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1
                 STATE OF NEW JERSEY
 2
           DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
 3
  IN RE:
5
        Local Finance Board
 6
 7
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10
            Department of Community Affairs
11
            101 South Broad Street
12
            Trenton, New Jersey 08625
            Thursday, July 30, 2020
13
14
            Commencing At: 10:02 a.m.
15
            (Taken Remotely Via Teams.)
16
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HELD BEFORE: (ALL MEMBERS APPEARING VIA VTC)
 2
 3 MELANIE WALTER, Chairwoman
 4 ALAN AVERY
 5 FRANCIS BLEE
 6 ADRIAN MAPP
 7 WILLIAM CLOSE
 8 TED LIGHT
 9
10 A L S O P R E S E N T:
11
12 PATRICIA PARKIN MCNAMARA, Executive Secretary
13 ADAM MASEF, DAG
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
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23
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6	By: Miss Walter	4
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1	MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Walter?
2	MS. WALTER: Here.
3	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Mapp?
4	MR. MAPP: Here.
5	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Close?
6	MR. CLOSE: Here.
7	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Avery?
8	MR. AVERY: Here.
9	MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Rodriguez?
10	MS. RODRIGUEZ: Here.
11	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Blee?
12	MR. BLEE: Here.
13	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Light? We do
14	have six members. Mr. DiRocco is not expected on
15	the call today.
16	MS. WALTER: Before we start with
17	testimony on the application, if we could please
18	swear in everyone who is not counsel.
19	MS. MCNAMARA: We are in compliance
20	with the Open Public Meetings Act. Notice of
21	this meeting was sent to the Secretary of State,
22	the Star Ledger and The Times.
23	MR. LIGHT: Ted Light just called
24	in.
25	MS. WALTER: Anyone who is not

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counsel, please speak up so you pop up on the
  screen and then our stenographer can see you and
 3
  she'll be able to swear you in.
 4
                (At which time those wishing to
5
  testify were sworn in.)
 6
                             Really glad to see
                MS. WALTER:
7
  everyone here today.
                         I know it's been a
  significant effort to get here and it didn't
  start just this year.
                         When Paterson first
10
  brought up this question just a few years back,
11 and it's been a lot of discussion as to whether
12
  or not it would be feasible with the pandemic and
13
  with all of the development that's going on, it
14 seemed like a good time to make the transition.
                I know how hard your auditors have
15
16 worked and all of your professionals.
17
  in-house team has been incredible, so I wanted to
18
  take a minute before you introduce the
19
  application to say how much I appreciate all of
20
  your efforts on this project in the middle of
21
  everything else that's going on.
22
                And I'm optimistic that it will
23
  really help the city move forward as you go in
  the next year, put you in a much stronger
  position this fall and it will give you the
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opportunity to do some wonderful things for the
  city that you might not have been able to do
  without the surplus that you'll realize through
  this transition. Thank you again. And with that
4
  said, I open up to you to present the
  application.
 6
7
               MR. WIELKOTZ:
                               I quess, if everybody
8
  is okay, I'll start. Good morning, everybody and
  thank you for having a special meeting. And as
10
  the director said, this was a very compressed
11
  time frame and there were a lot of meetings,
12
  Teams calls with both the monitors, the city, the
13 director, staff, so we appreciate that.
14
                The city of Paterson is requesting
  permission to revert back to a calendar year for
16 budgeting and reporting services effective
17
  01-01-2021 pursuant to Public Laws of 2008
18
  Chapter 92 which amended N.J.S.A. 40A:4-3.1.
                                                 The
19
  revision will be accomplished through the use of
20
  a six month transition budget for July 1st to
  December 2020.
21
22
                In the application, there was a
23
  certified copy of the introduced ordinance.
                                                Ι
  believe that ordinance has since been adopted by
25
  the city counsel. The city is seeking the
```

```
approval of the director for a TY 2020 lax levy
  of 81,206,343 which is 51 percent of the state
  fiscal year 2020 municipal tax levy.
 4
               The budget and the tax levy are all
5
  within the 9510595125 parameters required by the
  statute. And as the director said, it took some
  convincing to me. In fact, I think the mayor
  dubbed me Mr. Negativity during the process for a
  period of time.
10
               MR. SAYEGH: For the record, it was
11
  Cynical Steve.
12
               MR. WIELKOTZ: Thank you, Mayor.
13 But through the process, I think everybody agrees
14 with what the director has said in her opening
15 statement, that this is the opportunity. And by
16
  the way, the mayor and I have had many
17
  conversations going back three or four or
18
  five years ago when he sat on the council about
  doing this and what could we do in terms of
19
20
  getting the city back into some sort of fiscal
21
  stability, structurally balanced budgets, one tax
22
  bill, not a little thing negates the need to have
23
  a certified state fiscal year tax collector which
  is very few left around the state.
25
               The application contains all the
```

```
exhibits required. The proposed 2020 transition
  budget, the proposed 2021 calendar year budget,
  analysis of what we believe could be surplus
  generated in the six months. It's a little
  tricky right now, as everybody knows, because of
  the pandemic and the virus, but to date, the city
  revenues have been affected but not so negatively
  affected that we think there's going to be a
  tremendous issue.
10
                Obviously, if we have Armageddon and
  the August and November collections come in much
11
12 less than usual, that could be a problem. One of
13
  the, I guess, one of the beauties of the six
14
  month budget, notwithstanding 100 percent state
15
  aid, no pension pavement is that because of the
16
  extension of the May 1st tax payment and because
17
  the city doesn't accelerate a tax sale before
18
  June 30th here before when they were fiscal year,
19
  the main quarter couldn't be sold.
20
                So at June 30th, there was around 10
  million dollars of delinquent taxes relative to
22
  the second quarter of 2020 which will be
23
  collected, either have been collected year to
  date or will be collected via a tax sale in the
  October, November time frame, at least for the
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May quarter.
1
2
                In the six month transition budget,
 3
  the revenue anticipated for delinquent taxes is
  $400,000, so there is an opportunity to generate
  as much as nine million dollars in additional
  revenue just for delinquent taxes, which again,
  the way if we constructed the six month budget,
  the hope was obviously, we pull back on tort
  fees, interest on investments, construction fees,
  based on what's going on in the world.
11
                But the hope is that that tax
12
  revenue, which we will get with the tax sale one
13
  way or the other, would go a long way in keeping
14
  the six month budget in the black and not having
15
  the deficit situation. That's the hope. So with
16
  that, I would turn it over to the board for any
17
  questions they have for myself or for the mayor
18
  or for the city administration.
19
                MS. WALTER: So first, one of the
20
  things that appears to be resulting from the
21
  transition is stabilization of the tax cycle.
22
  You're really stabilizing your levy and rate; is
23
  that correct?
24
                MR. WIELKOTZ: Yes.
                                     Because the
  city always did their two percent in the second
```

```
half of the fiscal year in the February and May
  quarters, we were able to set a levy for August
  and November that is very similar to what was
  billed in municipal taxes in February and May
  which means that the municipal taxes that will be
  billed when the fourth quarter bill goes out with
7
  the first and second of 2021, municipal taxes
  will be the same within a couple $100,000.
 9
               And by the way, one of the other
  positives, the county taxes for the city in
10
11
  calendar 2020 went down about two and-a-half
12
  million dollars, which helps offset an increase
13
  of a much greater number by the school district.
14
  So all and all, we pretty much created tax
15 stabilization for six quarters, which is one of
16
  the driving forces in terms of getting the city
17
  council on board was that there was a true
18
  picture of first and second quarter '20, third
  and fourth quarter '20, first and second quarter
19
20
  '21.
21
               And basically, the way that the
  proposed budget in the application is constructed
23
  for calendar '21, we actually get the ability to
  raise taxes more than two percent, but only have
  a two percent impact on calendar year 2021 which
```

```
is great for the taxpayers and for the city.
1
2
                MS. WALTER:
                            And you've really taken
  a very conservative approach by modeling all of
4
  the revenues that are going to come in, so
  realistically you put yourself in a strong
  position everything will be supplement instead of
7
  risk hopefully.
 8
                MR. WIELKOTZ:
                               I believe that
  collectively, we've done everything we could do
10
  based on the current situation, notwithstanding,
11 again, you know, if Armageddon presents itself,
12
  then there's nothing we can do about it, but
13
  we're certainly now in a better position to deal
  with that than we might have been two months ago.
15
                MS. WALTER: As you mentioned
  learlier, we've been fortunate so far this year
17
  when we looked at the May revenues that came in
  across the state, the state is actually up
18
19
  3.1 percent on collections. There's only half a
20
  dozen towns that saw more than five percent
21
  shortfall, so I think we're all concerned that
  August may still be a challenge, but May came in
22
23
  substantially better really universally than we
  anticipated if that gives any comfort.
25
                Something I know you had raised that
```

you were looking for some comfort for before the board was whether you'd be able to apply for transitional aid in the calendar year. We're anticipating it at 85 percent of the prior year plus the cost of transition. That's what we're budgeting within the TA program. To account for cash flow needs, we want to work with you guys to make sure you have what you need in the first two quarters of the calendar year during the 10 transition, so we look to do a 18 month 11 transition MOU and to set forth anything you 12 would need around cash flow as we work with you 13 in the coming weeks. 14 We're also looking to specify anything that needs to be reserved or addressed 16 during that period and that 18 month MOU so we 17 can support you through the reversion. 18 prepared, if need be, split the award between the 19 first and second half of the CY, so within our 20 current year and next year, so effectively that 21 would be about 10.6 million dollars in the first 22 two quarters and 10.6 in the second two quarters 23 that would ease the cash flow concerns that were 24 raised. 25 The other thing I would ask, is I

```
know you talked about the tax sale revenues
  because you're on a regular tax sale for one
 3
  quarter. Do you anticipate proceeding with a
  three quarter sale or trying to convert to a
  regular tax sale as part of the transition?
 6
                MR. WIELKOTZ: The goal would be no
  more accelerated tax sale, but as we sit here
  today, I couldn't even venture a wild guess as to
  what's going to happen.
10
                MS. WALTER:
                             Okay.
                                    Does anyone else
11 have questions at this time?
12
                MR. MAPP:
                           Yes.
                                 I'm just curious to
13
  know if you still have any fiscal year adjustment
14
  bonds outstanding.
15
                MR. WIELKOTZ: No, none.
16
                MR. MAPP:
                           Thank you.
17
                MS. RODRIGUEZ:
                                I would like to make
18
  a comment, if I can. First, the mayor, I want to
19
  commend you for putting what I would consider an
20
  outstanding team together and Steve and Tim and
21
  this whole group as a native Patersonian, I would
22
  be remiss if I didn't make a comment. I want to
23
  see Paterson move forward.
24
                I know it's been a really difficult
  time for yourself as basically the CEO of this
```

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corporation called Paterson and I wanted to
  commend you for moving forward in spite of
  everything that's happening, the pandemic, our
  own personal pandemics in certain areas of
 5
  Paterson, so I just, you know. I wish you
  continued success.
 6
                If you succeed we all succeed as I
8
  tell a lot of people that I come across.
  really enlightening to me, how you've moving
10 forward with the budget and other projects that
11 are going on in Paterson, so I wanted to take
12
  this time, Mayor, to commend you and wish you
13
  well.
14
                MR. SAYEGH:
                             We appreciate you in
15
  Paterson.
              Thank you, Commissioner
16
                MS. CHERONE:
                              Thank you.
17
                MR. CLOSE: Steve, first nice job
18
  with the application.
19
                MR. WIELKOTZ:
                               Thank you, sir.
20
                MR. CLOSE:
                            Nice to see you. And,
  Mayor, I would echo those comments as always, I
22
  know you're working diligently to move things
  forward and it's good to see your efforts.
23
  Steve, I noticed in the application, you talked
  about that this was going to generate 8.6 million
25
```

```
dollars in additional surplus with reversion.
1
 2
               How does that go to where you are
  now and where you will be with this projected
         That seems like a really nice, an
 4
  move?
  exponential amount of growth for you.
 6
               MR. WIELKOTZ: Right.
                                       In the June
7
  '19 audit, the city had 1.7 million dollars in
  surplus. The expectation is when they close out
  fiscal 2020, it might generate maybe a million
10
  dollars all together net which gives us 2.7.
11
  Using nothing in the transition year budget and
12
  the surplus, using nothing in the calendar year
13
  2021 budget out of surplus.
14
               We're hoping that the surplus, as I
  mentioned, one of the biggest drivers is going to
16
  be the delinguent taxes. In the application I
17
  estimated 5 million because, again, anybody that
18
  knows me, I try to be, you keep the expectations
19
  low and if good things happen, then you get to
20
  take all the credit. That's the way it is.
21
                But seriously, it looks like 8.6, it
22
  could be as much as 12 or 13 million if things go
23
         It things don't go right, again, we're in
  right.
  a position, a lot better than some other cities
  based upon what's going on in the world right
```

```
1
  now.
 2
               MR. CLOSE:
                           Sure. It looks like a
  nice effort and it looks like it has some
  potential to be better than what you anticipated
  given your remarks.
               MR. WIELKOTZ: That's the goal
 6
  because, you know, Idida, I've known a long time,
  I know she's from Paterson. I say this to the
  mayor all the time. I was born in Paterson at
  Barnert Hospital. My mother and my uncle
10
11 graduated from Eastside High School in 1948, so
12
  I've got some strong roots back in Paterson as
13
  well, so to be on the team to help see this
14
  through on a fiscal basis is a feel good kind of
15
  thing for me.
16
               MR. CLOSE:
                            Sure.
                                   I want to commend
17
        It's a nice job, nice job with the mayor
  you.
18
  and I did want to acknowledge that and give you
19
  an opportunity to talk on that a little bit.
20
  Cash on hand, Steve? Any challenges with that
  given your report because it looked like you had
22
  a couple months where you were going to have some
23
  challenges there relative to cash on hand in this
24
  transition. How does that tie back to the
  director's remarks relative to kind of segueing
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you to make sure you get to the point you're
2
  looking to achieve.
 3
                MR. WIELKOTZ: I think that part of
  what took me from Cynical Steve, maybe six or
  eight weeks ago to being here today was the
  conversations that we had with the state and the
  director and her team and her staff to get
  certain things in the 18 month MOU that were, I
  quess, on the surface not so difficult for the
10
  state to do, but certainly important to the city
11 like the TA at 85 percent, like the calendar year
12
  for cash flow purposes.
13
                The city a little short won't to
14 have to go out and borrow to pay the interest.
15 Again, that ended up becoming part of the whole
16
  equation and the cash flow is in the applications
17
  don't reflect any advance of the transitional
  aid, so that's why you'll see some deficits in a
18
19
  couple of months. We're hoping that will even
20
  out based on being able to get some of that money
21
  advanced.
22
                MR. CLOSE:
                            Okay. Very nice job,
23
  Steve.
          Just wanted to give you a chance to talk
24
  about that.
25
                MR. WIELKOTZ: Thanks, Bill.
                                              Good
```

```
1
  to see you.
 2
                MS. LONG:
                           Hi, everybody. My name
 3
  is Kathleen Long. I'm the new business
  administrator for the city since February and
  previously, I was working as the mayor's chief of
  staff and I would like to sort of second that,
7
  just that comment and the assistance from the
  director and your team.
 9
                And to put on record just how
  grateful we are for the work of Michele Meade and
10
  Chris Ratz because I think I have been both as
12
  chief of staff and the BA has been sitting in
13
  those meetings with them weekly and working
14
  through this topic and just building that
15
  relationship and our CFO, Marge Cherone has been
16
  there as well and just how important it was to be
17
  able to say, this really is a deal breaker for
18
  us.
19
                And, you know, to be able to have
20
  that conversation back and forth and for it to be
  brought forward here so we are very grateful for
22
  this assistance and we think it wouldn't have
23
  happened without the building of this
  relationship over these couple of years.
25
                MR. SAYEGH: If I may, I was going
```

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to wait until after the vote.
                                  I want to duck
1
  tail on some of the sentiments expressed.
  my colleague in Plainfield, Mayor Mapp, the beard
  is looking really good.
4
 5
                Second, I'd like to say, as Steve
  alluded to earlier, the councilman, five years
 6
  lago, I did broach the subject with them to lean
  on him for his opinion and see what he thought
  relative to this reversion and there was always a
10
  will, but there really wasn't the way. And today
11
  there's the will and you made the way Melanie.
12
  Thank you, Director Walter.
13
                I really appreciate your enlightened
  and visionary leadership and we're grateful to
14
15
  our fiscal monitors, Michele Reade and Chris Ratz
16
  and then here at home we're happy to have Steve
17
  on the team and we're glad that Marge did the
18
  work and particularly to my business
19
  administrator, Kathleen, she wasn't going to let
20
  up.
21
                She was relentless and she helped
22
  cultivate support among the council members, and
23
  that was helpful here. And quite frankly, it
  really wasn't opposition to this.
                                      They felt like
  it was the time to do it. It will create some
```

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budgetary breathing room and we would be like
  almost 560 other municipalities within New Jersey
  because Camden, I spoke to my counter part in
  Camden, Frank Moran, and he was interested in
  doing it, my understanding has done it as well.
 6
                This is what we feel was necessary
7
                  And again, Director Walter, I
  at the moment.
  can't thank you enough for your leadership.
 9
               MS. WALTER:
                             Thank you so much,
  Mayor, for those kind words. I know a lot of
11 times our team is very much behind the scenes on
12 these type of projects. I know Michele and Chris
13
  will be appreciative for your words today and I
14 am as well. So with that said, I think this has
15 been very well considered and the work that's
16
  been done as been extraordinary. I appreciate
17
  the board's interest and vote on this
18
  application. I would ask if anyone would like to
19
  move the application at this time.
20
               MS. RODRIGUEZ:
                                I move it.
21
               MR. CLOSE:
                           Second.
22
               MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Walter?
               MS. WALTER: Yes.
23
24
               MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Mapp?
25
               MR. MAPP: Yes.
```

1	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Close?
2	MR. CLOSE: Yes.
3	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Avery?
4	MR. AVERY: Yes.
5	MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Rodriguez?
6	MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.
7	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Blee?
8	MR. BLEE: Yes.
9	MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Light?
10	MR. LIGHT: Yes.
11	MS. MCNAMARA: Motion passes.
12	MS. WALTER: Thank you all so much.
13	MS. LONG: Special thanks to Cynthia
14	as well. Such hard work and we're so grateful
15	for her help.
16	MS. MCNAMARA: We have this other
17	item we wanted to get a vote on for the members.
18	MS. WALTER: Next item on the agenda
19	is moving the meeting date for November because
20	it was going to fall on Veterans Day.
21	MS. MCNAMARA: Yes. We had actually
22	counted for it to be that it had fallen on
23	Veterans Day. And initially, we moved it to the
24	Tuesday, the 10th, but we found out that the
25	meeting room is unavailable on the 10th. That's

```
the Government Records Council meeting date, so
  we are proposing to move it to Thursday, the
  12th, which is the day after Veterans Day.
 4
                We may or may not need a room, but
5
  if we happen to be back or we can we can be
  somewhat back, then we want to be ready to have
  the meeting, so we are asking the board members
  to vote to move that meeting date to Thursday,
  the 12th.
10
                MS. RODRIGUEZ: I make that motion.
11
                MR. CLOSE: I second that motion.
12
                MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Walter?
13
                MS. WALTER: Yes.
14
                MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Mapp?
15
                MR. MAPP: Yes.
16
                MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Close?
17
                MR. CLOSE:
                           Yes.
18
                MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Avery?
19
                MR. AVERY:
                           Yes.
20
                MS. MCNAMARA: Miss Rodriquez?
21
                MS. RODRIGUEZ:
                               Yes.
22
                MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Blee?
23
                MR. BLEE: Yes.
24
                MS. MCNAMARA: Mr. Light?
25
                MR. LIGHT: Yes.
```

```
MS. MCNAMARA: Anything else,
1
 2
   Director?
 3
                 MS. WALTER: Just motion to adjourn.
 4
                 MR. BLEE: So moved.
 5
                 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Second.
                 MS. MCNAMARA: All ayes?
 6
                 BOARD MEMBERS:
 7
                                  Aye.
 8
                 (Hearing Concluded at 10:27 a.m.)
 9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
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1 CERTIFICATE 2 3 I, LAUREN ETIER, a Certified Court Reporter, License No. XI 02211, and Notary Public of the State of New Jersey, that the foregoing is 6 a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date hereinbefore set forth. 10 I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a 11 relative nor employee nor attorney nor council of 12 any of the parties to this action, and that I am 13 neither a relative nor employee of such attorney 14 or council, and that I am not financially interested in the action. 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 auren M. Etier 22 Notary Public of the State of New Jersey 23 24 My Commission Expires June 30, 2022 25 Dated: August 18, 2020

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A	ALAN 2 : 4	24:25	born 16:9
a.m 1:14 23:8	alluded 19:6	Avery 2:4 4:7	borrow 17:14
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