1. BET Public Hearing Minutes

Documents:

SUB_TO_APP_BET_PUBLIC_HEARING_MINUTES_03-22-18.PDF
APPROVED_BET_PUBLIC_HEARING_MINUTES_03-22-18.PDF
MINUTES of the Board of Estimate and Taxation Public Hearing on the FY2018-2019 Budget held on Thursday, March 22, 2018, in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Chair Jill Oberlander called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

Board members in attendance:

- Jill K. Oberlander, Chair
- Jeffrey Ramer, Vice Chairman
- Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Clerk
- William Drake
- Andreas Duus III
- Karen Fassuliotis
- Debra Hess
- Michael S. Mason
- Leslie Moriarty
- Leslie L. Tarkington
- Anthony Turner
- David Weisbrod

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller
Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman; Sandy Litvack, Selectman

Ms. Oberlander welcomed BET members, Town of Greenwich staff and members of the public to the Public Hearing, thanking them for their interest in Town spending and priorities. Ms. Oberlander summarized the TOG’s Budget process, which commenced with the announcement in October 2017 by the BET of its Budget Guidelines for the FY19 Budget. The Chair thanked Department heads, TOG Boards and Commissions for their contributions and noted that the BET would vote on the budget and then submit the budget to the RTM for its vote at the RTM’s May meeting.

Ms. Oberlander asked the members of the public who wished to speak, to use the sign-in materials and submit their requests to the BET Clerk, Ms. Krumeich, who would group the topics and announce the speakers. The Chair then introduced the Comptroller Mr. Mynarski, and explained that he would be the official timer for each public speaker’s 3-minute remarks.

Public Hearing
The Public Hearing was opened to the public.

Lorianne O’Donnell – Chief Operations Officer, Board of Education – representing Mr. Peter Bernstein, Chair, BOE: spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget, the staffing request which reflects the enrollment forecast, the capital plan which is a bridge to the new Master Plan currently in development.

Carol Sutton – President, Greenwich Education Association – spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget and the staffing plan which maintains the current student/teacher ratios.

Clare Kilgallen – President, Board of PTA, New Lebanon Elementary School - spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget.

Dina Murphy – Member Board of PTA, Eastern Middle School - spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget, the teacher/student ratio and the staffing headcount.

Gregory Large – representing Abbe Large, RTM D-9 member - spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget that was in the best interest of the community.

Kathleen Yu – Member Board of PTA, Western Middle School and Parkway Elementary School – spoke in support of the BOE Facility Master Plan, Cardinal Stadium, funding for teachers and school playing fields.

Janet Stone McGuigan – Member of Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC) – spoke in support of the BOE FY19 Budget and concurred with the increase in FTEs based on projected enrollment at the middle schools and the high school in order to maintain excellence in the educational system citing the jurisdiction of the BOE to establish headcount for Staff.

Harry Fisher - parent of public school student who received special education services (former BET member) – spoke in opposition to expanding TOG’s borrowing authority; spoke in opposition to the BOE’s planning of projects, Special Education program and number and quality of the Board of Education’s personnel.

Stephen R. Meskers – Vice Chair, RTM Education Committee, D-6 – spoke in support of providing resources to the Board of Education to properly maintain facilities, landscaping around schools, physical structure, class size and student/teacher ratio.

Mareta Hamre – Parent of former public school student; RTM member, D-10 – spoke in support of the BOE FY19 Budget stating that the schools are taking on more responsibility helping students, as shown by the digital learning curriculum, emphasis on social learning and supplemental behavioral intervention programs.

Maria Merrill and Anne Pfitsch – GHS PTA co-presidents – spoke in support of the BOE FY19 Budget, including funding for teacher headcount and capital to repair GHS locker rooms, bathrooms, and school playing field maintenance.

Wendie Force – Parent of student in Special Education Program – spoke about concerns with the Board of Education’s Special Education Program and budget, especially the $5 million of out-of-district tuition payments that should be spent on additional staff and more effective staff.
Nerlyn Pierson – PTAC Health and Wellness Co-Chair, North Street Elementary School parent – spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget.

Sharon Sunoo – GHS Parent – spoke in support of adopting BOE’s FY19 Budget including teacher headcount, capital projects, Master Facility Plan, Cardinal Stadium and for increasing safety at GHS.

Mary Lee Kiernan – Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA (former BET member) - spoke in support of Department of Human Services’ budget appropriation to continue the YWCA domestic violence educational programming presented to students in the public schools.

Meredith Gold – Director, YWCA Domestic Abuse Services – in support of DHS Budget to support the YWCA violence prevention education program.

Katie Galbraith Noguki – resident Central Middle School neighborhood - spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields and raised issues regarding use of the CMS field by high school students, traffic, lighting and safety concerns in surrounding neighborhood

Arthur Yee – resident CMS neighborhood for 30 years – spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields and raised issues regarding artificial turf, lack of traffic study by BOE and Parks & Recreation, as well as GHS use of CMS playing field.

Bryan Tunney – resident CMS neighborhood for 25 years – spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields and raised issues regarding health, safety, traffic, school start time change, and the inappropriateness of moving GHS sports to CMS. Spoke in support of Cardinal Stadium.

Liane Tel – resident CMS neighborhood - spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields.

Jude Braunstein – resident CMS neighborhood and parent of public school student – spoke in opposition to BOE Capital Budget allocation for physical plant repairs and the lack of transparency of the BOE’s voting methods.

Warren Silver – resident CMS neighborhood and parent of public school student - spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields and general lack of accountability for poor planning; spoke in opposition to lighting school playing fields.

Rosemarie Asner – resident CMS neighborhood for 35 years and parent of 5 children who attended CMS - spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields, questioning quality of BOE decision-making without sufficient due diligence on drainage and traffic study.

Paul Colligan – Greenwich resident – spoke in opposition to funding BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields, the faculty and staff/student ratio, security in GHS including his opposition to armed Security Officers in school buildings, but is in support of a Police sub-station in the Hillside Avenue area.
Denise Savageau – recently retired Conservation Director for Town of Greenwich; current Conservation Consultant to TOG - spoke in support of increasing Conservation Department FTE staffing and hours to protect Town assets; spoke in favor of TOG CIP budget for sea level rise study.

Eric Brower – Vice Chairman, Conservation Commission representing William Rutherford, Chairman, Conservation Commission – spoke in support of consolidating the Conservation Commission and Inland Wetland and Watercourses Agency into an Environmental Affairs Department by establishing a new job description for a Director of Environmental Affairs and increasing the headcount within the new Department and the increase of hours of Staff.

Arlene Lomazzo – Chair, RTM Public Works Committee - D-6 (Old Greenwich) – spoke in support of the Capital project to reconstruct a roundabout in front of the Perrot Library on Sound Beach Avenue, including bridge repair in Old Greenwich to enhance safety for vehicles and pedestrians.

John Lipman – President, Round Hill Volunteer Fire Station – spoke in support of the architectural and engineering (A&E) allocation for Shoreline Design for the renovation of the Round Hill Fire House to improve Northeast Greenwich fire safety response time.

Sabine Schoenberg – Co-President, Think Greenwich initiative; realtor – spoke in support of the First Selectman’s public relations campaign, Think Greenwich, which was completing a successful first year of collaboration with a public relations agency to enhance the Town’s image.

Despina Fassuliotis – RTM member D-11, former teacher – spoke in support of the new position of Director of Environmental Affairs for its consistency with FY19 Budget Guidelines for efficiency; spoke in opposition to the BOE Budget FY2019 for failure to meet BET Budget Guidelines.

Peter Berg – Chair, RTM Land Use Planning Committee –D-8 (former BET member) – spoke in opposition to the proposed zero Mill Rate increase suggesting that increasing expenditures for safety, a Master Bicycle Plan, additional investment in quality of life improvements makes it appropriate to increase TOG Budget Mill Rate.

Henry Orphys – RTM member, D-7 – spoke in support of TOG Budget FY2019 but in opposition to increasing Capital Project spending, and the impact of the Federal tax law changes on individual tax obligations.

Kara Mendelsohn – PTA President, North Mianus Elementary School – spoke in support of BOE FY2019 Budget and in favor of digital personalized learning; spoke in support of BOE Budget allocation to the BOE Feasibility Study of middle school playing fields and, in particular, Central Middle School field improvements.

Steve Bruce – Old Greenwich resident – spoke in support of the independence of the Internal Auditor function based on good governance principles.

Mindy Smith –Member, RTM Education Committee, D-1 – spoke in opposition to BOE expenditure for students with special needs due to large amount of the budget being spent on legal settlements to provide services for the students with special needs.

Molly Saleeby – RTM member, D-8 – spoke in support of BOE FY2019 Budget, Cardinal Stadium
and the Master Capital Improvement Plan for BOE facilities.

Peter Quigley – Former member, RTM Land Use Committee and Budget Overview Committee, – spoke in support of increasing budget to invest in capital improvement projects for storm sewers and storm drains; spoke in favor of a Mill Rate increase for these purposes.

Margaret Freiberg – Greenwich resident (RTM member, D-7) – spoke in support of low Mill Rate which attracts residents to the Town versus enhanced amenities; spoke in opposition to increasing BOE headcount and Cardinal Stadium improvements.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Ms. Oberlander thanked the speakers, TOG staff and BET members for their attendance at the Public Hearing. She invited attendees to the next meeting, BET Budget Decision Day, taking place on Monday, March 26, 2018, beginning at 4:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Fassuliotis, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn at 9:08 P.M.

The next Regular Meeting of the BET is scheduled on Monday, April 23, 2018, at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

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Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Clerk of the Board

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Jill K. Oberlander, Chair
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