

**TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW DAY TWO FOR FY14 BUDGET
MINUTES
Town Hall Meeting Room – 9:00 A.M.
Monday, February 11, 2013**

Present:

- Committee: Joseph L. Pellegrino, Chairman; William Finger, Jeffrey S. Ramer, Leslie L. Tarkington
- Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Roland Gieger, Budget Director, Peter Tesei, First Selectman, John Crary, Town Administrator
- Board: Robert Brady, Marc Johnson, Mary Lee Kiernan, Sean Goldrick, Randall Huffman, Michael Mason
- Others: Allen Brown, The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) Executive Director, Ray Augustine, TNW Director of Financial Operations, David Ormsby, Andy Fox and Lloyd Bankson, TNW Board of Directors, Rod Dioquino, Business Operations Supervisor, Tod Laudonia, Tax Collector, Alan Barry, Commissioner of Social Services, Laurette Helmrich, Senior Center Administrator, Lori Contidino, Director of Commission on Aging, Lori Jackson, Chairperson of The Commission on Aging, Jay Domeseck, Fleet Manager, Charlee Tufts, Greenwich Emergency Management Services, John Strong, GEMS Chief Financial Officer, Dick Kriskey, Chairman of the GEMS Board, Fred DeCaro III, Republican Registrar of Voters, Joseph Siciliano, Director of Parks and Recreation, Carmen Budkins, Town Clerk,

Mr. Pellegrino called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

SPEAKERS

1. **Nathaniel Witherell** – The meeting began with a presentation from Nathaniel Witherell officials. Mr. Augustine distributed a 2013 – 2014 Budget Summary accompanied with a Quarterly Profit and Loss Summary and Revenue Summary. Mr. Brown started the discussions by detailing census information for the current year. Mr. Brown told the Committee that the forecasted occupancy rates for 2013 were 91.7% for all categories but the actual were coming in at 86.2%. Mr. Brown added that there are 202 beds for full occupancy and for peak construction periods, starting next year, the occupancy rate will fluctuate with a forecasted rate around 184. Mr. Brown and Mr. Bankson warned the Committee that projecting revenues was difficult because the conversion process for private pay and Medicaid is contingent upon the State of Connecticut.

Mr. Finger asked about the potential losses in revenue by the State of Connecticut. Mr. Brown responded that the loss would be for Medicaid only and he projects that figure to be about \$300,000 next year. Mr. Brown was also asked to explain the difference between Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements and he responded accordingly.

Mr. Augustine turned the Committee's attention to the revenue forecast and expected year end fund balance figures. Mr. Augustine reiterated Mr. Brown's comments about losing Medicaid revenues and also a loss due to unexpected expenses for the delay in construction for Project Renew. Mr. Augustine told the Committee that the current 2012-2013 budget was based on a construction start date of September 1, 2012 and they have just finished the bidding process well after that date. Mr. Augustine concluded that the 2012-2013 budget had planned on a surplus of \$150,965, but will experience a projected deficit of (\$157,956). This \$300,000 difference will prompt the BET to increase the fiscal year 2013-2014 subsidy from \$2.5 million to \$2.8 million.

Mr. Huffman asked about outsourcing and if there were any candidates. Mr. Fox and Mr. Bankson said they are currently looking at outsourcing the telephone system and all technology.

Mr. Pellegrino asked where they stand on funding for the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell. Mr. Ormsby responded that they have about \$575,000 in cash and pledges as of February 8, 2013. In addition, with the monies the Friends of Nathaniel Witherell already had at about \$800,000 in liquid assets, they would have no trouble cutting a check for the \$1 million contribution back to the Town for the current fiscal year. Mr. Pellegrino asked Mr. Ormsby if he thought they could get the \$2 million dollars budgeted for next fiscal year. Mr. Ormsby stated that they are not going public with fundraising until they can go public with the private fundraising. Mr. Pellegrino asked who was in charge of the fund raising. Mr. Ormsby responded the team is led by Ms. Debbie Lash, Ms. Karen Sadik-Khan and himself.

The Committee turned its attention to going through the budget book and Mr. Finger asked for an explanation on the large variance increases in the Personal Services and Supplies and Materials accounts, specifically the Overtime and Temporary Salaries accounts. As Mr. Augustine attempted to explain the variances he was unable to explain the large variance in the Temporary Salaries account with a 26.5% increase. Mr. Pellegrino suggested that Mr. Augustine work with Mr. Gieger to reconcile a series of variances that he detailed by account number. Mr. Pellegrino did concede that Nathaniel Witherell is unlike other Town departments with a complex accounting system with two sets of books for reimbursement purposes.

Mr. Pellegrino concluded the session by asking Nathaniel Witherell officials if they had anything to add. Mr. Bankson responded that they started the application process for reimbursement through the State of Connecticut Historic Facility Credit Program.

- 2. Parking Services** – The Director of Parking Services, Allen Corry, could not attend due to illness. Mr. Dioquino, the Business Operations Supervisor for Parking Services stood in for Mr. Corry.

Mr. Pellegrino remarked that he liked the Operational Plan prepared by the Parking Services Department. Mr. Pellegrino asked about the decline in Parking Meter Revenues. Mr. Dioquino responded that he thought it was from ongoing construction at the various parking lots.

Mr. Pellegrino asked about the License Plate Recognition System. Mr. Dioquino answered that they just got the equipment two months ago and it is on one vehicle. He said the Police Department has their own system separate from the Parking Services Department.

Mr. Finger asked about the waiting list for parking permits at the Greenwich Plaza Parking Garage. Mr. Dequino said the waiting list for garage parking was 5 to 7 years and the waiting list for outside parking was about 3 years.

Ms. Tarkington added that the land under the Greenwich Plaza Parking Garage, is deed restricted by the New Haven Railroad for use for railroad commuter parking only as Mr. Crary and Mr. Cory are aware. In the last couple of years, the disclaimer that users previously signed was removed from the annual application. She asked whether the Town website application for parking, used for waitlists, requires Greenwich residency.

Mr. Pellegrino asked about the rates for parking permits. Mr. Dequino responded that the rates for Plaza garage parking were \$575.00 per year and \$337.00 per year for outside parking lot permits. Mr. Pellegrino calculated a rough estimate for the annual rate recomputed to a daily rate and expressed his displeasure at the non-competitive rates charged.

Mr. Ramer asked about maintenance of the Parking Services vehicle enforcement equipment and Mr. Dequino responded that the Fleet Department maintains the vehicles and charges back the cost to the Parking Services Department.

Mr. Finger asked Mr. Dequino to discuss the capital project request of \$187,000 for the Gate Installation in the Plaza Garage. Mr. Dequino told the Committee that the gate was primarily for security, limiting speeding taxis racing through the garage and preventing non-permit holders from accessing the garage.

3. Tax Collector – Tax Collector Tod Laudonia appeared before the Committee to discuss his budget request. Mr. Pellegrino took time out to acknowledge and expressed condolences for the recent death of Tax Collector Department employee, Celia Vita.

Mr. Laudonia told the Committee he was currently working on two initiatives. The first one being the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for software for the Tax Collector and Assessor Departments software application modules currently being supported by the MUNIS system. Mr. Laudonia stated his second initiative involves alternative methods to pay taxes. Ms. Tarkington asked if the new RFP would generate efficiencies. Mr. Laudonia told the Committee that MUNIS is still in the running as a potential vendor. However, he stated that he is not happy with MUNIS and a change in vendors would produce efficiencies, especially in the area of management reports and monthly reconciliations.

Mr. Pellegrino asked why his Office Services account was up. Mr. Laudonia responded that the Post Office had substantially increased the charge for the Town's rental box.

Mr. Ramer asked about new funding for Wearing Apparel. Mr. Laudonia responded that they were going to provide shirts for Tax Collector Department personnel. He said it will enhance the professionalism of the department by having his employees serving the public wearing official looking apparel in uniformity.

Mr. Finger asked if there is a system in place to track receivables to which Mr. Laudonia answered yes; it is done by the MUNIS software package.

Mr. Finger asked about the seasonality of the office and if the department was a candidate for sharing services with other departments. Mr. Laudonia said no. He said they lost a budgeted position recently and the staff is always busy.

- 4. Registrars of Voters** – The Republican Registrar of Voter, Fred DeCaro III, joined the meeting to give the Committee an update on his and the Democratic Registrar's budget. Mr. DeCaro told the Committee that he has been in his elected position for 4 years now. He informed the Committee that he and his associate, Sharon Vecchiolla, review and sign off on every expense for the department. Mr. DeCaro also informed the Committee that they started a process of sending out 6,000 letters to non-voting Town citizens in an attempt to purge and update the voter database. He said that if he could clean up the voter list the vote participation rates would be much higher.

Mr. DeCaro told the Committee he is collaborating with the Board of Education for state mandated voter day telephone services that must be supplied during election that will save the Town money.

Mr. Pellegrino concluded this session by commending Mr. DeCaro for all of his work he put into the job of making the office of the Registrar of Voters a better place to work. Mr. Pellegrino called it a model working environment.

The Committee recessed at 11:55 A.M. for lunch and reconvened at 12:15 P.M.

- 5. Social Services** – The Commissioner of Social Services, Allen Barry, appeared to speak to the Social Services budget. Mr. Barry told the Committee that he arrived in September 2010 and realized the department was hurt by turnover and that the Social Services Commission was in the middle of preparing their strategic plan and their mission was changing. Mr. Barry gave a lengthy dissertation on his work plan goals and objects with the highlights as follows:

- Reorganization – the department is in a reorganization mode, which will be reflected in his FY 2013-2014 budget request.
- Employment Training – the department strives to hold job training opportunities to provide job placement for the lower income unemployed.
- Education – the department works to provide after school education for children in need of such services. He referred to the New Lebanon School experience where 80 children are attending the afterschool community programs in Byram.
- Collaboration – the department continues to work with other social service providers in an effort of collaboration.
- Revenue Producers – the department is always looking for sources of revenue to return to the Town. Mr. Barry used the experience of homemaker services that will bring \$35,000 this year and hopefully double next year.
- Management Information Systems (MIS) – the department has improved statistical reporting to the Board with improvements to the Evolv software application.

Mr. Pellegrino noted that the Social Services budgetary request was flat at a negative (0.1%) decrease. Mr. Pellegrino asked Mr. Barry if he was comfortable with his budget. Mr. Barry responded that the department is starting to get there. He said the department is meeting the needs of the community. Unfortunately, Mr. Barry stated he is not happy with the \$30,000 cut to various external entity programs that threatens its partnership with community programs. Ms. Kiernan then asked about outside funding and if he

works with United Way. Mr. Barry said yes he works with United Way and also the Community Development Block Grant Office.

Mr. Huffman asked if they work with Yerwood Center in Stamford, Connecticut. Mr. Barry said yes and that it was a new program.

Mr. Goldrick stated that 8% of the Greenwich population is in need of social services according to statistics he has seen. He asked Mr. Barry how many people are not being properly served. Mr. Barry responded that the federal guidelines on poverty levels have increased and he feels that a family in Greenwich would need household income of \$70,000 to \$80,000 to get by. He added that he has seen that the department is still dealing with the after effects of the recent recession.

Ms. Tarkington asked Mr. Barry about employment rate statistics for Greenwich relative to State of Connecticut levels. Mr. Barry responded that it is hard to determine the correct unemployment rates because so many people have dropped from the measurable roles and they have stopped looking for work. He added that the Latino population in Greenwich has increased dramatically.

- 6. Commission on Aging & Senior Center** – The Commission on Aging and Senior Center budgets were presented by Lori Contidino, Director of the Commission on Aging, Lori Jackson, Chairperson of The Commission on Aging and Laurette Helmrich, Senior Center Administrator. Ms. Contidino is a new employee having been on the job for only two weeks. Mr. Pellegrino noted the Senior Center budget request was up 3.5%. He also asked Ms. Contidino about her first impressions being she is a new employee. Ms. Contidino responded that she was struck by the number of people trafficking through the Senior Center building. She added that the building is tired looking, parking is a challenge and was surprised by the confines and constraints of the building design.

Ms. Tarkington asked about the price for a meal served by the Senior Center. Ms. Helmrich answered that they charge \$4 per meal and it cost them about \$14 per meal.

Mr. Finger asked if the focus at the Senior Center is on wellness and fitness programs to which Ms. Helmrich answered yes.

Ms. Kiernan asked what are the differences between services provided by the Social Services Department and The Commission on Aging. Ms. Helmrich answered that The Commission on Aging concentrates on providing services to seniors, while the Social Services Department deals with individuals and families at all income levels in need of their services.

- 7. Fleet Department** – Mr. Pellegrino noted that the Fleet Department budget is down (3.7%) and asked about staffing. Mr. Domeseck responded that they couldn't fill the mechanic position for three years and gave up trying to fill it. He said this is reflected in the headcount reduction of one position.

Mr. Domeseck was asked about the increase in the overtime request. He responded that the account was reduced by the BET last year and he is just requesting what he feels is an adequate number.

Mr. Domeseck was asked about the increase in the professional services account by 6.1%. Mr. Domeseck answered that is for the outsourcing of vehicle repairs and parts replacements and it is a negotiated amount.

Mr. Pellegrino asked a series of questions about vehicle purchases for Ford and Dodge vehicles. Mr. Domeseck responded by saying that they are striving for uniformity in their purchases and strive to match the best vendor with each particular purchase.

Ms. Tarkington asked if he thought there should be uniformity in color among Town vehicles. Mr. Domeseck said no, he had no preference for uniformity in vehicle color.

- 8. Greenwich Emergency Management Services (GEMS) –** The GEMS budget was presented by Charlee Tufts, GEMS Director, Andy Fox, Chairman of GEMS Board's Facilities Committee, Dick Kriskey, Chairman of GEMS Board and John Strong, GEMS Chief Financial Officer. They provided audited financial statement through April 30, 2012 and current financial statement through December 31, 2012.

The budget request for GEMS amounted to a 12.4% increase. Mr. Kriskey told the Committee that the amount of calls has significantly decreased which translates into less revenue. He explained this is the reason for increased budget request.

Mr. Finger asked when measuring response time, when does the call start. Ms. Tufts responded the response time starts as soon as the call is received by GEMS.

Mr. Finger asked about their Information Technology systems and if they are happy. Ms. Tufts answered they have an inside person who they are very happy with.

Mr. Finger asked about their payroll and how it is done. Ms. Tufts answered they use ADP and are charged \$330 per month.

Mr. Pellegrino asked how many personnel they have. Mr. Strong answered they have 46 Full Time Equivalents with 4.5 Administrators.

The meeting adjourned at 4:04 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Mynarski, Recording Secretary

Joseph L. Pellegrino, Chairman