

1. SUB_TO_APP_BET Budget Comm. Hearings Day 4 Minutes_2-10-2021

Documents:

[SUB_TO_APP_BET BUDGET HEARINGS_DAY 4 MINUTES_2-10-2021.PDF](#)

2. APPROVED_BET Budget Hearings_Day 4 Minutes_2-10-2021

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

**DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW FY2021-2022 DAY #4 MINUTES
Hybrid Virtual & Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:00 A.M.
Wednesday, February 10, 2021**

Present:

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

Staff: Aamina Ahmad, Assistant Town Attorney, Daniel Carlsen, Senior Management Analyst, Office of the First Selectman (OFS); Law Department; Katie DeLuca, Director of Planning and Zoning/Zoning Enforcement Coordinator/Town Planner; Jay Domeseck, Director, Fleet Department (Dept); Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Dept; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems, Finance Department; Craig Jones, IT Dept; Blaize Levitan, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation; Bill Marr, Manager, Building Services, DPW; Bill McCormick, DPW; James Michel, Deputy Commissioner, DPW; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Patricia Sesto, Director, Environmental Affairs; Amy Siebert, Commissioner, Dept Public Works; Joseph Siciliano, Director, Parks & Recreation Department; Maureen Tracy, Chief Accounting Officer, Finance Dept

BET Michael Mason, Chair; Bill Drake, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Beth Krumeich, David Weisbrod

Selectmen Jill Oberlander, Select-Person

RTM Nanette Burrows (D-7); Tracy Freedman (D-11); Karen Giannuzzi (D-11); Lucia Jansen (D-7) Chair, Budget Overview Committee (BOE), Labor Contracts Committee (LCC); Katherine LoBalbo (D-2), Chair, Parks and Recreation Cmte; Dan Ozizmir (D-5) Vice Chair, Budget Overview Committee, Chair, Labor Contracts Cmte; Molly Saleeby (D-8) BOC; Lucy von Brachel (D-4)

Other: Margarita Alban, Chair, Planning and Zoning Commission; Ken Borsuk, Greenwich Time; Timothy Herbst, Attorney, Marino, Zabel & Schellenberg PLLC (MZS); Dennis Kokenos, Attorney, MZS; Horst Tebbe, GCTV

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the Meeting to order at 9:03 A.M. and welcomed the attendees to the fourth 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 and 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 and Horst Tebbe. A schedule of the Budget Committee's Departmental Review Hearings is available on the Town website's calendar.

Planning & Zoning, Land Use Department

Operations – Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Director DeLuca highlighted new items in the Department's FY2022 budget including several new studies to be undertaken, outsourcing signage and lighting planning, zoning changes, collaboration with Fire and Health Departments to jointly support a blight ordinance, the elimination of an administrative position redundant due to digitalization, sharing positions with Land Use, and, increases in salaries due to union adjustments, longevity pay and temporary salaries. New revenues are projected from increasing permit fees 5%-10%, developing incentives to generate developer interest in building affordable and workforce housing, and pre-concept P&Z applications. Reductions are anticipated in reproduction costs through form digitalization, and reduced amount of legal advertising relating to public meetings. An upcoming municipal improvement summit with other Fairfield County P&Z officers is planned in the near future to share information for cost-savings and efficiencies, as well as issues of concern such as controlling special exemptions in neighborhoods, permits and enforcement fees adjusted to correspond to property value. She described P&Z initiatives to incentivize housing diversity.

Ms. DeLuca expressed concern about the impact of proposed State legislation impacting local planning and zoning authority. Ms. DeLuca indicated P&Z initiatives add housing diversity to address Greenwich's affordable housing inventory, which is needed to address the impact of State statute 8-30G applications allowing developers to deviate from local regulation when including 10% low-income units in a project. She described a Housing Trust Fund and other ideas to improve the Town's inventory. She identified the opportunity for the Town to provide Greenwich Communities (formerly Greenwich Housing Authority) with a \$20 million low-interest municipal bond loan for the development of 434 affordable housing units, which would help the Town get closer to qualifying for a 5-year moratorium on 10% low-income unit inclusion exempting other zoning regulations. The P&Z Commission is providing commentary and testimony on the State's proposed legislation in this area. Other new projects include the POCD bicycle path, expanding downtown parking capacity and plans for increasing the value of Greenwich Avenue properties through collaboration with DPW to showcase the Town's visual appeal. Ms. DeLuca commented on the Greenwich downtown, that police is something nostalgic, the addition of restaurant bump outs for outdoor dining on the Avenue which resulted in parking loss of 60 spaces, zoning issues still being resolved for the outdoor dining, and spoke to the hustle and bustle and cars everywhere. In response to a Committee question, Ms. DeLuca replied responsibility for a bicycle study, which is supported in the POCD, was moved from P&Z to Conservation.

Conservation & Inland Wetlands and Waterways Administration (IWWA)

Operations – Environmental Affairs Director Sesto described the IWWA departmental budget as self-sustaining based on fees, that implements regulatory policy. IWWA works through applications, has few denials, and oversees enforcement. Reduction of a full-time position and outsourcing technical projects has enabled a level budget despite decreasing estimated FY2022 fees due to lack of large projects. Conservation, which is not a regulatory board, focuses on

natural resource management, including sea level protection, open space and sustainability partnering with Town and Fairfield County programs.

Capital Budget – The Committee reviewed the Department’s plans related to the climate-change study, a project that was not included in the current year capital budget. An RFP process for a purchase of power is under consideration by the Town’s Energy Committee and a grant for sustainability programming is being sought.

Department of Public Works – Building Inspection

Operations - Commissioner Seibert and William Marr described the Department’s permitting activity as the issuance of 764 permits during the first half of FY2021 and starting January with \$2.7 million building permit revenue increase over previous year. Ms. Seibert’s presentation highlighted staffing, equipment, reproduction, and the implementation of new software as increasing efficiency. Customization of Muncicity software has improved functionality but in the case of sewer and highway permitting further refinement is required for the public to access older permits. The software’s Inspection Reservation tool is anticipated to be available for public online scheduling in April. The Committee asked if customization could be added to adjust records of unplanned or under-estimated original construction costs.

Capital Budget - Open Items were reviewed to identify projects to be closed. Ms. Seibert commented on projects underway.

Parks & Recreation

Operations – Parks and Recreation Director Siciliano noted that although COVID protocols restricted initiatives, it increased the public use of online service options. He commented that it was one of the hardest years since he had worked with the Town, and that they had learned a lot. Mr. Levitan summarized the Department’s areas of responsibility. COVID increased demand for monitoring capacity, increased the clean-up program, reduced income from reservations for events and the need for cashless services. Among the COVID lessons learned, Mr. Levitan cited increase awareness of outdoor spaces’ value, expansion of RecTrac use, and staff redeployment. The FY2022 Budget reflects conservative program revenue of 8%, minimum wage increase of \$1.00 per hour in September (impacts Marine budget by \$22,000 and Recreation budget by \$11,500), no headcount increase, higher trash removal fees due to the tipping fee, and renegotiated cell tower rental revenue for the Griffith Harris Golf Course Revolving Fund. Savings are projected from phasing out Brinks services due to increased (cashless) online sales. The overall budget increase for FY2022 will be 1.9%. FY22 issues include coordination with Eversource on its accelerated tree trimming program from three years to two years cycle in the rights-of-way; continuation of daily attendance limits for the beaches; benchmarking Town staff and service levels to industry standards, and data communication between RecTrac and MUNIS.

Capital Budget Mr. Siciliano updated the Committee on capital projects including: playing field maintenance and reviewing the recently completed field study. The department demonstrates its ability to execute 86% of projects and limiting encumbered funds by returning balances. The plan includes the revised ferry proposal of re-powering the three existing boats rather than the purchase of a new ferry partly since regulatory agencies were not supportive of dock extensions, which reduces the capital cost in the 15-year plan. Field projects may be increased in the outyears as an action plan is developed from the Field Study. One capital item of note in the FY2022 budget will be \$2.2 million dedicated to maintenance, a Tree Risk Inventory and providing ADA accessibility at Town marinas. Four projects are also planned for the Griffith Harris Golf course.

Law Department

Mr. Herbst, an Attorney from the Town Attorney's firm, compared the proposed FY22 Law Department budget to FY2020 and FY2021. He highlighted the reduction of two full-time staff headcount, which results in a savings of \$48,000 when salary and benefit costs are compared to the increase in outside counsel cost. There was a discussion over the terms of the Personal Services Contract. The Committee requested more clarity in bookkeeping to separate the Town Attorney retainer arrangement from outsourced counsel costs. An additional request was made by the Committee for a tracking system that would include status of each case, a plan for its value, and anticipated timeframe. Tax appeal cases and settlement charges were briefly discussed.

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the public meeting at 3:28 P.M.

Executive Session

Upon a motion by Ms. Moriarty, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to go into Executive Session to discuss legal claims and the Risk Fund at 3:44 P.M.

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted to come out of Executive Session at 4:59 P.M.

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to adjourn the Zoom Executive Session at 5:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie Tarkington, Committee Chair



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Leslie Tarkington, Committee Chair