MINUTES of the Organizational Meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation held on Wednesday, January 2, 2008 in the Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich, CT.

Chairman Robert Stone called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M., after which the members pledged allegiance to the flag.

The Board took the Oath of Office administered by the Town Clerk Carmella Budkins.

Board Members in attendance:

Stephen G. Walko, Chairman
Robert S. Stone, Vice Chairman/Chairman
Leslie L. Tarkington, Clerk
Nancy E. Barton
James S. Campbell
William G. Kelly
Edward T. Krumeich, Jr.
Michael S. Mason
Arthur D. Norton
Jeffrey S. Ramer

Board Members absent: William R. Finger, Laurence B. Simon

Ex-Officio Members: First Selectman Peter Tesei; Selectman Peter Crumbine
Staff: Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; John Wayne Fox, Town Attorney; Carmella Budkins, Town Clerk; Aamina Ahmad

Other: Ed Dadakis, Vince DiMarco, Marcus Tarkington, Neil Vigdor, Alex Walko, David Walko

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Upon a nomination by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Krumeich, and closed by Mr. Campbell, the Board voted 10-0-0 to elect Stephen Walko Chairman of the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

Upon a nomination by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. Norton, and closed by Mr. Campbell, the Board voted 10-0-0 to elect Robert Stone Vice Chairman of the Board of Estimate and Taxation.

Upon a nomination by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Mason, and closed by Mr. Campbell, the Board voted 10-0-0 to elect Leslie Tarkington Clerk of the Board of Estimate and Taxation.
After being elected Chairman Mr. Walko took over leadership of the meeting.

**APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSOR**

Resolved that the Board of Estimate and Taxation appoints Ted Gwartney as Assessor for a two-year term effective January 2, 2008 and terminating on the date of the first meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation in January 2010. The appointment shall be subject to the provisions of Article 17, Section 293 of the Town Charter. The Assessor’s salary shall remain at $120,640. However, the Board of Estimate and Taxation shall review and set the salary effective January 1, 2008 at its January 22, 2008 meeting and the salary effective January 1, 2009 at its December 2008 meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Board voted 10-0-0 to approve this resolution.

**APPOINTMENT OF COMPTROLLER**

Resolved that the Board of Estimate and Taxation appoints Peter Mynarski as Comptroller for a two-year term effective January 2, 2008 and terminating on the date of the first meeting of the Board of Estimate and Taxation in January 2010. The appointment shall be subject to the provisions of Article 1, Section 11 of the Town Charter. The Comptroller’s salary shall remain at $150,352. However, the Board of Estimate and Taxation shall review and set the salary effective January 1, 2008 at its January 22, 2008 meeting and the salary effective January 1, 2009 at its December 2008 meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Norton, seconded by Mr. Mason, the Board voted 10-0-0 to approve this resolution.

Mr. Walko reported that the deadline for submission of evaluations for the Comptroller and the Assessor has been moved to Tuesday, January 8, 2008.

**CHAIRMAN’S APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Budget Committee**
   Michael Mason - Chairman, Bob Stone, Larry Simon, Ed Krumeich

**Human Resources Committee**
   Leslie Tarkington - Chairman, Michael Mason, Bill Kelly, Nancy Barton

**Audit Committee**
   Art Norton - Chairman, Jim Campbell, Jeff Ramer, Bill Finger

**Law Committee**
   Jim Campbell, Nancy Barton

**Investment Advisory Committee**
   Art Norton, Bill Finger
LIAISON ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2007-2008 TERM

Finance Board
Steve Walko, Bill Finger

Board of Education
Jim Campbell, Nancy Barton

Department of Social Services
Leslie Tarkington, Ed Krumeich

Nathaniel Witherell
Leslie Tarkington, Ed Krumeich

Parks and Recreation
Michael Mason, Bill Finger

Retirement Board
Art Norton, Larry Simon

Hamilton Avenue School Building Committee
Steve Walko

Glenville School Building Committee
Art Norton

Nathaniel Witherell Building Committee
Leslie Tarkington

Greenwich High School Auditorium Renovation Building Committee
Bill Kelly

Negotiations
GEA - Art Norton, Bill Kelly
LIUNA – Jim Campbell, Nancy Barton

OPEB
Bob Stone - Chairman, Art Norton, Bill Finger, Larry Simon

BET Representative to CIP Committee
Bob Stone

BOARD ORIENTATION – TOWN ATTORNEY

FOIA Review

J. Wayne Fox introduced attorney Aamina Ahmad who gave a presentation to the Board on the Freedom of Information Act.
Ms. Ahmad explained that the FOIA can be divided into two parts: one part having to do with the conduct of meetings and the second part having to do with the disclosure of records. The FOIA is all about open government, open meetings, and open records.

With regard to meetings, Ms. Ahmad explained that as long as there is a quorum, the agenda has been posted with the Town Clerk, and the meeting has been made open to the public, this constitutes a meeting subject to public disclosure. A non-meeting would be situations such as social gatherings not for the purpose of discussing the business of the Board, or if the Board attends a meeting of the RTM or Board of Selectmen, that would not constitute a meeting of this Board.

Votes on any business conducted at a meeting must be made available to the public within 48 hours. And the minutes, in draft form, would have to be made available to the public within 7 business days.

The public may be excluded under specific circumstances such as executive sessions used to discuss pending litigation, pending claims, property purchases. The requirement is that when in an open meeting a 2/3 vote must be taken to go into executive session stating what the purpose of the executive session is, but votes must be taken after coming back to the public meeting.

Regarding disclosure of records, section 1-210 of the General Statutes, lists 24 different types of documents that need not be disclosed. Even within the list there is also a caveat. If the BET gets a request for documents, contact the Law Department to review whether or not the documents are exempt from disclosure and under what circumstances. Denying a request for documents must be done within 4 days. Compliance must be done promptly.

There was some discussion on what emails and electronic information might be subject to disclosure.

Mr. Fox commended Ms. Ahmad and Valerie Maze of the Town Attorney’s office for their work with respect to the relationship with the Freedom of Information Commission, also the progress made and results achieved with complaints that have been filed with it. The Board of Selectmen had adopted a Freedom of Information Policy. In addition, there has been a series of meetings and seminars put on by the Freedom of Information Commission for department heads.

**Conflicts of Interest Review**

Town Attorney Wayne Fox reported that the Greenwich Board of Ethics over the last couple of years has been very active on a couple of issues. It renders opinions and holds hearings with respect to issues that come before it.

The standard that is applicable is simply set by state statutes, which provides that if an official has reason to believe or expect that the official, the official's spouse, dependent child, or a business with which he is associated will derive a direct monetary gain or suffer a direct monetary loss by reason of that official’s act then that carries a potential conflict. If in fact, that person's interest is no different from any other member of the profession or occupation or group, then there is no conflict.
CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mr. Walko stated that this is the beginning of a new two-year term for the Board of Estimate and Taxation. Mr. Walko expressed his gratitude to all.

Mr. Walko pledged to continue in the BET tradition to maintain the high level of service to residents, and to properly plan for future generations. Core services such as public safety, maintenance of infrastructure, and education must remain top priorities.

Over the past several years the BET has focused its attention on increased operating budget efficiencies, improving infrastructure, and outcome based budgeting. Over the next two years those same areas will continue to dominate our agendas, with some variation.

The Town's infrastructure needs to be brought up to an acceptable level, while at the same time it plans for and funds its proper maintenance. The BET must ensure that all projects which receive funding are necessary, and follow a well thought-out plan that can be afforded within its current budget guidelines. It is imperative that the BET review and update the Town's capital financing schedule, to fulfill the promises that capital projects will not have any adverse impact on future budgets.

The BET needs to encourage and assist departments in the creation of strategic plans for both their operating and capital budgets. While prior BETs have been unsuccessful in the implementation of outcome based budgeting, the principles behind that method of budgeting are sound, and creation of strategic planning for all departments should and must become a priority of this Board. All departments, including those under the direct supervision of the BET, must define goals and outcomes, and operating and capital decisions should be made to attain those goals and outcomes. Departmental table of organizations should support the defined goals and inefficiencies should be eliminated.

It is critical that the BET provide proper oversight and guidance to the Assessor, as the Town performs its next revaluation. Prior revaluations have shown that proper planning and decision making are critical elements of a revaluation that provides for an accurate and equitable distribution of values of properties which comprise the Town's Grand List.

During this term, the BET will address these three main areas, along with others, in a somewhat different organizational manner. Regarding his appointments of Board members to standing committees and liaison assignments, Mr. Walko intends to alter the manner in which the BET operates and organizes itself.

Liaison assignments concerning general government, information technology, public safety, and public works have been eliminated. Instead the BET through two-member teams, will address separate and distinct issues or special projects by researching a particular topic, generating a report, and making a recommendation to the full BET. This process will result in a better distribution between members of the work that must be completed, allow for a more transparent practice of decision-making, and generate greater attention by this Board to issues that require review or oversight.

The first ten issues or special projects to be addressed by the BET, with oversight provided by the Vice-Chairman, will be:

1) Development of Strategic Plans - Department. of Parks & Recreation (initially)
2) Sidewalks and Safe Routes to Schools
3) Organization of Land Use Agencies with the Building Department
4) Cash-Flow Analysis
5) Shared services between the Board of Education and the Town of Greenwich
6) Havemeyer Building, Old Town Hall, and the downtown business area master plan
7) Elderly Tax Relief
8) Review of the Town of Greenwich waste management agreements
9) Information Technology update, including usage of Microsoft Project as a management tool
10) The next Revaluation planning

During the course of the two-year term as other topics arise, Mr. Walko will appoint additional two-member teams to address specific issues. Those assignments will be announced at the regularly scheduled BET meeting on Tuesday, January 22, 2008.

In closing Mr. Walko expressed his gratitude to his family and supporters once again.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Campbell, the Board voted 10-0-0 to adjourn at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Maria Bocchino, Recording Secretary

[Signature]
Leslie L. Tarkington, Clerk of the Board

[Signature]
Stephen G. Walko, Chairman