

1. SUB TO APP BET Budget Comm. Budget Presentation And Public Hearing Minutes

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TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR FY2019-2020 BUDGET

MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room
Thursday, January 24, 2018, 6:00 P.M.

- Committee: Leslie Moriarty, Chair; Michael Mason, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington
- Board: Jill Oberlander, Chair; William Drake, Andy Duus, Karen Fassuliotis, Deborah Hess, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Anthony Turner, David Weisbrod
- Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman
- Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Carolyn Baisley, Director, Health Department; Ben Branyan, Town Administrator; Al Cava, Director of Labor Relations; Tom Greco, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation; Barbara Heins, Executive Ass't to First Selectman; Blaize Levitan, Senior Management Analyst; Robert Kick, Ass't Fire Chief; Barbara Ormerod-Glynn, Director, Greenwich Library; Howard Richman, Tax Collector; Larry Roberts, Deputy Chief Training, Fire Department; Joseph Siciliano, Director, Parks & Recreation;
- BOE/GPS: Peter Bernstein; BOE Chairman; Jennifer Dayton, Member BOE; Meghan Olsson, Member BOE; Barbara O'Neill, Member BOE; Kathleen Stowe, Member BOE; Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools (GPS); Kim Eves, Director of Communications, GPS; Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Service Officer, GPS; Lorianne O'Donnell, Chief Operations Officer, GPS; Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer, GPS; Robert Stacy, Director Human Resources, GPS
- RTM: Kimberly Fiorello (D7, Health & Human Services); Brooks Harris (D10, Finance); Lucia Jansen (D7, BOC); Molly Saleeby, (D8, BOC); Candace Garthwaite, (D6, BOC)
- Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, Greenwich Time; Leslie Yeager, Publisher, Free Press

Ms. Moriarty called the Meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. and welcomed the audience to presentations by the First Selectman and Chairman of the Board of Education of the recommended FY2019-2020 Budgets. She invited attendees to upcoming Departmental Reviews taking place during February to understand the budget details and decision-making process in determining the BET recommended budget. The BET Budget Committee will vote on its recommended budget on March 1st and, if necessary, March 4th. The Budget then moves to the full BET for a public hearing on March 26th and its vote on March 28th. The RTM will vote on the recommended budget at its May 13th meeting. The vote on the Approved is then followed by the setting of the mill rate by the BET at its May 20th meeting. Ms. Moriarty indicated the goal for the BET is to find the right balance between the level of Town services, infrastructure maintenance and facility improvements and the tax levels required to fund them. She noted that tonight's Public Hearing, an opportunity for public comment, would begin at the conclusion of presentations by the First Selectman Peter Tesei and Mr. Peter Bernstein, Chairman of the Board of Education. and Mr. Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools.

PROPOSED BUDGET FY2019-2020

First Selectman Tesei presented his recommended FY2019-2020 Budget and thanked his staff for their professionalism and contribution to its preparation. Mr. Tesei introduced the recommended FY2019-2020 Budget noting that it reflected an overall increase of 3.85% to \$442.3 million in expenditures supported by a Mill Rate increase of 2.99%, which will maintain the vitality and quality of life Town residents enjoy in public education and essential services while making an investment in Capital Improvement Projects -- the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink, the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Roger Sherman Baldwin Park, Hillside Soil Remediation, and the Northwest Greenwich Fire House – to enhance the Town. He noted the increases over the current year's budget of 1.77% for Town departments, 1.95% for the Schools, and 8.38% for fixed charges (covering employee benefits, pension cost, insurances, contribution to Nathaniel Witherell, and other expenses). He noted the use of more available fund balance than the current year's budget of \$1.65 million to lower the mill rate needed to fund the budget. He referred to the Resident Satisfaction Survey as evidence of the support of existing Town services. He noted the increases in healthcare expenses after several years of benefitting from the migration to State employee healthcare plan and increases in pension expense due to the lowering of the discount rate by the Retirement Board and the impact of new Silver Shield agreement, which has a pension cost of living increase but a change to a defined contribution plan for new hires. The Town is working with the one remaining bargaining unit that has not moved from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan. He praised recent community partnerships developed under the auspice of the First Selectman's Economic Advisory Committee --- the Greenwich Economic Forum that attracted national financial industry leaders, Think Greenwich raising awareness of Greenwich as a pre-eminent community, Experience Greenwich focusing on the Town's retail, dining and entertainment assets. He highlighted the YWCA Domestic Abuse program's service to the community. Mr. Tesei applauded the Town's AAA financial rating that afforded low interest rates on borrowing. He noted that the proposed Budget was designed to invest in both capital and operating budgets for the Town's long-term fiscal stability while maintaining level-services with essentially a flat headcount.

He concluded his remarks acknowledging the Town's culture of volunteerism and its vital contribution to the Town's successes.

BOE BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent of Greenwich Schools, and Mr. Peter Bernstein, BOE Chairman, presented an overview of BOE's proposed FY2019-2020 Operating Budget for Greenwich schools of \$163,364,193, an increase of 1.95% over the current year's budget and within the BET Budget Guidelines. Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Mayo highlighted the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of the District: 4th highest District in the State on the CT Accountability Performance Index; increases in performance on State standardized tests; large number of students awards in many State and National competitions for academic, athletic and arts achievements. School enrollment is projected to be 9,108 students, a decline of 5 students from the current year; which represents an increase at the secondary level offset by decreases in elementary students. Mr. Bernstein identified that the primary cost-drivers of the BOE Budget are the contractual obligations for employees, the out-of-district tuition for special needs students, and transportation. The challenge was to prepare a budget that meets the Board's strategic academic and personal goals for Greenwich students, while still meeting the BET Guidelines. To accomplish this, the BOE lowered spending in professional learning, which is not sustainable for the longer term. The BOE budget includes a reduction in staff of 6.4 FTE, representing enrollment

shifts, administrative efficiencies, and a change in the secondary staffing model. This staffing model change is being tested this year and the BOE will determine if it negatively impacts students during next year's budget development process. Mr. Mayo also indicated that the Administration will be conducting a program review to assess the current status and effectiveness of all programs within the District. Mr. Mayo discussed the proposed Capital budget of \$26,012,281, which includes \$9.1 million for major projects, \$13.8 million for infrastructure maintenance and improvements, and \$3.1 million for technology. The plan reflects the results of the Facility Master Plan completed last year. The major projects for FY20 include improvements to Cardinal Stadium, design study for renovation and expansion of 3 elementary schools and a design study for Greenwich High School's entry way to improve security. Longer term, the plan includes higher annual spending on infrastructure maintenance, and major projects on a majority of its buildings. Mr. Mayo concluded with thanking his staff for their contributions in preparing the budget.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Moriarty opened the public meeting at 7:00 P.M.

The following speakers addressed the Committee:

- Susan Rudolf – Greenwich resident, spoke in opposition to synthetic turf installation on Greenwich public school playing fields.
- Diana Zuckerman, Ph.D., President, National Center for Health Research – invited to speak by Susan Rudolph – spoke in opposition to synthetic turf installation on school playing fields.
- David R. Brown, Sc.D. Public Health Toxicologist, Director for “Environment & Human Health, Inc. - invited to speak by Susan Rudolph – spoke in opposition to installation of synthetic turf on school playing fields.
- Patricia Taylor, Director of the Plastics Project for Environment & Human Health - invited to speak by Susan Rudolph – spoke in opposition to the installation of artificial turf on school playing fields.
- Mary Jones, Community Organizer, Toxic Action Center - invited to speak by Susan Rudolph – spoke in opposition to the installation of synthetic turf on school playing fields.
- Alicia Collier, Greenwich Public School (GPS) parent and Old Greenwich Riverside Community Center (OGRCC) Soccer Coordinator – spoke in favor of improving playing fields throughout Greenwich to increase playable time.
- Leighton Collier, Student, Old Greenwich School – spoke in favor of improving Greenwich playing fields for sports and recess.
- Pat O'Donohue, member OGRCC – spoke in favor of improving quality and quantity of Greenwich playing fields
- Arthur Yee MD, Greenwich resident – spoke in opposition to the installation of artificial turf on school playing fields

- Bryan Tunney, Cos Cob resident – spoke in opposition to artificial turf but in favor of expanding the number of playable fields in Greenwich
- Warren Silver, Greenwich resident -- spoke in opposition to artificial turf playing fields
- Jason Auerbach, Greenwich resident, parent of school age children – spoke in opposition to artificial turf on school playing fields
- Vip Kumar, Old Greenwich resident and parent – spoke in opposition to artificial turf on school playing fields but in favor of expanding number of playable fields in Greenwich
- Maureen Bonanno, Co-President GHS PTA – spoke in favor of the BOE budget but wants Professional Development cuts reinstated; spoke in favor of increased investment in school maintenance, Cardinal Stadium projects for new bleachers and bathrooms.
- Karen Hirsh and Cricket Dymont, President and First Vice President of PTA Council – spoke in favor of the BOE budget without cuts
- Candace Garthwaite, Chairman RTM D-6 – addressed projects impact Old Greenwich: spoke in support of EGCC project moving forward and including the improvement of the fields; in opposition to lack of information about the Sound Beach Avenue bridge project; spoke in favor of improvements to Cider Mill Creek to reduce flooding; spoke in favor of landscaping and pedestrian safety improvements at the Old Greenwich Railroad station parking lot.
- Kim Fiorello, RTM D7 – spoke in favor of fiscal prudence; spoke in opposition to the 2.99% increase in Mill Rate
- Rick Loh – member Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – spoke in favor of the renovations to the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink
- Sarah Gleeson, RTM D5 – spoke in favor of the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink, lengthening its season, and additional sport facilities in Greenwich.
- Jan Merrill, Cos Cob resident – spoke in opposition to artificial turf for indoor use at OGRCC
- Karen Hirsh, PTAC member – spoke in support of the BOE budget as presented.
- Susan Foster, Riverside resident – spoke in favor of the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink; spoke in favor of indoor fitness facilities at OGRCC
- Brooks Harris, RTM D10 Finance Committee - spoke in favor of fiscal discipline in Operating and Capital Budgets; concern about rising taxes; spoke in favor of improving controls and processes for capital projects; concern that growth in capital spending will crowd out operating needs; spoke about need to match growth in operating expenses to growth in the Grand List.

- Alex Popp, Teacher Riverside school, Greenwich resident – spoke in opposition to increasing the number of students in the classroom; in opposition to the BOE Facility Master Plan
- Juri J. Savyckyj, MD, Greenwich Resident – spoke in opposition to artificial playing fields at Greenwich schools and in opposition to indoor artificial turf at OGRCC.
- Frank Presioso, Greenwich resident – spoke in opposition to excessive spending

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie Moriarty, Chairman

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL