



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

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Virtual Meeting

Committee

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

Staff

Robert Barry, Assistant Police Chief, Police Department; LuAnn Bellantoni, Business Manager, Parking Services; Roland Gieger, Director, Budget and Systems. Finance Department; James Heavey, Chief, Police Department; Jenny Larkin, Information Technology Department; Alan Monelli, Superintendent, DPW Division, Construction & Building Maintenance; Demetria Nelson, Commissioner, Department of Human Services; Barbara Ormerod-Glynn, Director, Greenwich Library; Amy Seibert, Commissioner, Department of Public Works; Joseph Siciliano, Director, Parks & Recreation Department

Board:

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

RTM:

Lucia Jansen, (D-7), Chair, Budget Overview Committee (BOC), Labor Contracts Committee (LCC); Scott Kalb, (D-7), Public Works Committee; Janet Stone McGuigan, (D-6), Education Committee; Janet McMahon, (D-8), Education Committee; Danial Ozizmir, (D-5), Vice Chair, BOC, Chair, LCC; Lucy Von Brachel, (D-4)

BOE/GPS:

Peter Bernstein, Chairman, BOE; Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer,

Public:

Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; Stephanie Cowie, member, First Selectman's Advisory Committee on Disabilities; Russ Davidson, Architect, FAIA, KG&D Architects; Clare Kilgallen, Co-President, New Lebanon School PTA; Brian Peldunas, President, PTA Council; Horst Tebbe, GCTV

REQUESTS FOR BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Number	Department	Purpose
ED-3	BOE	Release of Conditions
\$1,900.000	B680 5960 21254	Cardinal Stadium

Mr. O'Keefe, BOE Chief Operating Officer, explained the request for release of \$1,900,000 for Phase 1A for the new Cardinal Stadium to enable the BOE to sign a contract for the purchase of

new bleachers, site development, elevator to the press box, team rooms, and related project costs. At the September 15, 2020 meeting, the Committee requested a breakdown of costs to differentiate Phase 1A as approved, to reflect the BET condition of release. Together with the \$2,725,000 released in September this completes the release for Phase 1A construction. The remaining \$1,731,000 of the FY21 appropriation, which are not being requested, are budgeted for Phase 1B.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the partial release of conditions on the Cardinal Stadium project of \$1,900,000 for Phase 1A and recommend the application to the full Board as a Routine application. Motion carried.

PW-1	Public Works	Release of Conditions
\$250,000	B245 59560 20133	Release of Conditions
\$150,000	B345 59560 21232	Dorothy Hamill Skating Rink

Mr. Monelli, Superintendent of Construction and Building Maintenance, explained that the request for the two Budget Release of Conditions are being made simultaneously. Conditions for the release of funds were satisfied with completion of a scope and feasibility space and initial schematic design plans report. Funds would be used to prepare 30% design plans necessary for submission for Municipal Improvement (MI) status and land use agencies approvals. Project Bids for the project architect ranged from \$1.2 to \$1.4 million with a current estimated building cost of \$16.9 million. The Committee was told that new construction offered the advantages of bringing the building to code, replacement of aging mechanicals and plumbing, improving rink size to regulation standards, and enhancing facilities to attract team and private contracts. Public Private Partnership funds are currently being sought. The Committee inquired whether a market study, benchmarking study against other municipalities or staffing plan were available.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Hess, the Committee voted 3-0-1 (Abstain: Tarkington) to approve the Release of Conditions for \$400,000. Motion carried.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to add item PD-2 for the Police Department to the Agenda. Motion carried.

PD-2	Police Department	Approval to Use
\$135,782		Federal/State Regional Port Security Grant

James Heavey, Police Department Chief, and Robert Barry, Deputy Chief, explained that the Department had received a grant award for regional port security. The total grant is \$181,789, of which 75% is from the Department of Homeland Security and 25% is expected to be funded locally. The local funds would be absorbed by the Police Department annual budget over the next three years of \$38,061 plus \$11,300 from the Federal Asset Forfeiture Account. The grant is designed to enhance the Departments' fleet equipment for water response and staff safety.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Hess, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the use of a \$135,782 Port Security Grant and \$11,300 of the Federal Asset Forfeiture Account as a contribution to the total cost of the \$181,782 project and recommend the request the full BET as a Routine application. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion of Economic Conditions**

Mr. Gieger, Director, Budget and Systems, provided an overview of FY21 year-to-date September revenues and expenses compared to previous FY20. He noted that building permit revenue was down, and tipping fee revenue was reported with a one-month lag time. In response to a Committee member's question about what appeared to be a negative revenue total at the end of September tax collection period, the Budget Director explained there was a \$5.4 million lag with payments processed. The extended property tax due date of October 1 was established by Executive Order due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the envelopes were properly stamped by the post office.

The Comptroller explained due to the Retirement Board reduction of an assumed rate of return from 6.5% to 6.25%, that a larger contribution would need to be budgeted for the Town's FY22 contribution to the Retirement Fund. The Comptroller presented a benchmarking table to compare the proposed reduced rate of the annual rate of return using peer Connecticut cities and towns.

Ms. Tarkington commented that the Committee had sent five Department heads specific questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their Department and requesting information on any related change in their operations. Responses were detailed and will be helpful in the Budget Guidelines process.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion and Approval of Fiscal Year 2022 Guidelines**

Ms. Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair, reviewed the second draft Budget Guidelines, which integrated Departmental responses to the Committees questions, projected FY22 salaries, and proposes increased Departmental operating expenses at 2%. She commented that this is above the area inflation rate of 1.4%. In addition, the Guidelines addresses changes to areas such as BOE special education and capital projects.

Mr. Mason, BET Chairman, observed that it was premature to discuss some topics before February Budget Hearings because some factors were in-play that would result in budget changes including labor negotiations, the amount of capital borrowing needed, and revenues. He recommended that capital improvement projects be prioritized and a Guidelines workshop be considered.

Mr. Ramer and Ms. Moriarty expressed concern over BOE operating budget levels in the areas of special education and out-of-district tuition and supplies, the level of capital projects and the capital tax levy, given the forecast of several large projects in the next few years. Mr. Ramer also indicated a concern about the use of Capital Non-Recurring Fund Balance.

In an effort to prepare realistic and timely Guidelines for the BET's consideration and Departmental budget formulation, it was agreed that further dialogue about service-level, capital projects and mill rate would be warranted.

Upon a motion by Mr. Ramer, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to continue further discussion of the second draft of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget Guidelines to the next meeting of the Budget Committee, the Committee voted 4-0-0. Motion carried.

Approval of the BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Hess, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, the Committee voted 4-0-0 to approve the BET Budget Committee Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2020. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Moriarty to adjourn at 1:47 P.M. The Committee voted 4-0-0 in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Next Regular Meeting of the BET Budget Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 9, 2020 at 10:30 A.M. The Meeting is currently scheduled as a virtual webinar meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary

Leslie L Tarkington, Budget Committee Chair