

1. SUB_TO_APP_BET Budget Comm. Hearings_Day 2 Minutes_2-5-2021

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

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW FY2021-2022 DAY #2 MINUTES

**Hybrid Meeting Town Hall Meeting Room & Virtual – 9:00 A.M.
Friday, February 5, 2021**

Present:

Committee: Leslie Tarkington, Chair; Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

Staff: Lu Ann Bellantoni, Robert Berry, Deputy Chief, Police Dept, Business Services Manager, Parking Services; Benjamin Branyan, Town Administrator; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, Finance Department; James Heavey, Chief, Police Dept; Jenny Larkin, IT Department; Bill McCormick, Business Services Manager, Alan Monelli, Superintendent, Building Maintenance & Construction, (BMC) Department of Public Works (DPW); Mark Marino, Deputy Chief, Police Department and Parking Services; William McCormick, Manager, Business Services DPW; Jim Michel, Deputy Commissioner, DPW; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Joseph Siciliano, Director, Parks & Recreation; Amy Siebert, Commissioner of Public Works; Horst Tebbe, WGCH

BET: Michael Mason, Chairman, Bill Drake, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Beth Krumeich, David Weisbrod

Selectmen: Fred Camillo, First Selectman; Jill Oberlander, Select-Person

RTM: Michael Basham (D-2), Chair, Finance Committee (Cmte); Jill Cobbs (D-7), Public Works Cmte; Lucia Jansen (D-7), Chair, Budget Overview Cmte (BOC); Labor Contracts Cmte (LCC); Richard Neumann (D-11), Chair, Town Services Cmte; Dan Ozizmir (D-5), Vice-Chair, BOC, Chair, LCC; Charles Parkhurst (D-5), Finance Cmte; Molly Saleeby (D-8), BOC; Lucy von Brachel (D-4)

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the Meeting to order at 9:12 A.M. and welcomed the audience to the first in a series of eleven BET Budget Committee public meetings. Ms. Tarkington introduced members of the BET Budget Committee --- Andy Duus, Leslie Moriarty and Jeff Ramer. The Committee is also supported by the Finance Department --- Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, Angela Gencarelli, Assistant Budget & Systems Manager and Shira Davis, Executive Assistant.

The BET Budget Committee Departmental Review Hearings are operating under the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders and will be conducted by hybrid Zoom. This meeting is being recorded by Zoom. An audio recording will be posted on the Town website. Meetings are being live broadcast by GCTV on channels 79 and 24 and on YouTube. Technical expertise is being provided by Jenny Larkin, Craig Jones and Horst Tebbe. A schedule of the Budget Committee's Departmental Review Hearings is available on the Town website.

At the BET Budget Committee Public Hearing, the FY2021-2022 Budget was presented as \$400 million in Operating costs in the General Fund, up 0.57%, and \$90 million in Capital requests up 130%. The General Fund Mill rate in the FY 2021-2022 as proposed by the First Selectman increases by 1.75%, slightly above the 1.67% in the Estimate Budget attached to the Budget Guidelines. Residents within the sewer district are projected to have a 5.11% increase in that combined mill rate.

Over the next 4 weeks, the Committee will hear how Departmental budgets compare to the approved FY 2021-2022 Budget Guidelines and learn about new initiatives, and what programs may be reduced or eliminated.

Welcome First Selectman Fred Camillo and Town Administrator, Ben Branyan.

Office of the First Selectman

First Selectman Camillo provided an overview of his recommended FY2021-2022 \$450,649,585 Budget, noting that it reflected an overall increase of 0.51% over previous year to be supported by a mill rate increase of 1.3% from 11.590 to 11.793. He summarized anticipated expenses as an increase of 1.24% in operating expenses and recommended a capital budget of \$90 million, or a 130% increase, that includes the \$38.9 million of capital projects deferred from previous year.

Capital Budget – Mr. Camillo remarked that his objective is to focus on capital projects that are important to the community by prioritizing them in categories: maintenance, replacement, upgrade, discretionary and new projects. In addition to the 15-year Capital Plan submitted by Departments, Mr. Camillo recommended a hard focus on years' 1 through 5. He reviewed previous year's deferred projects budgeted for \$38.9 million – moving some to future years --- and moving vital projects forward. Of the \$90 million capital budget, \$40 million will be dedicated to annual maintenance projects. He remarked that his capital plan includes continuing support for cybersecurity, a three-year plan for soil remediation, the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center project, GEMS Station 4, the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink and Roger Sherman Baldwin Park. Among the resources to support the capital projects: a headcount reduction of eight full time positions and three part time positions were eliminated; two part time positions were added. Revenue sources include: funds expected to be returned from encumbered and open capital projects; savings from rethinking capital projects for cost-avoidance; and contributions from public/private partnership are being sought. Grants, State reimbursements and additional Federal CARES Act funds are expected.

Operations - In reviewing the Operating Budget, the COVID-19 impact of financial uncertainty is unclear going forward. While not anticipating a total return to pre-pandemic financial conditions, Town services, education and fixed costs continue to rise. Fixed costs are expected to rise in the following areas: healthcare, OPEB and pension contribution, Risk Fund, insurance, school lunch program and The Nathaniel Witherell. The value of offsets of headcount reduction, a proposed business retention initiative, cost-avoidance method of examining capital projects and open and encumbered capital were enumerated. Operation efficiencies have been found in virtual Zoom meetings and are anticipated in the addition of two part time positions – Energy Coordinator and Economic Development Director. The Committee recommended developing a Town policy for public/private partnerships, considering some of the analytic recommendations from the Matrix Study of Fire Department response time, and policy development for tipping fees at the Holly Hill Transfer Station.

Police Department

Operations – Chief Heavey led off his presentation saying the Police Department costs would only increase 1.3% in FY22 while salaries were up 2.4% in accord with the Silver Shield negotiation. Police staffing at 152 officers (due to retentions and retirements), create a ratio of 2.4 uniformed police officers per 1,000 residents; patrol cars are stationed in 11 locations throughout the community 24/7; and Police bicycle patrol and plain clothes officers patrol Greenwich Avenue. There are 44 officers eligible to retire and there is a long lead time before a new hire is eligible for independent work. An average of 7 officers retire per year. While exploring peer communities for benchmarking information, the Chief commented that although staffing was 10-15% higher than other Connecticut communities, it was due to the value and expectations of the Town's residents and properties, and certain services are not provided in all communities, like a marine division. A 5-year national accreditation process is underway, but he added that Greenwich's professional standards were already high based on the level of the staffs' education and annual investment in training. The recently adopted Police Accountability Bill requires CALEA accreditation by 2025. Current frequent crimes include illegal parking, aggressive driving, and car thefts. Side job revenue is strong with primary customers, Verizon, CNG and Eversource. A 5-Year Strategic Plan (2021-2026) is to be unveiled for the Department's 125 Anniversary under the theme of "Embrace Change. Create Value, Inspire Others". There was a discussion about the benchmarking study and Greenwich's higher staffing levels based on population, miles and number of calls as compared to other communities. There was a discussion about the expectations for the officers on bicycles, pedestrian safety versus business coverage of Greenwich Avenue, animal control staffing, use of body cameras, and side jobs accounting.

Capital Budget - The Chief reviewed the Department's 15-year Capital Plan that included replacement of 5 cars and 2 motorcycles, an annual replacement cycle for body cameras, tasers, dashboard cameras, power backup of vehicle electronics, license plate reader, and outboard motors for Marine Division boat.

Parking Services

Operations - Deputy Chief Marino commented on COVID-19's impact on revenues due to the suspension of meter payments, day-parking and reduction in commuter parking. Challenges included: redeploying parking enforcement staff to Town Parks; reallocation of parking spaces for outdoor dining; remote telephone Parking Ticket Appeals; Railroad Parking permits were renewed online but a decrease in requests was noted so follow-up to the wait list is being implemented. Departmental initiatives include exploration of valet parking; kiosk shelters replacing meters; Park Mobile added as a payment method; neighborhood resident parking permits; and restructuring job description responsibilities. Deputy Chief Marino noted that Finance Department feedback on revenue reporting and training confirms that recommendations made in the recent Internal Audit are being implemented.

Capital Budget - The Committee asked to be provided with an updated Organizational Chart and spreadsheet of revenue projections anticipated from parking fees. Concern was expressed about the possibility of depleting Parking Services fund balance due to reduced inflow of revenues versus costs.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

Operations – Commissioner Siebert provided an overview of some of DPW’s recent activity including: outdoor dining in parking spaces issue on Greenwich Avenue; traffic created by 900 - 1,500 daily vehicles visiting Holly Hill Transfer Station; increasing volume of online transactions of credit cards, permits, and scheduling inspection reservations. She identified that the implementation of tipping fees last July required significant work for the department, as did the addition of the food scrap recycling program, and the change to outdoor dining for restaurants. The Department also helped with the set up for vaccination sites. Operationally, the department will continue credit card payments for building, sewer, and Holly Hill permits, and will be implementing permitting and inspection scheduling via email. She also mentioned that her participation on the Sustainability and Streetscape Committees was bringing her into contact with a wider range of ideas and opinions. Mr. Monelli remarked that Building Construction and Maintenance’s (BCM) lengthy major projects’ design and municipal approvals require encumbering money for several years while smaller construction and engineering projects were handled by Town employees. engineers, architects, building committees, construction managers, or in the case of GEMS Station #4, owner’s representative, were frequently hired to prepare plans, provide detailed costs, review materials, and monitor work requiring special expertise. There was a discussion about the management of capital projects and whether one approach was most appropriate (e.g., construction management versus construction manager at risk versus general contractor) and role of an owner’s representative. There was a discussion on the systems that the facilities staff uses – building facility index which is internally developed and a work order system that tracks requests and develops a preventative maintenance schedules; but that there is no system tracking age and status of individual pieces of equipment.

Capital Budget – BCM’s FY22 major projects include reviewing Open Capital Items, Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, which had increased in cost from \$17 million to \$18.7 million (plus \$2.8 million of owners rep costs and outfitting in future years and an upcoming appropriation for Civic Center/Harding Road drainage), Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink, Roger Sherman Baldwin Park renovation, Police Department Firing Range, on-going Senior Center improvements, Byram Fire Station, and GEMS Station #4 construction. Mr. Monelli also commented on other projects including the Round Hill Volunteer Fire House and the Queen Anne and Old Barn renovations Greenwich Point. The Committee reviewed the increasing size and costs of projects and cautioned Mr. Monelli that increased size increases operating costs. A member of the Committee expressed concern that ADA and HVAC changes for school buildings were not prioritized in the Capital Plan. Community input was proposed as a solution to choosing which project - Eastern Greenwich Civic Center. Roger Sherman Baldwin Park or the Skating Rink - might be postponed. There was a discussion over public private partnership opportunities for EGCC as well as the operating projections for revenues and costs going forward. There was a discussion about priorities for several of the larger projects – EGCC, Hamill Skating Rink, Roger Sherman Baldwin Park.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the BET Budget Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn Day #2 of the FY2021-2022 Departmental Review Meetings at 4:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie L. Tarkington, Committee Chair