

## NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

- RE: FY 2017-2018 GENERAL, CAPITAL, AND SPECIAL BUDGETS.** (Mayor Harp)
- a. Appropriating Ordinance #1, an ordinance making appropriations for operating departments of the City for the fiscal year (FY) July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018
  - b. Appropriating Ordinance #2, tax levy and revenue for FY18
  - c. Appropriating Ordinance #3, an ordinance authorizing issuance of general obligation bonds for FY18
  - d. Appropriating Ordinance #4, an ordinance authorizing issuance of general obligation tax anticipation notes and/or general obligation grant anticipation notes for FY18
  - e. Appropriating Ordinance #5, an ordinance authorizing the addition and/or changes in Livable City Initiative and Transportation, Traffic, and Parking fees for FY18

**REPORT:** 1528-10

**ADVICE:** The Commission supports the proposed budgets for the City Plan Department and Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Historic District Commission as part of the orders submitted by the mayor regarding the FY 2017-18 budget. The Commission finds no conflict with city land use policies or the Comprehensive Plan and therefore recommends approval of the general, special, and capital fund budgets; the various enterprise fund budgets; and the appropriating ordinances.

### BACKGROUND

On March 1, 2017 as required by the City Charter, Mayor Harp submitted the recommended municipal budget for FY 2017-2018 to the Board of Alders. The budget includes the general fund, special fund, and capital budgets for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2017. This budget proposal is substantially affected by the proposed State budget and restrictions as they affect municipalities. The FY 2017-18 budgets recognize that the United States, the State of Connecticut, and the City of New Haven will have to continue to make compromises on services and investments and yet must continue efforts to deliver services to citizens.

The Mayor has proposed to decrease the mill rate to 38.68 mills while keeping overall revenue constant. This is possible because of the revaluation of property that took place this year. Individual property tax bills will vary based on the results of the revaluation. The budget for 2017-2018 expects \$554,530,920 in revenues. The grand list is currently \$6,589,755,761.

The proposed capital budget is **\$68.7 million** (\$44.9 from City bonds, \$23.8 from other sources).

The special funds budget is **\$25.6 million**.

The mayor with the approval of the Bond Sale Committee and on authorization by the Board of Alders will issue **\$29.02 million** in twenty-year general obligation bonds; **\$8.08 million** in ten-year general obligation bonds; **\$7.81 million** in five-year bonds and **\$23.80 million** for various public improvement projects that have state and federal matching requirements (see Appropriating Ordinance #3).

The Commission notes that it previously reviewed the Consolidated Plan, Community Development Block Grant, ESG, HOME, and HOPWA budgets (see CPC Report 1528-07).

A public hearing was held on March 7, 2017 and the Board of Alders will continue with workshops and hearings through March, April, and May, with the mill rate determined by the end of May.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The fiscal year 2017-2018 budget reflects ongoing challenges on the both expense and revenue side of the City ledger, so proposed appropriations are scaled back accordingly. However, the Mayor's proposals maintain the City's commitment to essential City services in public safety, public education, and economic development. The 'lead story' in this budget proposal is that it literally – if incrementally – reduces overall city spending. As a result, it calls for no revenue increase over last year, though the mill rate will change because of revaluation. The impact of the lower mil rate (32 mills) for automobiles will reduce those costs for tax payers. The proposed spending plan makes good use of considerable savings in police department and fire department overtime, as well as savings earned through debt restructuring, while it meets increases in contractual labor obligations and keeps our collective commitment to New Haven Public Schools.

The budget continues several new programs and initiatives such as a Main Streets commercial revitalization program and employment training and small business support programs which are being staffed and funded with existing staff and resources. The mayor is committed to the core values that are essential to the health of our community, such as quality public education, enhanced public safety through community policing, and economic development.

While the Commission does not prepare a line-by-line review of the budget for every department, the Commission does note matters pertaining to city planning and supports the proposed budgets for the City Plan Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Historic District Commission. In addition, the Commission supports the department's proposed capital budget requests that serve to match other government funding to proceed with the last phase of the Farmington Canal Greenway, and to continue planning for the projects in the Downtown Crossing/Route 34 corridor. The department also proposed comprehensive updates to the City's geographic information system and planning for coastal resilience.

The City's modest capital spending for the economic development group of departments is critical to keeping the momentum on projects that increase the grand list and the employment base, as well as provide services and training to New Haven residents seeking to enter or re-enter the work force. These capital funds are also used to match various federal and state grants to prepare long-range plans that promote further economic development and improve quality of life of the city's residents. These funds have also been limited during the past several years. Nonetheless, this is a crucial time to plan for long-range projects that create jobs and increase tax revenues for the city in the near future. This way the city will not lose out on opportunities to attract developers, encourage job creation, improve the quality of life for residents, and help fund infrastructure needed for development projects and for city services such as parks, education, and roads and bridges. Having planned improvements ready to go allows the City to move expeditiously to implementation should federal or state funding become available.

## **ADVICE**

The Commission supports the proposed budgets for the City Plan Department and Commission, the Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Historic District Commission as part of the orders submitted by the Mayor regarding the FY 2017-18 budgets. The Commission finds no conflict with city land use policies or the comprehensive plan and therefore recommends approval of the general, special, and capital fund budgets; the various enterprise fund budgets; and the appropriating ordinances.

**ADOPTED:** March 23, 2017  
Edward Mattison  
Chair

**ATTEST:**   
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA  
Executive Director