

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

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW FY2020-2021 - DAY #2 Minutes

**Town Hall Meeting Room
Thursday, January 30, 2020**

- Committee: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer
- Staff: Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Department; Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller
- Board: Michael Mason, BET Chair; William Drake, Andy Duus, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Elizabeth K. Krumeich, David Weisbrod
- BOE/GPS: Peter Bernstein, Chairman, BOE; Karen Hirsch, BOE; Joe Kelly, BOE; Kathleen Stowe, Vice Chair, BOE; Dr. Ann Carabillo, Deputy Superintendent; Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Services Officer; Sasha Houlihan, Director of Communications; Shamain Johnson, Interim Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent; Jennifer Lau, Research Manager; Patricia Maranan, Finance Supervisor; Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer; Irene Parisi, Chief Academic Officer; Michael Ting, Chief Technology Officer; Regina Williams, Ass't Director, Human Resources
- RTM: Hector Arzeno, (D-8), Finance; William Galvin, (D-7) Health & Human Services; Lucia Jansen, (D-7), BOC, Chair; Dan Ozizmir, (D-5), Labor Contracts Chair, BOC, Vice Chair
- Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; Brian Peldunas, First VP, PTA Council, Anthony Turner, GPS Parent

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington welcomed members of the Board of Education and GPS Staff. Ms. Tarkington invited Superintendent Dr. Jones, Mr. Bernstein and Mr. O'Keefe to share how the upcoming year's budget was planned so that the Budget Committee could better understand its proposed operating and capital requests.

BOE Budget Review Opening Comments

BOE Chairman Bernstein presented the proposed BOE Operating Budget for FY 2020-2021 of \$166,631,476 that represents a 2.0% increase over the previous year and is within the BET Budget Guidelines. The Capital Budget of \$35,755,000, an increase of \$9,744,000 over the previous year, included costs for major projects (\$22,510,000), annual infrastructure and maintenance improvements of \$11,567,000, and technology software/hardware (\$1,678,000). Efficiencies and deferrals allowed for an overall reduction of \$1,000,000 that was trimmed to meet the BET Guidelines. The increase over the current year's operating budget is primarily due to contractual obligations (salary and transportation), and the Special Education program.

Superintendent Jones commented that educational outcomes of the strategic plan for student academic, personal and interpersonal growth were improving as documented by State statistics

compared with other Connecticut public schools, achievement awards received by students, and national test scores. The Superintendent remarked that budget priorities for FY2020-2021 included:

- Concern about a budget gap of an estimated \$1.5 million in Special Education out-of-district tuition line item.
- Closing out 2015, 2016 and 2017 Capital Projects.
- Building a structure for execution of Capital Construction & Maintenance Projects .
- Launching 2020-2021 Major Projects:
 - GHS Entry Renovation
 - Construction Design of Julian Curtis Elementary School renovation
 - Cardinal Field improvement
 - Central Middle School field improvement
 - Western Middle School field remediation
 - Design Study to renovate Old Greenwich Elementary School

BOE Operations Plan FY2020-2021 Budget

Chief Operating Officer O’Keefe presented details of the GPS Budget and the efficiencies and drivers that were creating the \$3.3 million Budget increase. Special Education tuition and cost of litigation, transportation, salaries and contractual payments, utilities, maintenance and supplies, administrative services, consulting contracts, rental and leased equipment cost, waste removal, the free and reduced cost school lunch program, and cybersecurity were among the drivers mentioned. Reductions, efficiencies and deferrals that created close to \$1 million of savings were adopted that related to the staffing ratio, freezing two administrative headcount positions, eliminating a school bus route, and reducing allocation to HR settlements and staff travel.

Revenues from State Education Cost Sharing and Excess Cost grants are estimated to be received but are posted to the General Fund. The Committee requested a list of other grants and reimbursement funding anticipated during the upcoming year. It complimented the BOE Community Partnering initiatives to fund instructional programming and identify potential referral students.

The Committee asked questions about additional economies that might be found in further consolidation of services, invoice processing, curriculum management and reduction of Summer School sites. The Superintendent identified the efficiencies incorporated into this budget, including reallocation of staff to create behavioral support teams, changes in the Pre-K model to reduce the number of sections, consolidated summer school in one site, did not restore professional learning to prior years’ level, and changed the curriculum renewal schedule. The Superintendent responded that further reductions would be difficult to accomplish and that there are additional student needs that are not fully met with this budget. She indicated that an RFP or RFI for process analysis of Special Education issues and best practices was budgeted for the growing high needs population. Enrollment changes within the 9,000+ student body were projected to result from student demographics and fewer lower school enrollments replacing a higher number of students exiting through graduation.

BOE Capital Plan FY2020-2021

Major Capital Projects - The FY2020-2021 Capital Budget of \$35,755,000 was requested for \$22.5 million of major projects; \$11.6 million of maintenance/infrastructure; and \$1.7 million for technology. The development considerations in preparing the Capital Budget included the Master Plan, work in progress and workload capacity. The Committee Chair asked for a status report on the recommended acquisition of Capital Project Construction & Maintenance Process software

by BlumShapiro. Dr. Jones explained that the functionality of the MUNIS software was being used currently and they are looking at solutions to track project process. They do not expect to implement an asset management system in FY21. The Committee questioned whether the BOE 15 Year Capital Plan which used as part of the BET 2019 Debt and Fund Policy could be accomplished or if a revision might be required.

The Committee reviewed and discussed each major project and its components with Mr. O’Keefe. Some members believed that FY21 Capital projects list may contain projects which could not be started during the fiscal year and suggested a further reduction prior to Consolidation Day.

School Lunch Program - Mr. Ramer, the BET Liaison to the GPS Lunch Program, commented that the number of students entitled to the Free and Reduced Lunch Program had increased, despite students not necessarily taking advantage of it. The question of whether the program should be outsourced was unresolved. The Committee was told that students voiced objections to the serving sizes, pre-processed portions, and short lunch period. Anecdotally more muscle meats, palatably prepared and fresh foods would be more popular. Ms. Hess commented that insights and recommendations could result from the BET Audit Committee’s upcoming Internal Audit of the School Lunch Program. Mr. Bernstein invited BET members to attend an upcoming Student Government meeting for first-hand information.

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
SUBJECT TO APPROVAL
Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair