



MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Thursday, April 1, 2021 in a hybrid virtual webinar format, Greenwich, CT.

Chair Michael S. Mason called the meeting to order at 11:44 A.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

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: Daniel Carlsen, Senior Management Analyst, Office of the First Selectman (OFS); Angela Gencarelli, Ass't Budget & Systems Manager, Finance Department (Dept); Roland Gieger, Director, Budget & Systems, Finance Dept; Barbara Heins, Executive Assistant, OFS; Brian Koczak, Ass't Chief, Fire Dept; Jenny Larkin, Information Technology (IT) Dept; Joseph McHugh, Chief, Fire Dept; James Michel, Deputy Commissioner, Dept of Public Works; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller

BOE/GPS Peter Bernstein, Chairman, Board of Education (BOE); Karen Hirsh, Secretary, BOE; Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools (GPS); Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operating Officer

Other: Webinar attendees ranged between 140 to 143 people during the length of the meeting; Ken Borsuk, Reporter, *Greenwich Time*; Richard Kaufman, Reporter, *Greenwich Sentinel*, Horst Tebbe, GCTV

Mr. Mason welcomed the members of the Board and guests to the FY 2021-2022 Operating and Capital Budget (the Budget) Decision Day. Mr. Mason thanked the Finance Department Staff and the IT Department for their efforts to assist the BET with presentation of virtual meetings. He complimented BET members for sharing ideas and working to balance the Operating and Capital Budget revenue and expenses.

Mr. Mason then presented a brief explanation of the budget process to date and commented that Decision Day was not a day for debate, but rather to make choices and votes, and in many cases, people want to express their rationale for their voting choice on the record.

PROPOSED FY 2021-2022 BUDGET

- **Motion:** Mr. Drake made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to accept the FY22 Budget as recommended by the BET Budget Committee of \$444,832,234 Total General Fund Operating, of \$69,015,000 Total Capital Fund for a total recommended Budget of \$513,847,234.

Discussion

The discussion commenced with the reading of each department's operating budget request and paused at items identified during the BET Budget Workshop for further discussion, motions and voting.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT OPERATING with FIXED CHARGES

Office of the First Selectman – 105-51300 Economic Development Director Temp Salary (\$60,000)

Reason: The Economic Development Director is a newly proposed part-time position in the FY22 budget. While there is general agreement that the function needs to be addressed, the job and grade/salary does not clearly convey the intent of the position such that goals and outcomes are identified. In order to have a consistent understanding of this new initiative, additional discussion and clarification need to occur.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, to condition release of funds upon receipt and approval by the BET of a document setting forth the mission of the new Economic Development office, its objectives, purpose and measurable criteria for success. The Board voted 6-6-0 (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassiliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion failed.
- **Motion:** Mr. Duus made a motion, seconded by Ms. Fassuliotis, to delete the proposed appropriation and position until additional vetting for the position description including level and compensation is provided. The Board voted 9-3-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Moriarty, Ramer) Motion carried.

Office of the First Selectman - 105-51490 Greenwich Plaza Consultant

Reason: \$75,000 was proposed in the Recommended Budget to evaluate options relating to the Greenwich Plaza lease. This request is premature.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, to delete the Greenwich Plaza consulting appropriation because the request is premature. The Board voted 11-1-0. (Opposed: Ramer). Motion carried.

Office of the First Selectman - 105-51490 Consultant for Nathaniel Witherell discussions \$25,000

- **Motion:** Mr. Duus made a motion, seconded by Mr. Drake, condition "Subject to release by the BET upon receipt and acceptance by the BET of a written request by the OFS that

\$25,000 is needed and is to be restricted for additional consulting needs for the Nathaniel Witherell review". The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Law Department - 140-51010 TOO Table of Organization, Ass't Town Attorney \$140,000

Reason: The open position in job #1815 Assistant Town Attorney 3 has been held open by the Town Attorney on a trial basis, to determine whether the job function can more effectively be handled by outside counsel. The position was to be reviewed with the BET after a year of experience. Due to current events, the review has not yet taken place. The position should be retained in the Table of Organization of the Law Department pending that review.

- **Motion:** Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, to retain the Assistant Town Attorney 3 position in the Law Dept. Table of Organization until it is reviewed by the Town Attorney with the BET. The Board voted 6-6-0. (Opposed: Duus, Drake, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington). Motion failed.

Fire Department 201-51010 – Administration – (\$150,000), \$99,706, (\$20,000)

Reason: To restore the Administration structure of the Fire Department. Any new administrative structure will be considered only after the 1) new Firefighters' union contract has been approved by the RTM and 2) Internal Fire Department operations study is reviewed and accepted by the BET.

- **Motion:** Ms. Fassuliotis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to remove new position, Assistant Fire Chief (\$150,000); restores position of the Volunteer Coordinator \$99,706; and removes Temporary Salaries funding (\$20,000) no longer need with restoration of Volunteer Coordinator position. The Board voted 5-7-0. (Opposed: Drake, Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion failed.
- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to increase the Temporary Labor Line by \$20,000 to support additional temporary hours for the Volunteer Training & Recruiter to remain in the position until the new Assistant Chief joins. The Board voted 7-5-0. (Opposed: Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Ms. Fassuliotis, to condition hiring the new Assistant Fire Chief until the new Firefighter union contract has been approved by the RTM and the internal Fire Department operation study is reviewed and accepted by the BET. The Board voted 4-7-1. (Opposed: Drake, Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) (Abstain: Mason) Motion failed.

DPW - 321-52510 and 52520 Waste Disposal Cost

Reason: Reduce waste and recycling disposal costs based upon revised, more accurate tonnage and prices by \$390,000.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to reduce budgeted waste costs by \$390,000. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

External Entities - 440-57221 and 440-57231 Transportation Association of Greenwich
(TAG) merge TAG and Saferides

Reason: TAG has been under revenue pressure during COVID to respond to additional tasks being requested of it and to cover various revenue shortfalls. At the same time, its Safe Rides operations have been suspended. TAG is essential to the Town and merging these two appropriations would grant TAG the funding to continue its operations while keeping open Safe Rides funding in the event it resumes Safe Rides service.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to merge the Town's budgeted contribution to TAG \$284,000 and the \$18,000 Safe Rides contribution as a single contribution. The Board voted 7-5-0. (Opposed: Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to condition as "Subject to Release of the TAG amount of \$151,000" (including \$9,000 for Safe Rides under the prior motion) "by the BET upon receipt and acceptance of a semiannual report from TAG respecting its operations, personnel and finances". The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.
- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Ms. Moriarty, to condition as "Subect to Release of \$2,391,153 by the BET upon receipt and acceptance of a semiannual report from GEMS respecting its operations, personnel and finances and including a semiannual report on construction progress at GEMS Station 4, 1237 King Street." The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

External Entities & Human Services - transfer of YWCA Domestic Violence Education (\$175,000) and Kids in Crisis – Teen Talk (\$279,000) from Human Services to External Entities A440-57228 \$279,000 from A501-57210; and A440-57233 \$175,000 from A501-57210

Reason: The YWCA Domestic Violence Education and Kids in Crisis programs to the Human Services budget which makes payments to outside service agencies (501-57210) which can be more effectively or less expensively delived. While valuable, the Kids in Crisis Teen Talk program is not the provision of normal municipal emergency intervention for citizens in need. These programs were budgeted in External Entities through FY18 before being transferred to Human Services and are requesting to be transferred from Human Services back to External Entities.

- **Motion:** Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to transfer YWCA Domestic Violence Education (\$175,000) and Kids in Crisis Teen Talk (\$279,000) from Human Services budget to External Entities budget. The Board voted 1-11-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Erickson, Fassuliotis, Hess, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Mason, Moriarty, Tarkington, Weisbrod) Motion failed.

Human Services 502-55020 and 55050 Emergency Aid/Rent Supplement

Reason: The pandemic has increased the vulnerability of some of our residents, requiring greater assistance through the Department of Human Services. These needs will continue

into FY22. Given the uncertainty of other resources to assist with this need, the Budget Committee added \$15,000 to each of these accounts with the intent to condition the funds upon demonstrated need.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Ms. Erickson, to condition as Subject to Release upon BET review and acceptance of a report from the Dept of Human Services of the need for these supplemental \$30,000 of funds. The Board voted 6-6-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington). Motion failed.

Human Services 502-55020 Emergency Aid and 55050 Rent Supplement

Motion: Ms. Fassuliotis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Drake to reduce the amount of supplemental Emergency Aid/Rent Supplement totaling \$30,000 voted by the Budget Committee because the federal American Rescue Plan tranche of 50% of \$32.4 million is anticipated to be received by the Town by May 15, 2021 which specifies that home owner and emergency rental assistance are two key provisions for reimbursement. These substantial federal funds make the Town's small supplemental appropriation unnecessary. The Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion carried.

Fixed Charges – 902 Unemployment and Workers Compensation

Reason: Due to the need to hire substitute teachers and other BOE employees, currently reimbursable by various ESSER I, II, and III Grant funds, there is a future potential unemployment liability when those teachers and other employees are no longer needed. The future liability will be borne by the Town (not the BOE budget), in Account 902-57330 – Unemployment Insurance. Currently, the Town receives a reimbursement rate of 50% on unemployment costs related to COVID.

- **Motion:** Mr. Mason made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to “condition the Transfer funds on a quarterly basis from the BOE’s various COVID Grants to the Unemployment Insurance Account #902-57330 based on a quarterly report prepared by the Finance Department, working with the BOE Human Resources Department on the amount of future Unemployment charges incurred from the laying off of substitute teachers and other BOE employees previously hired during and as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic”. The Board voted 6-5-1. (Opposed: Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) (Abstain: Erickson) Motion carried.

Fixed Charges – 999-57122 Contribution to Risk Fund (\$2,350,000)

Reason: In FY2021, the Risk Fund appropriation was \$3,000,000 (the annual amount generally funded by the BET). As a result of COVID-19, the Risk Fund balance had not been reduced from the current total of \$4,614,611 due to civil courts being closed. The proposed FY2022 contribution to the Risk Fund was \$2,350,000 that would result in a large Risk Fund balance of \$6,964,611. The Law Committee voted 2-0-0 that the Risk Fund was sufficient at its current level of over \$4.6 million given that the backlog of court cases filed against the Town will not be cleared in FY2022.

- **Motion:** Ms. Fassuliotis made a motion, seconded by Ms. Krumeich, to eliminate the FY22 recommended amount of \$2,350,000. The Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod). Motion carried.

Fixed Charges – 999-57129 From/to Other Funds Contribution to School Lunch Fund & 57131 Prior Year Loses

Fixed Charges – 999-57128 Contribution to Nathaniel Witherell & 57131 Prior Year Losses (unbudgeted)

Reason: To ensure COVID-19 Funds including Grants and other Federal and/or State reimbursement programs when received by the BOE and Witherell are credited, when appropriate, to cover the COVID-19 expenditures as appropriate, for FY20, FY21 and FY22.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to condition as “Subject to Release at Fiscal Year-end 2022 by the BET upon receipt of a year-end report of Grants and other Federal and/or State reimbursements and their application to cover the COVID-19 expense reimbursement in the School Lunch Fund and the Nathaniel Witherell Fund, as appropriate for FY20, FY21 and FY22. Appropriations in the General Fund designated to eliminate prior year losses will not be expended above an amount to achieve a zero balance in the referenced funds as appropriate”. The Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod). Motion carried.

Revenue – 321-44732 Public Works MSW Residential Permit Fee \$87,500

Reason: In FY21 approximately 7,500 Holly Hill residential permits have been purchased year-to-date at \$25 per permit of approximately \$187,500 for a 8.5 month period. \$100,000 was budgeted for FY22.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Duus, to add and additional \$87,500 to the currently budgeted \$100,000 for FY22. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Revenue – M824-46200 Griffith E, Harris Golf Course Revolving Fund revenue transfer

Reason: The cell tower located at the Golf Course is budgeted to generate lease revenue in FY22 of \$131,457. The revenues retained within the Golf Course revolving fund are intended to be those arising from golfing activities. The transfer of \$90,000 of these lease revenues from the revolving fund to the General Fund would leave behind \$41,457 in the revolving fund as compensation for the administration by the Griff of the lease and maintenance of grounds. The change would require some rewording of paragraph 2 of the Resolutions to provide for the allocation of the cell tower lease payments.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ramer, to transfer \$90,000 from the Griff revolving fund not relating to golf activities, to the General Fund. The Board voted 3-9-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Erickson, Fassuliotis, Hess, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Mason, Tarkington). Motion failed.

PROPOSED FY22 BUDGET CAPITAL BUDGET General Government

A172-904 Conservation: Adaptation to Sea Level Rise Planning \$100,000

Reason: The second part of a three part study and planning project to assess Greenwich's vulnerabilities to sea level rise. Phase II will assess the impacts to Town ponds from tidal migration. Phase III will evaluate the vulnerability of Greenwich Point and prepare design documents to minimize potential further damage.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, to add this appropriation and condition Release of funds upon a BET update on the status and goals of the studies. The Board voted 6-6-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion failed.

A172-59600 Conservation, Bicycle Path \$100,000

Reason: Funding for a study of the feasibility of establishing safe bicycle routes to connect village centers along an east-west corridor through the higher density areas of central and southern Greenwich, primarily using existing infrastructure.

- **Motion:** Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, to add this appropriation and condition release of funds upon BET acceptance of a report on the availability of private donations to offset or supplement the cost of the study to the Town and/or the cost of implementation of the resulting Plan. The Board voted 6-6-0) (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington). Motion failed.

206- Fire Department – Fire apparatus & Equipment Vehicle Extraction Tool \$210,000

Reason: Restoration of a project removed by the Budget Committee, Replacement of current Hurst vehicle extrication equipment, which is soon to become obsolete. New extrication equipment operates at twice the speed and power of current equipment.

- **Motion:** Mr. Ramer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to add funding of \$210,000 Fire Department Vehicle Extrication equipment. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

206-956 Round Hill Fire Station – Fire Apparatus and Equipment

Reason: The funding is for architectural design work and due diligence as required for land use approvals to augment the currently planned renovation of the RHFVD to allow for additional space to accommodate career firefighters. These funds are requested to implement the recommendation of the Matrix study that the Town establish a combined career-volunteer fire station at Round Hill.

- **Motion:** Ms. Moriarty made a motion, seconded by Mr. Weisbrod, to fund \$75,000 for architectural design and due diligence required for land use approvals to establish a combined career-volunteer fire station at Round Hill. The Board voted 6-6-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Fassuliotis, Hess, Mason, Tarkington) Motion failed.

Z312-59120 DPW Highway – Streets & Bridges - Variable Message Signs (\$50,000)

Reason: The proposed purchase of three additional message signs would be supplemental. It is not a necessary investment this year.

- **Motion:** Mr. Duus made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to delete \$50,000 from the recommended FY22 Budget for variable message signs. The Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion carried.

312- DPW Highway – Streets & Bridges – Annual Asphalt Paving Program (\$500,000)

Reason: To reduce the appropriation to on-going asphalt paving program to \$3,500,000 to reflect lower cost of petroleum products and opportunities for participation in federal reimbursement programs under appropriations to revive post-COVID economy.

- **Motion:** Mr. Mason made a motion, seconded by Ms. Tarkington, to reduce \$500,000 from the annual asphalt paving program. The Board voted 7-6-0. (Opposed: Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion carried.

312- 22320 DPW Greenwich Ave. Streetscape and Repaving Implementation (\$250,000)

Reason: Plans to implement initial drainage and sidewalks, curbs, and pedestrian facilities changes may be premature until there is an overall approved site plan for Greenwich Avenue Improvements.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Ms. Fassuliotis, to reduce the proposed appropriation from \$500,000 to \$250,000 to allow for ongoing projects such as sanitary sewer repairs/upgrades to continue. The Board voted 2-10-0. (Opposed: Drake, Duus, Erickson, Hess, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Mason, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion failed.

312- 22320 DPW Greenwich Ave. Streetscape and Repaving \$500,000

Reason: Plans to implement initial drainage and sidewalks, curbs, and pedestrian facilities changes may be premature until there is an overall approved site plan for Greenwich Avenue Improvements.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hess to condition the release of \$500,000 subject to the BET receipt and acceptance of a detailed business plan for proposed projects and confirmation by DPW of updated outreach to the community including residents and street retail of the proposed plan. The Board voted 5-7-0. (Opposed: Drake, Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion failed.

312- 22323 DPW-Engineering Brookside/Glenville Rd. Intersection Improvements (\$175,000)

Reason: Neighborhood opposition including concern for engineering and rotaries design, taking of land and reconfiguring abutting neighbors' property.

- **Motion:** Ms. Tarkington made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to eliminate this appropriation due to neighborhood comments. The Board voted 5-7-0. (Opposed: Drake, Erickson, Kreuzer, Krumeich, Moriarty, Ramer, Weisbrod) Motion failed.

312-22323 DPW-Engineering Brookside/Glenville Rd. Intersection Improvements Condition

- Motion: Mr. Weisbrod made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mason, to condition \$100,000 of \$175,000 subject to release upon BET receipt and acceptance of a preliminary plan and preliminary budget for the project. Mr. Weisbrod will prepare a draft of the budget amendment for Tuesday, April 6, 2021, Decision Day #2. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Motion: Mr. Mason made a motion to suspend BET Decision Day business at 4:00 P.M. until April 6, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. The Board voted 12-0-0. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



William Drake, Clerk of the Board



Michael S. Mason, Chair