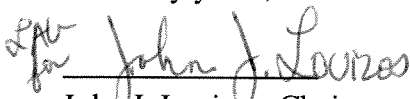
1. We recommend that the Board of Representatives consider an increase to the City's conveyance tax to the maximum allowed by the State, which would set it at .50 as opposed to the present rate of .35. This fee has not been reviewed by the Board of Representatives in several years and represents an opportunity to raise revenue, thereby reducing the tax levy. Please note attached information from CCM dated today which indicates that Stamford is the only municipality in Fairfield County that is not charging the full .50 increase in conveyance tax. All of the cities which were allowed to charge the maximum amount that are located in Fairfield County which include Norwalk & Bridgeport did so. In addition, each municipality that was contacted that was similar in size to Stamford, but located outside of Fairfield County, also opted to charge the maximum conveyance tax allowed by the State. These include New Haven & Waterbury.
2. We recommend that the Board of Representatives undertake a comprehensive review of all city fees to ensure that we are aligned with the marketplace and reflect the true value of those city services. It is our understanding that these fees have not been reviewed by the Board of Representatives in several years and they also represent an opportunity to raise revenue, thereby reducing the tax levy.
3. We suggest that the Board of Representatives review the City's Purchasing Ordinance with respect to those sections on the communication of public notices. Currently the City pays upwards of \$75,000 to local publications to print public notices because of the specific requirement in the Purchasing Ordinance. Given the advances in technology, the savvy of our citizens and the fact that RFPs and various other city business is already posted on the city website, we believe that the elimination of the requirement to post notices in print makes sense. Posting on our website allows our citizens to view pertinent information whenever they wish and drives all city activity to a single site. The Connecticut legislature is already considering comparable changes on a state level.

4. We plan to recommend to the Mayor, Acting Director of Human Resources and the Personnel Commission that, going forward, the position of Executive Secretary be eliminated from the municipal organization and be replaced with Office Support Specialist. To be clear, only the Mayor's Office should be allowed to retain administrative staff at the executive secretary level given the confidential nature of streamlining efforts, executive secretary positions have already been eliminated in the private sector. Moreover, almost all office support jobs in the private sector already require additional skills, including proficiency in generally-accepted software (i.e. Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

We recommend that this transition be a fair and gradual one. That is, as current employees at the Executive Secretary level leave the employment of the city or retire, we recommend that they be replaced by Office Support Specialist with heightened skills as required by updating existing municipal job descriptions. We understand that this change will take time but it will clearly result in cost savings and will move the city toward a more efficient and modern work force. We ask the Board of Representatives to join us in this effort.

Please advise if you and other members of your Board have any questions regarding these measures and wish to further discuss.

Sincerely yours,


John J. Louizos, Chairman

cc: David Martin-Mayor
Clemon Williams-Acting Director Human Resources
Michael Handler- Director of Administration

Gilden, Lorraine C

From: KENNEDY MUNRO <KMUNRO@CCM-CT.ORG>
Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2014 10:53 AM
To: Gilden, Lorraine C
Cc: Martin, David; Gina Calabro
Subject: Response to your request for information regarding what other municipalities that are of a similar in size to Stamford are charging for their local conveyance tax



May 28, 2014

Ms. Lorraine Gilden
Board of Finance Clerk
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06901

Dear Ms. Gilden,

I am writing in response to your request for information regarding what other municipalities that are allowed to charge an additional conveyance tax and are of a similar in size to Stamford are charging for their local conveyance tax.

I contacted the Cities that we discussed over the phone: Bridgeport, New Haven, Norwalk, and Waterbury. All of these cities are charging the highest conveyance tax amount allowed; 0.25%. This brings the local conveyance tax for these Cities to 0.50%.

The following municipalities are allowed to charge up to 0.25% on top of the state's 0.25% local conveyance tax: Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Bristol, East Hartford, Groton, Hamden, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Southington, Stamford, Waterbury, and Windham.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and fully responsive to your inquiry.

Please call me at (203) 498-3055 or email me at kmunro@ccm-ct.org if you have any questions or would like further information.


Best regards,

Kennedy E. Munro
Government Research Analyst
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)
900 Chapel Street, 9th Floor
New Haven, CT 06510
Phone: (203) 498-3055
Fax: (203) 498-5817



Save the Date!
2014 CCM Annual Convention & Exposition
October 21 at the CT Convention Center in Hartford

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message (including any attachments) may contain confidential information intended for a specific individual and purpose, and is protected by law. If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message.

 Please consider the environment before printing.