

1. SUB TO APP BET Public Hearing Minutes

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MINUTES of the Public Hearing of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Jill Oberlander, BET Chair, called the Public Hearing to order at 7:02 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

BOE/GPS: Ralph Mayo, Interim Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools

Selectmen: Peter Tesei, First Selectman; Victor Ferraro, Student, Brunswick School; Mr. Ferraro, Parent

The Chair welcomed Board members, Town staff and members of the public, thanking them for their interest in the Town and its spending priorities. Ms. Oberlander summarized the Town's Budget process that commenced with the adoption by the Board of its Budget Guidelines for the FY2019-2020 Budget in October 2018. The Chair thanked Department heads and Town Boards and Commissions for their contributions and noted that the Board would vote on the FY2019-2020 Capital Budget and Operating Budget (collectively, the Budget) and then submit the Budget to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) for its vote at the RTM's May meeting. Ms. Oberlander noted that this was the Board's opportunity to learn the expectations and priorities of residents and emphasized that the Public Hearing is important to assist in the balancing of competing needs in the FY2019-2020 Budget.

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

Public Hearing

Rick Kral - Greenwich Athletic Foundation (GAF), Representative - Spoke in regard to the Board of Education (BOE) Cardinal Stadium Project (the Project) which is inadequate and aging facilities and in support of the plans to purchase and install bleachers, modern bathroom facilities near field, team rooms, a larger and accessible press box, and a concession stand. Indicated this might be able to be accomplished in a more modest project than envisioned by the BOE. Indicated he had supported the BOE project which has a larger scope that includes a separate team building and new access road for Greenwich High School. Announced that GAF would commit to raise 20% toward the estimated \$5 million total Project cost for the project which places team rooms and bathrooms underneath the bleachers as it would be able to be completed quickly and meet the immediate needs.

Ingrid Large - Resident and student athlete parent and grandparent - Spoke in support of bleachers, restrooms and accessibility of all areas of the Cardinal Stadium.

Mary Flynn - Resident - Spoke in opposition to the two consultants' findings and presentations regarding The Nathaniel Witherell. Concerned that one consultant had a conflict of interest because it could and does run skilled nursing facilities, and that the study should have included additional comparable competitors in neighboring Westchester County, New York.

Craig Warwick - Resident for 48 years - Spoke in support of upgrading Cardinal Stadium that is a public school facility to serve student athletes. The facilities should be upgraded to attract more students in the community who leave to attend private schools. Athletic facilities should reflect the quality of the Greenwich community.

Karen Hirsh - President, Parent Teacher Association Council (PTAC) - Spoke in support of the BOE operating and capital budget in full. Focus on what is needed long term and do not cut the budget any further. Teacher training impacts student academic outcomes, as does the quality of facilities (e.g. maintenance and repairs). The schools are economic drivers of the community. In particular, PTAC supports the funds for design studies at Julian Curtiss, Riverside and Old Greenwich Schools in order to bring them into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and affords accessibility at all facilities including Cardinal Stadium.

Cricket Dymont - First Vice President, PTAC - Spoke in support of redesign of Greenwich High School entryway for increased security and the renovation of Cardinal Stadium that is used by student athletes and others who rent the facility. PTAC is concerned that if the stadium project is split into three phases, and the first is completed, then the other two will not be completed. Approve budgets that truly meet the needs of students in our District. PTAC supports the BOE requests for necessary spending and investments that are fiscally responsible. Strength of education system supports preeminent reputation of the Town.

Claire Kilgallen - parent, New Lebanon PTA; member, New Lebanon School Building Committee - Spoke in support of BOE operating and capital budgets as proposed, without further reductions. The BOE Master Facilities Plan is thorough, comprehensive and holistic. The analysis of the buildings is from top to bottom. The three elementary school and Cardinal Stadium projects are necessary. When thinking of Greenwich, thinks long-deferred capital projects and liability. Cardinal Stadium and other facilities not ADA-compliant (an Act that goes back to 1990). Community buildings should be accessible to Town residents. Support NW Fire Station as an asset for the entire Town.

Victoria Martin Young - RTM D-6 - Spoke in favor of BOE budget. Do not delay infrastructure improvements and renovations for Old Greenwich School. Thank you for design study funds for the Eastern Greenwich Civic Center (EGCC) and hope plans will include adjacent fields. Athletic fields serve as ambassadors for Town. Visitors are shocked at the poor condition of the fields – uneven, lack of grass and lines, multiple games on same field. Liability waiting to happen. Need larger inventory of grass athletic fields and better maintenance of the fields. Support more flexible financing policy for qualifying projects that would allow Town to address infrastructure needs.

Julie DesChamps - Member, PTAC Green Schools Committee and the Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board - Support school lunch reusable foodware and dishwashing systems that would be healthier for students and more economical for the Town. Styrofoam trays are wasteful due to chemical content that give rise to health problems; half a million trays thrown away each year, costing \$15,000 year. Reduce hauling and waste disposal system. There are no safe and disposable trays. Purchase of reusable foodware and dishwashing systems would cost \$110,000. Extend beyond labor cost and dollars and cents; focus on environmental impact in community.

Candace Garthwaite - RTM D-6 - Spoke in support of funding for EGCC during the design phase. Requested more communications regarding the design of the facility; propose going forward with obtaining municipal improvement (MI) status before completing design and site plans. Seek overview of managing flooding on Harding Road and rehabilitation of adjacent fields – all one area. In support of rehabilitation of Old Greenwich School to bring in compliance with ADA. In support of long-term financing for long-term capital projects.

Julie Ybarra - Glenville resident and parent of WMS and GHS students - Spoke in support of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program and BOE budget. Real estate values tied to state of schools. State of Cardinal Stadium is embarrassing compared to other Connecticut towns' facilities. Raised concern regarding lighting on fields that poses a potential liability for the Town when athletes playing on poorly-lit fields in the late afternoon.

Rosemary Hyson - Old Greenwich resident, grew up in Cos Cob - Spoke in support of BOE budget as proposed by BOE and, in particular, the BOE capital budget that should not be cut further. The three elementary schools were prioritized according to guidelines and needs and should be addressed in this budget cycle. The schools are not ADA-compliant and that impacts students, Staff, parents, family members attending special events and voters coming to register their votes.

David Chass - Vice President, Round Hill Volunteer Fire Company (RHVFC) - Spoke in support of funding Round Hill Fire Company Fire Station renovations. They appreciate support for Round Hill Volunteer Fire Company and fire fighters. They feel the renovations will help RHVFC to better support the entire community. Noted that the 50/50 shared expense for renovating the Round Hill Fire Station places burden on fire fighters to be fund raisers as well, but appreciate support.

Carol Zarrilli - Before go forward with proposed Northwest (NW) Fire Station, have analysis done of response times from all Fire Stations.

Timothy Alexander - Resident - Spoke in support of the development and implementation of the proposed NW Fire Station and the \$100,000 to explore property sites for the Fire Station. Shout out to BET, RTM and *Greenwich Time* coverage of proposed new Fire Station, calling attention to the February 4, 2019, coverage of 57-page Report prepared by the Office of the First Selectman regarding the proposed Fire Station. Expressed anger at the threatening anonymous

e-mail from “Concerned Citizen” casting aspersions on the selection process for the location of a NW Fire Station.

Alan Small - RTM D-10 and NW Greenwich Association - Saw 10 trucks on Round Hill Road for fire which poses a problem of resulting response times for residents at other end of Town - 18 minutes from their home. Spoke in support of addressing EGCC but thought it may not be ready to proceed due to and the lack of consensus on use of new facility. It should not compete against facilities and businesses near there. Consider additional fields as part of the plans.

Phil Dodson - RTM D-8; participated in 12 RTM member fire report; long-time resident - Spoke in support of an independent analysis of Greenwich fire service. Data is not always reported and data not always captured by Greenwich Fire Department. Told staffing need 5 fire fighters rather than 4 fire fighters and, therefore need 15 and not 12 fire fighters for one Fire Station. Need to examine and manage travel and response times.

Michael Dabrowski - Resident; former president, Greenwich Youth Lacrosse - Home declared total loss from fire in 2017; slow response from Fire Department. Support efforts to reduce response time. Also spoke in support of more and better athletic fields.

Mareta Hamre - RTM D-10 - Spoke in support of NW Fire Station. Time for the NW Fire Station to be addressed. The need increases in Northwest Greenwich and north King Street for fire safety.

Monica Prihoda - RTM D-6 - Spoke in support of not deferring maintenance. Buildings are degraded such as EGCC and school facilities. Spoke in support of NW Fire Station. Does not believe Town needs another Fire study. Spoke in support of long-term financing if do not want to raise Mill Rate.

Joanna Swomley - RTM D10 - Referencing the strategic plan to improve fire services prepared 2 decades ago. Residents did not purchase homes knowing that they did not have fire service coverage. Seek same level of fire services for all residents. The time-distance problem cannot be addressed by adding career fire fighters to current Fire Stations. Spoke in support of the NW Fire Station and, in particular, \$100,000 to explore best property site for NW Fire/GEMS Station.

Lucia Jansen - RTM D-7 - In response to request from 12 RTM members, the Fire Department provided data (*i.e.*, 5-year incident reports) only after a Freedom of Information Act request was filed. Fire data is either non-existent or lacks completeness and consistency and leads to a concern regarding the integrity of the data. Staffing and response time based on industry standards - National Fire Protection Association Code 1710 - and the request of the Local 1042 International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), AFL-CIO for 4-man staffing needs to be reviewed. In support of an independent Town-wide fire study.

Stephanie Barrett - RTM D-6 - Spoke in support of \$100,000 in FY2019-2020 budget for study for NW Fire/GEMS Station. Referenced RTM Sense of the Meeting Resolution (SOMR) for enhanced fire coverage and need to complete the NW Fire/GEMS Station.

Paul Olmsted - RTM D-5; signatory to 12 RTM member fire report - Spoke in support of an independent study of Town fire services' response time, travel time, turnout time, and call time. Spoke in opposition to long-term financing. When financial crisis occurred, Town was able to proceed without being loaded up on debt obligations.

Nancy Gray - RTM D-10; parent, GHS graduate; former member, RTM Finance Committee Fire Study - Recognize areas needing improvement. The Fire Department has achieved greater efficiencies and needs the 24/7 NW Fire/GEMS Station to complete its strategic plan. Spoke in support of the completion of a NW Fire/GEMS Station as a matter of safety for residents.

Louisa Stone - RTM D-10 - Referenced the RTM SOMR for NW Fire Station. Northwest side has the second most need regarding fire services and response times; residents need NW Fire Station at estimated \$9.0 million.

Allen Williams - Resident; member, Northwest Greenwich Association - Spoke in support of NW Fire Station and the \$100,000 to explore property site.

Michael Spilo - RTM D-11; Vice Chair, RTM DPW Committee - Discussed inaccuracies in hot spots on maps of fire incidents; call volume not representative of actual incidents or response time needed. Spoke in support of an independent analysis of Town fire services, including response time and other metrics.

Michael Miller - Treasurer, Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG) Board of Directors - Spoke in support of release of 100% of Town contribution to TAG for FY2019-2020 on July 1, 2019. TAG suffered loss as result of loss of large State contracts. Working with BET, RTM and community to restructure and reduced expenses by 40%. Moved from \$30,000 loss to projected profit of \$40,000 for January-June 2019. Would like to purchase 2 new vehicles to replace high-mileage vehicles. Cash flow resulted in 14 times being within 1 week of \$0 balance and would rather have funding at beginning of year. Fund raiser, Casino Night, planned.

Alan Gunzburg - Cos Cob 22-year resident, legally blind and hearing impaired; Chairman, First Selectman's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities; Member, Board of Health and Human Services - Residents rely on TAG because it is accessible and available; incumbent on Town to fund transportation services. Spoke in support of TAG funding.

Anthony Medico - President, TAG Board of Directors - Thanked BET and Town agencies for financial support and requested release of 50% to 100% of Town contribution to TAG for FY2019-2020 as of July 1, 2019. Constant focus on operating budget would be reduced to focus on growing the business.

Lucy von Brachel - RTM D-4; RTM Transportation Committee - Spoke in support of TAG, school capital and operating budget, and fire station. Town has lowest Mill Rate, highest Grand List, but stopped growing (e.g., empty storefronts on Greenwich Avenue, few owner-operated businesses opening, revenue down -- not collecting as many fines or fees, among slowest growing in population and fastest growing in poverty rate in Fairfield County). Shocking that Grand List dropped by half a billion dollars while housing units increased by 600. Could raise Mill Rate by 25% and still be lowest in the State. To attract people and businesses, Town needs to invest in infrastructure, facilitate growth smartly, prioritize growth in budget, and establish economic development plan for Town.

Peter Berg - Requested addition of \$75,000 in Capital Budget line 956 Open Space Plan Implementation in FY2019-2020. Need to protect land and acquire land; last acquisition was Pomerance Park in 2002. Aware of two properties that should be acquired. Town needs to build its fund balance to purchase open space; act now for future generations.

Dan Ozizmir - RTM D-5 - Spoke in support of new audio/visual equipment for the Town Hall.

Spoke in support of an independent fire study. Cited Los Angeles Fire Department which did not have accurate response data; LA acknowledged it needed good data on turnout time and now such data can be found on the LA Fire website. Greenwich Fire Department needs accurate data. Turnout time through GPS on engines is doable and needed to analyze response time. Turnout time in Greenwich averages 2 minutes; LA turnout time averages 53 seconds.

David Rudolph - RTM D-6 - Spoke in support of restoring DPW overtime funds. Police Department Marine services budget should also be maintained to protect student crew teams and others out on the water in the evening. Spoke in support of placing cost of additional Police Officer in school under BOE operating budget for proper accounting for resource allocation. Need project management systems and personnel in place before approving allocation for capital projects. Query: how is the Town getting ready for further budgetary cuts from the Legislature in Hartford? Spoke in support of grass athletic fields; all elementary and middle school fields should be natural grass fields.

Mike Basham - RTM D-5; participant in 12 RTM member fire report - Spoke in support of \$100,000 for independent data analysis of fire services and in support of \$100,000 to explore property sites for NW Fire Station. High response time is a public safety issue. NFPA Standard 1710 standard is 1 minute processing, 1 minute 20 seconds turn out time, and 4 minute travel time for response time of 6 minutes 20 seconds from time call made to engine arriving. Next engine can arrive in 8 minutes. Eighty percent exceed this response time, acknowledge travel time beyond control of Fire Department. If independent analysis suggests that to improve Town-wide response times, a fire station in Northwest Greenwich is needed, then will support it.

Bob Brady - Riverside resident; former BET member - Spoke in support of cost-effective LED lighting for Town Hall and to expand scope to all Town buildings. Endorses the Conservation Commission Climate Change Adaptation Sea Level Rise Planning Project to assess Town's vulnerability to sea level rise, to assess impact of low-lying ponds, to develop recommendations to achieve greater salinity and greater soil saturation. This supports plan in Binney Park to replace trees and plantings. DPW identified problem of flooding in Park that needs to be considered. Spoke in support of \$300,000 A&E services funds for EGCC subject to release upon receipt of Municipal Improvement (MI) approval. Need to address various questions such as what uses are appropriate for the facility and use of athletic fields before appropriating funds so that the architectural design is for the right building. Requested that the following paragraph be posted in the record of the Public Hearing:

“The release of funds is conditioned upon the BET receiving notice of the Planning & Zoning Commission’s (“P&Z”) or the Representative Town Meeting’s (“RTM”) approval of the proposed project in accordance with Charter Articles 99 and 100, including, in the case of an Article 99 approval, the expiration of the 30-day period for referral to the RTM without referral.”

John Blankley - former BET member - Spoke in support of long-term financing for certain projects that will enable the Town to resolve a long-standing problem such as soil remediation for fields at Western Middle School. Noted that State Representatives arguing against tolls, proposed long-term financing for infrastructure by using long-term debt maturities. If they agree to longer-term debt, then why can't the Town allow long-term financing to get certain projects completed?

Brooks Harris - RTM D-10 - Expressed concern over BET's recent change of its Debt Policy. This could allow issuance of long-term debt without proper controls in place. Until proper controls

in place, this could result in adverse consequences such as dramatic increases in taxes over time that could jeopardize AAA rating. Modified pay-as-you-go is not perfect system of financing but has benefit of preventing Town from increasing spending recklessly. There is a necessary linkage between spending and taxes. Examples of lack of controls include projecting only one year of operating expenses, tax rate and Mill Rate, all of which should be projected over future years. Discipline requires set of robust financial projections and controls so know what the future will look like when consider long-range financing, including BOE Master Plan. BET Fund Balance and Debt Policy Committee set of projections was constructive, but critical that once we have projections, then we need to use them.

Sharon Shisler - Greenwich resident and has lived in 4 districts within Town - Spoke in support of installation of new audio/visual equipment in Town Hall meeting room. Lived through loss of 15 classmates in school fire (structure burned down in 27 minutes); need a Fire/GEMS Station in Northwest. Spoke in support of environmental protection initiatives (e.g., soil remediation and air quality control) and long-term financing.

Harry Fisher - former Vice Chairman, BET - Spoke in opposition to new BET Debt Policy that allows for consideration of long-term borrowing up to 20 years. If implemented, no going back. Revenue will have to be raised in future budgets. Origins of financial plan relates to renovation of High School and addition of Science Wing. Allowed borrowing in public markets over the life of the construction of the project, but no more than five years. Numbers from Finance Department show modified pay-as-you-go works for next 5-6 years on capital projects on current list. Spoke in opposition to reduction of level of services when there have been no complaints about services. Is this in anticipation of the reduction of State reimbursements for school building and transfer of teacher pension costs to Town? Spoke of recent review of BOE planning and management of capital construction and maintenance projects and the need to develop policies and procedures to plan and manage future capital construction projects. Financial plan gave Town ability to slow down or accelerate projects in times of financial crisis.

Richard DiPreta - Chairman, Republican Town Committee - Spoke in opposition to long-term debt borrowing. Disappointed that Board changed Debt Policy before Public Hearing. Town thrived under pay-as-you-go policy, able to finance large capital expenditures without financially burdening future generations. Shorter maturities and careful budgeting will save money for taxpayers. No debt service from those who preceded us. Long-term debt will cost taxpayers more. New taxes will impact Greenwich taxpayers the hardest. Stay with pay-as-you-go policy.

Dr. Carl Carlson - RTM D-1, Member, Republican Town Committee - William Butler Yeats poem "1919" with phrase "The center will not hold." Approaching that period; something needs to be done. Budget with more constraint and caution. Opposed change in Federal tax law; bad for this Country and this State. Outside pressure that impacts finances. Problems at State level and for middle class people in this Town. Long-term bond sells for less than short-term bond; handwriting on wall for recession. Paul Tudor Jones said Federal Reserve no longer had tools to bail out of recession. Advise against expansionary budget; urge BET to exert more caution and vote no on budget that is expansionary.

Johann Thalheim - Resident - Spoke in support of pay-as-you-go financing. Do not burden future generations. Replaced good sidewalks with unnecessary sidewalks; allocate resources better. Support funding for Greenwich Police Department.

Susan Fahey - Chair, RTM D-11; Secretary and delegate, RTM Education Committee; Representative to Cardinal Stadium Project Committee - Spoke in support of Cardinal Stadium.

Spoke in opposition to reducing the BOE request to \$1.3 million from \$8.4 million. Supporting Phase I of the Cardinal Stadium renovation project, including replacement of bleachers, press box that is ADA-accessible, permanent rest rooms, electrical wiring, live stream video capability and proper ADA-compliant parking.

Richard Chambers - Resident - Spoke in support of renovation of Cardinal Stadium. Hundreds of athletes use the facility and it should be ADA-compliant. Ignored infrastructure must be addressed to ensure all students have same opportunities to use facilities, including fields, in a dignified way.

Laura Kostin - RTM D-8 - Spoke in support of long-term financing. Speaking about lack of controls, but we spent a lot of time speaking about \$100,00 for fire protection equity. We are in an environment when interest rates are lower today to borrow for a year than to borrow for ten. Need to be cautious, not leveraging up on debt. Need flexible financing structure that allows us to take advantage of the best terms offered in the market. What is advantageous for Town financially? Borrow for long term for sewers and The Nathaniel Witherell. We can have flexible financing. There have been multiple BET meetings to comment on Debt Policy. Now have Debt Policy that is flexible and that allows Town to invest prudently in capital projects.

John Conti - Life-long resident; President, Round Hill Association - Spoke in support of Round Hill Volunteer Fire Station renovation and NW Fire/GEMS Station.

Kimberly Fiorello - RTM D-7, participant in 12 RTM member fire report - Spoke in opposition to long-term debt financing. State pension problems and issues in Hartford mean Town needs to exercise fiscal prudence. Discussed blumshapiro review of BOE construction projects and maintenance process, and the need to develop policies and procedures to initiate, manage and complete capital projects. Spoke in support of an independent data analysis of fire services. Should not borrow against the future.

Wynn McDaniel - Chair, RTM D-7 - Does not support change to Debt Policy. Does not want to burden future generations. Analyze carefully the request for a NW Fire Station.

Mike Curly - Commodore, Greenwich Boat & Yacht Club - Spoke in opposition to reducing funds for Police Marine Division and resultant reduction in hours of operation. Marine Division needed in the evening; some of the best-equipped officers doing an outstanding job on the Sound. Representing 300 members (1,000 Greenwich residents) who unanimously support retention of funds for Police Marine Division evening coverage.

Gary Silberberg - former member, Harbor Management Advisory Committee; Officer, Greenwich Power Squadron - Spoke in opposition to cutting Police Marine Division budget since most accidents happen in evening. Need to protect life and property. Coast Guard do not respond to local emergencies. Save money by dredging and extending dock on Great Captain's Island to allow larger ferry to make a loop and pass by both islands so could reduce number of ferries and staff.

Mary Gibbons - Long-time resident; Member, Greenwich Boat & Yacht Club - Spoke in opposition to reducing Police Marine Division budget. Protect boaters on Sound.

Rick Kral - Greenwich resident - Spoke in opposition to reducing the Police Marine Division budget. Evening schedule should be maintained.

Molly Saleeby - Life-long resident, RTM D-8 - Town has not maintained its capital assets. Spoke in support of \$3.8 million rather than \$1.3 million budgeted amount for Cardinal Stadium. Need ADA-accessible renovations. Spoke in support of long-term financing because it takes too long to get projects done. Spoke in support of recommendations of the blumshapiro Review to enhance BOE processes and procedures.

Marianne Gattinella - Resident - (was not able to stay but asked that record reflect her position)
- Opposed to change of modified pay-as-you-go funding for capital projects.

Public Hearing - Closed.

Ms. Oberlander thanked the speakers, Town 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 Thursday, March 28, 2019, beginning at 4:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Mr. Weisbrod, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn at 9:45 P.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation is scheduled on Monday, April 22, 2019, at 6:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

Respectfully submitted,

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Elizabeth K. Krumeich, Clerk of the Board

Jill K. Oberlander, Chair