

1. BET Budget Comm. Decision Day Documents

Documents:

[SUB_TO_APP_BET_BUDGET_COMM_DECISION_DAY_MINUTES_02-27-14.PDF](#)

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

**DECISION DAY - FY15 BUDGET
MINUTES**

**Town Hall Meeting Room - 9:00 A.M.
Thursday, February 27, 2014**

Present:

- Committee:** Marc V. Johnson, Chairman; Mary Lee Kiernan, Jeff Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington
- Staff:** Peter Mynarski Comptroller, Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Maureen Tracy, Financial Analyst
- Selectmen:** First Selectman, Peter Tesei; Selectman, Drew Marzullo;
- Other:** John Crary, Town Administrator; Dr. William McKersie, Superintendent of Schools; Ben Branyan, Managing Director of Operations, Greenwich Public Schools; Robert Lichtenfeld, Director of Human Resource, Greenwich Public Schools; Amy Siebert, Public Works Commissioner, Public Works; Peter Siecienski, Chief, Fire Department;
- Board:** Michael Mason, Chairman; John Blankley William Drake, William Finger, Sean Goldrick, Randall Huffman, Nancy Weissler

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

Mr. Johnson explained that before finishing Capital Consolidation discussions and starting Decision Day, he had invited the BOE to address the Committee on actual and budgeted positions within the school District. He stated that after the conclusion of the BOE presentation the Committee would complete Capital Consolidation. To begin Decision Day there would be a brief overview from Mr. Gieger, followed by a Revenue Presentation from Mr. Mynarski. The Committee would then review each Capital Project individually, then proceed to operating budgets. The minutes will only reflect comments and motions made on specific items. Unless otherwise noted, each item will be considered accepted. The full recommended budget would then be forwarded to the full BET for their reviews and votes.

The BOE presentation began with Mr. Branyan introducing the materials handed out to expand on the topic of District positions covered in the previous meeting. Dr. McKersie then commented on the method of staffing and how it responded to the needs of the students, program needs and class sizes that drove the number of teachers and programs. He indicated that student enrollment was flat (-1.4%) and staff had increased (+ 2.3%). Further he assured the Committee that its scrutiny was appreciated because it gave him an opportunity review and expand on its concerns. He then discussed the

achievement gap and how it was narrowing despite a 14% increase among lower income and minority populations. He indicated that the BOE had a balanced budget and returned unspent money to the General Fund in previous years.

Mr. Branyan gave an example of the difference between comparing actual-to-budget and budget-to-budget positions: 1.7 FTE increase in 2013-2014 actual to 2014-2015 budget vs. 11.9 FTE increase budget-to-budget. He noted that when comparing the 2009-2010 staffing to 2014, there was an actual 3.2% increase. Mr. Lichtenfeld pointed out that the November budgeting cycle estimates the number of students and teachers but that not until the following September is the actual student enrollment known.

Mr. Branyan responded to Ms. Kiernan's question about the projection for students at Central Middle School for the current year, and Mr. Branyan referenced page 265 of the BOE Budget Book, which shows that 576 students were projected and 595 showed up. This increase is driving part of the staff increases for FY2015. Mr. Ramer asked if BOE's 2.1% budget increase would be adequate or if it anticipated future requests. Mr. Branyan said yes. Mr. Ramer asked about the 2.0 FTE increase located at Havemeyer and was told that these are special education and instructional coach FTE hours previously located and listed in elementary school locations, and these are not new positions. These professionals spend most of their day in the field and Havemeyer is a more appropriate home base.

Ms. Tarkington asked where to find the digital learning staff and was told that digital learning was in every teacher's job. There was no need for additional staff for this curriculum enhancement.

Mr. Blankley asked if there were no budget constraints how the budget request would be different. Mr. Branyan replied that BOE didn't operate in that world.

Mr. Goldrick asked how the administrative ratio compared to Westchester schools; Mr. Branyan responded that New York State sets its own standards and that Greenwich's were based on neighborhood schools.

Ms. Tarkington inquired how Capital Projects were managed; Mr. Branyan described the role of Mr. Ron Matten, Director of Facilities, and his regular meetings with Mr. Matten. In certain cases, Mr. Branyan replied that RFPs supported outside consultants managing projects day-to-day.

Ms. Kiernan inquired about the \$2.37million requested for MISA not yet voted on by BOE's Board and was told that a vote was scheduled for March 6, 2014.

Ms. Tarkington expressed concerns that funds allocated for the gym roof (\$1.72m), track resurfacing and window replacement might need to be postponed due to conflicts with MISA construction. Mr. Branyan acknowledged that there might be conflicts with the roof replacement but assured Ms. Tarkington that there were no points of conflict for work to the stadium track or pool dehumidification.

Mr. Mason indicated that the BET wants to cohesively finance the work and that the \$19.5 million allocated to all BOE capital projects and BOE projects managed by DPW represented such a large amount of funds that the BET needed to increase its confidence in their management.

Discussion of Remaining Consolidation Items Commenced at 10:04 A.M.

Mr. Johnson suggested that the Committee go through each department and each project not covered on Tuesday for further discussion before they start Decision Day.

Discussion commenced on the following Capital Projects:

- **Town Hall Site Improvements** – Mr. Johnson suggested that the request for \$500K in 2014 and \$400K in 2015 for Town Hall projects might be delayed. Ms. Tarkington was in favor except for the \$117K for the front of the building.
- **Silva Cell Tree Project** – Mr. Johnson wondered if this new initiative could be delayed due to the location near the temporary fire station that will be removed in two years. There were also questions on discretionary funds from Superstorm Sandy Insurance reimbursement and FEMA.
- **Town Street Light Purchase** – Mr. Crary reiterated his recommendation because of savings to the Town. The only issue he saw was the higher amount of depreciated value assigned by CL&P.
- **Fleet Vehicles** – The Fleet Department recommended the number of vehicles identified for replacement based on their condition.
- **Frontage Road** – LOTCIP reimbursement meant that no money would be spent.
- **Asphalt Paving** – Discussion took place as to increasing the allocation to \$3million, however Mr. Johnson said he was in favor of increasing it to \$2.75million.
- **Parks & Recreation Park Sidewalk and Paving Projects** – Mr. Johnson proposed a one-year delay due to the planning for sedimentation work at Binney Park and master planning at Byram Beach and Pool. Ms. Tarkington concurred that deferring new work made sense. Ms. Kiernan questioned if there might be safety issues given the already heavy schedule of activity in Byram and Binney Parks. Mr. Siciliano explained that existing safety hazards needed to be addressed and that there would be coordination of the paving projects with other park projects.
- **Church Street Storm Drains** – Mr. Ramer commented that cost could be reduced by 15% if work was completed in one year rather than phased. Mr. Johnson commented that the area around Church Street is one of the busiest in town and focusing too much work at one time would be very difficult.
- **Sewer Maintenance** – Ms. Kiernan expressed concern about reducing maintenance in critical infrastructure.
- **Soil Remediation** – Ms. Tarkington indicated that although billing lags, the dedicated money will be spent. Mr. Ramer suggested conditioning the release of the \$9million until approval is received from EPA and DEEP.
- **Arch Street** – Ms. Tarkington suggested this was a major planning issue and it would be appropriate to hold a public hearing so that the impact would be better understood. Mr. Johnson noted that \$300K remained unspent in the current budget.

- **Holly Hill Master Plan** – Mr. Johnson indicated that this would be an \$11.2 million project that included sewer line relocation, moving of the fueling station and installation of a stormwater basin. Ms. Tarkington was concerned that an inadequate amount of contingency was budgeted and thought the priority was the sewer line relocation with the balance of the project moved forward for a year. Ms. Kiernan mentioned that 2013-2014 was supposed to be the design phase and asked if environmental testing had been a component of the design phase.
- **Eastern Greenwich Civic Center Heating Upgrade** – Mr. Johnson recommended no appropriation due to the fact that a longer term solution needs to be found. He was concerned that once the lobby floor was torn up it would lead to far more required improvements; Ms. Tarkington preferred a temporary band-aid project. Ms. Kiernan commented on the requirement in the POCD that the Town develop long-term building plans for major assets such as EGCC. Mr. Ramer suggested conditioning release of funds on receiving a long range Masterplan for the building.
- **Byram Beach Pool** – Ms. Tarkington commented that inadequate information had been received on how the 300 person capacity would be managed.
- **Building Department Software** – Ms. Tarkington questioned if an additional PT employee would be necessary if the new software created efficiencies.
- **Fleet** – Mr. Johnson suggested that a 10% reduction should be removed from this budgeted figure by changing the number of dump trucks from 3 to 2; removing the 2 pickup trucks and moving one vehicle to the DPW budget.
- **Social Services** – Mr. Johnson questioned the need to replace current Evolve software now given that a new IT Director would be arriving soon and might have different ideas. Ms. Tarkington felt that the requested \$130K was excessive.
- **Schools** – The technology installation of WiFi for \$500K and the Digital Learning program cost of \$992K were discussed. Ms. Tarkington suggested that both projects were operating projects that had been moved to the Capital Budget so that their costs could be supervised. She also recommended that \$100K be added to the New Lebanon project budget code so that the feasibility consulting could be tracked with any potential project.
- **GHS Doors & Windows** – Mr. Ramer proposed that this project be moved to the 2016 Budget. Ms. Tarkington offered that it would be important to have Turner Construction and AECOM give their opinion on this potential change.
- **GHS Roofing replacement** – Mr. Johnson commented that the \$1.72 million should be delayed due to logistic constraints from MISA. Mr. Ramer recommended deleting the \$1.7million and leaving only the \$92K in place on this expenditure.
- **GHS Pool Dehumidification** – The Committee discussed the delay of this due to MISA work. Ms. Tarkington warned that the pool renovation component would create a staging problem for Turner that would hold up the MISA project.

The Committee discussed the \$2.37 million requested from the MISA Building Committee. Mr. Mason interjected that the issue for concern was about the moisture that the cofferdam anchor bolts might cause; since additional expert opinion that would be available shortly, it might make the removal of the old auditorium moot. Ms. Tarkington said that the existing auditorium issue was in conflict with the original specs for the instructional space but that a decision would need to be made on the re-use of the old auditorium or its demolition before steel was ordered.

Mr. Ramer offered that there was a performance bond with the contractor to deal with water penetration. Ms. Tarkington said it was based on the full \$2.37 million amount. Mr. Drake then suggested that the release of the money be conditioned on hearing alternatives from the BOE.

- **Libraries** - Mr. Johnson questioned how the external masonry repair of \$1.4 million would be accomplished. Ms. Tarkington felt that town procedures should be followed and ideally that Mr. Monelli should handle the project. Mr. Ramer concurred that release of funds should be based on the project following the town bidding process, that the construction manager needed to be approved and that the process should be under the direction of the Town Administrator.
- **Eastern Greenwich Civic Center** – Mr. Ramer recommended that the \$45K requested to replace the building’s patio be conditioned on receiving a Masterplan for the building.
- **Community First** – Mr. Ramer suggested that the \$65K operating cost be deleted.
- **Electronic Gate at Pinetum** – Mr. Ramer recommended deleting the \$35K.
- **Greenwich Commons** – Mr. Ramer suggested that the \$433K project proposal did not appear to be drastically different from the current park. Mr. Johnson opposed the expenditure given that the Parks & Rec Committee had not approved the project. Ms. Kiernan questioned whether this plan was consistent with the Downtown Committee's plan. Ms. Tarkington acknowledged that the Commons needed upgrading but hoped for more New England styling.
- **Tennis Courts** – Ms. Tarkington noted that since the number of tennis players was decreasing that a conversion to an alternative sport field be considered.
- **Trees at Risk** – Ms. Tarkington was critical of the addition of 1/3 to project costs for Police presence. She also felt that planting new trees was not addressing the risk aspect of the original reason for the program.
- **Grass Island Drainage & Parking** – Ms. Tarkington indicated that DPW was working on the project.
- **Parking Fund** – Ms. Tarkington noted that too much money was being allocated for e-meters. Mr. Johnson said he did not think the Town should be in the business of charging stations and to let private enterprises handle the demand.

- **Town Hall Garage** – Ms. Tarkington wondered how much had already been spent on repairs to the garage.
- **Nathaniel Witherell** – Ms. Tarkington recommended that a percent of their capital requests fund be set aside similar to depreciation so that NW's administration could address future larger capital requirements.
- **Sewer** – Old Greenwich Storm Drains design plan was ready and \$4 million had been budgeted to proceed with the project. Ms. Tarkington felt an alternative to pay-as-you-go financing should be identified so that this was not a burden to the Greenwich taxpayer.

The Committee recessed for Lunch at 1:15 P.M. and reconvened at 1:48 P.M.

DECISION DAY

Mr. Johnson suggested the Committee begin voting on Capital Projects first, followed by Operating items. He noted that the Minutes would only reflect motions made on specific items. Unless otherwise noted, each item would be considered accepted and forwarded to the full BET for their reviews and votes.

Capital Tax Levy

Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, that the Tax Levy be increased from \$37.4million to \$39.4million.

Capital Project Decisions

Trunked Radio System – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, that \$5.4 million be moved forward from the 2016 Budget into the 2015 Budget. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Tarkington)

Fire Department - Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to delay funding \$650K for one pumper to 2016. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Silva Cell Tree Project – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to defer the project to 2016. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Ramer)

Frontage Road – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to approve the expenditure. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve. Mr. Ramer amended the motion to condition the expenditure on obtaining LOTCIP reimbursement approval, seconded by Ms. Tarkington. The Committee voted 4-0 as amended.

Asphalt Paving – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to increase the paving budget from \$2.75 million to \$3 million. The Committee voted 2-2. (Opposed Johnson, Tarkington)

Parks & Recreation Park Improvement – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan to amend the description of the sequence of parks to be improved to a phased three-year cycle. The Committee voted 2-2. (Opposed Johnson, Tarkington). Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delay the first year's appropriation of \$260,000 by one year. The Committee voted 2-2 (opposed Kiernan, Ramer)

GHS Soil Remediation – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, that funds should not be spent until approval is received from EPA and DEEP and reported to the Finance Department. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Holly Hill Master Plan Project - Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to reduce funding by \$300K (from \$2.2million to \$1.9million). The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

EGCC Heating – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delete \$200K budgeted for heating installation. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Ramer)

Fleet Department – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, proposing the following changes: reduce the budget for pickup trucks from \$110K by \$40K to \$70K; reduce the budget for dump truck from \$330K by \$110K to \$220K; deleted \$78K to \$0 for 2 pickup trucks. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Schools – Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to delay \$1.72 million for GHS roof replacement due to logistical difficulties with MISA construction and soil remediation. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

MISA - Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to add \$2.37 million to MISA's construction budget due to construction overruns from environmental contamination issues and winter delays. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Libraries – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to condition the release of funds to repair external masonry as follows: 1) itemization of the expenditure, 2) in accordance with Town bidding process, 3) knowing who would manage, and 4) what the construction process would be. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve. Mr. Ramer proposed an amendment to his motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, that additionally the Town Administrator would have oversight of the project. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the motion as amended.

Parks & Recreation Community First Project – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, that \$75,000 for new vehicles be deleted. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Electronic Gate at Pinetum – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson to delete this \$35K item but would welcome a request for a manual gate. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Kiernan)

Greenwich Commons Park – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to delay this item. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve the motion.

Parking Fund – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delete \$16K for the charging station. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Mr. Johnson requested that Mr. Geiger enumerate the proposed revenue changes. Mr. Geiger indicated that \$50K was subtracted from Parking Fines; a Capital non-recurring reimbursement of \$2million was anticipated from Insurance and FEMA and the balance

in Capital Non-Recurring was expected to be \$7-8 million; and a BAA adjustment was expected one time during the Revaluation Cycle.

Operating Budget Decisions

Registrars of Voters – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to reduce the budget from \$182,468 to \$168,468 to reflect only a 2.5% increase from the previous year. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Law Department – Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to remove \$71,657 from the salaries line item and add \$58,220 to the temporary pay line item to reflect deletion of a full time position and addition of a part time position. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Ramer)

Planning & Zoning – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to delete the requested full time position at \$69,879 and add a part time position for a net increase in Temporary Salaries of \$10,000. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Conservation – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delete \$73,419 for the fulltime position and insert \$52,175 for the part time position. The Committee voted 2-2. Motion failed.

Inland Wetlands – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington to increase the budget from \$22,000 to \$25,000. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Fire Department – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delete the increase of 9 positions for \$335,476 and the increase of \$89,600 in salary for the position upgrades to Captain. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Ramer)

Fire Administration – Training – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to condition \$196,236 of salaries on the department reporting quarterly, commencing in June 2014, on the co-mingling of career and volunteer fire fighters in Training exercises. The committee voted 4-0 to approve the condition.

External Entities – TAG – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to decrease the budget request by \$77,500 to 2.5% of previous year's budget plus \$10K. The committee voted 4 – 0 to approve.

Ms. Tarkington requested that by the March Budget Committee Meeting the external entities submit their most recent budget and audited financial statements as a courtesy to the Committee.

GEMS – Ms. Kiernan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer to condition the release of the appropriation on receiving a budget consistent with the town's system of coding and a staffing list. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Social Services – Due to reporting errors, Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan to change the temp salary line of \$464,311 to \$414,311 and add \$37,000 to emergency aid. The Committee voted 4 – 0 to approve.

Parks & Recreation – Community First – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to reduce \$55,434 (\$41,203 Temporary Salaries and \$14,230 Supplies) for this

program. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve. Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to increase the Temporary Salary line by 2.5% for extra restroom cleaning. The Committee voted 3-1 to approve. (Opposed Ramer)

Health Benefits – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to reduce the benefits expense by \$500K. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Workers Compensation – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to reduce the Workers Compensation expense by \$100K. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Unemployment Insurance – Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kiernan, to reduce the Unemployment Insurance expenditure by \$50K. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Payment in Lieu of Sewer Tax – Mr. Johnson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to reduce the anticipated payment by \$90K. The committee voted 4-0 to approve.

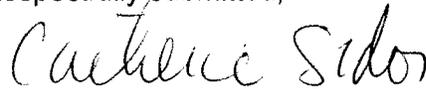
Transfers from Other Funds– Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to reduce TOG's contribution to Nathaniel Witherell by \$2.5million in anticipation of the State's Historic Tax Credit reimbursement. The Committee voted 4-0 to approve.

Mr. Geiger indicated that the reduction to the budget amounted to \$3,812,446. The increase to the Mill Rate would be 2.75%.

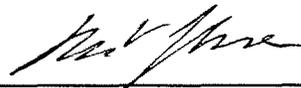
Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Mynarski, Mr. Geiger and Ms. Tracy for their assistance with the Budget process. He also commended all of the Town, BOE and Appointing Authority Department Heads for their hard work and dedication in preparing their budgets.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.21 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Marc V. Johnson, Chairman