

1. FINAL Minutes BET Budget Comm. BOE Presentation, 1st Selectman Presentation & Public Hearing

Documents:

FINAL_BET_BUDGET_COMM_BOE_BUDGET_PRESENTATION_MINUTES_02-01-06.PDF

FINAL_BET_BUDGET_COMM_FIRST_SELECTMAN_PRESENTATION_MINUTES_02-01-06.PDF

FINAL_BET_BUDGET_COMM_PUBLIC_HEARING_MINUTES_02-01-06.PDF

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET PRESENTATION
MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room
Wednesday, February 1, 2006

Present:

Committee: Stephen Walko, Chairman
Edward Krumeich, Michael Mason, Larry Simon

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Dr. Larry Leverett, John Curtin, Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Colleen Giambo, Board of Education;

Board: Nancy Barton, James Himes, Arthur Norton, Alma Rutgers, Robert Stone, Leslie Tarkington, Peter Tesei

Board Ex Officio: James A. Lash, First Selectman

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M.

Colleen Giambo, Chairman of the Board of Education (BOE) began the presentation to the Budget Committee. Mrs. Giambo began by explaining that over the last year and a half, the BOE has been improving its governance system. Policy Governance, a framework devised to help focus on the BOE's most important tasks: setting policy and strategic planning. This system was adopted to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the school system. Resources have been aligned with strategic directions. The recommended budget is \$113,865,757, more than \$500,000 under the BET guidelines. The proposal is a 3.9% increase over last year's budget. Maximizing achievement for all students is the objective, as well as closing gaps in performance. Some of the elements to improve the academic experience of students include the elementary foreign language program, adoption of a new elementary math curriculum and the addition of a portfolio system to improve student writing in the middle schools.

Mrs. Giambo reported that the current enrollment cycle has passed its peak, and a gradually declining enrollment is the current reality. While maintaining existing staffing ratios, the district will employ fewer teachers next year due to the declining enrollment. Retirement and attrition will allow for the adjustment in staffing levels, resulting in fewer teachers needing to be replaced.

Dr. Leverett then made his presentation to the Board.

- Re-allocating resources in an efficient manner, and linking them with results and strategic directions.
- The budget is fiscally responsible and sensitive to the shifts in enrollment that have occurred over the last few years.

Dr. Leverett stressed the following strategic directions:

- align the focus of schools in terms of the goal setting process
- examine the patterns of resource allocation
- adoption of key initiatives to move forward
- measure results in a way available to staff, parents and members of the community

Aligning adults in support of improving teaching and learning and maintaining facilities and aligning resources with instructional priorities are also essential to achieving the BOE objectives.

A number of the initiatives introduced in this year's budget are multi-year initiatives and will continue beyond 2006-07. Commitments include multi-year focus on improving the performance of students on literacy and numeracy, and increasing the role of Central Office in the area of professional development.

- A 9% increase in the Contracted and Other Services Account is primarily caused by fuel increase costs.
- A 5.6% increase in the Supplies accounts attributed to efforts to implement a comprehensive maintenance program in order to stay ahead of problems that may occur in systems.
- A 19.4% increase for the Maintenance accounts, focuses on capital projects under \$25,000, and complements the BOE comprehensive maintenance program.
- The Fixed Settlements account moves toward budgeting for the previously unanticipated cost of settlements. Prior to FY 2006-07, other ways to absorb settlements were found. The amount of \$200,000 is roughly what has been spent in the past, but not formally budgeted. The breakdown is \$150,000 in the area of special education and \$50,000 budgeted for unanticipated human resources settlements.
- Personnel Services: 2.8% increase. An adjustment in current year staffing (not deploying 4.6 full time equivalent positions) reflecting sensitivity to a variance between actual and projected enrollment, resulted in a \$318,816 reduction in expenditure. Additionally, in response to declining enrollment, 20 positions were eliminated, offset by the number of retirees. There has not been a reduction in programs or services, nor has there been any layoff of school personnel in order to achieve a savings estimated to be approximately \$1.7 million. An additional salary savings of \$110,000 for an additional 5 retirees, and a salary differential from resignations of \$172,925 are also among the savings.

Accounting Conventions:

Enrollment Impact on 2004-05 Expenditures:

9238 anticipated enrollment
9083 actual enrollment
\$104.9 million appropriation base
\$103,505,114 expenditures (\$1.3 million returned to the town, as a result of withholding the deployment of staff and imposing a spending moratorium)

Enrollment Impact on 2005-06 Expenditure:

9151 anticipated enrollment
9003 actual enrollment

\$109,589,129 appropriation base
Expenditures TBD

2005-06 numbers impacted by cost containment, declining enrollment and unanticipated expenses and adversely affected by rising energy costs.

Enrollment Impact on 2006-07 Expenditures:

8905 anticipated enrollment

\$113,865,757 appropriation based on projected enrollment

Student performance is the measure of value of the programs implemented. SAT 1 verbal and mathematic scores are the highest in five years, and highest for the district in 16 years. Average scores continue to increase on a year to year basis.

Participation rates in advanced placement courses have doubled.

CAP performance scores show some increase over the past four years, but needs to improve in overall performance.

Performance on the Connecticut Mastery Tests has plateaued, trailing best in class. More than 80% of students are achieving at the mastery level or above. There is concern about those students (20% on the CMT and 30% on the CAP) who consistently achieve below mastery.

Approximately 85% of students are in the high performance category, more than half of these being high growth.

11% show low performance or low growth, or not making a year's worth of progress for each year spent in the educational system.

16% of students are not at goal on the reading portion of the CMT 6th grade reading score.

The mission of the Greenwich public schools is to educate all students to the highest level of their academic potential and to teach them the skills and knowledge that enable them to become capable, creative and responsible members of society.

Dr. Leverett concluded by saying that the budget is responsive to that mission, linking resources, demonstrating fiscal responsibility, managing declining enrollment and responding to unanticipated events.

Dr. Leverett also thanked all of the members of his cabinet for their efforts in preparing the budget.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION

BUDGET COMMITTEE
FIRST SELECTMAN'S BUDGET PRESENTATION
MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room
February 1, 2006

Present:

Committee: Stephen Walko, Chairman
Edward Krumeich, Michael Mason, Larry Simon

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ed
Gomeau, Town Administrator;

Board: Nancy Barton, James Himes, Arthur Norton, Alma Rutgers, Robert Stone,
Leslie Tarkington, Peter Tesei

Board Ex Officio: James A. Lash, First Selectman

Other:

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M.

Mr. Lash made the presentation of the First Selectman's Budget to the Committee. For the first time in years, the Education Budget is going up less than 4%, and the Town Services or Operating Budget is going up 5.96 %. This reflects a decrease in school enrollment patterns.

The Capital Budget is up 28.6%. The new Grand List is not reflected in the Capital Budget number, but is expected to produce a reduced mill rate.

Fixed Charges increased 18.32%. This number does not reflect revenue offsets. The most dramatic example of this is that the actuarial calculation for the amount needed to contribute to the Retirement Fund this year is about \$3.9 million, and last year was less than \$700,000.

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS:

General Government:

Headcount: While headcount has not increased, new categories of personnel have been added while others have been reduced. Seven civilian dispatchers have been added, down from the forecasted 10, the remaining 3 will be added in the FY2007-2008 Budget. This will bring the Police and Fire Departments along with GEMS together for the first time into a single dispatch function run entirely by civilians. There will be a total of 16 positions. The calculations done a year ago indicate that the cost of the civilians was substantially lower than the cost of the police

and fire personnel they were replacing, creating an offset. There will be a cost increase created by putting more police and fireman on the streets. The process will free up 4 firefighters and 12 full time equivalent police officers. Of these 12, 10 police officers will go back on patrol and 2 positions will be eliminated. Of the 10 going back on the street, 3 are being established as sergeant's positions, allowing 3 sergeants on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, which the department was unable to do before.

A provision in the 2005 contract allows, for a short period of time, police officers to retire and come back as civilian dispatchers, while drawing their pension from the town. This results in civilians that are experienced as police dispatchers.

Also added are 2 Building Inspector positions. With the 6 existing inspectors, a delay of anywhere between 2-14 days may exist when sick time or vacations are taken into account for building inspections. By adding 2 or 3 part time inspectors, a few days a week, the delay rate dropped to 2 or 3 days. The fees charged for the inspections more than cover those additional salaries.

Department List:

Fire Department: There is an increase in the overtime allocation. The town had worked with the fire department union to give the firefighters a desirable work schedule. In exchange for this, the firefighters agreed to reduce the amount of sick time being taken. The implication was that sick time was being used for personal reasons. The average was 14 days per year, and they agreed to reduce that number to 9, considered average. There is a poor record of implementation, and it was back up to 14 again this year, and the overtime budget was used up more rapidly than this year's budget allowed for. Whether sick time is being abused is being investigated.

Police Department: The primary activity is the move toward civilianization of dispatch. The Chief continues with the Community Resource Officer program, the first 3 of whom are about to graduate the program. This program is designed to put more officers in the field, interacting without being in patrol cars, in a more personal way with neighborhood associations and business groups to identify issues before they become general problems. During the current year, additional police officers were rotated into the Traffic Division, and the consequence of that was an increase in traffic enforcement, resulting in an increase of 300% in moving violations written. Data processing has also been upgraded.

Public Works: There has been a large impact wherever energy is concerned. This includes fuel/diesel/oil costs, tire costs, and asphalt.

Fleet: Again, an impact for fuels cost is reflected.

Health Department: Nothing of note to report.

GEMS: After a study commissioned by GEMS, it was found that staff was being under compensated compared to other public safety personnel. GEMS began a seven year program to raise salary scales for their personnel. As the end of this sequence approaches, an increase in salaries can be seen. The town and the BET support this. Another challenge is their retirement

program. Lifting and carrying are a large part of this position. This type of physical activity leads to an earlier retirement age. The proposed retirement plan involves a defined employee contribution, which will allow more competitive recruitment of qualified personnel. A plan to build a combined GEMS Fire House at the King Street location is in the beginning stages. The major cost for this project is not the building or the equipment, but the staff.

The Nathaniel Witherell: TNW will present to the Budget Committee separately as part of the Departmental Hearings. Being in a regulate industry, their reimbursement rates and the rates they can charge to private pay patients are not completely under their control. Their revenue is expected to improve, and they are working to control their costs.

Department of Social Services: The Board adopted the recommendations of its consultant, which called for re-organization of staff into teams with team leaders, eliminating a management layer.

Board of Education: The BOE will present to the Committee after Mr. Lash makes his presentation. The budget reflects a more thoughtful approach to funding education.

Libraries: Doubling the size of the Byram Schubert is being funded 15% with State funds, 60% through private funds and 25% with town funds. Heavily utilized with a multi-lingual clientele and staff, the need for more service in the community is recognized by the Board.

Parks and Recreation: This department is within guidelines and reflects only minor program changes. Last year operating money was taken out of this year's budget for the Western Greenwich Civic Center, because it was going to be closed and assumed to re-open part way through next year. Some of the expected revenue was to come from a daycare center. There has been ongoing discussion with several day care providers about using that facility for several years. The United Way had offered a \$100,000 incentive to help initiate the process, but finding a provider to operate the facility has been difficult.

Sewer: Nothing of note to report.

Parking Fund: In the current years budget there was money allocated to hire a firm to evaluate 5 sites in the downtown business district for a parking structure that will produce between 200 and 400 more spaces. The site that is recommended is at Benedict Place, behind Greenwich Avenue. This site will net approximately 211 additional spaces. The next step is to take the \$600,000 already in this year's budget to do the architectural work to design that structure. It is recommended that this not be done until the new head of the Parking Department does a study of parking utilization in the Benedict Place vicinity. A similar study was done by a consultant, who also recommended Benedict Place as a realistic location. The objective is to improve the ratio between long term and short term parking spaces. Currently, full time employees are using short term parking areas on the Avenue, when they should be using long term parking spaces, typically between 9AM-5PM.

The Parking Fund has been depleted due in part to using some of the money for day to day operations in the town (the Police Officers who direct traffic on the Avenue, the Traffic

Engineering Division, etc.). This may result in the general fund contributing to the cost of a parking structure.

Mr. Lash feels that the budget overall fits the guidelines that taxpayers can absorb, and raises taxes in line with the rate of inflation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Stephen Walko, Chairman

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2006-07 BUDGET
MINUTES
Town Hall Meeting Room
February 1, 2006

Present:

Committee: Stephen Walko, Chairman
Edward Krumeich, Michael Mason, Larry Simon

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Dr. Larry Leverett, John Curtin, Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Colleen Giambo, Board of Education;

Board: Nancy Barton, James Himes, Arthur Norton, Alma Rutgers, Robert Stone, Leslie Tarkington, Peter Tesei

Board Ex Officio: James A. Lash, First Selectman

Mr. Walko called the meeting to order at 8:10 P.M. he welcomed everyone to the Public Hearing on the 2005-2006 budget. Mr. Walko said he had received the names of three persons wishing to comment on the budget.

SPEAKERS

1. Lisa Harkness and Sue Rogers, Glenville School PTA Co-Presidents
Ms. Harkness spoke in support of the \$1.4 million additional appropriation for Glenville School in the FY 2006-07 CIP budget. The appropriation will fund the architectural and engineering study that is needed prior to the beginning of that facilities renovation. Ms. Harkness further stated that the PTA fully endorsed the building committee and looked forward to working with them. The current estimate for the renovation is \$19 million.
2. Debbie Applebaum, Greenwich High School PTA Co-President
Ms. Applebaum spoke in support of the entire BOE budget. Ms. Applebaum reported that while declining enrollment is an issue at the elementary school level, increased enrollment is being experienced at GHS. No decline is expected for the next 10 years.
3. Janice Richards, PTA Council President
Ms. Richards spoke in support of the budget and the BOE staff.
4. Jim Boutelle, Executive Director of Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG)
Mr. Boutelle is opposed to a new budget guideline that specifies TAG will no longer be a part of the First Selectman's budget but will now be part of the Social Services budget,

along with subsidized day care and drug treatment programs. While Mr. Boutelle could see how the later two programs could be considered social service programs, he stressed that TAG is much more than a social service program, and feels that it should remain in the First Selectman's budget. He feels that passing things through the First Selectman's office, such as a recent grant application to FEMA for a generator for the TAG operations center, is easier than getting them through the Board of Social Services. Some of the other programs provided include the Commuter Shuttle and the Easy Access program, the later being a mandated program under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is a parallel system to the fixed route bus. Mr. Boutelle stressed that TAG is a transportation provider, not just a social service agency.

5. Vince DiMarco Chairman, RTM Transportation Committee and Selectman's Parking and Traffic Committee

Mr. DiMarco addressed the omission from the budget of the position of Transportation Planner or Coordinator. The transportation planner works with other town agencies, including the BOE, The Commission on Aging, Department of Social Services and Nathaniel Witherell to implement transportation programs for the populations they serve, their employees and their visitors. Traffic issues such as volume and speeding are also issues addressed by the transportation planner. Other agencies impacted by this position are the Housing Authority, Health Department, the Chamber of Commerce and the business community.

6. James Himes, former Chairman of the Greenwich Housing Authority

Mr. Himes spoke with regard to the absence of funds in the \$381 million 10 year capital plan for affordable housing. Mr. Himes pointed out that a lack of affordable housing increases transportation problems, jeopardizes the ability of the elderly to stay in town and contributes to the rate of turnover that the school system sees for younger teachers.

Mr. Himes reminded those present of the Town's obligation to create 24 affordable housing units as part of the agreement when the Cos Cob Power Plant site was purchased from the state for \$1. He hopes that this observation creates discussion and that in the future a sufficient amount will be added to the Capital Plan to develop affordable housing in Greenwich. Part of the difficulty is that affordable housing has little constituency. This item should be a priority for the town.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman