

1. SUB TO APP BET Budget Comm. Hearing And BOE Minutes

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**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE**

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW DAY ONE FOR FY2019-2020 BUDGET - BOE

Cone Meeting Room
Thursday, January 31, 2019

- Committee: Leslie Moriarty, Chair; Michael Mason, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington
- Board: Jill Oberlander, Chair; William Drake, Andy Duus, Karen Fassuliotis, Debra Hess, Beth Krumeich, Anthony Turner, David Weisbrod
- Staff: Finance Department: Angela Gencarelli, Financial Analyst; Roland Gieger, Director of Budgets; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Maureen Tracy, Chief Accountant
- BOE: BOE: Peter Bernstein, BOE Chair; Jennifer Dayton, BOE Member; Barbara O'Neill, BOE Member Administration; Thomas Bobkowski, Direct of School Safety; Dr. Ann Carabillo, Deputy Superintendent; Kim Eves, Director of Communications; Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Services Officer; John Hopkins, Director of Food Service; Shamain Johnson, Ass't Director of Certified Staff; Jennifer Lau, Research Manager; Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent; Lorianne O'Donnell, Chief Operating Officer; Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer; Robert Stacy, Director, Human Resources; Michael Ting, Director of Educational Technology; Dan Watson, Director of Facilities
- RTM: Kim Blank (D7, Education); Roz Nicastro, (D3, BOC); Lucia Jansen (D7, BOC); Dan Ozizmir (D5, BOC); Rebecca Steinfeld (D11, Finance)
- Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*

Budget Committee Chair Moriarty welcomed members of the Board of Education (BOE), Greenwich Public Schools Administration and attendees to the first day of the 2019-20 Budget Hearings. Ms. Moriarty commented that the full schedule of the Departmental Review Hearing dates was available online and reviewed Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET) dates for its Public Hearing and voting on the FY2019-2020 Budget.

Ms. Moriarty noted that the BOE operating budget was within the BET Guidelines and acknowledged the hard work of the BOE and Administration to develop the budget. Ms. Moriarty invited Interim Superintendent Mayo and the BOE Chairman Bernstein to present the BOE budget its goals and challenges to help the Budget Committee understand its proposed operating and capital requests.

Mr. Bernstein introduced the BOE Operating Budget for FY 2019-2020 of \$164,364,193 which represents a 1.92% increase over the current year budget and within the BET Budget Guidelines. The BOE Capital Budget of \$26,012,000 includes the first year of BOE's Master Capital Plan projects. He pointed out that the Superintendent's proposed budget was trimmed by the BOE to meet the BET Guidelines; however, he cautioned that cuts made in staff professional learning and curriculum development should not be considered permanent going forward. The increase over the current year's budget is primarily due to contractual obligations (salary and

transportation), and Out-of-District tuition. While the budget supports the BOE's strategic educational plan for students, it does not allow for any significant unanticipated expenses.

Interim Superintendent Mayo commented that academic outcomes continued to improve as reflected in the District's standardized test results. He noted that Greenwich Public Schools are performing well as demonstrated by comparisons to other Connecticut public schools, achievement awards received by students, national test scores, and installation of Greenwich's Pre-K model in other CT towns. The District is ranked #4 in the State on the State's Accountability Performance Index. He identified that the District continues to focus on annual academic growth for each student, highlighting the continuing efforts on the high needs students. He indicated the individualized digital learning initiative is critical to that effort.

Enrollment – Superintendent Mayo commented that Greenwich public school enrollment is peaking. Current year PK-12 enrollment is 9,113, is projected to be 9,108 in FY20, and then start a slow decline over the next few years. The mix of students is changing in FY20 with elementary school enrollment projected to decline while secondary enrollment is projected to increase. Mr. Mayo noted that Greenwich's trends are not reflecting the experience in the rest of the State, which is showing declining enrollment.

Budget Drivers – Chief Operating Officer O'Donnell indicated the budget is being driven by labor contracts, student transportation and out-of-district tuition costs while noting offsetting savings in salaries and programs. She explained that the budget for Special Education out-of-district placements is being increased by \$600,000 to reflect the current year's trends. This is an area that is a challenge and impacts all districts across the State. Out-placement of students can cost \$108,000 per student. Greenwich tries to meet the needs of these students within the District whenever possible. The FY20 budget for 52080 Tuition-Out-of-District SPED of \$5.4 million includes the tuition for 28 students plus settlements. Committee members asked about the increase in attorney fees (51400), residency verification practices, professional medical/dental (51420). Mr. Mayo indicated the District has started a program review which will identify redundancies or underperforming programs and will be used to streamline initiatives and provide a baseline for next year's budget development. When asked about the BOE's request for a special education study that could not be funded in the budget, Mr. Mayo remarked that a smaller scale effort is being conducted on the best practices for special education delivery with the University of Connecticut.

Salary – HR Director Stacy noted that the District reduced its headcount by 6.4 FTE due to enrollment changes and efficiencies in the non-certified staffing. However, the challenge for the budget was the arbitrated increase for the teachers of 3.6%, higher than prior years. He indicated the GEA contract is scheduled for negotiation this summer for a three-year contract starting FY21. He indicated that the budget assumption for the unsettled contracts is 2% wage salary increase.

School Lunch Fund –Ms. O'Donnell presented the School Lunch Fund budget which shows improving performance so that the Town's contribution is reduced from \$240,000 to \$170,000. She noted the budget reflects the increase in the number of students qualifying for the Free-and-Reduced (FRL) Lunch Program, which was attributed to new federal mechanisms to automatically identify and enroll students.

Other areas discussed were the transportation budget, employee travel policy, naming policies, security practices, building capacity, grants, accounting for continuing education and summer school, security of student records, utility savings,

Prior to Departmental Budget Hearings, department heads had been asked to identify what budget changes would be considered if a 1% decrease in budget was necessary. Mr. Bernstein responded that since the BOE already made cuts, additional reductions would come from school-based staff. This would negatively affect the classrooms and the students.

BOE Capital Plan FY20

Ms. Moriarty noted that the BOE and BET are jointly conducting a review of the BOE Capital Processes. The report will be available in February and may have an impact on the final approved capital plan.

Mr. Mayo indicated the proposed capital budget is \$26,012,281, including improvements to GHS Cardinal Field, design studies for renovations and expansions at 3 elementary schools, design study for a new and more secure GHS entryway, building maintenance projects, technology improvements, continuation of the digital learning initiative, food service equipment, and other projects. The Plan reflects the start of the Facilities Master Plan, which included an increase in the annual infrastructure maintenance projects.

Open Appropriations – Director of Facilities Watson commented that 27 projects had been closed out and more were being reviewed for close-out. Ms. O'Donnell noted that the projects that had been closed out accounted for \$13.8 million or a reduction of the available balance by 82%. In discussing the open appropriations, Mr. Watson indicated that staff turnover delayed some of the approved work, but that he anticipates he will be able to accelerate the pace of work with the addition of the new Director of Projects. Ms. O'Donnell confirmed Hamilton Avenue School, Glenville School and GHS MISA have all received Certificates of Occupancy. The Building Committees need to officially turn over the building to the BOE so that the final State reimbursements can be submitted. She indicated the BOE may use an outside firm to assist with those filings.

Digital Learning – Director of Educational Technology Ting discussed the technology projects. The District is continuing the infrastructure improvements, devices and support for the digital learning initiative and a new District-wide phone system. The Committee encouraged Mr. Ting to work with the Town's IT Director Klein for a compatible phone system in both BOE and Town. The Committee indicated the phone project should have a separate CIP sheet. The Digital Learning initiative was discussed.

GHS Cardinal Stadium – Mr. Bernstein indicated the project is being phased over two appropriation cycles. This phase includes replacement of the bleachers, new bathrooms, relocation of the tennis courts and addition of a new access road from Putnam Ave into the high school. The Committee discussed the challenges in terms of timing, management time and priority of this complex project. The Committee asked about the possibility of a public/private partnership. The Committee asked for a cost breakdown for each part of the proposed project.

BOE Master Facility Plan projects – Mr. Bernstein indicated the projects that begin the implementation of the master plan – design funds for a new entrance to GHS, renovation and expansion of Julian Curtiss School, Old Greenwich School and Riverside School. The Committee discussed the BOE's priorities, the timing of the design studies when compared to the construction timing. The Committee asked for information about the cost estimates used in the 15-year capital plan, including the escalation assumption.

Infrastructure Maintenance Projects – The additional projects discussed included: GHS locker room renovations, masonry projects; door and window replacement; roofs, fencing, HVAC

systems, removal of oil tanks on school property, interior painting, asbestos removal, emergency lighting, generators, plumbing and electrical work, fire alarms, school kitchen equipment security equipment, and new piano.

Other capital issues not included in this year's Plan were discussed including the expected timing for Western Middle School remediation and the condition of the school fields.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 4:46 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie Moriarty, Chairman

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL