



MINUTES of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Monday, October 19, 2020 in a virtual Zoom webinar, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Michael S. Mason called the meeting to order at 6:30 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; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

BOE/GPS: Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer, GPS

RTM: Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Chair, Budget Overview Committee

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

Chairman Mason reminded the meeting's audience that pursuant to a State Executive Order, the meeting was authorized to be held as a virtual meeting.

### **REQUEST FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENT**

Although the Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET) traditionally votes immediately on Routine Applications without requesting Committee reports, at today's meeting, Budget Committee reports were presented for each application.

The Clerk of the BET, Mr. Drake, read the following Routine Applications requesting Budget Adjustments.

**ROUTINE APPLICATIONS**

<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Department</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Purpose</u></b>
ED-3	BOE	\$1,900,000	Release of Conditions - Cardinal Stadium Phase 1A

Budget Committee Chair, Ms. Tarkington, reported that Mr. O’Keefe, BOE Chief Operating Officer, requested release of \$1,900,000 to enable the BOE to sign a contract for the purchase of new bleachers, site development, elevator to the Press Box and project costs. This was a partial release for Phase 1A for material to meet Phase 1A’s installation timetable. The Budget Committee received the requested updated breakdown of costs for each project phase and voted 4-0-0 to recommend it to the full BET.

Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to approve the release of conditions on \$1,900,000 for Cardinal Stadium Project Phase 1A. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

PW-1	Public Works	\$250,000	Release of Conditions - Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink
		<u>150,000</u>	
		\$400,000	

Ms. Tarkington reported that two Requests were being made simultaneously to release the conditions on appropriations in FY 2020 and FY 2021 for the costs to provide the plans and information needed for Municipal Improvement, P&Z Preliminary & Final Site Plan Approval and Inland/Wetlands applications for the replacement of the Rink (30% design). The Budget Committee voted 3-0-1 to recommend these releases to the full BET.

Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to approve the release of conditions on \$250,000 plus \$150,000 (\$400,000 total) for the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink preliminary plans. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

PD-2	Police Department	\$146,982	Approval to Use - State Regional Port Security
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Grant

Ms. Tarkington reported that the Police Department was awarded a Grant for regional port security for \$146,982. The Grant is designed to enhance the Departments’ fleet equipment for water response and staff safety. The Budget Committee voted 4-0-0 to recommend the project to the full BET. Mr. Mason commented that several Town newspapers reported the grant award.

Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to approve the use of the \$135,782 Federal funds of the Port Security Grant and \$11,200 of the Federal Asset Forfeiture Account. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

## **ASSESSOR'S REPORT**

The Town Assessor, Ms. Elliott, highlighted the following items from her written monthly report: Personal property declarations sent on September 28 to all business owners are due to be returned by November 2 and canvassing will take place to confirm how many businesses have been closed or relocated over the past year. Audits of 15 businesses that have never filed declarations have begun. For the first time, the Tax Collector sent out 5,241 delinquent Motor Vehicle notices on the 2018 Grand List to allow for adjustments that can no longer be made after December 31 per state statute. The normal process was to refer these delinquent accounts to the collection agency. Ms. Elliott reported a drop of 2,300 cars between the 2019 and 2018 Supplemental Motor Vehicles list. She will further look into this issue which may be partially due to disruption of DMV services as a result of the pandemic. The processing of all years' motor vehicle cancellations, additions, corrections, and pro-rations continues. Recognizing that revenues could significantly change, Mr. Mason asked the Assessor to follow-up with information on delinquent properties nearing the Statute of Limitation foreclosure deadline, provide a plan to communicate how the Department is pursuing delinquencies and provide a list of the Town's tax-exempt properties.

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**

Comptroller Mynarski drew the Board's attention to topics in his written Report: the Town's annual external audit by RSM has begun, and 5 internal audits by Blumshapiro Consulting are planned or underway. Mr. Mynarski thanked Mr. Gieger and Ms. Larkin for the assistance with administrative details during the interim between a retirement and the hire of a new Executive Assistant for the Finance Department who arrives November 2.

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

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

## **BET Standing Committee Reports**

**Audit Committee** – Mr. Drake reported of the five internal audits to be performed by Blumshapiro Consulting, the Student Activity Fund audit has been completed and is published on the Town website; a second read of the Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink draft and a first draft Town Marina audit will be presented at the next Audit Committee meeting, a draft of the Transfer Station audit is expected in December and the School Lunch Fund audit is expected by January. The Cyber Security Task Force reports to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis.

**Investment Advisory Committee** – Mr. Duus reported that despite the deferral of the 2019 property tax deadline from July 1 to October 1, 99.5% of taxes have been collected. The discussion of the OPEB Investment Policy Statement is continuing. Returns on the OPEB portfolio for the year were 7.0%. The Actuary will be attending the IAC November meeting to provide his annual report and all members of the BET are invited to attend.

**Human Resources Committee** –Ms. Fassuliotis reported that Town Hall was open from 8 am to 1 pm for walk-ins and by appointment from 1 pm to 4 pm. Town Hall continues to operate at one-third capacity of employees on site with the remainder working from home. A vacancy report highlighted vacancies primarily due to promotions or retirements. The Unemployment comments focused on GPS issues of retirements, FMLA leaves and the challenges recruiting substitutes. The Workers' Compensation expense is favorable despite a recent large settlement with a retired employee.

### **BET Liaison Reports**

**Nathaniel Witherell** – Mr. Duus and Ms. Krumeich reported favorably on the work of the newly hired management team. The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) occupancy was averaging 92% in September. Of note, overtime costs are down, and the Medicaid reimbursement rate is slightly higher. The new Executive Director is re-negotiating vendor agreements. Thanks were expressed for Mr. Gieger's on-site consulting with the new employees in TNW's Finance Department. Mr. Mason noted these good results.

**Education** – Mr. Mason reported on the many recent BOE/GPS changes; receipt of a new grant; an on-going discussion on capital projects; the formation of a new Building Committee for GHS Security entrance; and, an external audit of GPS Special Education program is underway. Ms. Moriarty asked the BET to express its thanks for the BOE/GPS for the smooth opening of schools in September.

### **BET Special Project Team Reports**

**Fire Study** – Mr. Ramer reported that a meeting had taken place with the Matrix Consulting Group to review the observations of the new Fire Chief and the Assistant Fire Chief with respect to the draft report and its findings. A public presentation of the Matrix Study is being planned in the near future.

**Debt & Fund Balance Policy** – Mr. Duus reported that the Committee had met twice with a third meeting scheduled for discussion on the Fund Balance Policy. Two additional meetings are scheduled to discuss Debt Policy.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Approval of BET Calendar for Calendar year 2021**

Mr. Mason drew attention to the February Budget Committee meeting schedule noting that Consolidation Day had been moved to an afternoon meeting. Due to holidays, school vacation and meetings creating a tight timeframe, BET Decision Day is not yet on the Calendar. A member of the BET suggested that Decision Day could be scheduled for the week of April 5 to give the Board an opportunity to review the previous Workshop discussions.

Upon a motion by Ms. Krumeich, seconded by Mr. Mason, the BET voted 12-0-0 to accept the BET 2021 Calendar. Motion carried.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- None

### **Chair's Report**

Mr. Mason commented that he had attended a meeting with the RTM at which hybrid meetings were discussed and scheduled going forward; a meeting with the Affordable Housing Task Force on the P&Z proposal to seek a moratorium on 8-30(g) developments and what would be required to qualify. First Selectman Camillo's vision of a Downtown Masterplan is taking shape; a dialogue is underway to streamline the Town's process for accepting Gifts; and several Labor contracts are in discussion or arbitration. Mr. Mason expressed the opinion that these initiatives were moving forward favorably.

### **Approval of BET Meeting Minutes**

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Board voted 12-0-0 to approve the Minutes of the Regular BET Meeting of September 19, 2021 as amended. Motion carried.

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Erickson, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, the Board voted 12-0-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 P.M. Motion carried.

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation is on Tuesday, November 16, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

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William Drake, Clerk of the Board

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Michael Mason, Chairman