



MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, September 21, 2020 in a virtual Zoom webinar, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael S. Mason called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

Board members in attendance:

Michael S. Mason, Chairman
Karen Fassuliotis, Vice Chairman
William Drake, Clerk
Andreas Duus III
Laura Erickson
Debra Hess
Miriam Kreuzer
Elizabeth K. Krumeich
Leslie Moriarty
Jeffrey S. Ramer
Leslie L. Tarkington
David Weisbrod

Staff: Lauren Elliott, Assessor; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems Management, Finance Department; James Heavey, Chief, GPD; Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Human Services Department; Vincent Marino, Town Attorney; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

Selectmen: Jill K. Oberlander, Select-person

Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; Horst Tebbe, GCTV, Richard Kaufman, Reporter, Greenwich Sentinel

Request for Budget Adjustment

ROUTINE APPLICATIONS

<u>Number</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
NW-1	Nathaniel Witherell	\$160,000	Additional Appropriation
HD-1	Health	\$67,736	Approval to Use
ED-2	BOE	\$2,725,000	Release of Conditions

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the following Routine Applications NW-1 Nathaniel Witherell for \$160,000, HD-1 Health Department for \$67,736, and ED-2 BOE for \$2,725,000. Motion carried.

ASSESSOR'S REPORT

The Town Assessor, Ms. Elliott, highlighted the following items from her written monthly report: the Board of Assessment Appeals received 81 appeals of which 78 were adjusted; 517 applications were received for Senior and Disabled Tax Program credits on their July 2020 taxes totaling \$829,827.91 compared to previous year when 513 applicants received total credits of \$760,409.60; Personal property declarations are being printed and sent to all business owners, canvassing will take place to confirm that a business has left, and the Chamber of Commerce will be contacted to learn how many business have been lost over the past year. Contracts are being signed with revaluation companies for an October 1, 2021 ReVal. Field inspections will begin in the Spring with a new Grand List to be prepared in January 2022. The next ReValuation is scheduled to take place in 2025.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Assessor's Report. Motion carried.

COMPTROLLER'S REPORT

The Comptroller, Mr. Mynarski, drew the Board's attention to topics in his written Report for possible discussion: the Town's annual external audit by RSM US LLP, Auditing, Tax & Consulting, will begin on September 28, 2020. The BET was updated on the 5 internal audits to be performed by Blumshapiro Consulting which are currently underway. A reimbursement report is being prepared by the Risk Manager, Ms. Zanesky, to calculate the COVID-19 reimbursements separately from the FEMA and the Town's private insurance reimbursements. Ms. Tarkington commented that the final MISA reimbursement of \$2.7 million has been received with the expectation of an additional reimbursement of retainage once the State has completed its audit of the MISA books. An overview of tax collections as of September 15, finds returns are \$33.7 million behind budget, but additional receipt is anticipated before the final deadline of October 1, 2020. Taxes can be paid until October 1 Executive Order extension deadline without penalty.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Duus, the Board voted 12-0-0 to accept the Comptroller's Report. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Upon a motion by Mr. Duus, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 11-0-1 (Abstain: Krumeich) to accept the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

BET Standing Committee Reports

None

BET Liaison Reports

Nathaniel Witherell – Mr. Duus reported that The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) occupancy was 94% in January/February, 71% during May/June and 83% in July/August with revenue down versus budget. The volume of rehab patients recovering from complex orthopedic procedures is growing. A cell tower is to be installed on the property which will be consistent revenue and improve reception to a large surrounding area. Volunteers have replaced Aides helping residents to enjoy the outdoors. A new Board member with financial experience has recently joined the Board of Directors.

Retirement Board – A preliminary actuarial report and Experience Report are being completed by Boomershine Consulting Group to enable the Retirement Board to considered reducing its Portfolio discount rate from 6.5% to 6.25% based on anticipation of lower market returns as the Board prepares its FY2022 budget. The Neuberger Berman (NB) investment relationship, Outside Chief Investment Officer (OCIO), has reached its third anniversary. While the average rate of return has been 6.5% for the equity portion of the portfolio, investments in private equity have yielded more but the lack of transparency of the product and the 3-6-month reporting lag time continues to be of concern.

BET Special Project Team Reports

Fire Study – Mr. Mason commented that Mr. Weisbrod, Ms. Fassuliotis and Mr. Ramer have submitted a redraft of the Study and discussed it in a Zoom meeting with Chief Heavey and Assistant Chief Kick. A discussion will take place later this week with the vendor, Matrix, to learn next steps.

New Lebanon School – The construction of the school was achieved under budget and the State reimbursement will follow after the records are audited.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

- **First Look – Draft of BET 2021 Meeting Calendar Year**
Mr. Mason commented that the 2021 BET Meeting Calendar still needs reconciliation with the RTM Calendar, however reservations for conference rooms are in demand so it is urgent that dates are reviewed in draft. Conference Rooms are available only during daytime and will be supplemented by an upgraded Zoom product.
- **Special Project Team – Biannual Review of Town Fund Balance & Debt Policy**
Mr. Drake, Mr. Duus, Ms. Moriarty and Mr. Weisbrod, the Debt Policy Team, will make a presentation of proposed changes to the Fund Balance & Debt Policy at the end of November. Factors to be considered include: COVID changes, the impact of delay on Capital Projects and sensitivity to credit rating agencies perspective.
- **Ratify – Police Department organizational changes**
The Human Resources (HR) Committee received a proposed new Table of Organization(TOO) at its July meeting calling for two Assistant Chiefs, 3 Captains and reducing staffing by one Lieutenant vacancy. The changes were announced in September, but a discussion ensued that the changes had not been approved first by the BET. The Town Attorney opined that BET approval was needed for organizational

changes that impacted pensions and shared his findings with Mr. Mason and Chief Heavey. The HR Committee retroactively rarified the TOO change. The Law Committee expressed concern about the process and will discuss clarification of the text of its Resolution at its next Meeting.

Ms. Krumeich made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hess, to retroactively ratify the changes made to the Police Department TOO. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Approval of BET Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the Regular BET Webinar Meeting of July 20, 2020 with the understanding that scrivener's error is corrected. Motion carried.

Mr. Mason called for a motion to add the Special Meeting Minutes to the Agenda by a 2/3 vote.

Upon a motion by Ms. Tarkington, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to add the Minutes of the Special BET Meeting of July 23, 2020 to the Agenda. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer. seconded by Mr. Drake, to approve the addition of the Minutes of the Special BET Meeting of July 23, 2020 to the Agenda. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried

Upon a motion by Mr. Drake, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the Special BET Webinar Meeting of July 23, 2020 with the understanding that scrivener's error is corrected. Motion carried.

Chair's Report

Mr. Mason commented that he had attended with First Selectman Camillo where his vision of a Downtown plan, possibly a masterplan, was discussed. GEMS met with the First Selectman to advise that their trailer on King Street was causing a hardship and asked how to move forward their request for a new facility at that location. Mr. Mason reported attending a meeting at the Police Department where he learned that BOE teachers were now being fingerprinted at that location. The First Selectman is scheduling a monthly meeting for himself, Mr. Mason, Ms. Moriarty, and Mr. Branyan.

Ms. Moriarty expressed her thanks to Ms. Elaine Brown for the support given to the BET, over the past 13 years, and as a Town employee for a total of 17 years. Ms. Fassuliotis concurred and added that the retirement of Ms. Brown will be a loss to the BET.

Adjournment

Upon a motion by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 5:29 P.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation is on Monday, October 19, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



William Drake, Clerk of the Board



Michael Mason, Chairman