

TOWN OF GREENWICH
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
BUDGET PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC HEARING FOR FY2020-2021 BUDGET

MINUTES

Town Hall Meeting Room
Thursday, January 23, 2020, 6:00 P.M.

- Committee: Leslie Tarkington, Chair; Debra Hess, Leslie Moriarty, Jeffrey S. Ramer
- Board: Michael Mason, Chairman; William Drake; Andreas Duus; Laura Erickson; Karen Fassuliotis; Elizabeth K. Krumeich; Miriam Kreuzer; David Weisbrod
- Selectmen: Fred Camillo, First Selectman; Jill Oberlander, Selectperson; Lauren Rabin, Selectwoman
- Staff: Carolyn Baisley, Director, Health Department; Benjamin Branyan Town Administrator; Tom Greco, Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation; Barbara Heins, Executive Ass't to First Selectman; Tom Klein, Director, IT Department; Blaize Levitan, Senior Management Analyst; Peter Mynarski, Comptroller; Barbara Ormerod-Glynn, Director, Greenwich Library; Amy Seibert, Commissioner, Department of Public Works; Joseph Siciliano, Director, Parks & Recreation
- BOE/GPS: Peter Bernstein, Chairman, Board of Education (BOE); Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent of Greenwich Public Schools (GPS); Dr. E. Ann Carabillo, Deputy Superintendent, GPS; Mary Forde, Chief Pupil Personnel Service Office, GPS; Karen Hirsch, BOE; Sean O'Keefe, Chief Operations Officer, GPS; Dan Watson, Director of Facilities, GPS
- RTM: Bruce Pflug (D5, Finance Cmte); William Galvin (D7, Vice Chair Health & Human Services); Brooks Harris (D10, Finance); Lucia Jansen (D7, Chair Budget Overview Cmte); Danyal Ozizmir (D5, Vice Chair Budget Overview Cmte); Molly Saleeby (D8, Finance)
- Public: Ken Borsuk, Reporter, Greenwich Time; Dennis Yeskey, Alternate Member, Planning & Zoning

Budget Committee Chair Tarkington called the Meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and welcomed the audience to presentations by the First Selectman and the Chairman of the Board of Education of the recommended FY2020-2021 Budgets. Attendees were invited to upcoming Departmental Review Hearings taking place over the next six weeks, to understand the budget details and decision-making process required to determine the BET recommended budget. Ms. Tarkington commented that the Departmental Review Hearings could be attended in-person or watched live on either Greenwich public broadcast Channel 79 or on YouTube. A schedule of the Budget Committee's Departmental Review Hearings is available on the Town website's calendar. The Budget Committee will vote on its recommended budget on March 2nd, and if necessary, March 3rd. The Budget then moves to the full BET for a Public Hearing on March 30th. A Budget Workshop will take place on March 31st, and then the BET will vote on the recommended budget on April 2nd. The RTM will vote on the recommended budget at its May 11, 2020 meeting. Ms. Tarkington noted that this evening's Public Hearing was an opportunity for public comment, which would begin at the conclusion of presentations by the First Selectman Fred Camillo and Mr. Peter

Bernstein, Chairman of the Board of Education. and Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent, Greenwich Public Schools.

PROPOSED BUDGET FY2019-2020

First Selectman Camillo presented his recommended FY2020-2021 Budget and thanked his staff for their professionalism and contribution to its preparation. He welcomed the Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET), members of the Board of Education (BOE) and Greenwich Public Schools (GPS), Representative Town Meeting members (RTM) and members of the community.

Mr. Camillo reviewed the BET Budget Guidelines and then introduced his recommended FY2020-2021 Budget noting that it reflected an overall increase of 3.02% to \$457,583.151 in expenditures supported by a Mill Rate increase of 2.53%. The Presentation included an overview of the budget's goal, objectives and challenges as well as highlights of its anticipated revenues and expenses. Mr. Camillo noted that it was not a status quo budget, but rather would include reductions in subsidy support to The Nathaniel Witherell, a pay-as-you throw (PAYT) program to support waste management and a proposal to reduce Town employee headcount. The Budget's capital improvement projects and initiatives include: cyber security and school soil remediation initiatives; Eastern Greenwich Civic Center replacement; improvement to the Dorothy Hamill Rink and GHS Cardinal Field; architectural and engineering for the renovation of Julian Curtiss Elementary School; a permanent facility for GEMS Station 4; and Roger Sherman Baldwin Park restoration and work facility relocations.

Mr. Camillo concluded his remarks acknowledging the Town's culture of volunteerism and his intention to pursue public/private partnerships as vital contributions to the Town's future.

BOE BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Peter Bernstein, Chairman of the BOE, and Superintendent Dr. Jones presented an overview of the BOE's proposed fiscal year 2020-2021 Operating Budget for Greenwich schools of \$166,631,476, an increase of 2.0%, and within the BET Guidelines; and, a Capital Budget of \$35,755,000 that included costs for major projects (\$22,510,000), annual infrastructure/maintenance improvements of \$11,567,000, and technology software/hardware in support of the digital learning program (\$1,678,000). To meet the stated budget guidelines overall enrollment decline, and the increase of 200 students in special education, efficiencies, headcount reductions, and deferrals were taken for savings of \$1,000,000. Dr. Jones explained how the budget was designed to meet the strategic plan's mission to assist student growth in academic, interpersonal and extracurricular areas and provided statistics of student outcomes, including 81% of students meeting or exceeding their expected growth. GPS scored in the top 15% of all state schools in Next Generation Science Standards. Commenting that enrollment was projected to be reduced by 48 students in the coming year, Dr. Jones noted that contractual obligations of salaries, transportation, utilities and facility operations will increase by \$3.1 million, which represents 1.92% of the total 2.0% increase. Revenue from state and federal cost-sharing, grants and community agency instructional partnerships contribute supplemental revenue. BlumShapiro, providing ongoing consulting on the BOE Capital Project Operational Assessment Study, continues to assist in establishing a strong capital project system and a future implementation of an asset management system. The full discussion of the BOE budget is scheduled for Thursday, January 30th.

PUBLIC HEARING

Ms. Tarkington opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 P.M.

The following speakers addressed the Committee:

- Jen Bencivengo - Principal, Old Greenwich: spoke in support of the full BOE budget; and in support of the feasibility study for Old Greenwich Elementary School for ADA accessibility.
- Christina Broderick and Carolyn Petersen - Co-Presidents Old Greenwich School PTA: spoke in support of the Old Greenwich Elementary School feasibility study to implement infrastructure improvements.
- Meg Nolan - President of Old Greenwich Association: spoke in support of Old Greenwich Elementary School feasibility study; spoke in support of the full BOE budget.
- Danyal Ozizmir - RTM D5, Vice Chair, Budget Overview Committee: spoke in support of First Selectman's Budget items and added a lot of the Budget Guidelines items were met; spoke in support of the Budget Committee pursuing its request for the identification of an additional \$2 million in savings from Town and BOE budgets; expressed concern about impact of next year's shift of property taxes from back country to other sections of town expected in the 2020 Revaluation.
- Bruce Pflug - RTM D5, Finance Committee: spoke about concern over 20% increase in capital projects; in support of clarification of the amount of state reimbursable improvements to the Sound Beach Avenue Bridge; in opposition to the BOE Capital Budget increase of 37%; concern about expense of sewer force main improvement project; spoke in opposition to increasing cost of Nathaniel Witherell.
- Brooks Harris - RTM D10, Finance Committee: spoke about the ongoing challenge with budgets increasing at a greater rate than the grand list; in opposition to the size of the BOE Capital plan; spoke as an advocate of more robust long-term capital planning.
- Julie Deschamps - Greenwich Recycling Advisory Board ("GRAB"); GPS parent: spoke in support of capital project to install dishwashers in schools to be able to use reusable trays.
- Ali Ghiorse - GPS parent: spoke in opposition to single-use school lunch trays; spoke in support of reusable trays and school dishwasher installation capital project.
- Diane B. Otto - Greenwich resident: in support of maintaining police traffic officers on Greenwich Avenue as a resident with a disability; spoke to accident where she was hit by an SUV at Greenwich Avenue - Grigg Street intersection.
- Lucia Jansen - RTM D7, Chair Budget Overview Committee: spoke in favor of Town's triple-A rating for financial management; spoke in support of BOC annual goals letter being in support of BET Budget Guidelines but would want to see adoption of an additional \$2 million; spoke in support of reduction in the capital budget, partially due to the amount of open capital projects of \$100 million.
- Cricket Dymont and Brian Peldunas - President and First Vice President of PTA Council: spoke in support of BOE operating budget; spoke in support of BOE capital budget maintenance, upgrades and capital investment.

- Susan Rudolf - Greenwich resident: spoke in favor of installation of natural grass at Central Middle School playing fields.
- Arthur Yee MD - GPS parent: spoke in support of installation of natural grass on Central Middle School playing fields.
- Ellen Wolfson - Commission on Aging Board member, retired MD: spoke in support of adding a part time employee to Senior Center staffing at \$10,000; “Age Friendly Community”.
- Jennifer and Alon Kutai - GPS special education student’s parents: spoke in support of increasing funding to GPS special education program and better implementation of the program.
- Michael Goff - GPS special education student’s parent: spoke in support of increased investment in GPS special education; identified increasing trend in litigation for services; spoke in favor of a survey of all GPS educators and special education students’ parents for understanding of facts.
- Carolyn and Ed Lermun - GPS special education students’ parents: spoke in support of increasing budget for programs, personnel and staff training for special education program providers.
- Audra O’Donovan - GPS Special Education student’s parent: spoke in support of increasing GPS special education funding; spoke for better implementation of programs; spoke for better support for teachers.
- Pat Coleman - GPS Special Education student’s parent: spoke in support that special ed is a leadership issue which needs to be addressed openly and in depth and wants to hear that this issue is being addressed by BOE members; no child should be left behind and dollars should be spent properly.
- Lindsey Fahey - GPS Special Education student’s parent: spoke for better special education services and increased special education funding; spoke in support of greater oversight of special education program including faculty and legal claim payouts.
- Diana Martinez - GPS special education student’s parent: spoke for better special education services and in support of increased Special Education budget for faculty training and paraprofessional salaries.
- Lucy von Brachel - RTM D4, Transportation Committee: spoke in opposition to “mill rate” as sole focus of budget development and measurement of taxpayer satisfaction with Town Services; supports focus on benefits as well as costs.
- Laura Kostin - RTM D8, Budget Overview Committee (BOC): identified that BOC Goals Letter was not voted on by the Committee; spoke in support of full BOE budget without any reductions.
- Molly Saleeby - RTM D8, BOC: identified that BOC Goals Letter was not voted on by the Committee; spoke in opposition to BOC Goal’s Letter recommendation to close-out a

project before new projects can commence; spoke in support of increasing special education budget; spoke in support of transparency of public/private partnership policy.

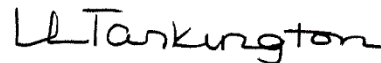
- Warren Silver - Spoke in support of grass fields for Central Middle School.
- Liane Tel - GPS student's parent: spoke in support of grass playing fields for Central Middle School.
- Doreen Pearson - RTM D7: spoke of concern about tax-exempt institutions expansion into residential neighborhoods and the individual cost in terms of time and expense to fight the growth; spoke in favor of need for payment-in-lieu-of-taxes program to support TOG expenses.
- Tony Turner - GPS special education student parent: spoke in support of a study of special education program spending to identify root problems and make changes.
- Michael Baumgarten - Riverside resident: spoke in support of full BOE budget, which attracts young families to move to Town.
- Clare Kilgallen - Byram resident: spoke in support of Senior Center infrastructure and additional \$10,000; spoke in favor of Old Greenwich School feasibility project; spoke in support of full budget as submitted.
- Lydia Plaskon - GPS special education student's parent: spoke in support of better special education services and increased budget.
- Hector Arzeno - RTM D8, Finance and Greenwich High School tour guide: spoke to the need for improvement in the quality of the elementary and middle schools' facilities.

The Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Catherine Sidor, Recording Secretary



Leslie L. Tarkington, Chair