1. BET Budget Comm. Dept. Review Day 3

Documents:

SUB_TO_APP_DEPT_REVIEWS_DAY_THREE_02-12-14.PDF
APPROVED_DEPARTMENTAL_REVIEW_DAY_THREE_02-12-14.PDF
TOWN OF GREENWICH  
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW DAY THREE FOR FY15 BUDGET  
MINUTES  
Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:30 A.M.  
Wednesday, February 12, 2014  

Present:  

Committee: Marc V. Johnson, Chairman; Mary Lee Kiernan, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington  

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Roland Gieger, Budget Director, Maureen Tracy, Financial Analyst, John Crary, Town Administrator  

Board: John Blankley, Bill Drake, William Finger, Sean Goldrick, Randall Huffman, Michael Mason, Art Norton  

Others: Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation, Thomas Greco, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, Jeffrey Freitag, Superintendent of Marine and Facility Operations Division, Susan Snyder, Recreation Division Supervisor, Diane Fox, Director of Planning and Zoning and Town Planner, Katie Blankley, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning and Assistant Town Planner, Don Heller, Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board, Michael Chambers, Director of Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Denise M. Savageau, Director of Conservation, Jodi Couture, Zoning Enforcement Officer, Allen Brown, Executive Director Nathaniel Witherell, Ray Augustine, Director of Financial Operations Nathaniel Witherell, Lloyd Bankson, Nathaniel Witherell Board, David Ormsby, Nathaniel Witherell Board Chairman  

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M.  

SPEAKERS  

Nathaniel Witherell (TNW)  

Mr. Bankson, Nathaniel Witherell Board Member, began the Nathaniel Witherell budget presentation. He told the Committee that there are three basic drivers of TNW revenues. They are 1) census, 2) the mix of the census, and 3) acuity. Mr. Bankson said that Project Renew is entering its final stages of completion and it is expected to be finished in the late spring or early summer. He said that the construction at the facilities has affected the census, or occupancy rate. Ms. Bankson said that the budget presented for 2014-2015 is clearly reflective of that with a $4,232,090, or 19.2% increase in revenues when TNW gets back up to higher occupancy levels. He stated that mix of the census at TNW has an effect on revenues. Ms. Bankson said the number of Medicaid beds is up to a 62% rate and they need to reduce that rate to increase revenue levels. Finally, Mr. Bankson told the Committee that acuity is a factor in revenues. He
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TNW officials explained a positive adjustment in debt service projected for FY ’15 in the amount of $116,292. TNW officials explained that the debt portion of Project Renew’s financing consisted of one year of BANS followed by a sale of 20 year bonds at 2.97% in January 2014, when a 20 year rate of 3.25% had been assumed in previous budgets.

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The Committee recessed for lunch at 12:36 P.M. and continued at 1:06 P.M.
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Mr. Siciliano said they wanted to concentrate on cleaning the Town’s restrooms and picking up the garbage in Town’s parks and beaches. Mr. Greco said there are 58 public restrooms and 600 garbage receptacles in the parks and beaches. Mr. Greco said it would take 7,000 cleaning cycles per year and the purchase of three new vans, power washers and Honda Generators plus the additional labor to make improvements. Mr. Greco said the labor portion amounted to $73,889 and was included in the operating budget. The equipment purchases of $89,230 are detailed and requested in the capital budget.

Subsequent to the opening remarks dealing with the Community First initiative, Mr. Greco and Mr. Siciliano said they would take any questions on the overall Parks and Recreation budget. Mr. Siciliano reminded the Committee that the Parks and Recreation budget was holding at 101 positions since they had budget cuts and layoffs during the 2009-2010 budget.

Ms. Kiernan asked about the progress of the 311 rollout. Mr. Greco responded that they have one dedicated position, Customer Service Representative, to the 311 project. He added that this person does not spend all of her time on the 311 project, but has other duties. Mr. Greco said that the 311 project is still in the startup stage and they are trying to get the bugs out.

Mr. Johnson asked about how the new payroll system will impact their operations. Both Mr. Greco and Mr. Siciliano expressed concerns. They collectively stated that they may need another person to take on the additional payroll responsibilities to conform to the new system. Mr. Greco said that right now they have a part time person dedicating 25 hours per week to payroll. He said that person will not be able to handle the additional duties of the new payroll system and it would probably require the request for another position.

Mr. Johnson asked about the change in Park Gardner positions in the Parks and Trees Division. Mr. Siciliano responded that they were promoted. He said it is normal when they reach a certain degree of capability.

The Committee decided to go through the budget division by division and the highlights of the discussion are as follows:
801 – Parks and Recreation Administration – Mr. Siciliano explained that Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries) is increasing because of the processing of an additional 8,000 beach cards. He clarified his remark by saying that they put beach card renewals on line and that the seniors were on a 3 year cycle. This means that the senior applicants will have to reapply instead of having their renewals roll over electronically. There was a question about Account #52030 (Bank Fees). Mr. Greco said they started allowing applicants to use credit cards. He said the usage is up and there is a 2% processing fee.

811 – Parks and Recreation – Supervisor – Mr. Siciliano introduced Ms. Susan Snyder, Recreation Supervisor, and said that she is basically the whole budget in this cost center and has been working for the Town for about one year replacing a long-standing supervisor.

812 – Recreation – Organized Recreation – Mr. Siciliano explained that this is where the camp programs are budgeted. Ms. Snyder further explained that in Account #51490 (Professional and Other Services), they budget monies to pay for out-of-town trips for the camp programs such as; the Bronx Zoo, the Norwalk Maritime Center, etc. Mr. Greco was quick to point out that they capture these out-of-town trip costs as part of the price to attend the camp programs and they show up in the revenues. He said these programs are self-sustaining.

814 – Eastern Civic Center – Mr. Ramer asked if the facility usage was on the increase, due to recent repairs to the roof and other parts of the building and what are the future plans for the facility. Mr. Siciliano said that they have lost a lot of the business from the trade shows but usage has gotten better. He specified as an example that the trade shows went to the Hyatt, which is a more attractive facility. Regarding the future of the facility, Mr. Greco reminded the Committee that there have been three studies on the future of the Eastern Civic Center. There was a study done by the local community groups, one done by the Parks and Recreation Commission and one done by a First Selectman’s Group, led by First Selectman Thomas Ragland. Mr. Siciliano and Mr. Greco commented that they didn’t know if there was still an interest in the community to renovate the building through fund raising efforts but there is a new initiative underway led by Mr. Gary D’ellabate to explore the future uses of the building.

815 – Community Centers – The Committee inquired about this cost center. Mr. Siciliano told them that this is funding for Community Centers in the Pemberwick Park and in Cos Cob.

816 – Ice Skating Rink – The Committee asked about Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries). Mr. Siciliano explained these are the seasonal employees needed to run the facility. Supervisory costs are budgeted in other divisions. Mr. Johnson asked if they had purchased a new Zamboni machine that was listed in the current year budget. Mr. Siciliano said no, they repaired the existing Zamboni.

822 – Parks and Trees – Parks Playing Fields – Mr. Greco explained this is where Community First labor increases are budgeted and are located in Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries). He noted a 41.7% increase to this account.

Ms. Kiernan asked if this is where the Parks and Recreation maintenance of Board of Education facilities is budgeted, and Mr. Siciliano replied yes. The Budget Committee asked Mr. Siciliano to summarize a recent tour of the grounds around the schools requested by the
BOE because the BOE was unhappy with the quality of maintenance. Mr. Ben Branyan, Dr. Bill McKersie, First Selectman Peter Tesei and Mr. Siciliano toured these facilities in August. Mr. Siciliano stated that Parks and Recreation is down 8 positions since 2009. He conceded that with this decrease in labor force they are forced to ramp up for different areas at different times of the year. Mr. Siciliano said it was all a matter of timing. The Parks and Recreation labor force is dedicated to maintaining the beaches and parks during the summer and they devote their efforts to the BOE grounds when they can free up the seasonal work force.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Siciliano and Mr. Greco if they can compile the total costs for Community First for the Wednesday, February 19th Budget Community meeting.

**829 – Parks and Trees** – Mr. Siciliano gave the Committee an explanation on how the Town tree outsourcing program works.

The Committee had a quick review of the Griffith E. Harris Golf Course budget. Mr. Siciliano explained that there was a reduction in headcount at the facility. He said they reduced the Park Gardner 2 positions from 3 to 2. This would reduce the overall headcount for full-time employees at the golf course from 9 to 8 positions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

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Marc V. Johnson, Chairman
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801 – Parks and Recreation Administration – Mr. Siciliano explained that Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries) is increasing because of the processing of an additional 8,000 beach cards. He clarified his remark by saying that they put beach card renewals on line and that the seniors were on a 3 year cycle. This means that the senior applicants will have to reapply instead of having their renewals roll over electronically. There was a question about Account #52030 (Bank Fees). Mr. Greco said they started allowing applicants to use credit cards. He said the usage is up and there is a 2% processing fee.

811 – Parks and Recreation – Supervisor – Mr. Siciliano introduced Ms. Susan Snyder, Recreation Supervisor, and said that she is basically the whole budget in this cost center and has been working for the Town for about one year replacing a long-standing supervisor.

812 – Recreation – Organized Recreation – Mr. Siciliano explained that this is where the camp programs are budgeted. Ms. Snyder further explained that in Account #51490 (Professional and Other Services), they budget monies to pay for out-of-town trips for the camp programs such as; the Bronx Zoo, the Norwalk Maritime Center, etc. Mr. Greco was quick to point out that they capture these out-of-town trip costs as part of the price to attend the camp programs and they show up in the revenues. He said these programs are self-sustaining.

814 – Eastern Civic Center – Mr. Ramer asked if the facility usage was on the increase, due to recent repairs to the roof and other parts of the building and what are the future plans for the facility. Mr. Siciliano said that they have lost a lot of the business from the trade shows but usage has gotten better. He specified as an example that the trade shows went to the Hyatt, which is a more attractive facility. Regarding the future of the facility, Mr. Greco reminded the Committee that there have been three studies on the future of the Eastern Civic Center. There was a study done by the local community groups, one done by the Parks and Recreation Commission and one done by a First Selectman’s Group, led by First Selectman Thomas Ragland. Mr. Siciliano and Mr. Greco commented that they didn’t know if there was still an interest in the community to renovate the building through fund raising efforts but there is a new initiative underway led by Mr. Gary D’ellabate to explore the future uses of the building.

815 – Community Centers – The Committee inquired about this cost center. Mr. Siciliano told them that this is funding for Community Centers in the Pemberwick Park and in Cos Cob.

816 – Ice Skating Rink – The Committee asked about Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries). Mr. Siciliano explained these are the seasonal employees needed to run the facility. Supervisory costs are budgeted in other divisions. Mr. Johnson asked if they had purchased a new Zamboni machine that was listed in the current year budget. Mr. Siciliano said no, they repaired the existing Zamboni.

822 – Parks and Trees – Parks Playing Fields – Mr. Greco explained this is where Community First labor increases are budgeted and are located in Account #51300 (Temporary Salaries). He noted a 41.7% increase to this account.

Ms. Kiernan asked if this is where the Parks and Recreation maintenance of Board of Education facilities is budgeted, and Mr. Siciliano replied yes. The Budget Committee asked Mr. Siciliano to summarize a recent tour of the grounds around the schools requested by the
BOE because the BOE was unhappy with the quality of maintenance. Mr. Ben Branyan, Dr. Bill McKersie, First Selectman Peter Tesei and Mr. Siciliano toured these facilities in August. Mr. Siciliano stated that Parks and Recreation is down 8 positions since 2009. He conceded that with this decrease in labor force they are forced to ramp up for different areas at different times of the year. Mr. Siciliano said it was all a matter of timing. The Parks and Recreation labor force is dedicated to maintaining the beaches and parks during the summer and they devote their efforts to the BOE grounds when they can free up the seasonal work force.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Siciliano and Mr. Greco if they can compile the total costs for Community First for the Wednesday, February 19th Budget Community meeting.

829 – Parks and Trees – Mr. Siciliano gave the Committee an explanation on how the Town tree outsourcing program works.

The Committee had a quick review of the Griffith E. Harris Golf Course budget. Mr. Siciliano explained that there was a reduction in headcount at the facility. He said they reduced the Park Gardner 2 positions from 3 to 2. This would reduce the overall headcount for full-time employees at the golf course from 9 to 8 positions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

Marc V. Johnson, Chairman