

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

BUDGET COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 15, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Committee

Present: Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer

Staff:

Caroline Baisley, Director and Debora Edwards, Business Office Manager, Health Department (Dept.); Roland Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, Finance Dept.; Jenny Larkin, Information Technology Dept.; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller, Finance Dept.; Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Human Services Dept.

Board:

Michael Mason, Chairman; Andreas Duus, Laura Erickson, Karen Fassuliotis, Miriam Kreuzer, Beth Krumeich, David Weisbrod

RTM:

Irene Dietrich, (D-8) Human Services Committee (Cmte.); Danyal Ozizmir, (D5) Vice Chair Budget Overview Cmte., Chair, Labor Contracts Cmte

BOE/GPS:

Toni Jones, Superintendent; Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer

Public:

Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; GCTV; Robert Carangelo, Esq., Chair, Board of Health; Russell Davidson, FAIA, KG&D Architects; Alan Gunzburg, Chair, Board of Human Services; Mary Lee Kiernan, President, CEO, YWCA Greenwich; Lawrence Simon, Chair, Nathaniel Witherell Board of Directors

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 A.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Number	Department	Purpose
HS-1	Human Services	Transfer
\$55,719	A502 61010	Regular Salaries

Mr. Gunzburg, Chair, explained that as a result of the approved FY2021 \$70,719 reduction of the proposed Human Services Department operating budget to be flat with FY2020, the Board of Human Services revised its budget with transfer of the equivalent dollars to case management from administrative salaries (\$22,719) and its contribution to External Entities (\$33,000). Members of the Budget Committee expressed concern about the reductions to the External Entities below the prior year's budget to address the approved flat budget. In the Committee's discussion that followed suggestions were made of possible alternative sources: transferring within the Department's 100 accounts including from temporary salaries, programmatic economies, or deferring the transfer until the funds were needed. The Members also expressed concerned that payments have not yet been made to the External Entities. The Committee and members of the BET in attendance explained that External Entities were actively rendering

contracted services in a Budget approved by the BET and RTM and delaying their payment jeopardized the Town's obligation, and Town nonprofits were also struggling financially. Mr. Gunzburg agreed to review the departmental budget and contracts, and forward delayed payments to External Entities that day as requested. Mr. Gunzburg indicated the Department will review its needs and return, as needed.

Application for Budget Adjustment transfer of \$55,719 was withdrawn.

NW-1	Nathaniel Witherell	Additional Appropriation
\$160,000	H450 59560 21293	Pavilion Exterior Rehab

Mr. Simon, Chair explained that the Federal HUD Community Development Block Grant award is a reimbursement grant so the additional appropriation was needed to commence purchasing and construction. Mr. Gieger commented that the \$160,000 would come from The Nathaniel Witherell Fund Balance.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the request for additional appropriation of \$160,000 by Nathaniel Witherell for Pavilion exterior rehabilitation and recommend the application to the full BET as a Routine Application. Motion carried.

HD-1	Health	Approval to Use
\$67,736	F403 & various codes	Public Act Funds 2020/2021

Ms. Baisley explained that the State Public Funds Act grant of \$67,736, received this year was 6.5% less than the 2019-2020 grant. The grant will be applied to the salary and benefits of a part time public promotion specialist position for 6-months and then cutback to 14-hours per week. This temporary position will assist the Department preparation of public educational material on various health issues including press releases and brochures. Chair Carangelo praised Ms. Baisley and Department staff's dedication and increased work level during the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the use of \$67,736 Public Act Funds and recommend as a Routine Application to the full BET. Motion carried.

ED-2	BOE	Release of Conditions
\$2,725,000	B6801689 59560 20163	Cardinal Field Improvements

Mr. O'Keefe, BOE Chief Operating Officer, explained that the BET Conditions for releasing \$2,725,000 had been met by the Board of Selectmen granting Municipal Improvement (MI) status and Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) approval of MI and a Phase 1-A site plan. Discussions of possible public/private partnership contributions continue. Mr. O'Keefe itemized expenses to be covered under Phase 1-A (home team bleachers, elevator, dressing room, access drive to bleachers, and replacement of field lighting). Changes made by P&Z limit scope of their approval to a reduced Phase 1-A by deferring the entrance road, handicapped parking and kiosk, and suggested a future 1-B. The Committee requested a breakdown of costs to differentiate Phase 1-A as approved, to reflect the BET condition of release. Mr. Davidson explained that it was timely to pursue bids, which might be more favorable in a Covid-19 construction environment.

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the FY2019-2020 Release of Condition of \$2,750,000 and recommend the application to the full BET as a Routine

Application. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion of Economic Conditions**

Mr. Gieger, Budget & Systems Director, provided an overview of revenue and expenses for the incomplete first quarter of the fiscal year. He noted that the deferred deadline for tax collection (October 1, 2020) impacted residents' payments, but collections were only 10% less than previous year by September 15. Building Permit and interest income were down year-to-date with conveyance taxes at record levels from the past 4 years history. Home sales are strong and the Grand List may benefit from the one-year deferred revaluation to October 1, 2021. Holly Hill Transfer Station tipping fees are lower than expected, partially due to a delayed start and due to the lag of billing, but may balance out because volume of trash is also down. It was postulated that haulers may be diverting to lower tipping fee locations. Department spending is equivalent to previous year's levels, however overall spending as shown on the chart decreased by \$10 million in July and August due to timing. Mr. Gieger was asked to add the more detailed BOE run rate to the monthly economic conditions information.

There was discussion of the anticipated difficulty in the preparation of Guidelines for FY22, both because it is unclear whether Town operations in FY22 will be conducted under COVID restrictions, and a member also felt lack of insight into departmental operations under COVID would add to the difficulty. One member proposed meeting with departments to enhance the Committee's understanding. The Chair then suggested that it would be preferable to start with two or three written inquiries to the departments. Committee members Debra Hess and Jeff Ramer undertook to prepare proposed questions to the departments.

- **Covid-19 Update**

Mr. Mynarski, Comptroller, explained that Covid-19 spending falls into two segments: February through June 30 and July 1 through September 15. A member of the Committee questioned whether State reimbursement money had expired. Mr. Mynarski will ask the Risk Manager, Ms. Zanesky, to prepare a report on expenses and reimbursements.

- **Hurricane Isaias Update**

The Risk Manager is in the process of exploring what will be covered by the Town's insurance and sources for the balance of storm damage reimbursements.

Chair Report

Ms. Tarkington enumerated factors that need to be considered while developing the Budget Guidelines including Governor's Lamont's proposed state 10% budget cut and its possible impact on the Town either through reduced revenues or increased unfunded mandates, increased healthcare insurance premiums and pension contribution for FY22; the impact of the increased Risk Fund deductible; inability to use FY21 Budget as a model for FY22; a recent United Way report that 29% of Greenwich residents are categorized as ALICE; and open capital projects of approximately \$132 million.

Ms. Moriarty responded that the Budget Guidelines for FY22 Budget will be a difficult challenge but services need to be balanced with residents' expectations and known escalations, like wage increases that have been approved.

Approval of the BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Hess, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the BET Budget Committee Regular Meeting of July 24, 2020. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer to adjourn the Meeting at 2:21 P.M. The Committee voted 3-0-0. Motion carried.

Next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee is scheduled for October 13, 2020 at 11:00 A.M. The Meeting is scheduled as a virtual webinar meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL