

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION
BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE 2006-07 BUDGET
MINUTES
Town Hall Meeting Room
February 1, 2006

Present:

Committee: Stephen Walko, Chairman
Edward Krumeich, Michael Mason, Larry Simon

Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Roland Gieger, Budget Director; Ed Gomeau, Town Administrator; Dr. Larry Leverett, John Curtin, Dr. Susan Wallerstein, Colleen Giambo, Board of Education;

Board: Nancy Barton, James Himes, Arthur Norton, Alma Rutgers, Robert Stone, Leslie Tarkington, Peter Tesei

Board Ex Officio: James A. Lash, First Selectman

Mr. Walko called the meeting to order at 8:10 P.M. he welcomed everyone to the Public Hearing on the 2005-2006 budget. Mr. Walko said he had received the names of three persons wishing to comment on the budget.

SPEAKERS

1. Lisa Harkness and Sue Rogers, Glenville School PTA Co-Presidents
Ms. Harkness spoke in support of the \$1.4 million additional appropriation for Glenville School in the FY 2006-07 CIP budget. The appropriation will fund the architectural and engineering study that is needed prior to the beginning of that facilities renovation. Ms. Harkness further stated that the PTA fully endorsed the building committee and looked forward to working with them. The current estimate for the renovation is \$19 million.
2. Debbie Applebaum, Greenwich High School PTA Co-President
Ms. Applebaum spoke in support of the entire BOE budget. Ms. Applebaum reported that while declining enrollment is an issue at the elementary school level, increased enrollment is being experienced at GHS. No decline is expected for the next 10 years.
3. Janice Richards, PTA Council President
Ms. Richards spoke in support of the budget and the BOE staff.
4. Jim Boutelle, Executive Director of Transportation Association of Greenwich (TAG)
Mr. Boutelle is opposed to a new budget guideline that specifies TAG will no longer be a part of the First Selectman's budget but will now be part of the Social Services budget,

along with subsidized day care and drug treatment programs. While Mr. Boutelle could see how the later two programs could be considered social service programs, he stressed that TAG is much more than a social service program, and feels that it should remain in the First Selectman's budget. He feels that passing things through the First Selectman's office, such as a recent grant application to FEMA for a generator for the TAG operations center, is easier than getting them through the Board of Social Services. Some of the other programs provided include the Commuter Shuttle and the Easy Access program, the later being a mandated program under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and is a parallel system to the fixed route bus. Mr. Boutelle stressed that TAG is a transportation provider, not just a social service agency.

5. Vince DiMarco Chairman, RTM Transportation Committee and Selectman's Parking and Traffic Committee

Mr. DiMarco addressed the omission from the budget of the position of Transportation Planner or Coordinator. The transportation planner works with other town agencies, including the BOE, The Commission on Aging, Department of Social Services and Nathaniel Witherell to implement transportation programs for the populations they serve, their employees and their visitors. Traffic issues such as volume and speeding are also issues addressed by the transportation planner. Other agencies impacted by this position are the Housing Authority, Health Department, the Chamber of Commerce and the business community.

6. James Himes, former Chairman of the Greenwich Housing Authority

Mr. Himes spoke with regard to the absence of funds in the \$381 million 10 year capital plan for affordable housing. Mr. Himes pointed out that a lack of affordable housing increases transportation problems, jeopardizes the ability of the elderly to stay in town and contributes to the rate of turnover that the school system sees for younger teachers.

Mr. Himes reminded those present of the Town's obligation to create 24 affordable housing units as part of the agreement when the Cos Cob Power Plant site was purchased from the state for \$1. He hopes that this observation creates discussion and that in the future a sufficient amount will be added to the Capital Plan to develop affordable housing in Greenwich. Part of the difficulty is that affordable housing has little constituency. This item should be a priority for the town.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Zebrowski, Recording Secretary

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman